

Alonso's Le Mans quest with Toyota



Vergne takes Formula E thriller

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Formula 1 needs a saviour

How Red Bull can dethrone Mercedes



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RED BULL STRIVING TO SHOW THE OTHERS THE WAY

Well, the experts all reckon Mercedes is sitting pretty going into this weekend's Formula 1 season opener in Australia. They also tell us that Ferrari is a tad behind. But the real intrigue lies in Red Bull, not only in its explosive driving strength of Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo, but on what the team can do if it gets its aero equations right — as it didn't quite manage at the start of 2017.

Jonathan Noble got the lowdown from Red Bull team boss Christian Horner to bring us our cover story for this week, which you can read on page 14. Yes, the team has turned its back on its former late-car-delivery brinkmanship. Yes, Adrian Newey is more involved again after lending his mindpower last year to the Aston Martin hypercar. But... yes... it seems that engine supplier Renault is still a little bit behind. But if the Red Bull RB14 as an entire package is closer to the pace than it was at the beginning of last year, then what can strategy wizardry and cockpit heroics accomplish?

Elsewhere in the magazine, Gary Watkins gives us great insight on Fernando Alonso's mission on the World Endurance Championship and Le Mans 24 Hours with Toyota, and also reports from the Sebring 12 Hours. Alex Kalinauckas explains how Jean-Eric Vergne has transformed himself into a Formula E master tactician able to hold Lucas di Grassi at bay throughout a Uruguayan thriller — although sadly Alex got stranded in South America for a day longer than scheduled due to airport meltdown after an electrical storm (that's the weather, rather than the Formula E racing). And Marcus Pye braved a door-ajar commentary box in the snow of Goodwood to bring you all the action from the ever-spectacular Members' Meeting.

Next week we'll bring you all the news and stories from the Australian Grand Prix. Don't miss the race; don't miss the mag!



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BTCC CHAMPION SUTTON TRIES AUSSIE SUPERCAR

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Reigning British Touring Car champion Ash Sutton has taken part in a driverevaluation day for the Walkinshaw Andretti United Australian Supercar team at Winton Motor Raceway.

The 24-year-old drove one of the team's 650bhp Holden Commodore ZBs, which are used regularly in the championship by James Courtney and Scott Pye. The team was renamed for this year after Andretti Autosport chief Michael Andretti and United Autosport and McLaren Formula 1 boss Zak Brown bought into Walkinshaw Racing, the squad of Ryan Walkinshaw, whose late father Tom was a tin-top and sportscar leviathan.

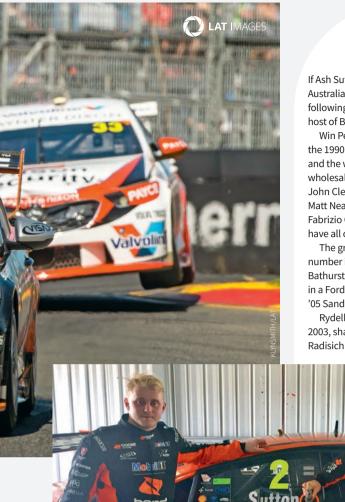
Last week's runout meant Sutton was reunited with Carl Faux, the team's engineer. Faux used to be the technical director of Team BMR, which ran Sutton to the UK title in 2017, and he also designed the BTCC Subaru Levorg machines.

"It was a chance for me to try the car and see what Supercars is all about," said Sutton, who racked up the mileage on Wednesday. "The car was a total monster – a real eye-opener. Even when I was leaving the pits it felt bloody fast, half throttle, and all I seemed to do is keep on pulling another gear..."

Sutton, who will bid for a second straight BTCC crown with the factorybacked BMR Subaru this season, took in a full day's running as he got to grips with the car on the 1.86-mile circuit.

"Supercars have a locked rear differential, and that means they are very different from what I've driven before," explained Sutton. "It requires a slightly different approach in my footwork techniques as the shift in balance is more towards understeer,

"THE CAR WAS A MONSTER, EVEN LEAVING THE PITS IT'S BLOODY FAST"



BTCC CHAMPS DOWN UNDER

If Ash Sutton eventually gets to race in Australia's Supercars series, he'd be following in the footsteps of a whole host of BTCC champions.

Win Percy was a trailblazer, winning the 1990 Bathurst 1000 with Allan Grice and the works Holden team. Since the wholesale switch to five-litre V8 rules, John Cleland, Yvan Muller, Jason Plato, Matt Neal, Alain Menu, Rickard Rydell, Fabrizio Giovanardi and James Thompson have all competed in 'The Great Race'.

The greatest achievements from their number include Cleland taking second at Bathurst in 2001 with his pal Brad Jones in a Ford, while Muller took victory in the '05 Sandown 500 with a Triple Eight Ford.

Rydell had a good Bathurst run in 2003, sharing with fellow BTCC hero Paul Radisich to take seventh with Triple Eight.



but dialling myself into this didn't take too long, and once I had found the sweet spot I loved the way the car rotated.

"I think it took me about 10 laps to get the hang of it and then I was really able to get into the rhythm of it. They are such impressive cars and I couldn't help but have a big grin on my face throughout my time behind the wheel. The Winton track was a great place to drive the car too – it had a bit of everything, with slow and technical bits to really fast and flowing corners, so I got to see all the abilities of the car. It was a little bit like Croft but, if anything, a tad narrower."

Sutton said that he was given the full range of experiences during his time in the car. "It was really interesting, with lots of new things thrown at me. We used both the hard and soft tyre over the course of the day, and the difference in them is so much more extreme than anything I've experienced before. You really had to alter your approach with the two different types of rubber as there was a lap time delta of two seconds between the two compounds, but it was good to experience another of Dunlop's products, because I'm used to them in the BTCC.

"All in all, I learned a great deal from the experience and I'm really grateful to the Walkinshaw Andretti United team for letting me loose in one of its wonderful cars. The entire crew was very welcoming and the whole set-up takes professionalism to another level."

Sutton said that he would keep in touch with the team and was planning a return visit later in the season. "I really enjoyed being around the team and I'm planning to go over and watch one of the rounds," he said. "I will go at the end of the season – maybe the final round at Newcastle at the end of November.

"I would love to get an insight into how the race weekends operate and how the team works when it's at a race meeting. It's a championship I will certainly be keeping a very close eye on in the future." MATT JAMES

Giovanardi lines up his Alfa return

WORLD TOURING CARS

With titles in domestic Italian, Spanish and British series, plus supremacy in European Touring Cars in the early 2000s, there are few accolades missing from Fabrizio Giovanardi's tin-top CV. But the Italian could add another to his list this year, after completing a deal to contest the new WTCR World Cup that will reunite him with Alfa Romeo.

Giovanardi's record boasts eight titles, the first of which he secured in 1997, as well as the one-off European Touring Car Cup crown in 2011. Now 51, he last contested a full season of racing in 2014, when he drove for Motorbase in the BTCC, but he did make one appearance in TCR Italy last year in a SEAT Leon TCR.

Having tested for the Team Mulsanne squad, which will run two Romeo Ferraris-built Alfa Romeo Giuliettas in the World Touring Car Cup, at Monza (below) earlier this month, Giovanardi – an Alfa stalwart for 10 years before his BTCC move with Vauxhall in 2006 – has become the latest in a stellar cast of touring car champions to join the WTCR grid for 2018.

Giovanardi tested alongside Gianni Morbidelli and Kevin Gleason at Monza, but a second Alfa driver is yet to be announced.

Meanwhile, the Belgian DG Sport team has confirmed Aurelien Comte and Mato Homola as its two drivers for 2018. The team, which will run two upgraded Peugeot 308TCRs, took Comte to the standalone TCR Europe Trophy last year, and fielded Homola in TCR International in an Opel Astra. Former Chevrolet WTCC boss Guy Neve will act as team manager. JACK COZENS



McLaren fury over Ferrari poaching of FIA top man



FORMULA 1

McLaren has accused Ferrari and the FIA of breaking a gentleman's agreement after Ferrari announced it had signed FIA safety and deputy race director Laurent Mekies.

Mekies will serve a three-month notice period before leaving his current post, and will start at Ferrari in just under six months' time, on September 20.

Renault's signing of former FIA technical head Marcin Budkowski at the end of last year prompted teams to discuss the matter of gardening leave in a Strategy Group meeting. It was agreed that 12 months would be an appropriate minimum wait for former employees of both the FIA and the F1 Group to start working for teams.

"We are very unhappy with the FIA for losing yet another key employee to a racing team," McLaren racing director Eric Boullier told Autosport, "especially after it was agreed by all teams at the last Strategy Group meeting that no key technical FIA employees would be employed by a race team within 12 months of leaving the FIA. Ferrari went against the gentleman's agreement, and the FIA has not enforced it." Other teams are known to have expressed similar views in private, although they have yet to comment publicly.

With Mekies stood down from F1 duties, the FIA has been hunting for a new deputy to race director Charlie Whiting for this weekend's Australian Grand Prix. His predecessor, Herbie Blash, relinquished the role at the end of 2016 after 20 years. Blash has duties with Yamaha in the World Superbike Championship this weekend, but Autosport understands that he could become available for subsequent races.

Rossi races on with new Yamaha deal

MOTOGP

VALENTINO ROSSI WILL race on in MotoGP until at least the end of 2020 after signing a new deal with the factory Yamaha team on the eve of last weekend's Qatar season opener.

Rossi, 39, will partner current team-mate Maverick Vinales for the next two seasons, the Spaniard having already signed a new contract covering 2019 and '20. Speaking in Qatar, where

he finished third, Rossi explained a desire to avoid a Michael Schumacher-style comeback in future was key to his decision to keep racing. "I saw a lot of great riders and also drivers stop at the maximum of their career, like Schumacher, also [Max] Biaggi or Troy Bayliss," he said.

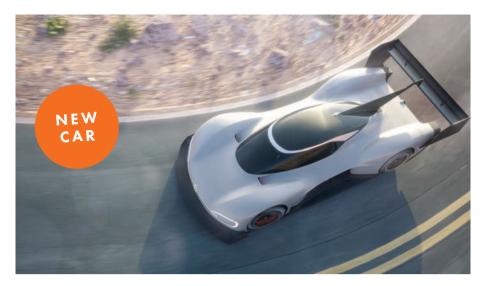
"Schumacher and Bayliss came back [after retiring].

So I decided I will race to the end. I don't want to think in the future, 'Maybe I can do another two seasons.'"

With the factory Yamaha team's line-up fixed, Tech3 star Johann Zarco has been linked to a switch to the works Honda team.

The Frenchman has emerged as an option to replace Dani Pedrosa, but Suzuki and KTM are also both known to be keen.





PIKES PEAK Volkswagen has revealed its first non-customer race car since 2016... meet the snappily named I.D. R Pikes Peak. This is the all-electric, four-wheel-drive prototype that Romain Dumas will drive in pursuit of the Pikes Peak Hillclimb electric record on June 24 this year.

Pulcini leads way at Jerez

GP3 SERIES

Leonardo Pulcini topped the second GP3 Series pre-season test of 2018 with Campos Racing at Jerez last week.

The Italian (below), seventh in the 2017 standings with Arden International, set the best time in the afternoon running on the second and final day.

Anthoine Hubert, the pacesetter from the opening test, was second overall this time with ART Grand Prix, although he set the best time of the first day during the afternoon session. Pedro Piquet, who is yet to have any deal announced for this season, was third with Trident.

Wet weather hit both mornings of the test, although the track dried out enough for quick times to be set. Trident's Alessio Lorandi was fastest on the first morning, with Ferrari junior Callum Ilott quickest on the second.

"Overall it was positive," said ART driver llott, who was seventh across the two days. "Pace was good and we got through most of our programme. The mixed weather conditions made for an unusual test but the track felt grippy in the wet."

Jenzer Motorsport's David Beckmann, 17th fastest overall of the 19 runners, completed 174 laps, the most of any driver. GARY WATKINS

TOP 1 O TIMES				
POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME		
1	Leonardo Pulcini (Campos)	1m30.255s		
2	Anthoine Hubert (ART)	1m30.449s		
3	Pedro Piquet (Trident)	1m30.463s		
4	Dorian Boccolacci (MP)	1m30.471s		
5	Jake Hughes (ART)	1m30.500s		
6	Tatiana Calderon (Jenzer)	1m30.531s		
7	Callum Ilott (ART)	1m30.597s		
8	Giuliano Alesi (Trident)	1m30.621s		
9	Niko Kari (MP)	1m30.630s		
10	Alessio Lorandi (Trident)	1m30.677s		



IN THE HEADLINES

WEC INTERLAGOS RETURN

The World Endurance Championship will return to Interlagos on the 2019-20 schedule. A date at the beginning of the first WEC winter series is set to be announced today (Thursday) in Sao Paulo. Bruno Senna will act as an ambassador for the event.

DE VRIES TO RACE LMP2

McLaren Formula 1 protege and Formula 2 ace Nyck de Vries is to dovetail a World Endurance Championship programme with his single-seater commitments. De Vries will replace fellow diminutive Dutchman Jan Lammers in the Racing Team Nederland LMP2 Dallara after the Le Mans 24 Hours, in which the 61-year-old veteran will be making his 24th start before bowing out.

F3 GETS 24-CAR ENTRY

The Formula 3 European Championship has revealed a 24-car season entry list ahead of this week's first official two-day test at the Hungaroring. The latest driver signings are Venezuelan Sebastian Fernandez, a leading contender in Italian Formula 4, with Motopark; and Indian Ameya Vaidyanathan, who steps up from Euroformula Open with Carlin. German F4 racer Sophia Florsch tested privately last week with Van Amersfoort Racing, with that team's third entry currently listed as 'TBA'.

NIGHT RACES FOR DTM

The DTM will get its first night races this year on its visit to the Italian circuit of Misano. Each of the Saturday and Sunday races will take place at 10.20pm. For the first time in 17 years there will be no Red Bull-backed car on the grid, following Audi star Mattias Ekstrom's retirement and the decision to pull support from the BMW of Marco Wittmann.

STRAKKA'S MERC STARS

Strakka Racing has put together an all-star cast for its lead Blancpain Endurance Cup car this season. The switch to Mercedes means the marque's factory drivers Maximilian Buhk and Maxi Gotz will join Strakka regular Alvaro Parente. A Pirelli World Challenge clash means Parente will have to miss the Silverstone round, where he will be replaced by David Fumanelli. Strakka's pro-am AMG GT3 will be piloted by Lewis Williamson, Chris Buncombe and Nick Leventis.

YELLOLY TO SUPERCUP

German Porsche Carrera Cup runner-up Nick Yelloly has secured a graduation to the marque's F1-supporting Supercup this season. The West Midlander, a Force India F1 simulator driver, will race with Fach Auto Tech alongside versatile Dutchman Jaap van Lagen and Christoph Langer.





F1 AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



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UK START TIMES FRIDAY FP1 0100 FP2 0500

HARD

SATURDAY FP3 0300 QUALIFYING 0600

SUNDAY RACE 0610 LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1 BBC RADIO 5 LIVE 0530 HIGHLIGHTS ON CHANNEL 4 RACE SUNDAY 1430

SUPERHARD



AVAILABLE



TYRE ALLOCATION





WFT

LENGTH 3.295 miles

NUMBER OF LAPS 58

2017 POLE POSITION Lewis Hamilton 1m22.188s

POLE LAP RECORD Lewis Hamilton 1m22.188s (2017)

RACE LAP RECORD Michael Schumacher 1m24.125s (2004)

PREVIOUS WINNERS

2017	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2016	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Kimi Raikkonen	Lotus
2012	Jenson Button	McLaren
2011	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2010	Jenson Button	McLaren
2009	Jenson Button	Brawn
2008	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren



AVAILABLE

AVAILABLE



THEMES TO WATCH

MERCEDES VS FERRARI VS RED BULL

The Mercedes W09 looked ominous in testing, but pure pace is still unknown. Ferrari topped the times, but still has concerns over its new car. The Red Bull chassis impressed Lewis Hamilton, but the Renault engine is always a question mark. Melbourne should begin to offer definitive answers this weekend.

McLAREN'S NEW DAWN WITH RENAULT

After three nightmare seasons with Honda, McLaren begins again with Renault. The car was unreliable in testing, but decently quick, and there's a big upgrade planned for Australia. Time to see how good that chassis really is.

WILL HAAS STUN THE MIDFIELD RUNNERS?

Renault should be on top of this pile, but Kevin Magnussen raised Hamilton's eyebrows with rapid pace in testing, and Haas went well in Australia last season, so F1's minnow could spring an early surprise.

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Specific Gravity	0.730
RON	101
MON	90
Reid Vapour Pressure, psi	9
Distillation, °C	
Initial Boiling Point	38
E70, % volume	40
E100, % volume	65
E150, % volume	95
Final Boiling Point	180
Lead, g/l	0.10
Colour	Light Blue
Oxygen, Wt. %	1.8





Specific Gravity	0.743
RON	102
MON	90
Reid Vapour Pressure, psi	9
Distillation, °C	
Initial boiling point	33
E70 °C, % volume	31
E100 °C, % volume	49
E150 °C,% volume	100
Final Boiling Point	124
Unleaded	
Colour	Clear
Oxygen, Wt. %	3.7

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RISE AND FALL

It's said that all political careers end in failure, and while that may not be true of elite sportspeople, every champion has to hand over the baton at some point

EDD STRAW

istory bestows on us perspective; it permits us to slice and dice events into neat and easily labelled compartments. The history of grand prix racing is no exception, wafting gracefully from clearly defined era to clearly defined era.

But that perspective also irons out the kinks, the blemishes, the mucky reality that makes what seems starkly obvious in retrospect invisible in real time.

No matter how great things seem to be for Lewis Hamilton at present — detailed analysis of pre-season testing having set him up to be the world championship favourite yet again — there will be a time when he must face down the forces of history. And it could happen this year.

Right now, there seems no end to the Hamilton era. Five, six — even the magic seven — titles seem inevitable. But there can never be certainty, because if there's one thing we can be sure of it's that, if the times are not a-changing now, they will be very soon. Grand prix racing's eras are generally short and, for the victors, very sweet. Admittedly, there are some sketchy transitions, but you can bound back almost a quarter of a century in a few easy steps — through the Hamilton/

"GOOD AS HAMILTON IS, HE IS NOT HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE HIS COMPETITION"

Mercedes era, the Sebastian Vettel/Red Bull era and the Michael Schumacher era (briefly interrupted by the Fernando Alonso era that never quite came to pass).

This connects us to one of the most sudden and horrific transitions of all, that fateful day on May 11994 when the Ayrton Senna era came to a tragic end and Schumacher picked up the baton. Before that day, Senna was going to dominate the mid-1990s. History blindsides the best of us.

Hamilton has only recently turned 33 and, with a new Mercedes deal supposedly imminent, he's at the top of his game — so why shouldn't he stay on top? Well, partly because he's dependent on the machinery at his disposal still being up to it. And while Mercedes looked strong pre-season, Red Bull and Ferrari could both pose a threat.

But there's a more important factor – good as Hamilton is, he is not head and shoulders above his competition.

It's impossible for any driver to attain that status in the way that it was in, say, Juan Manuel Fangio's time. Standards are simply too high, the differences too small.

Which brings us to Max Verstappen. The cliche that age is but a number is a tired one, but when it comes to era-change narratives it's irresistible. Verstappen is the young, wild upstart who is shaking up grand prix racing – just as Hamilton himself was a decade ago.

Hamilton is now the elder statesman, his place among the all-time greats guaranteed. He's still got plenty of years left in him, but he's in the age range when era-defining drivers have a habit of handing over to the next generation. It takes a combination of luck, circumstances, ability and sheer determination to hang on.

Jim Clark was 32 when he died in 1968, Alain Prost was 33 when Ayrton Senna joined him at McLaren in 1988, Jackie Stewart quit at 34 and Senna lost his life at the same age, while Michael Schumacher was 36 when he was toppled by Fernando Alonso. You don't always get to relinquish your position as gracefully as Stewart, even without tragedy intervening.

If Verstappen is able to fight for the drivers' championship this year, it will be a gruelling test for both him and Hamilton. Hamilton has never come up against a driver quite like Verstappen on equal terms – he is something different. As for Verstappen, how does a driver barely out of his teens, with three grand prix victories to his name, find a way to beat a foe who has achieved so much?

This could set the stage for a season for the ages, especially if the Mercedes has the edge on qualifying pace and the Red Bull on race pace. This would challenge Verstappen to reverse a track-position disadvantage and set up a stunning battle.

As for Hamilton, it will be a test of his desire. No driver has infinite reserves of that, and it's one of the key factors in how long an era lasts. Hamilton could stay at the top of his game for five or more years — if he can keep drawing from that well.

Hamilton would love to see off Verstappen in a straight fight. If Verstappen does go on to become the next era-defining driver, that's probably the last box Hamilton can tick in the list of greatness. Hamilton will eventually have to take this challenge on, whether it's this year or beyond.

Then there are the wild cards. If Daniel Ricciardo, Sebastian Vettel, Kimi Raikkonen, Valtteri Bottas or even Fernando Alonso have the car, they too have every motivation to grasp for Hamilton's crown. That's the thing with sport – it is unpredictable and all empires eventually fall.

The only question is how long the emperor can keep the inevitable at bay. $\ensuremath{\mathcal{W}}$



IN WITH THE OLD

The FIA's new vision for F3 has taken it onto the F1 support bill with spec cars. But the existing machines could race on at DTM events, and that would boost the sport

MARCUS SIMMONS

he recent announcement from the FIA World Motor Sport Council that its revampedfor-2019 Formula 3 category will be promoted by the Formula 1 Group – and therefore take a place on the F1 support package – came as a

surprise to no one. Well, the news didn't, but the timing did, as one F3 team boss said. "The first we knew about it was when we read it on your website!"he exclaimed.

Ever since the FIA concluded its deal 12 months ago with GP2/GP3 Series organiser Bruno Michel for his flagship GP2 category to be redubbed Formula 2, the F3/GP3 third tier has been the subject of much speculation. And it still isn't going away even in the wake of the latest news.

To recap, at the F3 European Championship's Hungaroring round last June, the teams met with DTM chairman Gerhard Berger to discuss whether the current F3 cars could race on in a DTM-supporting series, should the new F3 be made into a spec formula and pushed onto the F1 bill. At the Norisring a couple of weeks later, Berger expanded on this vision to Autosport, telling us that it could readopt the old F3 Euro Series name (used from 2003-12) as German motorsport's governing body

"MICHEL HAS WON THE WAR. THE NEW F3 IS EFFECTIVELY GP3 IN ALL BUT NAME"

owns the rights to this. By the late summer Berger had backed off on this plan, since the existing F3 teams had pledged their commitment to the new FIA spec-car vision for their category.

Now it seems that some of those are beginning to regret the prospect of losing 'traditional'F3 for good, like Brexit voters beginning to realise the utopian vision of the future they'd been sold was built on quicksand. The new International F3 will no doubt be a fantastic series, with the cream of the level's teams and young talent. But Walter Mertes, whose Formel 3 Vermarktungs subsidiary of the DTM-promoting ITR has organised the F3 European Championship for the FIA since 2013, has been keeping the flame alive for 'old-school'F3. Meetings were held by the ITR board last week, where the matter was discussed, and Mertes and Berger will meet with the FIA before the end of this month.

Noises have been emerging to the effect that Mertes's

company would try to get FIA blessing for its series to move under the governing body's new Regional Formula 3 umbrella, which, like the new F1-supporting International F3, is for spec cars. This may be feasible on the chassis and engine front. All the chassis are Dallaras anyway, even though theoretically there is open competition. The current engine suppliers to European F3 are Mercedes and Volkswagen. With Merc pulling out of the DTM at the end of this year, presumably any continuation in F3 would only make sense on a commercial basis rather than for any marketing reasons. VW announced last week that it would cease F3 involvement at the end of this year, but its current engine is effectively a Spiess with a VW badge plonked on it, so all that needs to be done there is a swift logo change. The big sticking point could be the car's lack of a halo - Dallara F3 project leader Jos Claes told me last week that there is no way that the current car could have a halo fitted. But then again, as one team hinted, the only difference between being inside or outside the Regional F3 concept would likely be F1 superlicence points.

The other question is costs, with a current F3 budget in the region of €800,000. Claes has been around F3 for a long time, and believes this can be lowered by restricting the personnel working on the cars; a reduction from 10 rounds to eight; promotion of private testing instead of official tests, where teams can run at their local circuit instead of travelling around Europe; and keeping the cars as close to standard as possible. "That [standard cars] works fine in Euroformula Open,"he points out. "You can sign with any team for €450,000."

There is little doubt that, for now, Michel's company has won the war he declared on F3 with the instigation of GP3 in 2010 after all, the new F3 is effectively GP3 in all but name. Dallara, says Claes, is designing an International F3 car although the decision as to who wins the tender is "not in our hands at all - it's between the FIA and Bruno Michel/Liberty Media".

But then there's the question, a few years down the line, as to how this ladder — as opposed to a pyramid — will affect F2. At present the FIA has a massive pyramid base, with 13 Formula 4 championships, and is succeeding in expanding the next level up: Regional F3. But then it becomes a ladder: the following step, International F3, will be the only feeder into F2. What happens to F2 when only a handful move up each year from International F3, and those from F2 move into F1, sportscars or tin-tops? F2 needs a pyramid below it, the one that currently numbers around 45 drivers across Euro F3 and GP3. With a maximum of 30 in International F3 — and who's to say this won't slip to 25, then 20 in coming years? — F2 could be hugely thin on numbers in a few years'time. That is why F2 needs at least two categories side by side below, or face its equivalent of a cliff-edge, no-deal Brexit. *#*



Would it not be safer, and more entertaining, if the mechanics were not allowed into the pitlane until the car had come to a complete halt?

SIMON ROFFEY

Pitstop scramble would make a safer spectacle

I have an idea to improve the safety, spectacle and jeopardy of a pitstop in Formula 1. At the moment, you have a car travelling at 50mph (80km/h) towards a group of 20 people. Down the years there have been incidents of mechanics being hit, and injured.

Would it not be safer, and more entertaining, if the mechanics (right) were not allowed into the pitlane until the car has come to a complete halt? This would also introduce the possibility of mistakes, to add to the drama of the race.

Simon Roffey Witney, Oxfordshire

Learn lessons from IndyCar's aero changes

By adopting a new aero kit with fewer flaps, fins and elements and producing (less) downforce through ground effect, IndyCar transformed the racing at St Petersburg. The cars are more nimble, braking distances are greater and chicanes can't be taken flat. The drivers have to work harder and even experienced drivers made errors.

In consequence, the result was unpredictable, making the show more exciting. This is the kind of thing we need in F1 to bring back the fans. Ross and co would be well advised to see what's going on over 'the pond' when formulating the 2021 regs. **Steve Tan**

Runcorn, Cheshire

Here's who should be behind the screen...

If F1 does eventually see sense and starts looking at the shield option instead of the halo, might I humbly suggest that they ask Gordon Murray to design it?

Paul Thwaites Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

Automated warning systems are a hard sell

I was disappointed to see the article by Lucas di Grassi about a 'case' for automated warning systems in the March 1 issue's Engineering supplement. Most if not all of what he suggests is required is already available from companies such as the one



I represent in Europe, Alitrax, or DZ from Italy, EM or Mylaps. Integration of in-car warnings and feedback to race control, CCTV, timing and lights systems are well developed if not all fully tested as yet. The problem is not availability, it is, as always, cost. Circuits other than F1 are loath to spend money they do not have, and as yet the FIA or local ASNs have not mandated their use, so selling these safety and track operation systems is proving difficult. **Bob Barnard**

Byemail

Is Autosport losing a part of its essence?

While I understand Stephen Lickorish's point in his column (March 15), I don't fully agree with Autosport's response. It has always been a magazine of record, and although results may be available elsewhere online, who is to say they will still be online in future, and how to find out that the meeting even took place so that you know where to look? That was what you would dig out old Autosports for, as the bigger stuff can easily be found online. You are losing a piece of Autosport's distinctiveness. **Darren Galpin Bristol**

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RED BULL • ALONSO AT TOYOTA



"THE TEAM HAS NEVER LOST ITS COMPETITIVE DESIRE AND EDGE. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE IT RISES AGAIN"

Red Bull won four consecutive world championships in the V8 era but has been a bit-part player since 2014. Can the team deliver on its ambition now? JONATHAN NOBLE

CHRISTIAN HORNER COULD BE FORGIVEN

FOR THINKING THAT FORMULA 1 HAS BEEN A BIT OF A BROKEN RECORD

FOR RED BULL DURING THE TURBO HYBRID ERA.

THIS IS YET another season in which many observers have predicted that Horner's team will emerge as the greatest threat to Mercedes. But despite the obvious strengths of Red Bull's young, ambitious driver line-up and technical strength in depth, questions remain about the engine.

While those fundamentals have not changed ahead of the latest campaign, singling out one factor for underperformance can lead a team to complacency and folly. Formula 1 is a constantly changing sport that demands continuous evolution — and restless self-examination. It would have been very easy for Red Bull to carry on blaming Renault for its competitive shortfalls, even in the face of evidence that the team itself had authored some of its own troubles, particularly last season.

Instead it has carefully revised many of its behind-the-scenes processes and structures with a view to starting its 2018 F1 campaign in better shape than it has in seasons immediately past.

"You can feel within the team there is an air of ambition and, despite difficulties, the team has never lost its competitive desire and edge," Horner tells Autosport. "It's only a matter of time before it rises again."

While Horner cites 2015's annus horribilis with Renault – during which their partnership nearly dissolved entirely – as the lowest point most recently, last year indubitably ran it close in terms of disappointment, even though the team notched up three wins. The simple fact is that Red Bull failed to capitalise on a new package of technical rules that made aerodynamics a performance differentiator once again; it began the season with a half-baked offering that enabled Ferrari to take on the mantle of being Mercedes' closest competitor.

But Red Bull has learned from what went wrong. And the foundations for the performance step that the team appears to have made with its current RB14 can be found in what it did to address those errors.

Windtunnel-calibration issues relating to the increased dimensions of the car and tyres (factors other teams also fell foul of) contributed to the competitive drift, but there were other factors holding development back. Adrian Newey's work on the Aston Martin Valkyrie hypercar meant he was not as focused on the F1 project as he could have been. Additionally, the team exacerbated the consequences of this disarray by leaving the release of its 2017 design as late as possible, meaning the reality of its underperformance hit home too late. It took it until the Hungarian Grand Prix in July to get its campaign back on track.

These fundamental issues have been addressed through circumstance and a change of direction this year. Newey's work on the Valkyrie project has wound down for now, meaning he is more available to throw his input into F1. But you could argue that the team's dependence on Newey makes it vulnerable, so it has undergone a reshuffle in which chief engineer (performance) Pierre Wache has taken the new role of technical director. This should help give the team better internal structures and a clearer decision-making process that is not so reliant on Newey.

"It just maximises the benefit of it [Newey's input] I would say, and helps to coordinate it," says Horner. "Adrian has been very engaged over the winter because he has enjoyed the development strand that they have hit upon. He has enjoyed within this set of regulations. It's offered him some creativity — the hours he has put in have been impressive."

Beyond the staffing changes, Red Bull also altered its approach to car delivery, bringing forward the RB14's release date so it could factor in \gg







a shakedown (via a filming day), unlike the brinksmanship of recent years when the paint was barely dry as testing began. Passing its crash tests the first time this year showed that Red Bull's risk management was better, and that it wasn't letting itself get compromised by a blind pursuit of performance. Here, it seems, was a team willing to accept that it might have been too aggressive in chasing marginal gains.

"I think it was just a question of philosophy," says Horner. "It served us very well in previous years, particularly in the V8 era, but now with the limitation of track running that you have, and the reliability that is required, it's crucial to be out there knocking 100 laps from day one."

Despite an early hiccup with the RB14 – Daniel Ricciardo had a minor off during that wet filming day at Silverstone – Red Bull's new approach appears to have paid off. It's customary for teams and drivers to be noncommittal on the record during testing, but the tone of the comments from both Ricciardo and Max Verstappen in Barcelona suggested they felt bullish about the car's prospects, and Horner too is pretty content with where things are at based on GPS data from testing. "I think it's difficult to draw too many conclusions, but I don't think we give anything away in any of the corners we looked at in Barcelona," he says. "And if you went out and had a look on the circuit it was evident that the car looks well poised. It's a well-balanced car, and you can see it is instilling confidence in the drivers. Going into Melbourne we feel as well prepared as we have ever been — and certainly within the V6 era. And I think the RB14 is the basis of a very good chassis.

"There is a real optimism about this car. It responds well. It's giving the drivers good feedback and it's a great starting point as we go into the season. We know where our deficiencies are to our opponents, and we just have to compensate in other areas."

That which he alludes to in his final sentence may again prove to be the defining factor in Red Bull's season. Over the course of 21 races the team's chances of stringing together a title challenge against the sheer maturity of the Mercedes package depend on Renault — in a season in which drivers will only have access to three rather than four power units before incurring penalties. Although it's hard to be definitive at this stage



about how well the manufacturers have met the durability challenge, the indications are that Renault and Ferrari have at least maintained their levels of performance from 2017, while Mercedes has unlocked more horsepower. That means Red Bull must be at the top of its chassis game.

Is the RB14 good enough for it to overcome any potential power deficit? Horner thinks so for the occasional race, but he is sceptical about being able to do that everywhere.

"Over a season I don't think so," he says. "But there will be some circuits where we will be stronger than others, and our focus is on dealing with what we can control, maximising our own performance, our own reliability, and grabbing opportunities when they present themselves."

The engine situation could be much more critical this year though, since the cars will be heavier on account of the halo, and grippier on account of tyre and aerodynamic development. That potentially means more time on the throttle and heavier fuel consumption.

The benefits Mercedes has – more power, qualifying engine modes and better fuel efficiency – add up a triple whammy that is going to be >>>



WILL MCLAREN BE IN NO-MAN'S LAND?

When Fernando Alonso suddenly went quickest of all at the end of pre-season testing, displacing Sebastian Vettel, there was a collective dropping of jaws. Is the new McLaren really that fast? The shockwave ran its course quickly; it turned out that Alonso had cut the final chicane to pass Charles Leclerc's Sauber, so that time was scrubbed and he dropped to second-fastest, 0.8 seconds slower than the Ferrari.

McLaren will not want the narrative of reality falling way short of appearances to become the theme of its 2018. It is currently faced with the prospect of occupying the no-man's land between the top three and the midfield; not exactly what McLaren was promising last season, when it bragged about having the best car.

McLaren's MCL33, featuring Renault power after three angst-riddled Honda years, will be modelling a more aggressive aero package in Australia. But exactly how much of a step up its race-spec challenger is from the version it committed to testing is unknown.

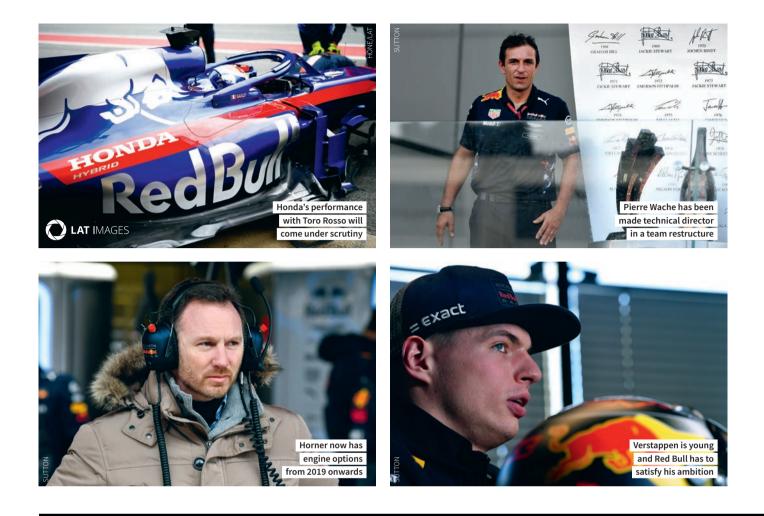
If McLaren slips up, or its upgrades fail to achieve the anticipated level of performance, it will be ruthlessly exposed by a host of teams looking to make their own escape from the "MCLAREN WILL NOT WANT THE NARRATIVE OF REALITY FALLING SHORT OF APPEARANCE TO BECOME THE THEME OF ITS 2018"

midfield. The works Renault squad is threatening another significant step forward – there is ample motivation at Team Enstone and plenty of confidence in its product, along with two gifted and podium-hungry drivers: Nico Hulkenberg and Carlos Sainz Jr.

Others look less convincing. 2017 best-of-the-rest Force India is (like McLaren) only rolling out its race package for the first time in Melbourne, while Williams looked a little lost in testing and suffered some handling imbalances that set it back. There's little reason to think the Honda in the back of the Toro Rosso will not be the fourth-best engine on the grid, while Sauber is still getting to grips with an all-new chassis concept that, at time, looked a pig to handle in testing.

That could open the door for Haas to be best of the rest, in Melbourne at least. Even Lewis Hamilton noted the team's "surprise" performance in testing.

SCOTT MITCHELL



FERRARI AND MERCEDES

STANDING IN RED BULL'S WAY

Ferrari is the 'low-hanging fruit' for Red Bull. Over the balance of the season Ferrari had the secondquickest car in 2017 and is therefore the most obvious target, and may have made itself more vulnerable by moving towards Mercedes' long-wheelbase design.

Sebastian Vettel has been on the defensive. When he went quickest on the penultimate day of testing he played down Ferrari's pace, then a few days later he suggested Mercedes' (impressive) long-run pace was misleading because it only used one tyre compound during race simulations, something that would be illegal in races. Is this Vettel in 'smokeand-mirrors' mode? It is clear that Ferrari is lacking compared with Mercedes over a race distance. Mercedes found out last year that a long-wheelbase car is tricky to get the most out of at every circuit, in every condition, and now Ferrari has gone in that direction it's lost its ace card: consistency and a bigger operating window as a trade-off for a lower overall peak.

Ferrari needs what it doesn't have: more time to

understand its new car. It may even have to fight to be in front of Red Bull in Australia. And if Red Bull can vault the Prancing Horse, can it topple the Silver Arrows?

That will be a lot harder. Valtteri Bottas talks of



Mercedes having to "guess" less going to Melbourne than in 2017, which is ominous given it was on pole there last year and only narrowly beaten by Ferrari in the race.

Mercedes does not know its ultimate one-lap pace since it focused on longer runs on medium and soft tyres in testing. But, as Bottas put it, at its most basic level bolting on grippier tyres will make the car better, not worse.

There is an element of doubt, since testing was accomplished on a cold, resurfaced, high-energy circuit. But Mercedes has an indication that the 'diva' qualities of the W08 have been dialled out. SCOTT MITCHELL hard to overcome. If Red Bull finds itself unable to get on the front row on Saturday, then it's going to be tough pulling things back on Sunday.

"Of course if they have 0.3-0.4 seconds up their sleeve in qualifying, that becomes extremely difficult to compete with — and it compromises you on a Sunday," adds Horner. "So we've just got to do the best we can. We have always been sharp and aggressive with race strategy and, as I say, try to make the most of opportunities that present themselves."

The fuel-consumption issue is a factor even at tracks where fuel saving is not necessary. Mercedes' efficiency advantage means that at venues where fuel management is not an issue for its rivals, it can underfill. Red Bull puts that figure at 10-15kg for some circuits.

"For every 10kg less that you carry, it's 0.35s per lap," says Horner. "So if you add that up over 50-70 laps, it is a significant amount. It's something that we have to manage. If you can get into a clear-air situation, it's far easier to control and dictate a race from the front than it is from an attacking position. But then, our drivers' ability on the first laps is what we are going to be depending on as well. Starts, first laps, and drivers getting their elbows out."

This will be the fifth year in which Red Bull has needed Renault to up its game in order to compete with Mercedes consistently. It's been a challenging journey for both; a partnership that won four consecutive world championships together in the V8 era has come close to divorce on more than one occasion — and that may yet come to pass.

They have remained together so far, but what's different this season is that for the first time since Red Bull emerged as a winning force in F1, it will have a clear choice of engines for the following season, as it keeps a watching brief on Honda's progress with Toro Rosso. While six months ago many would have scoffed at a scenario in which Red Bull could be forced to take Honda engines in 2019, the situation is very different now.

Honda's reliability in pre-season testing stood in stark contrast to the serial breakdowns of early 2017. Power, too, is thought to be better than before — perhaps just 15hbp shy of Renault. The development path the two companies take in the coming months will have consequences.

"The most important thing for us is having the most competitive package going forward," says Horner about the opportunity that may be about to present itself. "We want to be in a position to continue to close the gap to the teams ahead and get onto the front foot. Obviously we are in a position for the first time in probably 10 years where we have a choice moving forwards. And that is a position that we have not been in for a long, long time. There has either been a veto or a block or a nondesire from supplier to supply.

"I think they [Honda] have made very good ground over the winter. We have a front-row seat to see how that product is developing and performing with Toro Rosso. And it will all come down to performance. We want the most performant engine in the back of the car."

Since engine performance is such a dominant factor in this rules cycle, Horner is in no doubt about how important it is for his team to get that final box ticked – and to change Red Bull's narrative in the hybrid era.

"I think if there was an equivalence of power then we would have been right there,"he says. "We could have added to those four world titles already – and I think that is our opponents' biggest fear."

But despite the ongoing frustrations of its engine situation, Red Bull is not going to bide its time until it can get even in the horsepower stakes. F1 never stands still, and what may be true of performance from testing may not necessarily be the case in Australia. There is talk of a major Red Bull update coming for Melbourne, something that left Lewis Hamilton particularly wary about Mercedes'own chances.

"Lewis is showing his experience and he is a wily character," smiles Horner. "It's obvious that he is trying to move the spotlight away from Mercedes. But no doubt about it, Mercedes go into the first race as very much the favourites. They are the reigning champions of four years. It's total domination and it looks like they have a pretty decent car.

"How we will fare compared with that? I don't know. But we will never give up. We are hardened competitors, and there is a determination that runs through this entire team in terms of wanting to get back into a winning position — and a consistent winning position." "



The superstar racing junkie

Fernando Alonso's bid on the Le Mans 24 Hours and WEC with Toyota is about much more than gunning for motorsport's triple crown. It's because he's passionate about racing

GARY WATKINS

Could Fernando Alonso really have dropped out of Formula 1 to focus on his bid for the unofficial triple crown of motorsport? Yes he could, because he's admitted as much. Is he trying to secure a motorsport legacy that his present tally of two F1 world titles is unlikely to give him? He's definitely hinted at that one. But more than anything, the Spaniard's assault on the 2018-19 World Endurance Championship with Toyota has been fired by passion.

Alonso's passion for motorsport is something that's easy to overlook. It explains why he's never stopped karting on free weekends away from the F1 paddock. He also has a passion for the Le Mans 24 Hours, a race he'll get to contest twice courtesy of his deal with the Japanese manufacturer for the so-called 'superseason'.

Le Mans is an event Alonso knows all about. One of his best friends is long-time Corvette Racing man Antonio Garcia, a regular on the sportscar scene since the early 2000s and a veteran of 12 Le Mans starts, with three class victories in the big race to his name. They came up through the karting ranks together and competed against each other in the Open Fortuna by Nissan single-seater series in 1999. That was the year Alonso won the title; Garcia won it the following season.

"We've known each other for maybe 30 years," explains Alonso. "I follow him [at Le Mans] every time and we talk a lot. To race with him is something I've wanted for a long time. When we were five or six years old we raced together, and now at 37 I will race together with him again."

His interest in doing Le Mans came long before he hit upon the idea of trying to become only the second driver after Graham Hill to triumph in the Monaco Grand Prix, Le Mans and the Indianapolis 500. He's been sniffing around the race for some time. Longer than we all imagined, as it turns out.

It pre-dates his visit to the blue-riband WEC round in 2014, when he waved off the cars at the start of the green-flag lap in the final year of his five-season stint with Ferrari. He admits that he could, in fact, have ended up racing at Le Mans some time ago. "I was close on a couple of occasions when I was at Ferrari, but Ferrari was not very keen on sharing me with another brand," admits Alonso. "When I joined McLaren, I was very, very close, but in the end it didn't happen."

That's a reference to the deal that was in the works for Alonso to join Porsche when it expanded — temporarily as it turned out — its Le Mans assault to three cars in 2015. Alonso doesn't spill the beans on exactly what happened, but McLaren's then-engine supplier Honda is reputed to have stood in the way of him taking a seat in the extra 919 Hybrid fielded by the German manufacturer in the French enduro. Honda didn't want to share him, either. Now his F1 employer is happy to do so. McLaren was instrumental, of course, in his Indy 500 assault in its (traditional orange) colours with the Andretti Autosport squad last May as it entered into its next round of contract negotiations with its star driver. A full campaign in the WEC became viable because there will be just five WEC rounds in 2018 as the championship transitions to a winter-series format for 2019-20.

"I spoke to Toyota about the possibility of Le Mans, but they were only running two cars [down from last year's three]," explains Alonso. "There was no possibility to replace one guy for only one or two races; they were more in the way of the full superseason. I was thinking of that idea anyway, so we agreed that it was the best solution."

It's a solution that will result in Alonso contesting no fewer than 26 races this season. That includes his sportscar debut back in January with the United Autosports squad co-owned by his F1 boss, Zak Brown, at the Daytona 24 Hours. Then there's the official Le Mans test two weeks before the race. So in Alonso's words that's

"I WAS CLOSE A COUPLE OF TIMES, BUT FERRARI WAS NOT KEEN TO SHARE ME WITH ANOTHER BRAND"

"27 Sundays" that he'll be busy this year, though of course his WEC debut at Spa in early May will come on a Saturday.

It would have been 26 'Sundays', but the WEC bent over backwards for Alonso and Toyota in reshuffling its calendar to avoid a clash between its Fuji round and the US Grand Prix at Austin in October. That means he will be on duty in his McLaren-Renault MCL33 and the #8 Toyota TS050 HYBRID alongside Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima on eight weekends out of nine between September and November. There's also a run of seven straight events, including the Le Mans test, in the summer.

But Alonso is keen to point out that his appearances in Nomex in front of the race-going public represent only the tip of the iceberg of his forthcoming schedule. "Everyone is talking about the races because the calendars are public, but more time consuming – and more energy consuming – will be the marketing events with the F1 team, the commitments with personal sponsors and the all the media activities," he says. "Closing the visor and »



racing will be the easiest part of the year."

Alonso admits that he is already in energy-conservation mode. He wants to ensure that his batteries are still fully charged when he hits that run of races at the end of the year. "Even now if I have two days free between Barcelona 1 and 2, I will be at home," said Alonso, talking in the week ahead of the first of the four-day pre-season F1 tests in February. "I will do my home training there, I will jump on the bicycle with friends and visit my family. Then I will go back to Barcelona."

The year ahead has been planned with military precision: "I know every single flight I will take in the year. I know where I will be and what I will be doing on every single day."

He will arrive at Le Mans well-prepared, much better-prepared than when he pitched up at Indy last May in a Dallara-Honda DW12. Alonso is scheduled to take part in each of Toyota's three endurance simulations ahead of the start of the season, but his preparations had already begun before he joined his Toyota team-mates in the first of those tests at Motorland Aragon in February.

His appearance in one of United's Ligier-Gibson JSP217s at Daytona, the opening round of the IMSA SportsCar Championship, was all about getting some sportscar racing experience as he geared up for his WEC campaign. We all knew it, but he couldn't really say it. Toyota, of course, had yet to confirm its participation in the WEC superseason when his United appearance was announced, let alone confirmed its driver line-up.

"The Daytona experience was preparation for this," he says. "This [the Toyota deal] was not announced at that point, so I couldn't talk too much. But in reality Daytona was preparation for the WEC superseason."

And before that he turned out in some 24-hour kart races: "I wanted to prepare for the Daytona 24 Hours to have some traffic management and experience of driver changes. I am preparing for Le Mans much deeper than I did for Indy."

He also needs, he admits, to learn how "to be able to switch and get up to speed in two or three laps in one or the other series". Asked if switching back and forth from an F1 to an LMP1 is going to be a problem, he curtly suggests it is a



"challenge" rather than a problem. "If I commit to the programme," he says, "it is because I think it is possible."

Alonso's Toyota deal will give him two bites at the Le Mans cherry, presuming there is no bizarre F1 scheduling for 2019. That's two giant-sized bites, of course, given that the team faces no factory opposition over the WEC superseason.

What happens should he secure a second leg of the triple crown with a Le Mans victory in either 2018 or '19 – or perhaps both! – isn't clear. He insists that there is no masterplan for now and he has set no timescale for the fulfilment of his ambitions on the triple crown.

"If we are in that position, it will be a nice position to be in, but right now I don't have any plan," he says, pointing out that his Indy debut in 2017 "wasn't in the plan" either. "Last year the Indy experience – feeling competitive there and being happy there – opened my eyes. I know that I could have another chance in the future and hopefully be competitive again."

But there is another target: "I don't want to win only Le Mans; I want to be World Endurance champion." **#**





"IT'S SO DIFFERENT AND SO FRIENDLY"

FERNANDO ALONSO HAS admitted that he's had a lot to learn since embarking on his sportscar adventure. He got his first taste of an LMP1 car when he drove the Toyota TS050 HYBRID at the inappropriately named - at least in his case - World Endurance Championship rookie test in Bahrain last November. He reckons that the United Autosports Ligier LMP2 he sampled for the first time the week after felt "more comfortable".

"At Bahrain there were many new things that were a bit strange and it was a big challenge," he says. "Then I jumped into the LMP2 for a test. It's more of a normal car without the hybrid systems and the fuel cuts. But every time I jump in the Toyota now, I feel more comfortable.

"The car is giving

you different challenges and different feelings. The traction you get with these cars and their 1000bhp is amazing. That is impressive." The near-1000bhp

available when the twin

electric motors of the TS050 kick in takes some getting used to. But it's the four-wheel drive of an LMP1 car that Alonso describes as "probably the biggest difference" between the Toyota and the McLaren. Or, rather, the way it works to optimise performance.

"You rely on the front and rear motors knowing exactly what to do in the corner to optimise the acceleration," he explains at the Algarve circuit



during the second of Toyota's endurance simulations. "Here in the last corner, a blind corner at night, you are flat out. The car will do its best to get out of the corner. This requires confidence and a little bit of time."

There is another big difference between driving an F1 and P1 that has nothing to do with what happens out on the track. He's spending a lot more time with his fellow drivers than he's ever likely to do in the grand prix paddock.

"The atmosphere is so different and so friendly – so open and so nice," he says. "This is one of the best things I have found so far. It's different to F1, but it's not that you could take this philosophy there. It wouldn't work."



FORMULA E PUNTA DEL ESTE • SEBRING 12 HOURS GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING • WORLD OF SPORT



Vergne masters the sands of time

He was far from the finished Formula E article when he joined the series in 2014, but the Techeetah star drove a defensive masterclass in Uruguay ALEX KALINAUCKAS



THE TRANSFORMATION WAS seriously impressive. Three years and three months ago, Jean-Eric Vergne blazed onto the Formula E scene straight after losing his Toro Rosso Formula 1 drive and qualified on pole in Punta del Este.

On that day at the Uruguayan coastal circuit, his inexperience and rapid attacking took their toll – his energy consumption was much higher than eventual winner Sebastien Buemi even before a suspension issue forced him out.

What a difference 39 months makes. On FE's third visit to Punta del Este — forced upon it after the scheduled Sao Paulo race was cancelled — Vergne delivered a performance that was almost completely the reverse of his debut appearance.

Stalked for the entire race by a fired-up Lucas di Grassi, Vergne was under severe pressure. For lap after lap the gap ebbed and flowed between the pair, and for most of the 37 tours resolutely remained around 0.5 seconds. Di Grassi would close in through the high-speed chicanes that marked the track's return leg, and look to attack heading into the final right-left and then long double-turn final hairpin. But here was where Techeetah Renault star Vergne seemed to have the edge, streaking clear each time around and not allowing his Audi rival a look in the next big stop at Turn 1.

The breathless battle followed a messy qualifying session for all of the drivers who made it through to the final superpole shootout. Di Grassi escaped the first-group qualifying bunch — he'd been annoyed at being confined to the opening set for the fourth time in six races and having to set his time on a sandy circuit. But once into superpole he took the fastest time. Vergne, meanwhile, looked set to start fifth after clouting the barrier at the first chicane on his way to a mediocre lap time.

Then came the controversy. Di Grassi, Alex Lynn – who qualified second for Virgin Racing - and NIO's Oliver Turvey were all placed under investigation after clipping a tall orange bollard at the rapid Turns 14-15 chicane. In Lynn's case it had broken his front wing. After a lengthy examination, all three had their superpole times deleted for "not [respecting] the race director instructions" with regards to track limits. That should have put third-placed qualifier Mitch Evans on pole, but the New Zealander was himself demoted - rather further, to 16th - as his Jaguar was found to have incorrect weight distribution following a battery change between the first and second practice sessions.

Vergne, therefore, inherited pole and collected surely the three easiest points of his career. Di Grassi would line up alongside him, trailed by Lynn and Turvey – with Daniel Abt completing the top five.

Thanks to Vergne's brilliant defence – and it was majestic, despite the lack of up-front overtaking – the race boiled down



to who made it out of the first corner in the lead. And Vergne made it look easy, blasting away from pole to head di Grassi at the start of what would be an endless pursuit.

Their nailbiting battle raged either side of a safety car period, caused by Nick Heidfeld stopping his Mahindra on track at the second chicane during the early laps, and they pitted on lap 20 of 37. Vergne kept the lead throughout the car swaps, which were under renewed focus following a further FIA clarification on the issue that has rumbled on since the minimum pitstop time was removed last month in Santiago.

Di Grassi mounted a major attack approaching the final Turns 16-17 chicane on the out-lap, but Vergne fearlessly showed him to the outside and the Audi Sport driver had to rapidly get out of it to avoid sliding into the wall and out of the race.

Now over a second off the lead, di Grassi had to give chase all over again, which he gamely did, quickly reattaching himself to Vergne's gearbox. From there, di Grassi





gave it everything. He harried Vergne under braking at every opportunity and attacked the kerbs and chicanes for all he was worth, to the extent of whacking his orange rubber foe from earlier in the day at one stage.

But Vergne held firm, even brushing off light contact with di Grassi at the final corner with three laps to run, and a further clash at Turn 1 a few seconds later. In that instance, he swept over to defend his lead with a risk-laden determination rarely adopted by championship leaders, and he shot to the finish to win by 0.447s.

"He's really good at defending," said Techeetah's delighted and champagnesoaked team principal Mark Preston afterwards. "It doesn't even look like defending — it's really subtle; he knows exactly where to block. It's not crazy moves — just nicely done. It was nice that it was Lucas, of course, because he keeps it all clean — but at the same time aggressive. It was quite fun to watch."

Vergne himself was delighted with his performance – one where he'd also been able to shade di Grassi on energy use throughout both stints, only falling fractionally behind in the closing stages. What a difference 39 months makes.

But time and experience were not the only factors — this time he overcame intense, sustained pressure. "Winning the race today, in these conditions, against Lucas — one of the best drivers I've raced against — was really tough," explained Vergne. "I think I can handle pressure pretty well and today I proved to myself that I could. I didn't make a single mistake in the whole race and I'm really pleased because of that. It was probably the hardest [of his three FE victories], and probably the one I'm most happy with in terms of my driving, my whole race."

Audi team boss Allan McNish reckoned the race was "just about who got off the line and if there was a chance after the pitstops – track position was key", and di Grassi, although still furious about the "double standards" of the qualifying decision, had to pay tribute to his rival's meticulous defence.

"This track is really difficult to overtake on, especially if the guy in front just wants to defend," he said. "And JEV defended very well, so there was very little margin to attack. There was one time he did a small mistake coming into the last sector – I tried something and we ended up touching a little bit. We were super-close, but on a track like this with chicanes and brakings that move around – not straight-line braking – it's super-difficult to pass. I tried my best"

The Punta race was the first test of Audi's inverter fix, which had required a rehomologation of its power unit before the previous race in Mexico City, before appearing on the cars in Uruguay. "It wasn't a bad race," said McNish. "There's more to come from it — and now we've had two races consecutively with two cars without a [reliability] issue. So, that's been a positive."

But it could have been more for Audi, even if the win was ultimately beyond reach. Daniel Abt had worked his way up to third place by the car swaps, passing Turvey and then Lynn late in the first stint as Lynn struggled with "our limiting factor": energy management. Abt rejoined in third but was quickly, and unexpectedly, back in the pits because his seatbelts were "completely unbuckled in the car".

The FIA had already doubled-down on what was permissible during car swaps ahead of the race after clarity had been sought by the teams following Andre Lotterer clipping a mechanic's leg when accelerating out of his pitbox in Mexico. But the governing body was satisfied that Audi had done nothing untoward with Abt's belts and no action was taken for the incident, for which the German manufacturer still does not know the cause.

"I realised that my belts basically came loose under braking — all four," explained Abt, who eventually finished 14th. "In that situation what do you do? You risk your life or you come in — for me it's no choice. So, I came in, redid the belts, and then we lost too much to gain any points."

Third place ended up with Sam Bird after the Briton produced a battling display to rise from ninth on the grid. He made swift progress through the order and then passed Lynn in the pits, taking full advantage of \gg

Di Grassi's tricky Punta chicanery



Thanks to its beachside location and resulting lack of buildings, Punta del Este is a stunning street-circuit venue. The track layout resembles the Norisring, albeit with a multitude of tiny twists, big stops and tricky chicanes, which are particularly crucial to fast lap times.

"This track is super-specific," explained reigning champion Lucas di Grassi (above). "The chicanes are super – let's say they are not technical, they are just about how well you cut the kerbs and that defines, more or less, your lap time. So, you really try for it and things can go wrong, but it's a matter of risk taking."

That meant hitting the kerbs hard and straightlining the chicanes as much as possible to avoid losing momentum. But it came at price for some. In qualifying, Nico Prost, Nick Heidfeld and Nelson Piquet all came undone at the chicanes, with Prost's accident leaving onlooking team-mate Sebastien Buemi stunned.

And the chicanes created controversy too, with three of the superpole runners losing their times after making contact with a tall pylon that stood beyond the kerbs at Turn 15.

Di Grassi was particularly upset to lose pole, and felt the stewards had been unfair in punishing the high-profile superpole trio when he reckoned other drivers had got away with the same infraction in practice and group qualifying away from the cameras.

"I agree with the stewards doing their job, and I agree with the stewards delivering consistent stewarding," said Audi team boss Allan McNish when pressed about the subject. "And if they penalise one, they penalise them all. Now, I think there was obviously some difference in interpretation of track limits – and it was always going to be a problem here because of the type of chicanes, type of corners. It's pretty quick and if you misjudge it at all then you can quite easily get into that position – never mind if you're pushing. But you have to accept it."

IN THE HEADLINES



BIRD PODIUM FOR HHF Sam Bird dedicated his podium finish to journalist, broadcaster and former Autosport man Henry Hope-Frost, following his death two weeks ago. "Britain lost an amazing journalist," said Bird (above). "A great man who brought so much energy to the Autosport show. It's not a win, it's the best I could do, and I'd like to dedicate this to Henry. There was a lot of fever out there today and I think he'd be very happy and proud of the driving that happened today."

MORTARA'S TUB DRAMA

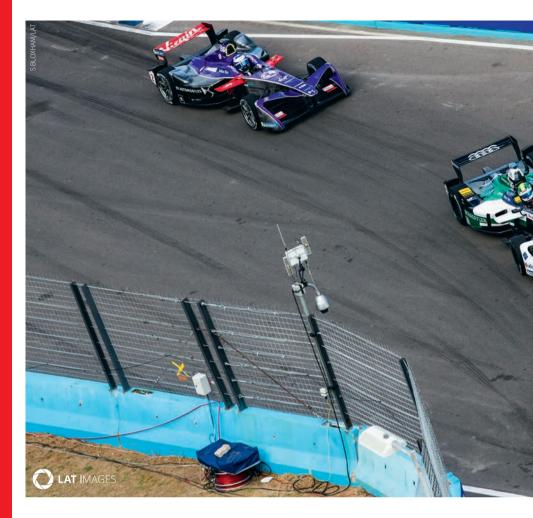
Edoardo Mortara finished 17th for Venturi after having a pre-race 10-place grid penalty for a change of survival cell rescinded. The Italian needed the change after clattering over the Turn 15 kerbs in Friday's shakedown but was reprieved as "sufficient repair of the chassis was not possible". He can use the new tub in Rome and Paris but may have to switch back for Berlin following full repairs.

DI GRASSI: A BIT PANTS

Lucas di Grassi was fined €10,000 and three licence penalty points for wearing non-compliant fireproof underwear during the race. His "short flameresistant underwear pants" are not allowed by the FIA's International Sporting Code, but he was allowed to keep his second-place finish.

STRAP UP, CHAPS

The pre-event FIA car-swap clarification highlighted that drivers "must be properly restrained in their seat by safety belts at all times when the car is moving. It is prohibited to unbuckle their safety belts when the car is moving. It is prohibited to remove the steering wheel when the car is moving. It is prohibited to buckle any safety belts before the driver is seated in his car."



the garage positioning that meant he could accelerate into the fast lane and nip out ahead of his DS Virgin team-mate.

Bird then homed in on the battling leaders, and briefly looked like making it a three-way scrap for the lead. "When they started really fighting I caught a lot in one go," he said. I thought, 'Yeah, we can do this — I just need one more little battle between them and I'm going to nick through'. But it wasn't too be." A moment at Turn 8 in the final laps meant Bird lost ground and he settled for the final step on the podium.

Behind him came two more hard chargers. Evans made monumental progress through the pack to clinch fourth, while Felix Rosenqvist rose from 12th to fifth for Mahindra. "It was tricky so I wasn't expecting a top-four finish," said Evans. "But you know, when the car's quick, and I think I gelled well with the circuit, you





can really make some good progress, and that's what we were able to achieve today."

Lynn and Turvey faded to sixth and seventh, ahead of the Dragon pairing of Jose Maria Lopez and Jerome d'Ambrosio, who both ran longer during the first stint to leap up the order. Maro Engel rounded out the top 10 for Venturi.

The other two retirements were inaugural champion Nelson Piquet and his successor Buemi, who suffered his first failure to win on this circuit. Piquet crashed in qualifying, relegating him to 14th on the grid, and he picked up damage in the early melee, which caused a driveshaft problem and eventual early end in his second car. Buemi did likewise after hitting the Turn 13 wall as he battled Turvey and Abt in the opening exchanges.

Having gone through the learning curve of those 39 months, Vergne has transformed his FE abilities to match the level of his searing raw pace. A 30-point advantage in the standings proves his development, even if he is trying not to think about where that may lead just yet.

"Who remembers who was leading the championship in the middle?" he had mused pre-race. "No-one. The only one that is remembered is the one that leads the championship after the last race. That's all that matters — the rest is nothing important." *#*



RESULTS ROUND 5/10, PUNTA DEL ESTE (ROU), MARCH 17 (37 LAPS – 64.029 MILE

POS		TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah · Renault Z.E.17	50m43.809s
2	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Audi Sport Abt · Audi e-tron FE04	+0.447s
3	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing · DS Virgin DSV-03	+2.611s
4	Mitch Evans(NZ)	Jaguar Jaguar I-type 2	+4.075s
5	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra Racing · Mahindra M4ELECTRO	+4.224s
6	Alex Lynn (GB)	DS Virgin Racing · DS Virgin DSV-03	+7.672s
7	OliverTurvey (GB)	NIO · NextEV NIO 003	+11.818s
8	Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	Dragon Racing · Penske EV-2	+12.612s
9	Jeromed'Ambrosio(B)	Dragon Racing · Penske EV-2	+22.242s
10	$MaroEngel({\rm D})$	Venturi · Venturi VM200-FE-03	+26.293s
11	AntonioFelixdaCosta(P)	Andretti Andretti ATEC-03	+27.335s
12	$AndreLotterer({\rm D})$	Techeetah · Renault Z.E.17	+38.731s
13	Luca Filippi (I)	NIO · NextEV NIO 003	+39.926s
14	DanielAbt(D)	Audi Sport Abt · Audi e-tron FE04	+43.139s
15	NicolasProst(F)	Renaulte.dams · RenaultZ.E.17	+47.194s
16	$TomBlomqvist({\sf GB})$	Andretti Andretti ATEC-03	+59.299s
17	Edoardo Mortara (I)	Venturi · Venturi VM200-FE-03	-1lap
R	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renaulte.dams · Renault Z.E.17	29 laps-out of energy
R	$NelsonPiquetJr({\sf BR})$	Jaguar · Jaguar I-type 2	25 laps-out of energy
R	$NickHeidfeld(\mathbb{D})$	Mahindra Racing · Mahindra M4ELECTRO	1 lap-technical system error

Winner's average speed 75.729 mph. Fastest lap Lopez 1m16.811s, 81.106 mph.

SUPER POLE 1 Vergne 1m16.806s; 2 di Grassi 1m13.948s**; 3 Lynn 1m14.189s**; 4 Turvey 1m14.978s**; 16 Evans 1m14.640s**.

QUALIFYING Vergne 1m13.672s; di Grassi 1m14.032s; Evans 1m14.093s; Lynn 1m14.135s; Turvey 1m14.181s; 5Abt 1m14.224s; 6 Buemi 1m14.320s; 7 Lotterer 1m14.442s; 8 Engel 1m14.523s; 9 Bird 1m14.552s; 10 d'Ambrosio 1m14.673s; 11 da Costa 1m14.973s; 12 Rosenqvist 1m15.104s; 13 Mortara 1m15.493s; 14 Piquet 1m42.656s; 15 Filippi 1m15.444s*; 17 Heidfeld 1m31.701s**; 18 Lopez 1m14.605s**; 19 Prost 1m53.358s*; 20 Blomqvist 1m16.424s*.* grid penalty.** excluded from session.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Vergne 109; 2 Rosenqvist 79; 3 Bird 76; 4 Buemi 52; 5 Piquet 45; 6 Evans 41; 7 Abt 37; 8 Turvey 32; 9 Mortara 28; 10 di Grassi 21.

Derani shows extreme speed when it counts

The Brazilian was the hero for the ESM squad as he moved to the front and stretched his late lead with the team's Onroak-Nissan

GARY WATKINS



LAT IMAGES



THE CHANCES OF THE EXTREME SPEED Motorsports squad taking a second victory in three attempts on the Sebring 12 Hours were halved almost before the race had begun: one of its pair of Onroak-Nissan DPis was effectively out at the first corner. But at the end of a long day, the American team was celebrating a victory for its remaining car driven by Pipo Derani, Johannes van Overbeek and Nicolas Lapierre.

The odds on an ESM victory last weekend may have fallen away at the start when Olivier Pla sustained irrevocable gearbox damage in a first-corner contact with polewinner Tristan Vautier. But they steadily shortened through a race in which ESM's Ligier-based Daytona Prototype International package got stronger and stronger.

Derani, van Overbeek and Lapierre eventually secured victory in the second round of the 2018 IMSA SportsCar Championship by nearly 12.5 seconds to follow up on the team's 2016 triumph at the Sebring International Raceway. In the context of a closely-fought enduro interrupted by no fewer than 11 safety cars, that was almost comfortable.

Back in 2016, Derani had moved ESM's Ligier-Nissan into the lead for the first time in the final 10 minutes. This time around, the remaining Onroak DPi was always there or thereabouts and led as early as the third hour. Come the end of the race, the French chassis and its Brazilian driver were in a class of their own when it mattered.

Derani nipped past fellow countryman Felipe Nasr in the #31 Action Express Racing Cadillac when the race went green for all of three quarters of a lap between the 10th and 11th safety cars. When the race finally got going again with just over an hour left on the clock, he simply took off.

Nasr, who shared the Action Express Caddy DPi-V.R with Eric Curran and Mike Conway, had nothing for his compatriot. Derani was three seconds up the road after one flying lap, and had a lead of six seconds over the chasing pack when the cars made their final pitstops 15 laps later with a shade over 40 minutes to go.

Derani came out of the pits with a nine-second advantage over Renger van der Zande in the Wayne Taylor Racing Caddy. The Dutchman, polewinner at the Daytona 24 Hours IMSA opener in January, barely got any closer over the run to the flag.

"The car was very understeery in the beginning," explained Derani. "It made it quite hard to race with the others, but we just had to hang in there. But in the lower temperatures the front of the car just got better and better."

Cadillac filled out the remainder of the podium places with the Dallara-based

DPi-V.R. The Whelen-sponsored Action Express car looked like Cadillac's best hope for a follow-up victory to its Daytona success. The car was a firm fixture in the top three throughout, but it just wasn't quick enough when required at the end, Nasr's need to save fuel in the closing stages not helping his cause. "The last two hours are what count," said Nasr. "We led a lot of laps for many hours and stayed in the top three. Of course I'm disappointed, because everybody wants to win."

WTR led relatively few laps on the way to second position after a clash with the Whelen Action Express car at the start of the eighth hour. Van der Zande had just taken the lead before safety car number seven. He dropped to fourth in the pits and then lost a section of rear bodywork when Curran gave the passing WTR car no room on the exit of Turn 3.

"When Lapierre just drove around me late in the race, I knew it wasn't going to work out for us today," said Jordan Taylor, who shared the WTR Cadillac with van der Zande and Ryan Hunter-Reay. "We needed something unusual to happen if we were going to win."

Meanwhile, Cadillac's Daytona-winning car wasn't in contention at the end: what can be considered the lead Action Express DPi-V.R, shared by Joao Barbosa, Filipe Albuquerque and Christian Fittipaldi, wasn't quite the competitive proposition it had been in round one, even before a long stop for repairs sent it tumbling down the order.

A collision with the Performance Tech ORECA-Gibson 07 LMP2 sent the Caddy into the pits and then back to the paddock for attention to the left-front suspension. The car ended up 20 laps behind in 16th position at the end.

The pole-winning Spirit of Daytona Caddy probably wasn't going to win either, although the car Vautier shared with Matt McMurray and Eddie Cheever III was still on the lead lap before it ended its race in the Turn 17 barriers early in hour 10 after Vautier went wide and got on the marbles.

It wasn't Cadillac that led the chase of Derani into the final round of pitstops, however. Harry Tincknell had brought the best of the Joest Racing Mazda RT24-Ps up to second position after the final restart.

The Joest Mazda squad was very much in the game at Sebring. It had a definite sniff of victory and was undoubtedly on course for a podium. That was an amazing performance given the torrid time the team endured at Daytona.

The RT24-P showed flashes of speed in January, but the flashes everyone remembered from the IMSA series opener were the ones coming from the exhaust >>

GTLM: TANDY TAKES FLAG FOR PORSCHE

PORSCHE DIDN'T HAVE THE FASTEST CAR at Sebring. But its 911 RSR was just about fast enough, both in the heat of day and the cool of night. That, combined with a zero-mistake run and a blinding final stint from Nick Tandy, allowed the mid-engined GTE contender to notch up a first GT Le Mans-class win in one of the IMSA enduros.

BMW's new M8, along with the Ford GT and the Ferrari 488, were quicker than the 911 RSR at different times of the race. The BMW, now running 20kg lighter and with more turbo boost than on its debut at Daytona, certainly looked quick enough at the end to win this one. But when push came to shove in the final hour, Tandy proved equal to the challenge in the Porsche he shared with Patrick Pilet and Frederic Makowiecki.

Alexander Sims, who was teamed in the #25 M8 GTE with Connor De Phillippi and Bill Auberlen, moved from fourth to second and then quickly onto Tandy's tail through the penultimate stint. "When I saw the lights I thought it was a prototype because they were coming so fast," reckoned the Porsche driver.

The Porsche needed less fuel than the BMW, giving Tandy a handful of seconds worth of breathing space. The 2015 Le Mans winner all of a sudden was able to pick up his pace, which included a string of fastest laps for the car, on the way to a six-second victory. It was the 71st for Porsche in Sebring 12 Hours history.

Pilet had moved the car into the lead just before he'd handed over to Tandy after a fierce battle with Toni Vilander in the Risi Competizione Ferrari. It turned out to be a crucial manoeuvre given Sims's subsequent charge. Equally important in the outcome was the change of brakes that the secondplaced BMW had to unexpectedly undergo in the seventh hour. The car missed getting out of the pits without losing a lap by literally a car length or two.

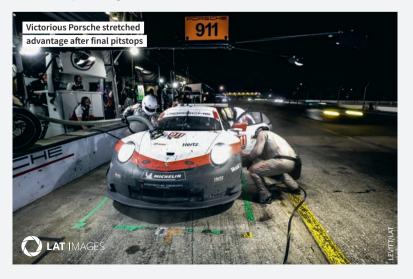
Ferrari's challenge ultimately faded over the final couple of hours. Alessandro Pier Guidi, who took over the car he shared with Vilander and James Calado, struggled for grip and dropped to fifth at the end of what is likely to be Risi's last IMSA outing for some time.

Ford would have been in the hunt at the end, but for an undisclosed electrical issue that brought Richard Westbrook into the pits for an unscheduled stop in the 10th hour. The Brit and team-mates Ryan Briscoe and Scott Dixon were looking well placed to repeat their Daytona victory, but ultimately finished fourth behind the second Porsche driven by Earl Bamber, Laurens Vanthoor and Gianmaria Bruni.

"I got into the lead with three hours to go and was able to pull away a bit," explained Westbrook. "The car felt really good; we definitely found some pace as the sun came down."

Corvette Racing had no problems with the #4 car shared by Oliver Gavin, Tommy Milner and Marcel Fassler. Except that their C7.R wasn't fast enough, which explained why it finished sixth as the final GTLM runner not to be hit by a significant delay.

Bryan Sellers, Madison Snow and Corey Lewis took GT Daytona honours in their Paul Miller Racing Lamborghini Huracan GT3. Sellers led into the final round of pitstops, and then had to pass Jeroen Bleekemolen's Riley-run Mercedes-AMG GT3 to seal the victory.





of the car Tincknell shares with Jonathan Bomarito and Spencer Pigot at the moment of its fiery retirement. This time the cars were for the most part reliable and consistently fast. It was an impressive turnaround for a team that had been able to take the time to build up its cars back at base in Atlanta for the first time after its Daytona travails.

Two problems colluded to rob Mazda of a top-three finish. The drivers of the car had been struggling with a clutch problem for much of the race, which had forced them to leave the pits on the starter motor during the final stages. It also had a worsening electrical glitch, which meant there wasn't enough charge to get the car rolling at the final stop, the three minutes lost dropping the Mazda to sixth.

"It's disappointing to miss out on a podium, but we would have signed for that after Daytona," said Joest Racing boss Ralf Juttner, who conceded that Tincknell wouldn't have been able to keep pace with Derani at the end. "The car was competitive in all conditions — I thought we would suffer more in the heat."

The second Mazda lost time in the fourth hour when an O-ring blew out of the right-rear brake caliper. It ended up 10 laps down in eighth, though Oliver Jarvis did take a consolation prize in fastest race lap.

The unofficial LMP2 class – and it is just that because the cars cannot keep pace with the DPis at the moment – was 'won' by the CORE Autosport ORECA. It took the best-of-the-rest prize in the closing stages when United Autosports had to bring its Ligier-Gibson JSP217 into the pits for a splash-and-dash fuel stop in the closing stages.

CORE came back from miles behind,



just as it did on the way to third at Daytona. Its ORECA-Gibson 07 was four laps behind when amateur driver and team owner Jon Bennett climbed out for the last time. But the team used the multiple yellows to bring star drivers Colin Braun and Roman Dumas back onto the lead lap in the closing stages.

The British-based United squad proved again that it has mastered US-style sportscar racing, bringing the car shared by Paul di Resta, Alex Brundle (standing in for Bruno Senna) and Phil Hanson back from a lap down on three occasions. Ultimately, however, it didn't have the pace to go head to head with the DPis in a straight fight.

The Penske Acura team went home disappointed for the second race in row after suffering engine problems on both its cars. The two ARX-05s were definitely in the hunt and the team reckoned it was well placed to exploit the changing conditions. It never got to prove it.

Ricky Taylor retired the #7 car almost exactly at the halfway mark with flames licking from the right-hand-side exhaust. The sister car made it another hour into the race before Juan Pablo Montoya, who was already losing power, was unable to restart the car after a spin following a clash with Vautier's Spirit of Daytona Caddy.

"We had such a good plan heading into the night-time hours, when I think our car was really going to come to life," said Taylor. "We will move past this. It's one thing if we weren't running up front and contending, but we were a car capable of winning this race."

That might have made for a grandstand finish to the 66th Sebring 12 Hours. But one or other of the Penske Acuras would have needed to have been in pretty exceptional shape to stop the flying Derani. *#*



RESULTS ROUND 2/12, SEBRING (USA), MARCH 17 (344 LAPS - 1286.56 MILE

POS	DRIVER TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Pipo Derani; Nicolas Lapierre; Johannes van Overbeek Extreme Speed Motorsports • Onroak-Nissan DPi	12h00m34.369s
2	Renger van der Zande; Jordan Taylor; Ryan Hunter-Reay Wayne Taylor Racing • Cadillac DPi-V.R	+12.427s
3	Felipe Nasr; Mike Conway; Eric Curran Action Express Racing • Cadillac DPi-V.R	+53.075s
4	Colin Braun; Romain Dumas; Jon Bennett COREAutosport • ORECA-Gibson 07	+1m16.328s
5	Paul di Resta; Alex Brundle; Phil Hanson United Autosports · Ligier-Gibson JSP217	+1m30.732s
6	Jonathan Bomarito; Harry Tincknell; Spencer Pigot Mazda Team Joest • Mazda RT24-P	-1lap
7	$Stephen Simpson; Chris Miller; Misha Goikhberg \ \ \textbf{JDC-Miller Motorsports} \cdot \textbf{ORECA-Gibson 07}$	-6 laps
8	Rene Rast; Oliver Jarvis; Tristan Nunez Mazda Team Joest · Mazda RT24-P	-10 laps
9	$SimonTrummer; NelsonPanciatici; Robert Alon ~~ JDC-Miller Motorsports \cdot ORECA-Gibson 07$	-13 laps
10	Nick Tandy; Patrick Pilet; Frederic Makowiecki Porsche GT Team (CORE) • Porsche 911 RSR	-16 laps
GTL	Μ	
1	Nick Tandy; Patrick Pilet; Frederic Makowiecki Porsche GT Team (CORE) • Porsche 911 RSR	328 laps
2	Connor De Phillippi; Alexander Sims; Bill Auberlen BMW Team RLL • BMW M8 GTE	+6.230s
3	$Laurens Vanthoor; Earl Bamber; Gian maria Bruni \ensuremath{\ Porsche GT Team} (CORE) \cdot Porsche 911 RSR$	+17.294s
4	Richard Westbrook; Ryan Briscoe; Scott Dixon Ford Chip Ganassi Racing • Ford GT	+29.030s
5	James Calado; Toni Vilander; Alessandro Pier Guidi Risi Competizione • Ferrari 488 GTE	+34.687s
6	Tommy Milner; Oliver Gavin; Marcel Fassler Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller) · Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	-1lap
GTD		
1	Madison Snow; Bryan Sellers; Corey Lewis Paul Miller Racing · Lamborghini Huracan GT3	321 laps
2	Gunnar Jeannette; Alessandro Balzan; Cooper MacNeil Scuderia Corsa • Ferrari 488 GT3	+8.169s
3	Ben Keating; Jeroen Bleekemolen; Luca Stolz Riley Motorsports • Mercedes-AMG GT3	+10.122s
4	$Christopher {\tt Mies}; Sheldon van der {\tt Linde}; {\tt Alessio} {\tt Picariello} {\tt Land-Motorsport} \cdot {\tt Audi R8 LMS}$	+14.936s
5	${\sf JackHawksworth;DavidHeinemeierHansson;SeanRayhall} {\sf 3GTRacing-LexusRCFGT3}$	+24.944s
6	$ChristinaNielsen; PatrickLong; RobertRenauer; MathieuJaminet\ WrightMotorsports\cdot Porsche 911GT3-1000000000000000000000000000000000000$	R +28.929s

Winners' average speed 107.128mph.

Fastest lap Jarvis 1m49.002s, 123.521mph. GTLM Jesse Krohn (BMWTeam RLLBMWM8 GTE) 1m57.622s, 114.469mph. GTD Dominik Baumann (3GT Racing Lexus RCF GT3) 2m00.628s, 111.616mph.



Blundell chases cars for victory in snow patrol

As flurries fell at Goodwood, Kerry Michael and Mark Blundell took honours in their Escort in a traditionally hard-fought Marshall Trophy

'SURREAL' IS THE ONLY WAY TO describe the 76th Members' Meeting. The British Isles' climate constantly harbours surprises these days, but racing in the snow added an extraordinary new Winter Olympics quality to the drama at the landmark 50th major event since Lord March (now the Duke of Richmond and Gordon) brought motorsport back to his circuit outside Chichester.

Friday's most glorious spring-like set-up day — a dazzling 13C making T-shirts and Ray-Bans almost *de rigueur* in the paddock — raised hopes that meteorologists' gloomy forecasts were wrong. No such luck! The fickle weather gods cranked temperatures back into the minus scale as the wind direction changed overnight and 'the mini beast from the east' tried its damnedest to spoil the fun.

The tragic loss of Goodwood's most-

passionate team member (and long-time Autosport colleague) Henry Hope-Frost a week previously muted the atmosphere at the modern era's fifth MM. The motorsport family dug deep to honour 'Hank's' memory, however, carrying his #FEVER moniker into battle and delivering sensational racing. Nowhere more so than in the feature tin-top races, which were world class.

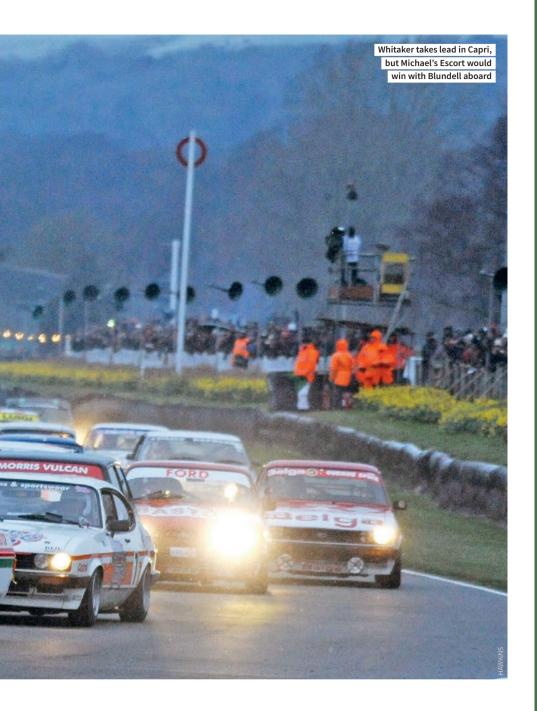
Friday's Gerry Marshall Trophy doubledriver race rewarded the most-inspired car owners, who played pivotal roles before putting their professional partners in to bat. Mike Whitaker (last year's resounding Graham Hill Trophy GT race winner sharing his TVR Griffith 400 with Mike Jordan) and Kerry Michael were the heroes of the moment, both driving blinders.

Following a pep talk from his Motorcraft/ Autocar Capri V6's original pedaller Gordon Spice, Whitaker howled ahead, extending a 12-second advantage over Craig Davies – distributor, appropriately, of US-made Sub-Zero refrigerators – debuting an Alan Mann Racing-built Boss Mustang, an homage to Frank Gardner's 1969 steed.

MINIMUM

As flurries of snow whipped up, Michael kept them within range in his flat-fronted Escort RS2000. The west countryman stopped as the pit window opened, relaying Peugeot's 1992 Le Mans winner Mark Blundell, clearly a man on a mission. Blundell had completed his first flier by the time Jason Plato jumped into the Mustang and a second as Mike Jordan leaped aboard the red Capri. Game on!

Batting well above their weight at the pitstop phase were Jim Morris in father John's feisty Volkswagen Golf GTI, the irrepressible Nick Swift (Richard Longman tribute PMG Mini 1275GT) and triple WTCC champ Andy Priaulx in Tom



Burgess's Datapost Fiesta, Ford Powertrain manager Mark Roberts' twin of which fell within a lap, denying Mat Jackson a shot. Also gone was Phil Perryman's bellowing Bastos Volvo 242T, a splendid addition to the 'Group 1' set.

As conditions worsened to a blizzardette, Blundell calmly reeled Jordan in and passed him audaciously into Madgwick during lappery on lap 18. Jordan responded, but having set personal best laps in unison Blundell had his measure. As Blundell's less-torquey but better-balanced mount came into its own and settling snow started to encroach on the track's fringes in failing light, officials wisely threw the chequer seven minutes early.

"I didn't trust him to go first; he might have jumped the start again [referring to poleman Blundell's penalty last year]," beamed the jubilant if disbelieving Kerry Michael, whose crew was ecstatic. "Kerry did a fabulous job, all the hard work," smiled the garlanded Blundell, having landed an unexpected late present on granddaughter Esme's birthday.

Whitaker and Jordan were magnanimous runners-up. "They did a great job but that was probably the best stint Mike's ever driven," said Jordan. "It was hellish slippery. It bit me big into no-name [the kinked entry to Fordwater], so second's just fine."

Tim Harvey loves a challenge and the 1992 BTCC champ rumbled the Marlboro Rover SD1 into third for increasingly rapid owner Andy Bruce's first Goodwood podium. Top qualifier Olly Bryant was breathing down Harvey's neck in the ex-Richard Lloyd Simoniz Camaro at the flag, the Chevrolet's cast-exhaust manifolds (replacing tubular headers) having trimmed their power this year. **>>**

COTTINGHAM'S HOARE TROPHY



EIGHT OF THE 100 OR SO SVELTE Porsche 904 Carrera GTSs built in Zuffenhausen made a magnificent sight on the (Colonel) Ronnie Hoare Trophy 1963-66 GT grid. German ace Eugen Bohringer drove one of the two-litre mid-engined machines to second place in the 1965 Monte Carlo rally in heavy snow, so a light smattering of white flakes did not faze James Cottingham, who started Phil Hylander's (above) from a convincing pole in Saturday's race.

There was so nearly a formbook upset though. Belgium's Vincent Gaye, who had shot his Ferrari 275 GTB/C into the lead at the start, then ceded it to Cottingham on lap two, spent the early laps trying to repel the tenacious Billy Bellinger in Keith Ahlers' Morgan Plus 4 SLR, thus Cottingham got away. Getting bottled up in traffic flattened James's 3.9-second cushion and suddenly Gaye had a whiff of victory in the event named for Maranello Concessionaires founder Hoare.

As he prepared to pounce, dropping the left-rear wheel onto the grass on the exit of the Fordwater kink flicked the metallic blue Ferrari across the track, spinning wildly onto the infield. Undeterred, Gaye picked himself up and salvaged a gallant third, behind Cottingham and Bellinger in the Triumph-powered aerodyne coupe.

Ambrogio Perfetti spun out of a heady Porsche 911 duel with Mark Bates at Madgwick. Bates thus claimed fourth from Mark Sumpter's Paragon car, while David Clark just outfoxed his old pal Rainer Becker for sixth in their 904 tussle, which raged racelong.

Having borrowed a gearbox in the nick of time following a breakage in testing, former Porsche champion Mark Cole topped the MGB posse, proving Belgian Guillaume Ramakers' Quinntech car, which is for sale. Eighth overall in such exotic company was a result. Last year's winning PMG Rover was also reined in, but non-started.

What of the Mustang? Plato's fun was spoiled when its hood (bonnet) flew off, then it went lame and was retired. Rob Huff brought Richard Meins' Bastos Capri into fifth ahead of Andy Jordan in Swift's Mini and a visibly battered Matt Neal, back in David Clark's late-shaped Bastos Camaro. The earlier Faberge Brut Z28 of Nigel Garrett and the evergreen Stuart Graham was sidelined by oil-system problems in practice.

Sunday's reversed-grid Sprint sequel was spoiled when the pack concertinaed into Madgwick at the start. The luckless Malcolm Harrison's Datapost Metro, on row three, was pincered between the more-accelerative Capri of Patrick Blakeney-Edwards and Rover of Peter Mallett as they outdragged him. Destabilised, the *Daily Express* SD1 cannoned off the Ford's passenger door into the bank, its momentum dislodging the tyre barrier. Patrick Watts' Frank & Jeans Capri, unable to slow once on the snowcovered grass, walloped the belting too.

Marshals and the car-recovery crew cleared the mess under full-course caution. Once the Porsche safety car retreated to its refuge at the chicane, leader Pantelis 'Laki' Christoforou made another escape. The long-time Escorteer could not be caught over just three laps, thus completed an RS2000 double.

A gripping Capri duel in his wake saw 'Skid' Scarborough pip Ric Wood on the road, only to be excluded for running incorrect brakes. With Wood promoted to second, outright lap-record holder Nick Padmore's efforts in the Sadler family's rorty UFO Jeans BMW 530i netted the other podium place.

Having started his Mini camera car from the pits, showman Nick Swift saw plenty of action as he gobbled up Camaros, Capris and Rovers, but frustratingly ran out of time to catch the leaders. He finished eighth, four seconds shy of Mark Burnett's 1275GT in its Jon Mowatt livery. Hart's GT40 (18) blasts off at start of Gurney Cup, Smith (56) and Bryant alongside



Sunday's weather prospects were officially better but colder! While sustained overnight snow forced the cancellation of the Hailwood Trophy motorcycle races, and children tobogganed on the now solid white Trundle hill towering over the circuit to the north, the car element ran. As hardy spectators huddled around fire pits in more layers of clothing, and sales of sky-blue branded hot-water bottles, steel flasks and blankets soared – the Goodwood organisers think of almost everything – unsurprisingly depleted single-seater fields opened the day's competition.



With brilliant poleman Geraint Owen's gruff ex-Fred Agabashian Kurtis-Offenhauser Merz Engineering Special pushed from the grid with gearbox failure, Scottish-based Tony Wood was unchallenged in the Hawthorn Trophy GP car opener in the ex-Ecurie Ecosse Cooper-Bristol, a sister car to that in which the 1958 world champion had emerged at Goodwood on Easter Monday '52. "Good old-fashioned Knockhill weather" held no fears for Wood, who distanced Frazer Nash racer Eddie Williams, first time out in Niall Dyer's Cameron Millar Maserati 250F. Fast starter Crispin Harris held third in Nick Upton's Monoposto AC-Bristol for most of the way, but was passed by Belgian Paul Grant (Cooper-Bristol) and David Wenman (Connaught A4).

Without practice shadow Andrew Hibberd, among a large number of absentees who did not want to risk their peaky 1000cc F3 cars, poleman Jon Milicevic blitzed the Derek Bell Trophy race in his pristine Brabham BT21. Having replaced a bent rear corner on his ex-Jean-Pierre Jaussaud Tecno overnight, Frenchman Thierry Gallo was delighted with second to the UK champion. Having seen initial leader Christoph Widmer and Paul Kite spin their Brabhams and been "completely sideways" himself, Milicevic's predecessor Simon Armer (March 703) was happy to land third,



clear of the fight between Ian Bankhurst (Alexis) and Marcus Mussa (Tecno).

Martin Stretton led the Salvadori Cup 1950s sportscar race from Union Flag to chequer, free from pressure after Jon Minshaw spun, until another Lister-Jaguar wrestler in the form of Andrew Smith was ousted by two-litre Lotus 15 duo Roger Wills and Oliver Bryant. They swapped positions several times before Wills prevailed. Only getting boxed behind a gaggle of lapped cars at the chicane precluded Kiwi Wills from having a late pop at Stretton. Marino Franchitti showed off father-in-law Nick Mason's wonderful Maserati Birdcage beautifully in fifth. Minshaw recovered to seventh, behind Ben Mitchell in Gabriel Kremer's Lotus 15.

Having started gently, Patrick Blakeney-Edwards dominated the Caracciola pre-war sportscar race in Peter Neumark's delicious pale-blue Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 Monza. Duncan Pittaway shot his unsupercharged Bugatti T35 into the lead at flagfall and was chasing hard when its hinged bonnet, displaced early on, took flight at St Mary's, exposing the straight-eight engine. "I had no idea [it was loose], but was expecting to get black-flagged," said Pittaway, who finished a popular second. Chris Mann's Alfa Monza lost third when its head gasket failed smokily. Moritz Werner (Monza) nipped past Alastair Pugh's **>>**

F5000 AND GROUP 5 DEMONSTRATIONS

PRESIDED OVER BY THREE-TIME US champion Brian Redman – who at 81 boldly saddled the unique Lola T192based two-seater 'ride car' on Saturday – Formula 5000 provided what the great Lancastrian described as "the best four years of my racing life, with Jim Hall and Carl Haas and Lola Cars".

Alas, bitterly cold conditions well outside the cars' operational window in terms of tyre and oil temperatures, and freezing fuel delivery, plus fears of collateral chassis damage through circuit salting, put paid to the eagerly anticipated high-speed demonstrations to mark 50 years of the stock-block category. The cars did attract a lot of attention in the paddock though, where period racer Clive Santo loved seeing his old Lola T300.

One car extensively damaged in a languid grassy spin at about 40mph on Saturday was a warning for anybody considering a real go on Sunday. Nonetheless, Stephen Hepworth enjoyed late father David's eponymous 4wd car in Green Shield Stamps Livery, Matthew Wurr ran a Sid Taylor Racing McLaren M10B raced by double UK champion Peter Gethin, and Lindsay O'Donnell didn't bring his Begg FM5 from New Zealand not to play.

Led by Jochen Mass in the extravagantly sculptured Martini Porsche 935 'Moby Dick' *langheck*, pilots of the Group 5 'Special Production' cars – wacky caricatures of their base models, in some cases barely recognisable – did get a proper chance to show off their dynamics in the best of the weekend's track conditions on Sunday afternoon.

Most spectacular was Hyundai's WRC test driver Kevin Abbring, who wrung the

neck of Christian Manner's Fruit of the Loom BMW 320i, raced in 1978 by Austrian Markus Hottinger. Circuit unfamiliarity holds no fears for rallymen, thus the opportunity to hear its shrill two-litre M12/7 four-cylinder engine on full song was music to many as the young Dutchman flung it around with abandon and enthused over it in the pit boxes.

Anthony Walker's ex-Dieter Quester/ Albrecht Krebs/Ronnie Peterson bewinged 3.5 CSL 'batmobile', its gorgeous green Gosser beer livery setting off the BMW stripes, was another favourite. The straight-six machine was joined on circuit by a Junior Team 320i in Eddie Cheever's colours, taking us back to the American's efforts alongside Marc Surer and Manfred Winkelhock in 1977.

A bunch of big but super-sleek Ferrari 512 Berlinetta Boxer LMs, appropriately in red, white and green battledress, sounded throaty with their flat-12 engines. The BB LMs were built for the long game at Le Mans, where they outlasted swifter rivals. Veteran David Franklin was among their drivers here, in Arnold Meier's.

Paolo Piazza-Musso brought an ex-Hans Heyer/Jody Scheckter Zakspeed Ford Escort from South Africa and enjoyed himself, while Ric Wood's ultra-low Capri evocation mirrored Klaus Niedzwiedz's D&W original from Peter Zakowski's successful Zakspeed team.

Stefano Macaluso's Martini Lancia Beta Montecarlo, Pekka Nystrom's John Greenwood-developed Chevrolet Corvette and Jan Bot's ex-Bob Gregg March-BMW M1 IMSA car also caught the eye amid a fleet of whooshing Porsche 935 turbocars, including the hallowed Kremer K3s.



STAR CARS



Lotus-Ford 41X

Raced by future Lotus F1 driver John Miles in 1968, the unique 41X was sold to Italian privateer Francesco Grezzi who raced it twice in '69 and '70, the final year of 1000cc F3. Not seen since and immaculately restored by Enrico Spaggiari (who qualified it eighth) and Davide Riparbelli of RS Historics, it was withdrawn due to the conditions.



Hepworth-Ferguson 4WD

David Hepworth contested early F5000 races in the same Ferguson four-wheeldrive car, powered by an Oldsmobile V8. His sons returned it to wingless 1969 spec (bar Chevrolet engine), creating a new body in period Green Shield Stamps livery from original moulds. Stephen was the only F5000 driver unconcerned about a slippery track.



Porsche 906

British based Mike de Udy raced Porsche 904 and 906s internationally, before switching to a Lola T70 Mk3, all in green liveries. In a change from the 904's robust unitary steel chassis, the 1966 906 – or Carrera 6 – reverted to tubeframe construction. Franck Trouillard raced German collector Frauke Feess's sonorous flat-six prototype.



Cooper-Porsche T39 'Pooper'

Raced in period by US chemicals heir Lex Dupont, this is no regular 'Bobtail', for a 1600cc flat-four Porsche engine has replaced the regular single-cam Coventry-Climax unit. Nicknamed the 'Pooper', it has been beautifully prepared for owner Cameron Healy by Essex-based marque specialist Andy Prill, who contested the Salvadori Cup.



Begg-Chevrolet FM5

Agricultural equipment engineer George Begg of Drummond, near Invercargill, in New Zealand's Southland, designed a short series of F5000 cars, including a pair of FM5s built by Fred McLean in 1972-73. Dave Oxton drove the first and Allan McCully its sister, brought to Goodwood by Kiwi historic stalwart Lindsay O'Donnell.



AC-Bristol Monoposto

Built from the wreckage of an AC Aceca coupe crashed immediately by its French owner, this 'budget Cooper-Bristol' looked effective in the hands of Crispin Harris, who ran third for much of the Hawthorn Trophy race. Custodian Nick Upton, VSCC event commentator and *bon viveur*, acquired it complete with chassis plate many years ago.



fast and well-conducted Frazer Nash BMW to snatch the place.

The Moss Trophy GT race for early 1960s cars opened with a great scrap between Jaguar experts Jon Minshaw and John Young in contrasting E-types, whose getaway from Emanuele Pirro in the Ferrari Breadvan was aided when Martin O'Connell's E-type FHC got out of shape at Lavant and sideswiped Gregor Fisken's roadster, which gyrated.

Pirro closed the Jags down, with Vincent Gaye (Ferrari SWB), Jeremy Welch (Austin-Healey 3000) and Michael Gans' violet Lotus Elite in the chase. Gave stopped later than Minshaw and Young, Anthony Reid taking over, and Pirro did two more laps before Lukas Halusa relieved him. The Austrian emerged from the pits as Phil Keen went past for victory in Minshaw's Jag. Rob Huff, sensational in Richard Meins' FHC, passed Halusa too. Reid and the combative Jack Young in dad's smoky coupe were next back. Poleman Simon Hadfield, finishing Wolfgang Friedrichs' Aston Martin DB4, was promoted to sixth after O'Connell/Olly Bryant were excluded for the former's early contact.

Tim Llewellyn blasted his newly rebuilt Bentley 3/8 Special 'Bluebell' from 15th to first on the opening lap of the Bolster Cup miscellany, leaving rivals in a smokescreen. "I should have invested in better oil rings," he smiled. An aero-engined dogfight for second saw Tom Walker's awesome Hispano Suiza-powered Amilcar edge out Justin Maeers' GN Parker, with top qualifier Pat Blakeney-Edwards homing in aboard Jolyon Harrison's lofty Bentley.

The great American Dan Gurney (a favourite of Goodwood events over the past 25 years) passed away in January, thus the



big-banger sportscar race was named for him. Dutchman David Hart was honoured to win it on the debut of his iridescent gold ex-Willy Mairesse Ford GT40. Olly Bryant's promising challenge in the ex-Roy Salvadori Cooper-Maserati T61 – from the same stable as his family Cobra – ended prematurely.

Gurney hurtled one of Carroll Shelby's Daytona Cobra Coupes to third in the 1964 RAC Tourist Trophy race here, thus Andrew Smith was made up with second in JD Classics' evocation – carrying the 'registration' FEV 3R in memory of Henry Hope-Frost. Bold teenager Olivier Hart escaped Lavant's gravel bed for third with fastest lap in another Cobra Coupe replica. GT40 trio Craig Davies, Chris Wilson and Shaun Lynn squabbled over the minor places, pursued by Chris Goodwin, the best of the four-cylinder tiddlers in his Lotus 23B.

The Jack Sears Trophy saloon car finale was a corker either side of a safety car. called when Shaun Lynn walked away from a spectacular roll when his Lotus Cortina smote the barrier on the exit of Fordwater on lap three. With snow falling again, the Cortinas of Andys Jordan and Wolfe, Mark Sumpter - who rocketed from 18th to fourth on the first lap – and Steve Soper, heart rate stabilised following a hairy excursion at St Mary's, were inseparable as they danced around the track. "Andy risked a slightly shorter diff, so I was vulnerable into Woodcote," said winner Jordan. "He's such a pro," countered Wolfe, who had speared into the lead at the start. Nick Swift earned Mini honours in fifth. ahead of Dickie Meaden's Ford Galaxie, redolent of Sears' 1963 title winner. #

RESULTS GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING, MARCH 17-1



GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY: GROUP 1 SALOONS 1970-82 (24 LAPS) 1 Kerry Michael/Mark Blundell (Ford Escort RS2000); 2 Mike Whitaker/ Mike Jordan (Ford Capri III 3.0S) +1.087s; 3 Andy Bruce/Tim Harvey (Rover 3500 SD1); 4 Grahame & Oliver Bryant (Chevrolet Camaro Z28); 5 Richard Meins/Rob Huff (Ford Capri III 3.0S); 6 Nick Swift/ Andrew Jordan (Mini 1275GT): 7 David Clark/Matt Neal (Chevrolet Camaro Z28): 8 Nick Jarvis/Stuart Hall (Rover 3500 SD1); 9 Patrick Watts/Anthony Reid (Ford Capri III 3.0S); 10 Ric Wood/Nicolas Minassian (Ford Capri III 3.0S). Fastest lap O Bryant 1m29.588s (96.44mph). Pole O Bryant. Starters 28. SPRINT RACE (9 LAPS) 1 Pantelis Christoforou (Ford Escort RS2000); 2 Wood +2.967s; 3 Nick Padmore (BMW 530i); 4 James Wood (Triumph Dolomite Sprint): 5 Bruce: 6 Mark Fowler (Ford Capri III 3.0S). FL Padmore 1m31.641s (94.28mph). P Christoforou. S 26.

MOSS TROPHY: GT CARS 1960-62 (29 LAPS) 1 Jon Minshaw/Phil Keen (Jaguar E-type); 2 Richard Meins/Rob Huff (Jaguar E-type FHC) +6.847s; 3 Emanuele Pirro/Lukas Halusa (Ferrari 250 GT SWB 'Breadvan'); 4 Vincent Gaye/Anthony Reid (Ferrari 250 GT SWB); 5 John & Jack Young (Jaguar E-type FHC); 6 Wolfgang Friedrichs/Simon Hadfield (Aston Martin DB4 GT). FL Huff 1m30.103s (95.89mph). P Hadfield. S 28. RONNIE HOARE TROPHY: SPORTS & GT CARS

1963-66 (13 LAPS) 1 James Cottingham (Porsche 904 Carrera GTS); 2 Billy Bellinger (Morgan Plus 4 SLR) +3 033s; 3 Vincent Gave (Ferrari 275 GTB/C); 4 Mark Bates (Porsche 911); 5 Mark Sumpter (Porsche 911); 6 David Clark (Porsche 904 Carrera GTS). FL Gaye 1m34.434s (91.49mph). P Cottingham. S 30. HAWTHORN TROPHY: PRE-61 FRONT-ENGINED F1 & F2 CARS (11 LAPS) 1 Tony Wood (Cooper-Bristol Mk1 T20); 2 Eddie Williams (Maserati 250F CM) +32.376s; 3 Paul Grant (Cooper-Bristol Mk2 T23); 4 David Wenman (Connaught A-type); 5 Crispin Harris (AC-Bristol Monoposto); 6 Nigel Batchelor (Kieft-Climax). FL Wood 1m53.001s (76.45mph). P Geraint Owen (Kurtis-Offenhauser), \$ 20. DEREK BELL CUP: 1000cc F3 1964-70 (11 LAPS)

1 Jon Milicevic (Brabham-Ford BT21);

2 Thierry Gallo (Tecno-Ford 67) +11.365s; 3 Simon Armer (March-Ford 703); 4 Ian Bankhurst (Alexis-Ford Mk8); 5 Marcus Mussa (Tecno-Ford 69); 6 Christoph Widmer Brabham-Ford BT18A). **FL** Gallo 1m48.676s (78.50mph). **P** Milicevic. **S** 11.

SALVADORI CUP: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SPORTS RACING CARS 1955-60 (12 LAPS) 1 Martin Stretton (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly);

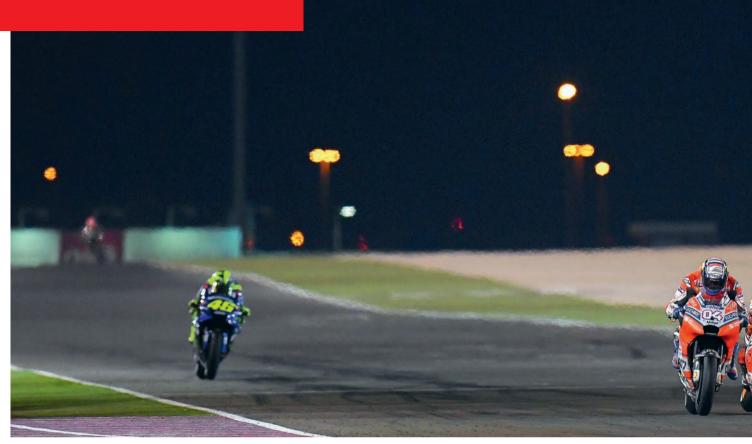
2 Roger Wills (Lotus-Climax 15) +1.340s; 3 Oliver Bryant (Lotus-Climax 15); 4 Andrew Smith (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly); 5 Marino Franchitti (Maserati Tipo 61 Birdcage); 6 Ben Mitchell (Lotus-Climax 15). **FL** Bryant 1m44.524s (82.66mph). **P** Stretton. **S** 24.

CARACCIOLA SPORTWAGENRENNEN: EUROPEAN SPORTSCARS TO 1939 (11 LAPS) 1 Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 Monza); 2 Duncan Pittaway (Bugatti T35) +28.642s; 3 Moritz Werner (Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 Monza); 4 Alastair Pugh (Frazer Nash BMW); 5 Marcus Black (Talbot-Lago T23); 6 Gareth Graham (Bentley Speed Model). FL Blakeney-Edwards Im48.498s (79.63mph). P Blakeney-Edwards. S 25. BOLSTER CUP: PRE- & POST-WAR MODIFIED VINTAGE CARS & RACING SPECIALS (12 LAPS) 1 Tim Llewellyn (Bentley 3/8 Special); 2 Tom Walker (Amilcar Hispano-Suiza) +3.912s; 3 Justin Maeers (GN Parker Spl); 4 Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Bentley 3/8 Spl); 5 Duncan Pittaway

(GN Curtiss); 6 Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford 'Piglet'). **FL** Llewellyn 1m41.698s (84.95mph). **P** Blakeney-Edwards. **S** 30.

GURNEY CUP: SPORTS PROTOTYPES 1962-66
(11 LAPS) 1 David Hart (Ford GT40); 2 Andrew
Smith (Shelby American Daytona Cobra Coupe)
+3.757s; 3 Olivier Hart (Shelby American Daytona
Cobra Coupe); 4 Craig Davies (Ford GT40); 5 Chris
Wilson (Ford GT40); 6 Shaun Lynn (Ford GT40).
FL O Hart 1m25.149s (101.46mph). P Smith. S 21.
SEARS TROPHY: SALOON CARS 1959-66 (13
LAPS) 1 Andrew Jordan (Ford Lotus Cortina);
2 Andy Wolfe (Ford Lotus Cortina) +0.637s; 3 Mark
Sumpter (Ford Lotus Cortina); 4 Steve Soper (Ford
Lotus Cortina); 5 Nick Swift (Morris Mini Cooper S);
6 Richard Meaden (Ford Galaxie 500). FL Jordan
1m31.845s (94.07mph). P Jordan. S 29.

WORLD OF SPORT



Dovizioso nicks it from Marquez

MOTOGP LOSAIL (Q) MARCH 18 ROUND 1/19

Andrea Dovizioso went into Sunday's MotoGP curtain-raiser in Qatar as the favourite, and he lived up to that billing by taking victory. But the opening round of the 2018 season was a lot closer than the Ducati-mounted Italian would have liked, as his battle with Honda's Marc Marquez went all the way to the last corner of the last lap.

Anticipation was already high heading to Losail, and even more so after practice had suggested there were as many as a dozen podium contenders. But in the end, it was 2017 title rivals Dovizioso and Marquez who had the clear edge over the field when it really mattered, the pair reprising a rivalry that delivered two of last year's most breathtaking finishes, in Austria and Japan.

While the climax was thrilling, much of the race was a phoney war. A large train quickly formed at the head of the field behind poleman Johann Zarco's Tech3 Yamaha in the opening stages, with everybody keen to keep their tyres in a fit state for the crucial closing laps. It wasn't until the 18th lap of 22 that Dovizioso finally pulled the pin and made a break.

Dovizioso swept past Zarco heading into Turn 1, swiftly followed by Marquez, and later on the same lap Valentino Rossi demoted the Frenchman another place by grabbing third. Next time by, Dovizioso recorded the fastest lap of the race, but Marquez and Rossi responded with personal bests on the 20th tour, the trio split by less than a second with two to go.

Rossi couldn't keep up with the leading duo after that though, as Marquez proved how much the Honda package has improved since this time last year by hanging on to Dovizioso until the start of the final lap, keeping close enough to the factory Ducati to

"DOVIZIOSO GOT SUPERIOR TRACTION AND BEAT MARQUEZ TO THE FLAG BY JUST 0.027 SECONDS"

attempt a late lunge at the very last corner.

But, in a carbon copy of their tussles at the Red Bull Ring and Motegi last year, it didn't work, as Dovizioso got superior traction and beat Marquez to the chequered flag by a scant 0.027 seconds. Rossi was a further seven tenths back in third aboard the best of the Yamahas.

After being demoted to fourth with five laps remaining, Zarco simply couldn't keep up the pace in the closing laps, and ended up slipping all the way down to eighth with what he described as a defective front tyre. It was a wretched way for the Tech₃ man to end the weekend, after he'd demolished Jorge Lorenzo's decade-old lap record with a blistering lap time to secure pole.

Zarco's misfortune promoted fellow privateer Cal Crutchlow to fourth on the LCR Honda, while the top five was completed by Danilo Petrucci – who many had fancied for a podium after his impressive long runs in testing – after a gamble on a soft front tyre on his Pramac Ducati failed to pay off.

Maverick Vinales made a spirited recovery charge to sixth on the second of the factory Yamahas, a result that looked unlikely after he slipped from his grid slot of 12th down to 15th early on. But the





Spaniard, boosted by set-up changes made on Saturday, was able to climb back up the order with strong pace in the latter stages of the race, passing Dani Pedrosa's Honda as well as the ailing Zarco late on.

The other rider who had been in the thick of the action early on was Suzuki's Alex Rins, but he threw away a likely top-six finish by crashing at mid-distance. That left a struggling Andrea Iannone as the team's top finisher in ninth, with the second Pramac Ducati of Jack Miller completing the top 10.

Lorenzo crashed out of contention on the same lap as Rins, but the three-time premier-class champion was entirely blameless. A brake failure on his Ducati left him needing to jump off his bike to avoid a worse accident; Lorenzo admitted later he was lucky to escape serious injury.

For Aprilia, the opening round was little short of a disaster. Aleix Espargaro had been looking good for a possible top-10 finish until he ran out of fuel on the last lap, dropping to 19th — one place ahead of new team-mate Scott Redding, who was dreadfully slow on his Aprilia debut.

Things were little better at KTM, with Bradley Smith trailing home a distant 18th and Pol Espargaro forced to park up with an electronics glitch. Of the five-strong rookie contingent, Moto2 champion Franco Morbidelli was the best finisher, in 12th. JAMIE KLEIN

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	Ducati	42m34.654s
2	MarcMarquez(E)	Honda	+0.027s
3	$ValentinoRossi({\rm I})$	Yamaha	+0.797s
4	$\textbf{CalCrutchlow}\left(GB\right)$	LCR Honda	+2.881s
5	Danilo Petrucci (I)	Pramac Ducati	+3.821s
6	$MaverickVinales({\sf E})$	Yamaha	+3.888s
7	DaniPedrosa(E)	Honda	+4.621s
8	Johann Zarco (F)	Tech3 Yamaha	+7.112s
9	Andrea lannone (I)	Suzuki	+12.957s
10	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+14.594s
11	TitoRabat(E)	Avintia Ducati	+15.181s
12	$FrancoMorbidelli({\sf I})$	Marc VDS Honda	+16.274s
13	$AlvaroBautista({\sf E})$	Aspar Ducati	+19.788s
14	$HafizhSyahrin({\sf MAL})$	Tech3 Yamaha	+20.2999
15	Karel Abraham (CZ)	Aspar Ducati	+23.287s
16	Thomas Luthi (CH)	Marc VDS Honda	+24.189s
17	Takaaki Nakagami (J)	LCR Honda	+24.554s
18	BradleySmith(GB)	КТМ	+31.704s
19	Aleix Espargaro (E)	Aprilia	+34.712s
20	ScottRedding(GB)	Aprilia	+37.6415
21	$\textbf{XavierSimeon}\left(B\right)$	Avintia Ducati	+46.7065
R	Pol Espargaro (E)	КТМ	15 laps-electronics
R	Alex Rins (E)	Suzuki	12 laps-accident
R	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	Ducati	12 laps-brakes

Winner's average speed 103.639mph Fastest lap Dovizioso 1m55.242s, 104.429mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Zarco 1m53.680s; 2 Marquez 1m53.882s; 3 Petrucci 1m53.887s; 4 Crutchlow 1m54.072s; 5 Dovizioso 1m54.074s; 6 Rins 1m54.339s; 7 Pedrosa 1m54.368s; 8 Rossi 1m54.389s; 9 Lorenzo 1m54.431s; 10 Miller 1m54.449s; 11 Iannone 1m54.619s; 12 Vinales 1m54.707s.

QUALIFYING 11 Miller 1m54.634s; 2 Vinales 1m54.637s; 3 A Espargaro 1m55.140s; 4 Morbidelli 1m55.169s; 5 Syahrin 1m55.258s; 6 Rabat 1m55.273s; 7 Redding 1m55.380s; 8 Luthi 1m55.381s; 9 Abraham 1m55.392s; 10 Smith 1m55.553s; 11 Bautista 1m55.638s; 12 P Espargaro 1m55.706s; 13 Nakagami 1m56.401s; 14 Simeon 1m56.545s.



RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Dovizioso 25; 2 Marquez 20; 3 Rossi 16; 4 Crutchlow 13; 5 Petrucci 11; 6 Vinales 10; 7 Pedrosa 9; 8 Zarco 8; 9 Iannone 7; 10 Miller 6; 11 Rabat 5; 12 Morbidelli 4; 13 Bautista 3; 14 Syahrin 2; 15 Abraham 1

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 25; 2 Honda 20;3 Yamaha 16;4 Suzuki 7.



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Truex (#78) retook the lead

from Busch (#18), who then lost out to Larson

Truex revives his title-winning form

NASCAR CUP FONTANA (USA) MARCH 18 ROUND 5/36

Reigning champion Martin Truex Jr won from pole position, taking all three stage wins in his Furniture Row Racing Toyota.

Truex led 125 of the 200 laps and, while one pitstop during the final stage of the race was slow and dropped him to third, he was able to retake the lead from Kyle Busch with 32 laps to run.

Truex breezed ahead of his fellow Toyota driver from then on and crossed the line 11.685 seconds clear for his first win of 2018. Busch's Joe Gibbs Racing car had stayed in second after Truex got by, until the Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet of Kyle Larson passed him with 19 laps to go.

Larson had earlier made contact with Kevin Harvick on lap 37 in the first stage, which put Harvick in the wall and necessitated repairs to his Stewart-Haas Ford. Harvick, who had won the previous three Cup races, was classified 35th at the finish and nine laps down.

Brad Keselowski was able to get himself into the top 10 during the first stage and, having made it up to second during the final stage, wound up fourth. His Penske Ford team-mates Joey Logano and Ryan Blaney were fifth and eighth respectively.

Denny Hamlin was one of multiple drivers who failed to pass pre-qualifying inspections on Friday, but he clawed his way through the pack and was able to finish sixth in his Gibbs Toyota.

Pernia's perfect start

SUPER TC2000 BUENOS AIRES (RA) MARCH 18 ROUND 1/12

Leonel Pernia and reigning champion Facundo Ardusso made it a one-two for the Renault works team after initial race leader Agustin Canapino retired from the race in his Chevrolet Cruze.

Pernia, a three-time TC2000 championship runner-up and two-time Super TC2000 runner-up, is once again one of the title favourites. He was previously a professional football player in Argentina and the US: "I played football for economic reasons, because as a kid I couldn't afford to race cars, but my passion has always been motorsport."

He was happy with his first win on the former Argentinian GP circuit. "This is a day I'll always remember in my career," he said. "It was a tough race, the track was drying, and in these conditions you can always make mistakes."

Third-placed Mariano Werner was at all times a threat aboard his Peugeot 408. **TONY WATSON**

WEEKEND WINNERS

NASCAR CUP

FONTANA

- 1 Martin Truex Jr Furniture Row Racing Toyota Camry
- 2 Kyle Larson
- Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet Camaro 3 Kyle Busch
- Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry

NASCAR XFINITY FONTANA

1 Joey Logano

- Team Penske Ford Mustang 2 Justin Allgaier
- JR Motorsports Chevrolet Camaro
- 3 Elliott Sadler

MOTO2

- LOSAIL 1 Francesco Bagnaia Kalex Honda 2 Lorenzo Baldassarri Kalex Honda 3 Alex Marquez
- Kalex Honda

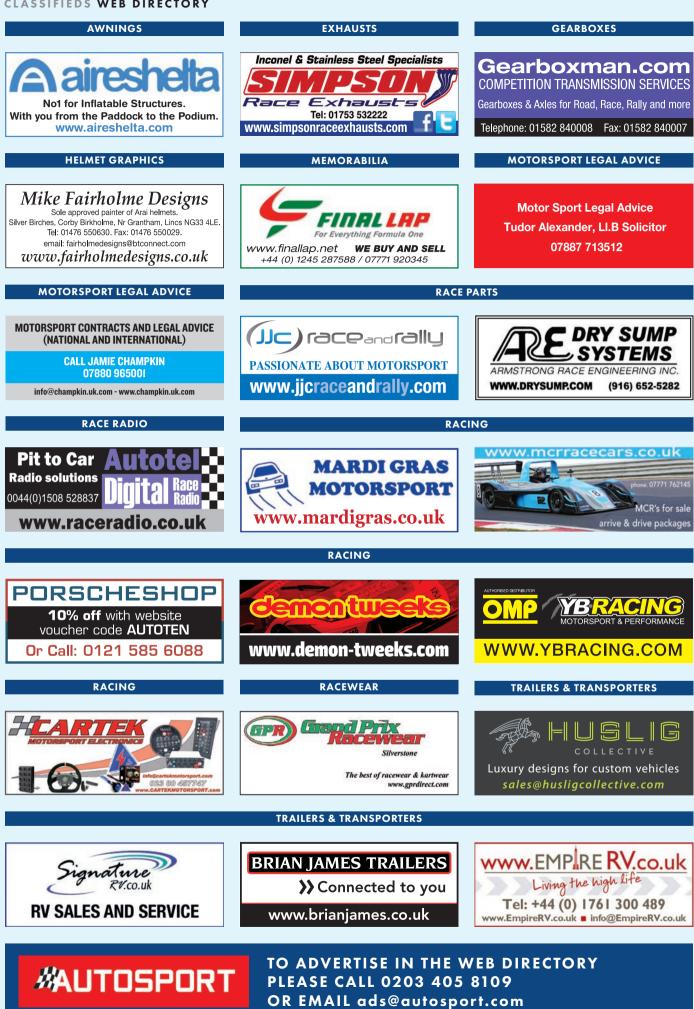
MOTO3 LOSAIL

- L Jorge Martin
- Honda
- Aron Canet
- Honda <mark>3 Lorenzo Dalla Porta</mark>
- Honda

SUPER TC2000

- BUENOS AIRES 1 Leonel Pernia
- Renault Fluence
- Facundo Ardusso
- Renault Fluence
- 3 Mariano Wernei
- Peugeot 408





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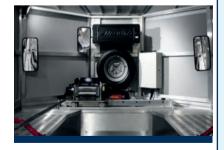


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WHORTON-EALES SWAPS BTCC FOR MINI CHALLENGE

MINI CHALLENGE

British Touring Car Championship racer Ant Whorton-Eales will join the Mini Challenge JCW Championship this year with the Jamsport team.

Whorton-Eales (below) won the Renault UK Clio Cup title in 2016 before graduating to the BTCC to race an AmDTuning.com Audi S3 last season. He also has a history with the Mini Challenge, having won the lesserpowered Cooper Class title in '11.

This year he will head up a multi-car JCW entry from Jamsport, the squad that ran him to the Clio title in 2016.

"I was made an offer that was too

"ANT COULD DRIVE A WHEELBARROW FASTER THAN MOST PEOPLE"



good to turn down by Jamsport," said Whorton-Eales. "I was all set to do the British Touring Car Championship again with AmD Tuning in one of its MGs, but then this came about.

"I spoke to AmD boss Shaun Hollamby and he was very understanding of the situation. Realistically, in the BTCC I wouldn't have been fighting for outright wins in 2018.

"I know how it works and it would have been tough, but in the Mini Challenge I think I can be right in the mix and be up there fighting at the front again hopefully.

"The JCWs are amazing cars and not too far away from a BTCC machine. They are a little bit different in the brakes and in the speed, but that's it. It is very, very close and I know that people will think I am there to be beaten, but I don't see it that way. It will be tough but I am really excited about the challenge."

Jamsport team boss Jamie Going said: "Ant's one of those special drivers who can simply jump into anything and be right at the front – he could probably drive a wheelbarrow faster than most people.

"He's got to be a title contender this year. He's won in almost everything he's done."

Jamsport will run additional cars for Scottish Mini Challenge ace Joe Tanner, reigning Ford Fiesta Junior champion Jack Davidson and series returnee Calum King.

£100,000 Japan drive for JCW Mini champion

MINI CHALLENGE

This year's Mini Challenge JCW champion will win a fully funded season of endurance racing in Japan worth more than £100,000.

The prize is being offered through a new relationship between British Mini Challenge promoter Total Track, Japanese firm Giomic and Chinese organisation Great Drive Group.

Both Giomic and Great Drive Group have ordered F56 JCW Challenge cars from Britain to launch their own versions of the challenge.

As part of the relationship, the champions of each series will be offered the chance to share a funded car in the Japanese Super Taikyu endurance series for 2019.

Super Taikyu (above) caters for both GT



and touring car-style machinery. The three winners will share a new endurance-spec Mini, which is under development at British manufacturer Excelr8 Motorsport.

Mini Challenge UK promoter Antony Williams said: "This has to be one of the biggest prizes in British motorsport, and it's a great way to kick off our relationship with the Far East.

"Motorsport in Asia is rapidly developing and the JCWs were always designed to be a springboard into touring cars. Having the chance to race in Japan for a full season is an amazing opportunity. The British champion will be put on the perfect stage to try to build a career in Asian motorsport and beyond." **ROB LADBROOK**



TCR UK

Reigning Kumho BMW class champion Ollie Taylor will race in TCR UK this year with a Honda Civic run by Team Pyro.

Taylor won the A1 class – the most populous of the Kumho BMW divisions – in an E90 M3, and has been testing a first-generation Civic TCR.

"I looked at Ginettas and other categories but we went with TCR," said Taylor. "Testing has been going well and we've been to Castle Combe, Donington and Silverstone."

It is unclear which Civic Taylor will use this season, as there is a new-generation machine for 2018. Taylor's Pyro-supported team-mate Finlay Crocker has the new car.

"He [Crocker] is going to be at Donington

and Josh Files [ex-Pyro, double TCR Germany champion] is going to do some work with him. So we'll be able to do some back-to-back work. We're not sure what's going to be the best package after the balance of performance is applied.

"I'd like to be in the new car as it has independent rear suspension, whereas the old one has torsion beam.

"Learning front-wheel drive has been a learning curve. We have a bit of experience in the old-shape car now, so we have options either way."

Taylor will be joined on the grid by former British Touring Car racer Howard Fuller, who will compete in a Sean Walkinshaw Racing Civic. JACK BENYON

Fielding tops Toyota GT4 line-up

BRITISH GT

Two Toyota GT86 GT4s will join the British GT grid this season, entered by Steller Motorsport.

Sennan Fielding, who finished second in British F4 in 2016, headlines one entry after switching from racing a Ginetta in VdeV. He is joined by the youngest driver on this year's grid, 16-year-old ex-Ginetta Junior racer Tom Canning.

"It's great to be racing back on British soil," said Fielding, 22. "After getting involved with coaching drivers in sportscar racing in recent months, I'm sure I can add something to the whole effort here too. It's always good to work with emerging talents."

The other car will be shared by a pair of 17-year olds. GT4 returnee Dean Macdonald, who switches from the McLaren he drove in the series last season, will be partnered by single-seater convert Alex Quinn, who took four wins in British F4 last year on his way to finishing fourth in the points.

"After my experience so far in single-seaters it's very different, but GT racing offers a real opportunity for a totally new career track and this programme is an exciting first step on that path," said Quinn.

Steller has been working on the car since 2017 to prepare it for this season, with touring car and sportscar engineer Gary Blackham behind the development.

"With the Toyotas now re-engineered and an array of young talent, we are eager to get the season started," said Blackham. "I'm delighted to bring a two-car effort for the full season. That will help everyone involved to carry the programme forward and be real contenders at the sharp end of a fantastic GT4 field." JACK BENYON





Clarke and Gough join Formula Ford grid

BRSCC NATIONAL FF1600

Teenaged historic racer and Clubmans frontrunner James Clarke will switch to single-seaters this year with an attack on the National Formula Ford 1600 Championship.

Clarke, 17, won his class in the Clubmans Championship in 2017 in a Mallock, and finished second in class in the Historic Sports Car Club's Historic Touring Car Championship in a Lotus Cortina.

Now he will compete in the Scottish and National FF1600 championships in a Mygale SJ08 converted from Duratec to Kent-engined specification and run by MCK Motorsport.

"In Clubmans and Historic Touring Cars I was learning a lot about driving different cars, but perhaps the racing wasn't as close," said Clarke. "Although it was close at times, it was more to do with different cars having different strengths. In Formula Ford it's hugely competitive.

"It's such a different category to what I'm used to that I haven't set any targets. I know to expect that it's going to be competitive."

Clarke has already set his sights on the end-of-season FF1600 blue-riband events at Brands Hatch and Silverstone, citing anticipated familiarity with the car as something that will help him to fight further up the grid.

"I'm almost more focused on the Formula Ford Festival and the Walter Hayes Trophy," said Clarke. "By the end of the year we should be on top of the car and those are events I would really like to do well at."

One rival Clarke will face is 2014 National champion Stuart Gough, who returns to Kevin Mills Racing after last racing with the squad in '04. He was competitive in the Walter Hayes Trophy with the same team last year.

"It's what I know and what I love," said Gough of the National championship, after competing in the Mini Challenge last year. "I know how good the championship is and it gives me the opportunity to go up against some of the more established names, but also some of the young drivers coming through. I know I will be pushed."

Gough will drive one of KMR's Spectrum chassis, alongside Michael Eastwood.

Rapid trio to WDE and Pyro for Clios

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

Three more drivers have been confirmed for the Renault UK Clio Cup, with Jack McCarthy and Lee Pattison contesting another season and Nathan Edwards making his debut.

McCarthy starred during his rookie campaign with Team Pyro last year and took two podiums. He will remain with the Pyro squad, while 2010 runner-up Pattison will again compete with WDE Motorsport.

Edwards has been a regular in Fiestas, finishing fourth in the standings in 2016, and will contest the first round with WDE, but doesn't have the budget for the full season and so will return later in the year.

WDE team boss Wayne Eason said: "Budget will decide when he comes back – it will likely either be just before or after the summer break. It's a real shame [he can't do the full season] as he's already proved he is a very capable driver. We're over the moon to have him as part of the team.

"I'm delighted to have Lee back and with him and Paul Rivett we've got two really good drivers that the likes of Nathan can feed off."

The latest signings take the Clio grid to 18 drivers for the season opener at Brands Hatch. STEPHEN LICKORISH



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Nicosia picks Ginetta GT5

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Ginetta GT5 Challenge race winner Geri Nicosia will take part in a full season of the series this year after joining Optimum Motorsport.

The 18-year old contested the two GT5 rounds that were on the British Touring Car Championship support bill last year at Knockhill and Thruxton, and he won three of the four races that he contested with the JHR Developments squad.

Nicosia, the 2014 Fiesta Junior champion and a race winner in Ginetta Junior in '16, has struck a late deal to race in the series fulltime and is the latest top name to join the near-capacity grid.

"We had a lot of options — in most of the TOCA support categories and British GT — but Optimum Motorsport put the best package together," said Nicosia, who also made one-off appearances in the Toyota MR2 Championship and Hyundai Coupe Cup last year in a bid to upgrade his race licence.

"We only agreed it fairly late so we haven't had a lot of preparation time — I haven't tested the car yet at all.

"It will be difficult [to win the title], but the team should be good and they've won it before. It will be the most competitive field the championship has had in the past few years."

Nicosia joins fellow junior car-racing champions Will Dyrdal and Katie Milner in the packed GT5 entry, as well as world karting champion Brett Ward and former Ginetta Junior frontrunner Scott McKenna. **STEPHEN LICKORISH**

Porsche champ to LMP3

LMP3 CUP

Former Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Tim Bridgman will join 360 Racing's line-up for the opening round of the LMP3 Cup at Donington Park.

Bridgman will share Jason Rishover's Ligier JSP3 with ex-British Formula Ford champion and British Formula 3 frontrunner Jamie Spence because Rishover plans to take part in the London Marathon that weekend.

"We got together after Jason met a friend of mine on holiday in Mauritius,"

said Bridgman, who was a star of the junior single-seater ranks in the 2000s before switching to the Carrera Cup. "It was suggested that I send him my CV, then he called me, we had a chat, and then we tested the car.

"I did a couple of races in Blancpain Asia last year [at Shanghai in a GT₃ Porsche] after an enforced absence. So I am looking forward to get back into racing more, and when Jason mentioned a possible ELMS outing later in the year I was in." **PETER SCHERER**

IN THE HEADLINES

SUPERSTARS UNVEILED

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Dan Ticktum heads the list of drivers who have been selected to join the BRDC's SuperStars programme for this year. Also joining are British Formula 3 champion Enaam Ahmed, British F4 title winner Jamie Caroline, Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Charlie Eastwood and Asian Le Mans Series winner Harrison Newey.

REEVE MOVES TO CLIO JR

Fiesta Junior Championship runner-up Nick Reeve will switch to Renault UK Clio Cup Junior this year. He will remain with Specialized Motorsport, which also makes its debut in the category. He is one of only six drivers currently confirmed for the first round at Silverstone this weekend.

GOODING'S SENIOR BOW

Harry Gooding is aiming to add the senior Fiesta Championship title to the Junior version he secured in 2016, after joining Jamsport. Gooding had planned to contest the new Renault UK Clio Cup Junior series last year before its postponement, but instead combined a part-season in the Fiesta category with the final three Clio Junior weekends.

TIBBS IN CLIO RETURN

Former Clio 182 frontrunner Andy Tibbs will return to the series in 2018. The Norfolk man won three races at Croft and Snetterton during his last full-season assault on the championship in '15. "I just missed it," said Tibbs, who expects to continue racing at the head of the field. "I had a trackday in the middle of last year, took some people round, and you just get the bug again. I'm sure I'll be in the top five – that's where I was before."

CHARITY PRINT FOR HHF

Racer Kevin Kivlochan has produced a limited edition of 50 prints of a painting he did of Shaun Lynn's Willment AC Cobra (below) and sold half of them at the Goodwood Members' Meeting for £50 each, with all proceeds to be donated to the Henry Hope-Frost fund. Orders can be made through the houseofpower. co.uk website in the shop/artwork section.





Ex-Ghinzani Osella-Alfa Romeo to race again

HISTORIC F1

A V12 Alfa Romeo engine will grace Historic Formula 1 events again this season when Richard Hope's Osella FA1E joins the field.

It will be the first time that it has raced since Piercarlo Ghinzani contested one grand prix in the car in 1983.

Originally an FA1C/D, it was converted from Cosworth DFV power to accept an Alfa Romeo 182 rear end, dominated by Autodelta's engine. Enzo Osella's Torinese team subsequently ran two bespoke Tony Southgate-designed FA1Es. First seen at Imola, the car only qualified for the Detroit GP, where it retired, but its cousins made the cut more often.

It subsequently resided in 1977 European and '79 Italian F3 champion Ghinzani's collection, until it was sold by Silverstone Auctions in 2015.

"I like weird, and if nothing else it will sound good," said Hope, who acquired the Osella from Formula Junior racer Crispian Besley.

"I hate it when quirky things get left in the corner. They should be out, even if they only run at the back." MARCUS PYE

Short will not defend MX-5 title

750MC MX-5 CUP

Reigning MX-5 Cup champion Ben Short will not defend his title this year as he focuses on other ventures.

Short will continue to race his Jaguar E-type in the Spa 6 Hours and Le Mans Classic, as well competing in the Citroen C1 Challenge, and has acquired new cars such as the one-of-a-kind 1956 Lister-Maserati.

"We've just bought something really quite special, the Lister-Maserati," said Short. "That's got some pedigree so we're hoping to go and do some really cool stuff like the Monaco Historic."

"With all that stuff going on, in neither this championship or BRSCC [MX-5 SuperCup] can I do enough rounds to win the title. I don't see the point in spending the money unless you've got a chance of winning it."

Short is also currently developing a Mk1 MX-5 rally car, which he aims to compete with in Ireland.

"We haven't actually picked a series yet, we're still developing the car because everyone told me I'm an idiot, using an MX-5," said Short. "But if you look at it, we're now keeping up with the 1.6 Escorts, which was the goal. We just want to get some class wins and some decent overall finishes."

• Ben Miloudi is another 750MC champion who won't be defending his crown this year. The Formula Vee title winner will instead make a limited number of appearances in the series. CHRIS STEVENS

Tordoff debuts Porsche

HISTORICS

British Touring Car Championship racer Sam Tordoff debuted his newly acquired Porsche 356 in the Moss Trophy race at the Goodwood Members' Meeting last weekend.

Tordoff, a Goodwood regular in period touring cars, wanted to have a classic race car of his own and the 1954 car fitted well with his family's Porsche motorsport heritage.

"We love coming to Goodwood and it's great to be here with our own car," said Tordoff, who shared it with his racing manager Tim Sugden in the two-driver race, but the pair failed to finish.

The former Californian car was owned by John Ruston and raced occasionally by Gareth Burnett. Tordoff now plans to contest the Pre '63 GT series and the Le Mans Classic.

Tordoff was also unable to see the chequered flag in the Gerry Marshall Trophy race as the Ford Escort he was sharing with David Devine didn't last the full distance. PAUL LAWRENCE





IS A REVOLUTION IN THE AIR?

New Motor Sports Association chairman David Richards sees the governing body's role shifting to a more enabling one – especially at the grassroots

JACK BENYON

he governing body. In popular perception it's always overlooking disciplines that it ought to be micromanaging to the exclusion of all else, it's perennially hesitant to reinvest funds, and it's inclined to make overly harsh decisions, enforcing brutal miscarriages of justice upon its competitors.

Or so you might think. As it stands, motorsport in the UK doesn't have it that bad when you glance in a sideways direction at how other sports are superintended. But things can always be done better, and that's the mandate of new Motor Sports Association chairman David Richards.

The direction of the governing body under his new leadership could be defined by a simple look at the definition of what a governing body is or, more importantly, *how* it should govern.

"We have, for better or for worse, become a regulatory body," Richards tells me. "That is one aspect, an important aspect, of the MSA's role, especially at the senior level of the sport. But it's certainly less important at the lower levels.

"NOT ONE PAGE OF THE BLUE BOOK IS ABOUT PROMOTING OR MARKETING THE SPORT"

"Anyone who gets a competition licence gets their annual copy of the Blue Book, all 456 pages of it, and all those pages are around how to regulate the sport, how to run the events, how to make sure everything is safe, and I don't decry any of that at all.

"But not one page of that blue book is about promoting or marketing the sport. That has to be the duty of the MSA, albeit not alone, with the support of the motoring clubs, participants it's our duty to be promoting the sport. I think that's what we've missed out on the past decade."

Now, more than ever, motorsport needs help in promoting itself and remaining relevant. It has but a dwindling presence in Fleet Street publications and in the general media, and the same goes for TV – there's less in-your-face motorsport for more general fans. Especially the younger generation.

"There's been a decline in licence holders, in participants, and an ageing profile," adds Richards. "We have to look at ways to reverse that and that won't happen overnight. It'll be a process which will take a while, but we have to start somewhere."

It's fair to say that the grassroots is getting a large amount of Richards's time at the moment, and that's understandable. If there's too much red tape, and too much cost, for people to get into motorsport, then all the help in redefining the promotional aspect would be for nothing.

Perhaps the rallying community has been guilty of setting up grandiose expectations, but there has been a feeling that Richards is going to come in and immediately fix every problem relating to motorsport in the UK, and that's unfair. He's a successful businessman and a world champion, but he isn't a miracle worker.

"Don't look at me as some sort of messiah who is going to solve all the problems,"he says. "This is a collective group that has to work at this through the whole sport. Certainly I can set the direction, help with resources and we can focus attention.

"Grassroots motorsport should be the easiest thing for everyone to participate in. It should not be bureaucratic, it should not be burdened with lots of regulation, it should be cheap and accessible for everyone, just as it was when I started.

"You might say younger people don't have quite the same interests, and perhaps the motor clubs have geared away from some of the grassroots events, or perhaps generally the governing body thinks it's below itself to get involved at this level. I absolutely, totally and fundamentally disagree.

"If we don't get involved at this level, we will not have motorsport in the long run. That for me is the number-one priority, to find out how we're missing out and what can be done to bring people back into the sport."

Richards has picked out groups such as people going corporate karting as ideal candidates to be persuaded into motorsport, and there's already good work being done by Caterham, Radical and MotorSport Vision on its trackday and racing programmes.

There are lots of good entry-level championships out there, and resources to help people entering the sport. With work on how motorsport is marketed and promoted, something the new chairman of the governing body has singled out, perhaps the next generation of competitors, marshals and organisers can be found. It's not just new drivers that are needed — an ageing organising community needs a welcome boost too.

Obviously we still need to hear more detail about how this improvement in promotion will be carried out. But for the sport, the new chairman has ideas that you can get behind. Now it's all about the execution and delivery. *#*



Debut pole for Wesemael gone in a blizzard

DONINGTON PARK RBG SPORTS 1000 MARCH 17-18

On-track running at Donington Park for the first 750 Motor Club meeting of the year was a case of 'blink and you'll miss it'. The entire weekend was abandoned after lunch on the opening day in sporadic blizzard-like conditions, and with forecasts threatening more. Just over three hours of track action, and no races, had been completed. Yet there was still time for something extraordinary to happen in the RGB Sports 1000 qualifying session. Making his debut for Mittell Cars, Christopher 'Chippy' Wesemael set the fastest time in his Mittell MC-53 to bag pole position for the opening race that never was. Wesemael had replaced 2015 champion Scott Mittell, who will instead compete in Bikesports, in the team's driver line-up.

Wesemael took pole by 0.4 seconds, ahead of the Mittell team's chief rival,



reigning champion Billy Albone (Spire GT₃). Wesemael's team-mates Paul Smith and Danny Andrew (who was impeded by a wiring issue and not wanting to push his new engine) were more than a second off his lead.

Most extraordinary of all, this was Wesemael's first car-racing meeting of any sort, as he was making his debut straight out of karting. He noted that the jump required a lot of adaptation.

"It's been more difficult than I would like to admit," he conceded. "It's the high-speed corners and mediumspeed corners that are a bit of an issue for me, just because I'm not used to the downforce and carrying all that speed.

"I got lots of help from everyone here at Mittell Cars. It's been going well."

Wesemael said that the abandonment of the meeting made his pole achievement bittersweet. "I really would have loved to take the car out in the race," he said. "Especially the 25-minute-long race [where Wesemael was to start second behind Albone, based on second-best times].

"I was really looking forward to that, to see if we could have a fight with Billy, and just see what happened. Unfortunately we'll just have to wait until Brands now.

"I was a bit worried. I've done no



starts at all in the car!"

He admitted to being taken aback at the qualifying result. "I was very surprised, actually. I had Scott on the wall with the pitboard and coming round I was about o.5s behind Billy, and I saw the lap was a lot quicker than that one, so it just kind of all came together when it needed to."

Snow was blowing in the air throughout, but Wesemael reckons the outcome wasn't explained by track conditions varying within the session, saying that the grip level changed "not overly". But he did suggest that the unusual circumstances were to his benefit.

"With it being so cold and the snow blowing across constantly, the first section and Craner Curves especially were very slippery. I think that might have played into my hands," he said.

"All these guys have lots of practice on a normal track. With changeable conditions all of us are on more of an even playing field. So that was probably good for me."

Wesemael's pole lap wasn't a case of throwing caution to the wind, either.

"No, being my first race here I hadn't really driven it in the dry at full revs until qualifying, so we were just building it up lap by lap; that's why my fastest lap was a lot quicker than the other ones that I did. >>

SNOW, ICE AND FREEZING TEMPERATURES FORCE MEETING TO BE ABANDONED



The Donington Park meeting had to be abandoned due to the extreme weather, with only the qualifying sessions held in wet and intermittently snowy conditions on Saturday morning, before the decision to cancel the weekend's racing was made.

With the forecast indicating that more snow would fall overnight, Sunday's action was also cancelled as it was considered unfair on the competitors, organisers and marshals to be left waiting in freezing conditions once again.

750 Motor Club competitions secretary Giles Groombridge explained: "The decision was made by the MSA steward and the clerks of the course because they're the people responsible for circuit inspection. The circuit must be free from snow and ice, the verges, all access roads and the paddock must be free from snow and ice. We also have a duty of care to all the marshals standing out in temperatures that were minus eight degrees with the wind-chill too."

Drivers agreed that it was the correct

decision, especially after facing issues in qualifying when several cars spun off as ice began forming on the track surface.

Bikesports racer Adrian Reynard experienced difficult track conditions even before the worst of the weather hit.

"I did the practice then the qualifying, but there were a lot of people going off, changing up into fourth gear and spinning up the rear wheels," he said.

"I looked at the forecast – it was variable so I left about two hours before they cancelled the meeting. I realised it wasn't going to get much better."

The club will attempt to reschedule as many races as it can, but Groombridge admitted that an entire meeting's worth of racing will be tough to fit into the remaining calendar.

"Potentially some of them could be rescheduled at other meetings," he said. "We might be able to squeeze one championship into our September Donington meeting." CHRIS STEVENS



"I just followed the process that we'd worked on with Scott and Mittell Cars, and just put it together at the end."

Indeed, his opening two laps in the session were in the 1m52s range and, aside from one breather on lap five, he chipped down consistently to his best time of 1m37.53s on lap seven.

Even after his impressive performance, Wesemael thinks championship ambitions are beyond him for now.

"Absolutely, all the boys here – Danny, Paul, Billy, all the frontrunners from last season and the midfield – everyone's really quick in this field," he said.

"It's going to be about trying to learn the tracks as fast as possible, and the car, just to try to keep up and see what happens. I'm not going to stand here and say, 'I want to win the championship.' That would be great, but probably not that realistic at the moment." **GRAHAM KEILLOH**



ADRIAN REYNARD STILL BEHIND THE WHEEL IN BIKESPORTS

There was a familiar name among those driving in the 750 Motor Club's Bikesports series at Donington, that of renowned constructor Adrian Reynard, taking part in a Radical SR3.

Reynard started out as a driver and built cars in order to race them, yet it was as a constructor that he really made his name. Reynard's cars dominated Indycars and Formula 3000 and have won races in many other series. So what keeps tempting him back

to this category?

"I'm doing it because I enjoy it, and if I stop enjoying it I won't be doing any more of this," Reynard said.

But he admits that it's not just that – the old habits die hard. "I like the series because the regulations in Bikesports are free enough for me to do just a few little experiments with my car," he added.

"I developed my own rear wing for it, and some other small features that I thought might help improve the lap times as my ability fades."

And for Reynard this freedom is the crucial distinction from the specialist Radical Challenge Championship.

"The Radical championship is far too prescriptive for me, and probably too competitive," he said. "I like to support the 750 Motor Club, and I meet a lot of friends here as well."

Even so, Reynard still has plenty keeping him occupied away from the driving seat, not least Ginetta's LMP1 aerodynamic programme, which he joined recently. His company remains active also in



NASCAR as well as with several IndyCar teams seeking to maximise this year's new aero kit. Reynard also has plans to drive a couple

of his old Formula Fords this year.

"When my Formula Ford 1600 comes back from New Zealand, where I raced it at Hampton Downs, I'm going to rebuild the nose and radiator, which were deficient," he explained. "A 44-year-old radiator didn't cool very well! And the rear uprights' bearings were deficient as well – I made all those mistakes in 1973.

"So I'll just make those a bit more reliable, and I might take it out towards the end of the year for the occasional Formula Ford 1600 race if it fits into a category. It was built in '73 and I think there's a pre-'72 championship, which it probably won't fit into!

"I might drive a 1978 Formula Ford 2000 car which I used to race. I did race that last year at Brands Hatch once on the Grand Prix circuit, but it had been a long time since I raced at Brands. I used to be able to learn circuits quite quickly, but it takes me a bit longer these days!

"It's just a little hobby now. I enjoy still doing some of the things I started nearly 50 years ago."

And he fully intends to keep competing in Bikesports. "I like the SR3," he said. "It's a very comfortable car to drive, with a paddleshift and nice high-revving engine. It's pretty quick and has a reasonable amount of grip. So I'll continue with the 750 Motor Club this year with that.

"I had a big push to win the championship in 2014, but I've since been a bit less aggressive so I miss quite a few races now. I haven't got the same drive and passion. I don't feel I need to prove anything to win, but it's nice to." GRAHAM KEILLOH

Mills leads Legends pack through the Oulton snow

OULTON PARK NATIONAL LEGENDS MARCH 17

Wintry showers played their part in the opening round of the National Legends.

The opening heat was red-flagged when Belgian visitors Guy Fastres and Jean Poncelet rolled in a multiple shunt at Old Hall on the opening lap.

Jack Parker led from the restart and began to tussle with Miles Rudman. Will Gibson had been in the mix too until John Mickel snatched third cresting Hilltop and began attacking the lead duo.

With a lap to go Mickel was second at Old Hall and led at Knickerbrook. But Gibson had followed him through and



made the decisive move to clinch a late win, with Parker completing the podium.

Steve Whitelegg's early break in heat two was eroded by a long safety-car period. But he maintained his advantage over a final two-lap sprint, with Parker holding off Rudman for second after Connor Mills retired on the last lap.

It was almost dark when the grid formed up for the final. Initially the lead quartet paired off, with Mills and John Paterson pursued by Stephen Treherne and Gilles Verleyen.

While the lead duo scrapped, Verleyen caught and tried to split them, but lost out to Parker and Gibson a lap later.

Mills made a break at the front, as the four behind had their own fight. But Paterson spun at Knickerbrook on lap four, which gave Parker space to close on Mills.

Parker briefly nosed ahead a lap later, but Mills soon reclaimed it to take a hard-fought win, while Gibson retook third from Sean Smith on the last lap, having lost the position on the penultimate tour. The sector of th

OULTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

CATERHAM GRADUATES – MEGA/CLASSIC/SIGMA Race 1: Declan Dolan (Mega) Race 2: Declan Dolan (Mega)

CATERHAM GRADUATES - SIGMAX/SIGMAX VCT Race 1: Lee Collins Race 2: Lee Collins

CNC HEADS SPORTS SALOONS Paul Rose (Saker RAPX S1)

NATIONAL LEGENDS Heat 1: Will Gibson Heat 2: Stephen Whitelegg Final: Connor Mills

MG OWNERS CLUB Race 1: David Mellor (MG ZR) Race 2: Simon Kendrick (MGF VVC)

Rose scythes to Sports/Saloon victory

OULTON PARK CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS MARCH 17

Former CNC Heads Sports/Saloons champion Paul Rose won the opening round of the championship in his Saker. Dave Harvey's Locosaki was the early leader in the restarted race, which was red-flagged when Paul Dobson's Locost had a transmission failure, Philip Morris crashed his VW Golf heavily and Graeme Laslett's Lotus Elise was caught up in the melee, all before the first corner. Rose had been fourth into the first

 corner behind Harvey, Danny Bird (Spire) and Garry Wardle (Porsche 997). He passed Wardle into Cascades on the opening lap, with Wardle then spinning at Cascades a lap later. Then Rose ousted Bird and closed on the lead. It took just three laps to take the position, from where Rose built a 21-second advantage.

Harvey had been clear in second, but had a last-lap scrap with the closing Bird after a lock-up at Old Hall.

Jon Woolfitt's turbocharged MK Indy and brother Paul's Lotus Exige had both been in formation in the top four, but both were caught by the Saker of Steve Harris, who was recovering from earlier contact with the Exige.

Harris tried to take both into Old Hall, succeeded, spun on the exit and retired to the pits with a broken splitter, before Paul Woolfitt pitted after a warning flag.

Tony Ellis came through to claim a solid fifth, debuting his Mazda-engined Gemini Elva, with Allan Davies completing the top six in his BMW M3.

Can Monger win in British Formula 3?

Eleven months after his life-changing F4 crash at Donington Park, Billy Monger could be making his F3 debut. A great story, but how well can he do? STEFAN MACKLEY

SHOULD BILLY MONGER BE CONFIRMED for this season's BRDC British Formula 3 Championship, which kicks off next week at Oulton Park, it will be the feel-good story of the motorsport year.

LAT IMAGES

It seemed almost inconceivable that the 18-year-old would ever be able to return to the cockpit of a single-seater competitively. But less than 12 months after his horrific British F4 crash at Donington Park, which led to a double leg amputation, Monger is on the verge of doing just that. He's been testing with Carlin and, although at the time of writing he hasn't been confirmed, it seems that it's only a matter of time until he is. It's an inspiring story if it comes to fruition, and illustrates Monger's determination and positive attitude.

The question of whether he could ever return to racing a single-seater will have been answered, but in its place arguably an even more important one will be asked. How fast will he be? Monger has been on the pace of his team-mates in testing, but has made no secret that it's taking time to adapt to his hand controls. The system involves Monger using a paddle on the steering wheel with his right hand to accelerate, while changing gear up and down with his left hand, as well as using a brake pedal with his right leg.

"I'm still learning [the hand controls] and it's not really something I'm completely used to," he says. "I would say it's harder [to drive like this compared with pedals] - some corners you're on the kerbs, so it's about being smooth with the throttle, but we're doing a lot of testing. I've driven a certain way for 10 or 11 years. It's completely different to how I used to drive before and I've been thrown in at the deep end."

It would be truly remarkable for Monger to be fighting for wins straight away this season, let alone mounting a serious challenge for the title. But the spotlight is on him, so there is a lot of pressure on very young shoulders. "I would like to think when we get to the first round, if there is a grid of 20 cars we're at least in the top five," says Monger. It's a realistic outlook and one "I'VE DRIVEN A CERTAIN WAY FOR 10 OR 11 YEARS. THIS IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT"



that will help to keep expectations in check.

So who will be Monger's strongest competitors? Swede Linus Lundqvist graduates from British F4 with Double R Racing, having finished fifth in the standings with five wins in 2017. "I made my debut at Spa last year [in British F3] with Double R, so I already made the progression into Formula 3 and got the experience from it," he says. "It's a good championship and I think it's going to be a tough one this year. There are still quite a few bits to learn like





the Pirelli tyres compared to the Hankooks [used in British F4] and the aerodynamics."

At Lanan Racing, Kush Maini, younger brother of Haas Formula 1 protege and Formula 2 newcomer Arjun, should also be considered a prospect for the title. The 17-year-old raced in Italian F4 for two years, finishing ninth in the standings last season, and now joins the team that took his older sibling to the runner-up spot in the 2014 BRDC F4 standings.

Word in the paddock is that the Bangalore

ENTRY LIST

D

DRIVER	TEAM
Nicolai Kjaergaard	Carlin
Sun Yue Yang	Carlin
Clement Novalak	Carlin*
Billy Monger	Carlin*
Tom Gamble	Fortec Motorsports
Tristan Charpentier	Fortec Motorsports
Manuel Maldonado	Fortec Motorsports
Krishnaraaj Mahadik	Double R Racing
Linus Lundqvist	Double R Racing
Pavan Ravishankar	Double R Racing
Kush Maini	Lanan Racing
Joshua Mason	Lanan Racing
Jamie Chadwick	Douglas Motorsport
Alexandra Mohnhaupt	Douglas Motorsport
Ben Hurst	Hillspeed
JusufOwega	Hillspeed
Harry Webb	Chris Dittmann Racing
Garry Findlay	Stratton Motorsport*
*yet to be confirmed	

CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT
March 31-April 2	Oulton Park
April 28-29	Rockingham
May 26-27	Snetterton
June 9-10	Silverstone
July 21-22	Spa
August4-5	Brands Hatch
September 22-23	Donington Park
October 13-14	Silverstone

ace has been blistering throughout testing, and he topped the final official test session at Donington Park by 0.632 seconds. OK, testing times need to be taken with a pinch of salt, but Maini is in a bullish mood about his chances. "Obviously I've never raced in an English championship before, the tracks are a bit tricky but definitely really fun," he says. "I think it's going to be a tough year with Linus and a couple more boys in the pack. I'm looking forward to getting stuck in on the first lap. Hopefully I don't need to pass people but we'll see."

Elsewhere, two Britons in the shape of reigning Ginetta Junior champ Tom Gamble and British F4 graduate Harry Webb could also be dark horses for Fortec Motorsport and Chris Dittmann Racing respectively.

But the Brit who will be facing the most pressure this season, not only in British F3 but arguably across national motorsport, will be Monger once his place on the grid is confirmed. He's already overcome the odds once before, so don't be surprised to see him do it again. #

A new way to score points

ONE OF THE BIGGEST TALKING points in BRDC British F3 is a radical format change whereby points will be awarded for positions gained in the second race of the weekend.

Previously, only the top eight finishers from the opening contest would be reversed for the race-two grid. Now, all cars that finish race one - and set a fastest lap within 103% of the quickest – will now be reversed.

Points will then be awarded based on the number of places gained between start and finishing positions, as well as for the race result itself (albeit on a smaller scale than for races one and three of each weekend).

Series boss Jonathan Palmer says: "It will make the racing more interesting. We know that racing can be less than totally captivating, shall we say, for spectators and also it will give drivers more experience."

Teams and drivers are unsure of the change, with many believing it needs to be tried before it can be judged.

With race three's grid formed by a driver's best lap across races one and two,

"We know that racing can be less than totally captivating"

Douglas Motorsport boss Wayne Douglas believes the rules tweak could work. "The problem was the second race was a dummy qualifying session; you had [2017 champion] Enaam Ahmed lifting off, pushing again and then lifting off [to get fastest lap]," says Douglas.

Linus Lundavist believes it will be more fun for the drivers and offer a greater chance for overtaking: "It will be a lot of fun, but from a championship point of view it will be interesting to see how it turns out. I think it's not going to have a massive impact. If you're quick you're going to pick up points at each race with or without it. But some championships have been won and lost by a few points."

N THE MEDIA • TOP FIVE • ARCHIVE • QUIZ



DELVING INTO F1'S RICH



new Formula 1 book to provide something truly different, but *Formula One: The Real Score?* succeeds. First-time author Brian Harvey has two

IT'S RARE FOR A

main aims, one of which he achieves admirably, while the other raises more questions than it answers.

The first is to remind everyone of the existence – and importance of – nonchampionship (or 'Extra-to-Championship' as Harvey prefers) and pre-1950 F1 races. Using the points-paying '58 German Grand Prix (with a field of 12 F1 cars bolstered by Formula 2 machines) and the same year's Argentinian GP (10 cars) as benchmarks, Harvey grades all relevant races – championship rounds or not – and writes short accounts of each. This brings into focus around 400 races that are usually missed, save for Chris Ellard's *Long Forgotten Races* and *Forgotten Races* compilations.

This throws up many gems, such as the

epic battles at the 1958 Aintree 200, '62 Silverstone International Trophy and '74 Brands Hatch Race of Champions. There are easily enough fine events to underline Harvey's point about these being important races, though he does feel the need to explicitly state that case too often.

The book also casts the spotlight on deserving drivers who are often otherwise overlooked, such as Jean-Pierre Wimille – a true great, killed just before the advent of the world championship – and ex-motorcycle star Gary Hocking, who impressed prior to his death at the 1962 Natal Grand Prix. Based on world championship records, he never started an F1 race.

"IT CASTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON DRIVERS WHO ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED"



HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

GOODWOOD 'MARSHALLS' ITS FORCES

Search for Intense Ford Battle Capri v Escort showdown Goodwood does its usual comprehensive job of bringing the best of the weekend's action to those unable to make it to West Sussex. This video features the battle for the lead of the Gerry Marshall Trophy, as Mike Jordan (Ford Capri 3.0S) and Mark Blundell (Ford Escort RS2000) lock horns in spectacular style.



FORGOTTEN HISTORY

But where *The Real Score*? becomes more problematic is when Harvey attempts to use all these races to decide who is the greatest driver. The first issue is with the race grading. It works perfectly to show that some non-championship races had as strong – or better – fields than championship rounds. But to assess the greatest, further grading would be needed. Should the 1955 Belgian GP – dominated by Mercedes, for example – be considered on a par with the '71 Italian GP, which had almost twice the number of starters and in which the top five crossed the line covered by just 0.61 seconds?

There is also no attempt to assess the quality and competitiveness of the machinery — surely one of the most important and difficult factors when judging drivers. The numbers thus still favour those who had the best cars.

Finally, Harvey attempts to factor out reliability with 'likely wins lost'. This is an intriguing and painstaking approach, but has two key flaws. The first is that it's sometimes very difficult to differentiate between a failure due to a driver error and one completely outside their control. The second is that there are some races Harvey suggests might have been won by more than one driver, depending on when the retirements occurred. Deciding who would have won when one of the main contenders went out early is of course very tricky, but simply having two or three winners for a race doesn't really make sense.

Harvey has been attending races since 1957, and demonstrates an impressive amount of research - this book is clearly a 'labour of love'. But that does sometimes mean Harvey's own enthusiasm and subjectivity sometimes gets the better of him too - he clearly has his favourites.

But none of this alters the fact that *The Real Score*? would be a worthy addition to any motorsport fan's library. Harvey should be applauded for bringing so many fine events – and drives – together in one place. It's a great reminder of some of F1's rich forgotten history, and gives enthusiasts yet more food for thought when it comes to the big question: who is the greatest? **KEVIN TURNER**

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX

Formula 1 World Championship **Rd 1/21** Albert Park, Victoria, Australia **March 25 W** Live Sky Sports F1, Sunday 0610.

BBC Radio 5 Live, Sunday 0530. **Highlights** Channel 4, Sunday 1430

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Rd 2/16 Albert Park, Victoria, Australia March 23-25

NASCAR CUP

Rd 6/36 Martinsville, Virginia, USA March 25 Live Premier Sports, Sunday 1730

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP Rd 1/8 Azores Rally, Portugal March 22-24

UK MOTORSPORT

OULTON PARK BRSCC

FF1600, Porsches, ST-XR Challenge, Karts

KIRKISTOWN 500MRCI

March 24

Ford Fiesta Zetec, FF1600, Saloons/GTs, Formula Vee, Ginetta Juniors

BRANDS HATCH BRSCC

March 24-25

F1000, Mazda MX-5s, MX-5 Super Series, BMW Compacts, Fiestas, Fiesta Juniors, Multi Marques, Nippon Challenge, Toyota MR2 Classic, Toyota MR2s, Tricolore Trophy

SILVERSTONE BARC March 24-25

Classic FF1600, Clio Cup Junior, Mighty Minis, Junior Saloons, Hyundai Coupes, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '03 Touring Cars, Pre '05 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons

Loeb wins as Silverstone rallycross track opens



THE OPENING ROUND OF THE BRITISH Rallycross Championship last Saturday featured several visiting entries from the World Rallycross Championship, all eager to sample the brand new 972-metre Silverstone layout ahead of the WRX visit at the end of May. The event took place despite the sub-zero temperatures and snowfall throughout the day.

Sebastien Loeb took victory in his works Peugeot 208 ahead of team-mate Timmy Hansen, with fellow WRX regular Andreas Bakkerud third in his Audi S1.

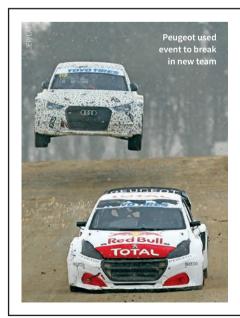
Loeb said that the track, which is 60% loose surface and 40% asphalt, lacked any stretches where the cars could use their power. "The circuit is OK," said Loeb. "But it would be I think more interesting if we could have some very fast sections where we have some fast corners, like in fifth gear with a straight behind, so we could maybe hope to have some more overtaking possibilities.

"Here overtaking is not easy; I think there are some opportunities in some places, but not easy ones. Also, we don't have any kerbs at the moment. It's just like a natural track."

EKS Audi Sport driver Bakkerud countered: "In the wet, like we have had this weekend, the track is very muddy and greasy. But I reckon in the dry there will be a lot of flow in the circuit and I like the jump, particularly because you have a corner right after it, which makes it a real test, and the joker lap is pretty cool. Between Turns 2 and 3, you have to have a pretty good rhythm there to go quickly. The demands are high and I think you will really see a difference between the fast and the slow guys here."

Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle said that the design and format of the track had adhered to the demands of WRX promoter IMG. "We have followed the guidelines set out," he said.

"The fans got a great view and the meeting ran well. The conditions weren't in our favour but the overall reaction was positive. We could put kerbs on the track rather than have tyre stacks marking the corners, but you know what drivers are like – they would soon start making up their own lines if we did that..." MATT JAMES



New Peugeot squad learns fast

JUST A WEEK AFTER reminding the world why he is one of the greatest drivers of his generation, by leading Rally Mexico on his return to the World Rally Championship, Sebastien Loeb embarked on a rather different proposition at Silverstone.

Having taken the operation of its World Rallycross programme in-house for 2018, Team Peugeot Total used the British RX opener not only to learn Silverstone's new rallycross layout ahead of the British round of World RX in May, but also to give its engineers and technicians a rallycross workout.

The continuous turnaround of its 208 WRXs in short timeframes for the qualifying races and finals gave the former LMP1 and Dakar Rally staff a taster of what's to come this season, and Loeb dominated the final to claim his first rallycross victory since the Latvian WRX round in 2016.

It was Loeb's team-mate Timmy Hansen who made the best start from the front row, nosing ahead into Turn 1. Both Peugeot drivers ran deep, allowing qualifying pacesetter Andreas Bakkerud to attack Loeb for the lead on the inside, but Loeb held on.

Having moved ahead of Hansen's 208 at the start, Bakkerud's Audi lost second to Hansen as the joker strategies played out. Five-time BRX champion Julian Godfrey finished fourth in a Mitsubishi Mirage, with Steve Hill fifth in his Mitsubishi Evo X. Triple British Rally champion Mark Higgins made his BRX Supercar debut and ran fifth on lap one, but his race ended shortly after with a broken driveshaft. **HAL RIDGE**



AHEAD OF THIS YEAR'S FORMULA 1 PRE-SEASON, Red Bull revealed the RB14 in a striking and favourably received blue, silver and black update to its CamoBull design from 2015. But sadly the team replaced it for in '18. So, inspired by the short life of that bold colour scheme, here are five rare F1 liveries.

LOTUS, JAPANESE GP 1977

One of the most iconic F1 liveries of all time is the famous gold-and-black of the Lotus team during its John Player Special sponsorship era. So, if you look closely at this example, you'll see that it is indeed a Lotus 78, albeit one that was painted in the red of the main sponsor's parent Imperial company for the 1977 season finale.





FERRARI, ITALIAN GP 2001

BAR, CHINESE GP 2004

Arguably one of BAR's most

A touching one-off livery was used by Ferrari at its home race in 2001, just five days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks

in New York and Washington. While a modern F1 car with no logos on would generally be unthinkable, Ferrari poignantly did just that - it stripped its cars of all sponsors and painted their noses black as a mark of respect.



Following a fallout with the Italian authorities, Enzo

FERRARI, US/MEXICAN GPs 1964

Ferrari declared in 1964 that his cars would not race in the

country's national colours anymore. For the final two races of that season his famous scarlet machines ran in the blue-and-white of 'North American Racing Team' – which John Surtees carried to the world title.



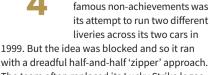


At the 2008 Brazilian Grand Prix - David Coulthard's final F1 race – the Scot's car was

painted white to support Red Bull's 'Wings For Life' charity. The decision to allow a team to run a one-off livery on a single car to help highlight a good cause earns this example the #1 slot in this list. Sadly, Coulthard failed to last the opening lap.



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with a dreadful half-and-half 'zipper' approach. The team often replaced its Lucky Strike logos in China, and in '04 went all out with this design for Anthony Davidson's Friday running.

FINISHING STRAIGHT

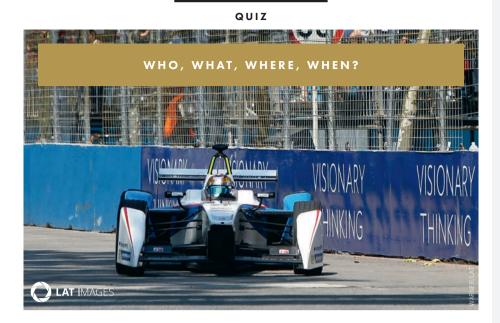
FROM THE ARCHIVE

The #19 Ferrari 512S shared by Mario Andretti and Arturo Merzario started the 1970 Sebring 12 Hours from pole position and looked set to seal a dominant victory until the gearbox failed after 227 laps while Merzario was at the wheel. But Ferrari was determined to win a race that was not running smoothly for the rival Porsche 917s, so Andretti was switched to the #21 car of Ignazio Giunti and Nino Vaccarella. In the dramatic closing laps Andretti charged back into the lead and, despite having to stop for a last-gasp splash and dash, finished 22 seconds ahead of the underdog Porsche 908/2 of Steve McQueen/Peter Revson.





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



WHO AM I?

This content Parisian was given his big break by a minnow that would later go on to rule the pond.

He was shaken but not stirred in his junior career and his title win led to a long and popular career in the top flight.

But it will be through treading the boards with a gypsy that he'll be most fondly recalled. He took a teapot to the top but was cruelly forced out in the Garden of England when he was on the verge of setting a new record.

In between there was a glorious period when he was a genuine contender, although he ultimately never finished higher than fourth in the points.

A tin-top postscript took him to Milan, Munich and ultimately Stuttgart. He now makes the occasional inappropriate outbursts from behind the mic for his national TV carrier.

ON THIS DAY

Which F1 legend scored his first podium on this day in 1992?

2 How many teams did Andrea de Cesaris race for in Formula 1?

3 What was Mauricio Gugelmin's best qualifying effort in the 1992 Jordan-Yamaha?

4 Today is Roberto Mehri's birthday. What was his best F1 result?

5 Peter Revson died on this day in 1974. Where was the American's only F1 pole?



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Robert Doornbos in the Superleague Formula Corinthians car at the Assen street demo, May 2010; **Who am I** Nigel Mansell; **Name the helmet** Stefano Modena; **Quick quiz** 1) Arrows 2) Riccardo Patrese

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE



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Autosport, ISSN number 0269946X, is published Autosport, ISSN Humber 0289940, IS published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG, United Kingdom. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431 Subscription records are maintained at Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent. ailing agen

Licensing and Syndication Stuart Williams

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Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 28 Planetary

is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond,

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Trading as Autosport Media UK. Publishing, trade and

CIRCULATION TRADE ENOUIRIES ENQUIRIES Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000.

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