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APRIL 26 2018

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Can Hamilton tame Merc's
latest troublesome racer?

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MERCEDES HAS SEVERAL ISSUES TO SOLVE IN 2018

In the fifth year of the hybrid-engine rules in Formula 1, we finally have what we've been waiting for: three teams quick enough to be in the mix at the front. With Ferrari and Red Bull now applying pressure, Mercedes' weaknesses are proving more costly.

Strategic conservatism cost Lewis Hamilton victory in the Australian Grand Prix, a better shot for Valtteri Bottas in Bahrain, and the chance to salvage Hamilton's weekend in China.

It's not implausible that Mercedes could have won all three races had the team played its cards differently, but it's not just calls from the pitwall that are hindering the Silver Arrows. As Edd Straw shows in our cover piece (page 24), the W09 struggles on the softer Pirelli tyre compounds. Just as the 2017 car was something of a diva – very quick when it was happy, truculent when it was not – this year's car is giving the team some headaches.

Interestingly (and as he has pointed out himself), Hamilton is struggling more than team-mate Bottas when the car is not at its best. It's surprising because most great drivers, of which Hamilton is surely one, can usually extract more from a weak car than drivers who are merely good. A mitigating factor for Lewis is that Bottas has always been strong in low-grip conditions, which is essentially what the Mercedes drivers face when the W09 cannot cajole its tyres into the right temperature range.

Nevertheless, Hamilton and Mercedes will need to get on top of the problem, just as they did last year. If Red Bull remains in the hunt, gaining any lost ground could be tricky – and there's no guarantee that Ferrari and Sebastian Vettel will self-destruct in the way they did after the summer break last season.



Kevin Turner

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HONE
LAT IMAGES

FUEL LIMIT RAISED TO BOOST

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 races will be faster next year after the F1 Strategy Group and F1 Commission agreed at their meetings in Paris last week to increase race-fuel allowance from 105 to 110kg in 2019, “in order to be able to use the engine at full power at all times”.

The change, now set to be ratified by the FIA World Motor Sport Council, has been welcomed by F1 teams. They have faced increased fuel consumption due to the higher downforce levels and faster lap times generated by last year's aerodynamic changes. A combination of extra drag and more time spent on the throttle has meant that at the higher-consumption venues, 105kg is now seen as being right on the limit, unless a safety-car intervention helps out. That has put an extra emphasis on fuel saving in races – something that has not gone down well with fans when referenced in radio messages.

Although some may argue that increasing the fuel allowance in the sixth year of the current formula goes against the green credentials that the FIA has espoused, the consensus is that what is a relatively small change will take the edge off the consumption issue for the less-efficient engine packages, and improve the show by allowing drivers to push harder.

Meanwhile, those teams currently benefiting from being more efficient will retain a slight advantage by starting races with less fuel weight than rivals.

Also confirmed after the Paris meetings is a late May deadline for finalising the 2021 power-unit regulations. In a statement, the FIA noted only that the '21 engines will still be 1.6-litre V6 turbo hybrids, but with no MGU-H. This basic format was first outlined, but with more detail, on October 31 last year. The fine print remains the subject of debate, with sources indicating that the FIA and Liberty have different views on some aspects of the final package. The FIA says that its Technical Department “will now meet with current and potential power unit manufacturers to discuss in more detail, with a view to concluding the 2021 regulations by the end of May”.

Rule changes confirmed for 2019 are the separation of the weight of the car and driver – with an 80kg minimum for driver and ballasted seat – and the use

**“THE FIA STRESSED
THAT IT WANTS A
DECISION BY THE
END OF APRIL”**

T FLAT-OUT F1...

of biometric gloves for safety reasons.

Meanwhile, there was further debate on proposed aerodynamic changes for 2019 to facilitate overtaking. The FIA has been working with F1's technical team, under Pat Symonds, to find ways of making it easier for drivers to follow the car ahead. Research suggests that 'out-washing' front-wing-endplate elements, designed to direct airflow around the front wheels, have a detrimental affect on the following car.

There is a move to have these elements removed in 2019, but not all teams agree with the principle, and some technical bosses have argued that it is already too late to make such a change. A bigger rear-wing flap — and thus more-powerful DRS — are also being examined.

The FIA has stressed that it wants a decision by the end of April, which is the official deadline for 2019 rule changes. After that, unanimity is required. Teams are helping by conducting extra CFD research on the problem that is outside the usual restrictions they face for current car development. The governing body noted that "discussions will continue on proposals relating to aerodynamics, with a view to taking a decision by the end of April, once research being conducted by the FIA, in consultation with the teams, has been concluded".

ADAM COOPER

FUEL IN

2021 PLANS WILL 'END TWO-TIER F1'

Force India chief Otmar Szafnauer reckons the proposals for 2021 outlined to the teams in Bahrain this month will lead to an end of the current "two tiers" of F1.

Chief operating officer Szafnauer believes that the plans, which include a suggested cost cap and a modification to how funds are distributed, will transform F1 into a series from one in which "the person who can spend the most wins to the person who spends the smartest wins".

While Mercedes boss Toto Wolff has said that the proposed \$150million budget cap is not achievable, Szafnauer disagrees on the grounds that his team has finished fourth in the constructors' table for the past two years with a spend beneath the FIA's figure.

"We spent significantly lower than what that target is," he said. "You've got to compromise. Maybe the right compromise is everyone is equally happy or equally unhappy. For us, ideally the target should be lower but that would be unfair to somebody else."

SCOTT MITCHELL

...but does it really need changing?

FORMULA 1

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff believes that the recent entertaining races in Bahrain and China should act as a warning to not make "erratic" decisions about Formula 1's future.

In addition to the major changes planned for 2021, efforts are currently under way to change next year's aerodynamic package to help boost overtaking, a direct reaction to an uneventful opening race in Australia.

"It shows that we are a little bit erratic with our decisions, and one race makes people try to do things that maybe are sometimes not necessary," said Wolff (below). "This is how Formula 1 always was. We had a first stint [in China] that you could have judged as being boring, and we had a second half of the race that was unbelievable motor racing.

"We just have to accept it. There are good football games, and there are bad football games. [In China], first half was not good, second half of the match was great excitement."

Asked if the recent dominance by Mercedes had been the biggest issue, he joked: "I wish we were back in the past and had that situation..."

Force India team principal Bob Fernley agreed that changes should be properly considered, while also suggesting that F1 should take the opportunity to introduce elements of the proposed 2021 package earlier, when possible.

"We should let it roll a little bit longer, and see where we go," he said. "There are other things that we could look at and start introducing leading towards the 2021 programme."

"Fundamentally we're very close to it being there. The focus should be on how we can start to bring in the 2021 programme and start getting the benefits of that rather than fixing something that's not really broken."

ADAM COOPER





Mercedes explains why it didn't pit Hamilton in China

FORMULA 1

Mercedes chief strategist James Vowles has explained the factors that led to Lewis Hamilton not pitting under the safety car during the Chinese Grand Prix.

Hamilton was running fourth, behind Max Verstappen and ahead of Daniel Ricciardo, when the safety car was deployed on lap 31. Both Red Bulls were called in, with Ricciardo capitalising on using soft-compound Pirellis that were 13 laps fresher than Hamilton's mediums to climb from sixth to win.

Had Hamilton pitted, he would have remained behind Verstappen but ahead of Ricciardo, although it is touch and go whether he would have fallen behind Kimi Raikkonen.

"At that point cars weren't really overtaking, even when there was a difference in compound between them," Vowles said in a Mercedes video. "We had Kimi in front [of Hamilton] on the soft tyre, no difference between the two cars, we couldn't even get close."

"Verstappen was on the ultrasoft tyre [in the first stint], a tyre that was very sensitive and very difficult, and neither Kimi nor Lewis could make any inroads into him at all. The difference between compounds wasn't working out."

"Under that safety-car condition we always review how many positions we can

potentially gain, and how many positions we may lose. So first of all, what would we have gained? Verstappen ahead, we knew there was a chance they would come in with the safety car, and it would put Lewis back up into a podium position if we can take that medium to the end of the race and defend against those cars behind us."

"The medium on our car was working very, very well. Indeed we knew that you could do 40 laps on it. So the first question is, is a 10-lap-old medium going to suffer? The next question is, how many positions are we going to lose behind us?"

"We didn't believe, based on the earlier evidence, that there would be enough performance differential for a soft to overtake a medium, even one that's 10 laps old. The reality is that both Red Bulls were extraordinarily quick on that tyre and were able to just scythe through the field."

While Mercedes believes Hamilton is unlikely to have been able to use fresh softs to charge to the front, not least because of concerns about managing the temperature of the rears on that compound in the first stint of the race, it would have made it far more difficult for Ricciardo to pass. Potentially, had he been able to keep the Australian behind, it would have allowed team-mate Valtteri Bottas to hold onto the lead.

EDD STRAW

Electric Teslas kick off at Jerez

ELECTRIC PRODUCTION CAR SERIES

The Electric Production Car Series will kick off at Jerez in November before visiting the UK for a Silverstone round in September 2019 as part of its inaugural eight-round season.

The spec Tesla series, which has been sanctioned by the FIA, gets under way in Spain on November 3-4 before taking in rounds at Paul Ricard (in February or March 2019), the Nurburgring (June 29), Assen (July 20-21), Silverstone (September) and the Algarve Circuit (October 12-13). Two rounds are yet to have venues assigned, although it is understood that discussions are ongoing with tracks outside Europe.

"This is a very exciting day for all of us who have worked so hard behind the scenes to prepare for our inaugural season," said Electric GT CEO Mark Gemmell. "Without a doubt, we have secured some of the most exciting European tracks for our first season of the Electric Production Car Series and this gives us a great platform to further expand the championship."

"We have received a great deal of interest from circuits around the world excited by the possibilities that electric racing brings. We've got lots more news to come very soon."

Ahead of the first round, the teams competing in the EPCS will take part in a warm-up event at the Pau Arnos permanent circuit – close to the Pau street track – which will take place behind closed doors over the weekend of October 26-27.

Subsequent rounds will consist of one 20-minute practice session, an hour-long qualifying, a 60km day race and a dusk race of the same distance.

Series organiser Electric GT is "currently in open discussions with several investors to close the first institutional fundraising round and complete the project's financing before its definitive launch this autumn", according to an official statement.

The racing versions of the Tesla, to be known as the Model S P100D, will have a maximum power output of 585kW, equivalent to 785bhp. The first signing is ex-Formula Palmer Audi and Scandinavian Touring Car racer Emma Kimilainen – the Finn will compete with Hispano-Swedish squad SPV Racing.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS





PIKES PEAK Volkswagen Motorsport has begun testing its first factory car since departing the World Rally Championship at the end of 2016, with a view to defeating Rhys Millen's electric record of 8m57.118s for the 12.42-mile Pikes Peak Hillclimb course. Romain Dumas, who will drive the I.D. R at the June 24 event in Colorado, gave the all-electric, 680bhp four-wheel-drive machine its shakedown at the Ales track in France on Monday. **Photograph by Volkswagen**

Palmer tipped for last-minute GP3 seat

GP3 SERIES

Formula Renault Eurocup runner-up Will Palmer is strongly tipped to contest the GP3 Series with Dutch team MP Motorsport after being a surprise late addition to the final pre-season test at Barcelona last week.

This wasn't the first GP3 test for 2015 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Palmer (right, top) – the younger brother of ex-Formula 1 driver Jolyon drove with Arden during the post-season GP3 running in Abu Dhabi last year. But he had not previously taken part in any of the sessions held in 2018. Now sources indicate that he is set to join MP in the series, which kicks off supporting next month's Spanish GP.

Palmer's best performance across the four sessions was 13th position.

ART Grand Prix's dominance of the series – which is going into its final year in 2018 – looks set to continue, with three of its drivers completing a clean sweep of the times during the Barcelona running.

The first day of testing was affected by dirt on the track thanks to a recent World Rallycross event at the circuit,

with Leonardo Pulcini topping the times for Campos Racing. Drivers didn't even attempt to use slicks until late in the morning.

Times tumbled on the following day, with ART's Anthoine Hubert (right, bottom) setting the fastest time. Ferrari junior Callum Ilott was narrowly pipped on both days as he looks set to battle Hubert and another team-mate, fellow F3 convert Jake Hughes.

JACK BENYON AND MARCUS SIMMONS

TOP 10 TIMES

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Anthoine Hubert (ART)	1m31.751s
2	Callum Ilott (ART)	1m31.780s
3	Jake Hughes (ART)	1m31.983s
4	Dorian Boccolacci (MP)	1m32.049s
5	Leonardo Pulcini (Campos)	1m32.073s
6	Nikita Mazepin (ART)	1m32.290s
7	Tatiana Calderon (Jenzer)	1m32.378s
8	Giuliano Alesi (Trident)	1m32.383s
9	Julien Falchero (Arden)	1m32.418s
10	Niko Kari (MP)	1m32.479s



BTCC star Jordan joins WRX field for Silverstone round

WORLD RALLYCROSS

Former British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan will compete in his home round of the World Rallycross Championship at Silverstone next month as part of a three-event 2018 programme with the MJP Racing Ford Fiesta team.

Jordan began his career in rallycross, and has made ad-hoc appearances in WRX since the series' inaugural season, finishing on the podium at Lydden Hill in 2014.

Now he rejoins the Austrian MJP team – with which he made the semi-finals at Lydden last year (left) – to pair up with Finn Toomas Heikkinen in 2018-spec Fiesta Supercars. “Max Pucher [MJP owner] got in touch about doing one or maybe more rounds and obviously my home event makes sense,” Jordan told Autosport. “I’m not going to turn down that opportunity. I love driving these cars and I really enjoy being part of a world championship at my home event.”

“I won’t have driven the circuit at Silverstone but, while I’m sure it’s tricky in some ways, it’s not like going to a really specialist track like Holjes with no testing there. I think we can be pretty strong and my aim is to get into the semi-finals again.”

As well as the Silverstone event, Jordan will compete in the French round at Loheac and the German event at Estering later in the year.

HAL RIDGE



TOP 3

MUSTANG VARIATIONS

The Ford Mustang has been raced since the 1960s. Not that you'd guess any lineage looking at the various different concepts to have sported the famous name



#1 TRANS-AM

This classic-shaped Mustang carried Parnelli Jones and Ford to five victories from 11 races in the 1970 Trans-Am series – very much the heyday of this form of racing. Jones lined up alongside George Follmer in the Bud Moore-run Boss 302s to give the Blue Oval title glory in a field that included Mark Donohue and Peter Revson in Roger Penske-run AMC Javelins.



#2 IMSA GTO

Ford guru Jack Roush developed this Mustang (like the Trans-Am machine, pictured at the Goodwood Festival of Speed) for the GTO class of the hugely successful IMSA series. Young Canadian single-seater ace John Jones drove one to title glory in 1985, and Scott Pruett followed up with the championship in '86. There was also a prototype Mustang GTP car.



#3 GT AND LE MANS

Remember the Saleen Mustangs that invaded Europe from the States in the late 1990s? Run by the Saleen Allen Speedlab Racing team of top US racer Steve 'Gas' Saleen and comedy TV actor Tim Allen, it brought the Mustang name back to Le Mans. The car pictured here is the machine of Saleen, Price Cobb and Carlos Palau in the 1997 Silverstone FIA GT round.

IN THE HEADLINES

BARRICHELLO TUMOUR

Ex-Ferrari Formula 1 star Rubens Barrichello has revealed that it was a tumour on his neck that caused his health scare earlier this year. The Brazilian was rushed to hospital with severe headaches in February, and later had the tumour – which was benign – removed between the early rounds of the V8 Stock Car Series, in which he competes.

ROSBERG'S ACADEMY

Nico Rosberg, the 2016 F1 World Champion, has set up the Rosberg Young Drivers Academy to help promote junior talent. The first drivers signed up to the Petronas-backed initiative are 13-year-old Briton Taylor Barnard and 18-year-old Italian Lorenzo Trivisanutto, who will be run in karting by Rosberg's old kart team boss Dino Chiesa.

BOOTH LEAVES F1

Toro Rosso director of racing John Booth has quit the team and will now focus on the World Endurance Championship activities of the Manor team that he founded. Manor has completed the line-up for its LMP1 squad, with McLaren F1 test driver and NIO Formula E racer Oliver Turvey partnering Oliver Rowland and Alex Brundle in one of the Yorkshire operation's Ginetta-Mecachromes.

OSTBERG CITROEN RETURN

Norwegian Mads Ostberg will return to the factory Citroen team for the next two European rounds of the World Rally Championship in Portugal and Sardinia, joining regular drivers Kris Meeke and Craig Breen. Ostberg drove a C3 WRC to sixth place on February's Rally Sweden.

MA IN FOR FILIPPI

Formula E team NIO has dropped Luca Filippi and will replace him with series part-timer Ma Qing Hua for this weekend's round in Paris. Filippi's best result in his rookie season had been 13th position.

EKSTROM BACK FOR ONE

Audi DTM fan favourite Mattias Ekström will get a 'farewell' outing in this season's opening round at Hockenheim. The Swede, a two-time champion, has stepped down from the series to focus on his World Rallycross commitments. Audi will expand to a seventh car for the occasion.

NODA SETS UP F3 TEAM

Hideki Noda has become the latest in a long line of Japanese ex-F1 drivers to become a team boss. Noda Racing made its debut in last weekend's opening round of the Japanese F3 Championship at Suzuka, with Australian Jake Parsons driving. He took two National Class wins, but was the only starter.



Mustang gets nod for Cup

NASCAR

NASCAR's worst-kept secret is now official: Ford will bring the Mustang name to the 2019 Cup series. And with Chevrolet having launched its Cup Camaro for 2018, it means a revival of the Mustang-versus-Camaro battle.

"We had started our new Mustang before Chevy came for submission with their Camaro," said Ford Performance global director Mark Rushbrook. "We were actually very happy when we saw that Chevy was bringing the Camaro because we knew with our Mustang it would be great to have those two nameplates on track at the Cup level racing each other."

History is always a goldmine in NASCAR, but look beyond the narrative and the Mustang is important for several reasons. Gone are the traditional NASCAR stock cars: North America's star makes have brought sports cars to compete.

It's also the latest blow in an aerodynamics war. Toyota's then-new Camry stole a march in this area last season, helped by its aggressive strategy of a new car every two years. Chevrolet then hit back with the 2018 Camaro. That also put a renewed focus on Ford and its increasingly dated Fusion, and rumours swirled that the Fusion would be retired at the end of '18 after five years of service and small updates.

Last year, Ford's inability to challenge Toyota outside of restrictor-plate races became such an issue that Team Penske and Wood Brothers demanded improvements to the Fusion.

It's believed that this led to some engine refinement, as well as some other tweaks,

and a further olive branch came thanks to increasingly stringent inspection rules. Gone are the old templates – which were rife for circumvention – and in came the new laser-based system.

The result? The oldest car on the grid has now won four of the nine races to date, while Chevrolet hasn't tasted victory since the season-opening Daytona 500. Heavyweight Hendrick Motorsports has spent most of the season grappling with the new Camaro and seven-time Cup champion Jimmie Johnson is only just looking like he's back on track.

Ford, though, is undeterred by the risks of a new car just as its current model hits top form. "I think this is good timing for us, especially as we look at how the Fusion is still performing, with four race wins so far this year early in the season," said Rushbrook. "We didn't want to bring out a new car until we knew we could do it right and make a good step forward. We think we've got the tools and the team in place now that we can deliver that for 2019."

It's a similar story in Australia, where the Mustang will replace the Falcon FG-X in Supercars in 2019 thanks a technical alliance between Tickford Racing and DJR Team Penske in developing the car (below).

TOM ERRINGTON



Alabama's inclement weather meant that the conclusion to the IndyCar race took place too late to make Autosport's early-section press deadline, so our report had to find another home...



LePAGE
LAT IMAGES

Newgarden grows and flowers in the rain

INDYCAR SERIES
BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK (USA)
APRIL 22-23
ROUND 4/16

Wet, dry, wet again – nothing, it seems, can faze the remarkable Josef Newgarden, whose second win from the first four rounds of the 2018 IndyCar Series has shot him to the top of the championship standings. It also continued his remarkable relationship with Barber Motorsports Park, the track that twists and turns for 2.38 miles and 17 turns through the Birmingham, Alabama countryside, like a cross between Mid-Ohio and Cadwell Park.

His first IndyCar win came here for CFH Racing in 2015, he muscled his way back onto the podium in '16, he got lucky last year when leader and Penske team-mate Will Power got a puncture while leading and gifted him victory in the closing stages. But this triumph – his ninth in all – was as hard-earned as that initial win.

Newgarden beat four-time Barber polesitter Power to pole position by a scant 0.0128 seconds and led the increasingly rain-soaked opening stanza on Sunday, while Power aquaplaned into the pitwall on a restart. The race was subsequently red-flagged and failed to restart that day, despite IndyCar's and the track services' best efforts to clear the standing water that had caused severe visibility issues for the drivers.

On Monday, the teams returned for a

75-minute timed race, and in the dry, on new alternate-compound Firestones, Newgarden soared away from his closest pursuers – Sebastien Bourdais in his Dale Coyne Racing entry, the Andretti Autosport machines of Ryan Hunter-Reay and Alexander Rossi, and the Schmidt Peterson Motorsport cars of James Hinchcliffe and ever-impressive rookie Robert Wickens.

By the time he made his first pitstop for primary rubber, Newgarden held a 12s lead, and such was his pace advantage on fresh tyres that by the time that closest pursuer Bourdais had stopped five laps later, the Penske driver was 25s up the road.

The only way to combat such dominance would be a one-stop strategy, which would be attempted by Coyne with Bourdais and Chip Ganassi Racing with Scott Dixon. The return of spits of rain – and the track's seeping 'weepers' – ended that plan. Penske president Tim Cindric called Newgarden to pit while slicks still held an advantage over wet tyres, and Newgarden appeared to show great discipline to then look after his wet-weather Firestones in these conditions, even allowing Hunter-Reay ahead.

Soon it became clear it would be near-impossible to stay on track without treaded tyres, and with less than a dozen minutes remaining Hinchcliffe, then Hunter-Reay and Wickens, ducked into pitlane. Bourdais, 11s ahead of Newgarden, and Dixon 11s behind, kept on rolling the dice, and just about clung to the shiny track surface but,

by the time they gave up the unequal struggle, Bourdais' lead was down to 4s and these two four-time champions had slipped out of podium contention.

Newgarden's lead over new second-placed man Hunter-Reay was now 19s, and the winner admitted that he hadn't been quite as careful as he'd intended with protecting his wet rubber on a not-quite-wet surface.

"It seemed like smooth sailing for the most part," commented the #1 Penske star. "But then that rain crept in and I couldn't believe how long everyone stayed out. It was really risky... but I understand why they were doing it. The problem is, we put the rains on a little bit earlier to protect [the net lead] and I kind of fried the fronts because, you know, these things aren't designed to work in the dry. I kinda overcooked the front end. And then I had to deal with that when the rain actually came. Fortunately we had a big gap. That's really what I think helped us win the race – just building that gap over the beginning part."

Two-time Barber winner Hunter-Reay could be reasonably content with runner-up position on this occasion. Not only had he been easily able to stretch away from the Schmidt Peterson pair of Hinchcliffe and Wickens in the wet final stint, but he had also outpaced his erstwhile points-leading team-mate Rossi throughout the weekend.

In fact, the Long Beach winner had a bit of a nightmare by his high standards, having clawed his way into fourth in the



wet Sunday portion of the race, and then mixed it up with the SPM cars in the dry on Monday while running scuffed reds (alternate tyres). He stopped for fresh reds and left them on for just 14 laps, before stopping for more primaries, just after the rain returned. He lasted just 10 laps before he could make a third stop for the inevitable wets, and compounded his delay with a spin, resulting in 11th place.

Bourdais and Dixon thus salvaged fifth and sixth places, 0.081s apart after a drag race out of the final turn, while Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing duo Graham Rahal and Takuma Sato were seventh and eighth after a very subdued weekend.

Completing the top 10 were Simon Pagenaud (Penske) and Marco Andretti (Andretti Autosport) who had gone off-strategy on Sunday with early stops, just before the red flag was flown. Their gamble never got a chance to pay off, but it's hard to imagine they, or indeed anyone, would have had an answer for Newgarden this weekend.

DAVID MALSHER

RESULTS ROUND 4/16, BARBER (USA), APRIL 22-23 (82 LAPS - 188.600 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	2h01m14.4486s
2	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+9.9607s
3	James Hinchcliffe (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	+15.5389s
4	Robert Wickens (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	+17.6794s
5	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	+26.8897s
6	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+26.9768s
7	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+30.1194s
8	Takuma Sato (J)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+30.5526s
9	Simon Pagenaud (F)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+42.4618s
10	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+44.6892s
11	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+45.2334s
12	Matheus Leist (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+57.9291s
13	Zach Veatch (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+1m05.9298s
14	Jordan King (GB)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1m20.0118s
15	Spencer Pigot (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	Rene Binder (A)	Juncos Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
17	Gabby Chaves (CO)	Harding Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
18	Tony Kanaan (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
19	Zachary Claman DeMelo (CDN)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
20	Ed Jones (UAE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	64 laps-engine
21	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	53 laps-weather
22	Max Chilton (GB)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	34 laps-electrical
23	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	10 laps-accident

Winner's average speed

93.335mph.

Fastest lap

Claman DeMelo

1m09.8183s, 118.594mph.

Q3 1 Newgarden

1m07.4413s; 2 Power

1m07.4541s; 3 Bourdais

1m07.5337s; 4 Hunter-

Reay 1m07.7807s;

5 Hinchcliffe 1m07.9472s;

6 Dixon 1m08.0303s.

Q2 Newgarden

1m07.0583s; Power

1m07.2628s; Hinchcliffe

1m07.3797s; Dixon

1m07.4595s; Hunter-

Reay 1m07.5323s;

Bourdais 1m07.5435s;

7 Andretti 1m07.6027s;

8 Rossi 1m07.7488s;

9 Pagenaud 1m07.8409s;

10 Wickens 1m07.8455s;

11 Veatch 1m07.9894s;

12 Jones 1m08.4386s.

Q1 - GROUP 1

Newgarden

1m07.5643s; Hunter-

Reay 1m07.5665s;

Hinchcliffe 1m07.5669s;

Wickens 1m07.7610s;

Andretti 1m07.7832s;

Jones 1m07.9193s;

13 Chilton 1m08.0235s;

15 Rahal 1m08.1038s;

17 Pigot 1m08.1184s;

19 King 1m08.3997s;

21 Leist 1m08.5516s.

Q1 - GROUP 2

Power 1m08.1087s;

Bourdais 1m08.2597s;

Veatch 1m08.2785s; Rossi

1m08.3649s; Pagenaud

1m08.4089s; Dixon

1m08.4262s; 14 Kimball

1m08.5494s; 16 Claman

DeMelo 1m08.5531s;

18 Sato 1m08.5676s;

20 Chaves 1m08.9763s;

22 Binder 1m09.5404s;

23 Kanaan 1m11.2015s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Newgarden 158;

2 Rossi 145; 3 Bourdais

119; 4 Rahal 119;

5 Hinchcliffe 118;

6 Hunter-Reay 113;

7 Dixon 107; 8 Wickens 97;

9 Andretti 88; 10 Power 81.



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F1 AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

FRIDAY

FP1 1000 FP2 1400

SATURDAY

FP3 1000 QUALIFYING 1400

SUNDAY

RACE 1310

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& CHANNEL 4

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE 1300

TYRE ALLOCATION

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HARD

MEDIUM

SOFT

SUPERSOFT

ULTRASOFT

HYPERSOFT

INTERMEDIATE

WET



AVAILABLE

AVAILABLE

AVAILABLE

AVAILABLE

AVAILABLE

TRACK STATS

LENGTH 3.730 miles

NUMBER OF LAPS 51

2017 POLE POSITION

Lewis Hamilton 1m40.593s

POLE LAP RECORD

Lewis Hamilton 1m40.593s (2017)

RACE LAP RECORD

Sebastian Vettel 1m43.441s (2017)

PREVIOUS WINNERS

2017 Daniel Ricciardo Red Bull
2016 Nico Rosberg Mercedes



THEMES TO WATCH

CAN MERCEDES BOUNCE BACK IN BAKU?

Three races down, three defeats – this has been a poor start to Mercedes' title defence. But Baku is the perfect place to get back on track. Although a loose headrest spoiled his race, Lewis Hamilton qualified more than a second clear of the Ferraris here last year.

McLAREN IN THE MIRE

McLaren has scored points consistently with Renault power, but admits it has misjudged its aero targets and must wait until May's Spanish GP for a major update. Baku's long straights should seriously expose the MCL33's excess drag and lack of top-end speed.

VERSTAPPEN COMING UNDER PRESSURE

Red Bull's prodigy languishes eighth in the championship, behind Nico Hulkenberg and Fernando Alonso, after three error-strewn races. His bosses say he needs to learn patience in battle. Last year's crazy Baku race was disastrous for those who failed to choose their moments carefully...

FIFTH COLUMN

THE SAFETY CAR DANCE

For all the talk of how to stimulate excitement in Formula 1, it was a safety car deployment that ignited all the action in the Chinese Grand Prix

NIGEL ROEBUCK

After a soporific race in Melbourne, then a humdrum affair in Bahrain, Shanghai happily – one might say mercifully – produced some action, and it delighted me that Daniel Ricciardo’s supreme opportunism was rewarded with victory. Some years ago Fernando Alonso told me he thought Ricciardo the best overtaker in the business, and in a recent chat David Coulthard echoed that: “Absolutely he is. Danny’s an incredible racer, and his judgement is amazing: from what looks way too far back he’ll have a go – and still make the corner.

“In my opinion,” DC went on, “Red Bull has the strongest driver pairing in Formula 1, and although last year it looked as if Max Verstappen had a slight edge, in terms of pure pace, it would be a huge mistake to underestimate Daniel. He, too, has great speed, and – relative to your team-mate – the tide can suddenly turn, you know...”

Verstappen’s youthful impetuosity, curiously, seems to have been particularly apparent this year, his fourth in Formula 1. As the Chinese Grand Prix wound down, he was ahead of Ricciardo, but lost the place to him after an impatient move on Lewis Hamilton, and then screwed up his race completely with another such on Sebastian Vettel. Ricciardo, by contrast,

nailed both of them with clinical brilliance, then did it again to pass Valtteri Bottas for the lead.

No-one is suggesting that Verstappen has lost the plot, but certainly he might study his team-mate to advantage: not once did Ricciardo so much as lock a wheel in all his moves, and he brought back to mind Martin Brundle’s memory of an IROC race with Dale Earnhardt: “Don’t know how he did it – he passed me on a piece of Tarmac that wasn’t there...”

Bottas, in particular, must have felt that way in Shanghai. You watch Ricciardo pull off a pass, wonder why they don’t all do it like that, and can only conclude that – for the most part, anyway – they can’t. Going for it on a hope-for-the-best basis is one thing, passing incisively, yet *cleanly* quite another. On that level, it is an art form in itself, and of particular worth in an era when ‘aero’ so militates against overtaking. Toto Wolff described Ricciardo’s move on Bottas as ‘a bit brutal’; but to me it was everything grand prix racing should be: uncompromising but fair.

Time and again Daniel shows what *can* be done, and although he laughingly talks about ‘sending it down the inside’, as if doing it on a wing and a prayer, his moves are precisely calculated: were they not, very frequently they would not come off.





For all his laidback off-track persona, Ricciardo is a very committed racing driver, and if I were Wolff or Sergio Marchionne I'd be hell-bent on keeping Red Bull from renewing his deal for 2019 and beyond. If, as Coulthard suggested to me, Danny has already signed some form of pre-contract with another team – say Ferrari – at the moment he would seem to be in the pound seats.

As Ricciardo's contract is up at the end of this year, so also is Hamilton's, and of course the assumption is that Lewis – who murmurs that his next Formula 1 deal will

“IRON-CLAD RELIABILITY IS A LUXURY TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY THIS GENERATION OF DRIVERS”

be his last – will remain with the team that has taken him to 40 wins in four seasons.

To some degree, though, perhaps the times are at last a-changing? We may be only three races into the 2018 season, but Mercedes has yet to put a victory on the board, and Hamilton himself has not won a race since Austin last October. As Wolff said after the Chinese Grand Prix, “This is the new reality...”

No, I'm not suggesting that either team or driver is on the skids, but when your car has been quantifiably the best for so

long you can get a bit spoiled, which is why anything going awry – as with Lewis's blown engine in Malaysia in 2016 – is considered a catastrophe, leading to hand-wringing anguish, talk of the need to 'regroup', and all that tiresome nonsense. Time was, as Alain Prost has pointed out, that a driver *assumed* he would retire at least three or four times a season, and iron-clad reliability is a luxury taken for granted only by this generation of drivers: since that day at Sepang 18 months ago Hamilton has finished every race.

Undeniably, though, Mercedes folk are currently facing opposition on a level to which in this hybrid era they have been unaccustomed. Bottas messed up in qualifying at Melbourne, thereby condemning himself to a miserable race, and although he then drove well in Bahrain, there was criticism of him for backing out of a move on Vettel in the late laps.

Valtteri, in his unruffled way, reckoned he hadn't been quite close enough, that 18 points were better than none, and assuredly in Shanghai he was all business in thwarting Ferrari's plan to have Kimi Raikkonen hold him up while Vettel closed. Immune to pressure, as usual, he drove superbly, and – without the intervention of the safety car – would have won.

Hamilton, meantime, was having one of those weekends when his drive was phoned in. These have been an occasional hallmark of his Formula 1 career, most notably in the McLaren years, and although one assumes that Lewis himself understands why they occur, to the world outside they remain a mystery: his freakish talent, after all, is a given, and so is the competitiveness of his car. Once in a while, though, the combination simply doesn't gel, and on those occasions it is left to his team-mate – be it Jenson Button, Nico Rosberg or Bottas – to fly the team's flag. “I was in no man's land >>



today – I had no pace,” he said in China. “I need to get myself back in normal performance mode.”

Amazing now to think that Jackie Stewart and Ken Tyrrell used to seal their agreements with a handshake: for endless months Hamilton and Wolff have been saying that contract negotiations are ongoing, with a resolution imminently expected. I have heard tell Lewis is looking for \$60million a year, which if true could explain at least in part why things are dragging on. While it is surely inconceivable that in the end a deal won't be done, Ricciardo picked a good moment to remind Mercedes that, yes, alternatives exist.

What gave the Red Bull victory extra piquancy was that it came within a couple of minutes of being out of the question. When Ricciardo suffered a turbo failure in FP3, only two hours were available to change his engine – and the replacement from Renault did not arrive in finished state, requiring work before it could go in. There was just time for a single quick lap in Q1; without it, Daniel would have started from the back.

In all respects, this is a slick team. On Saturday the mechanics worked miracles to get him into qualifying, and on Sunday quick thinking on the pitwall brought both cars in at the start of a safety car period. If Bottas and Vettel were unlucky with the timing, passing the pits before the safety car was deployed, Mercedes had time enough to bring in Hamilton, but decided against it.

Earlier in the race, by contrast, they had got it absolutely right, pitting Bottas ahead of the leading Vettel: scalding in and out laps by Valtteri, together with a relatively slow stop by Ferrari, allowed him to snatch the lead.

“SURELY WHAT SEBASTIAN NEEDED WAS TO HAVE KIMI AS A TAIL GUNNER EARLY ON”



To that point Vettel had looked to have the Chinese Grand Prix on a plate. At the moment Ferrari appears to have the edge on horsepower, and – as in Bahrain – he and Raikkonen had the front row to themselves.

Come the start, though, one wondered yet again why Sebastian has this way of making things unnecessarily complicated for himself. Given that he had Kimi alongside him on the grid, surely what he needed was to have him as tail gunner in the early laps, delaying Bottas *et al* while he made good his escape. Away from the start, though, Vettel can't help himself: routinely he chops across whomever is near at hand – even when it is his own team-mate – and he did so this time, obliging Raikkonen to back off, which allowed Bottas to sweep past him.

Kimi may be a man of legendarily few words, may also – for one of his ability – be remarkably accepting of his status in what is patently Vettel's team, but still he has a way of conveying displeasure, and he did so in Shanghai, just as in Monaco and Singapore last season. At last driving a Ferrari with a front end in which he has confidence – always an absolute Raikkonen necessity – and looking leaner than for many a year, he is back to something near his best, and I hope he wins – is allowed to win – a race soon.

After being nudged into a spin by Verstappen, Vettel's car suffered damage, and that, together with tyres running up the white flag, meant a wretched end to his race, putting him at the mercy of Alonso's McLaren-Renault. Yet again Fernando finds himself in a car off the pace, but his ferocious competitiveness abides, and if anything were sure to amplify it further it was



Verstappen's blunder
took Vettel out of the
China equation

the sight of a Ferrari — with Sebastian in it — up ahead in the closing laps. With one to go, he squeezed by in a slow right-left, and an outraged Vettel was instantly on the radio: “He can’t just run me off the road like that — it was intentional!”

Well, yes, in the sense that he claimed the line at the exit of the corner, just as Hamilton had done with Verstappen, it was. Perhaps Seb had forgotten Monza in 2012, when he pushed Alonso’s Ferrari off the road — all four wheels — at the exit of flat-out Curva Grande; I’ll guarantee Fernando hadn’t.

MIDFIELDERS MAKING AN IMPACT

Very pleasing to me in these opening races have been the strong showings of Kevin Magnussen and Nico Hulkenberg. Many believed Kevin was making a mistake when he left Renault for Haas at the end of 2016, and thought Nico equally ill-advised to replace him after years with Force India. Subsequent events suggest, though, that for both it was the right move: Renault and Haas have made significant progress since last season, and both Hulkenberg and Magnussen figure in the top half of the point standings.

Amazingly, with 138 starts behind him, Nico has still to stand on a grand prix podium, but this Kevin did on his F1 debut, with McLaren-Mercedes, at Melbourne back in 2014.

That said, it was something of a false dawn, and perhaps came too soon. “Obviously I was happy about it,” he said, “but the problem was that everything afterwards was measured against it — which made it tough, in many ways. Of course it was good to finish second in my first grand prix, but I’d rather have done it in the last race of the year.”

Although Alonso was returning to McLaren for 2015, Magnussen was quietly informed by the management that he, rather than Button, would be retained as Fernando’s team-mate, but a late change of policy put him out in the ‘third driver’ cold, a role he not surprisingly detested — particularly when, after sitting around for a year, he was shown the door by Ron Dennis, who now had a newer hot property in Stoffel Vandoorne.

For a while Kevin’s search for a drive looked hopeless, but when regime change in Venezuela put an end to Pastor Maldonado’s bountiful personal sponsorship, Renault, having lately bought back its team from Genii, offered him a one-year contract. He was not, of course, about to turn it down, but Renault’s return to F1 as a team had come late in the day, and through 2016 the car was nowhere.

On the table was a new single-year deal, but Haas, seeking a replacement for Esteban Gutierrez, offered an alternative, which Magnussen eagerly accepted.

From the start, it was a ‘home’ in Formula 1 such as he had not known before, a small team, not overrun with bosses, and an environment in which Kevin thrived: he took to them immediately, and they to him.

If last year’s car wasn’t up to much, the latest one is a different matter, and Magnussen gave notice of intent in the opening seconds of the first race, passing Verstappen and running a confident fourth — until the stops, where both he and team-mate Romain Grosjean were eliminated by botched wheel changes. No matter: he then scored points in Bahrain and China. >>



“VERY MUCH HIS OWN MAN, MAGNUSSEN. WE COULD DO WITH MORE LIKE HIM”

Apart from rating him highly, I like Kevin personally, not least because in the PR-suffocated world of contemporary Formula 1 he is a throwback to a time I savoured more than now. Politically correct he is not, which makes him something of an outlaw in 2018 – it goes without saying, for example, that, like Hulkenberg and not a few others, he *hates* the halo, and was implacably opposed to its introduction.

There’s more. “I’ve never,” he told me, “been to an ‘old’ track I didn’t like. They’re much more fun than modern tracks – up and down, for one thing, and something that definitely makes it better is when there’s no runoff. Everyone has a brain, so you know if you go off at places like that it’s going to hurt – OK, of course we don’t want to get hurt, but no matter how you look at it, it’s a choice: the safer we make it, the less exciting it is – it’s as clear as that. I wish we could go back to Imola and Brands Hatch and Watkins Glen...”

Hardly mainstream in today’s world, and guaranteed not to sit well with the Grand Prix Drivers’ Association: it should be no surprise that a hero of Magnussen’s is Stirling Moss, whose views are famously similar.

“I think,” Kevin said, “that a lot of people – I’m not saying all – who become F1 drivers these days are completely different personalities from those in the past. I have the impression some of them just want to be superstars, and rich and famous, rather than really loving Formula 1 – it would be interesting to see how many would leave the sport if they weren’t getting paid what they are. When I was six years old I didn’t think about making a lot of money from doing this – I just loved it, and that’s never changed.”

Very much his own man, Magnussen, one who artlessly says what he thinks. We could do with more like him.



A SAFETY CAR EVERY WEEKEND?

If the closing laps at Shanghai were indeed riveting, let’s not get carried away. Had Pierre Gasly not put a clumsy move on Toro Rosso team-mate Brendon Hartley, there would have been no safety car, and no opportunity for Red Bull to steal a march by bringing in both its cars for soft tyres.

To that point the Chinese Grand Prix had been pretty much standard Formula 1 fare: a long string of cars, each separated by a couple of seconds, and not much in the way of racing. Yes, there was a lead change, Bottas getting ahead of Vettel, but it came about in the pits, not on the track.

Tyre stops: this is where the order changes come from these days. It was with astonishment that I learned that in a recent fan survey there was apparently considerable support for a return to refuelling.

Quite apart from the expense of transporting all that cumbersome equipment across the globe, perhaps some have forgotten the drivers’ standard catchphrase in the refuelling era: “I was waiting for the stops...” Back then, when all the cars were running light all the time, overtaking was rarer even than now. Refuelling contributed precisely nothing to Formula 1.

Nor, for that matter, do all the unsightly bits of ‘aero’ that festoon the cars these days. As Coulthard said to me, “In IndyCar they’ve reduced downforce, but here we’ve greatly *increased* it – what the hell were we thinking? Of course it made the cars quicker – but are we surprised there’s no overtaking?”

What happened a couple of years ago was that a bunch of Einsteins decided that the cars needed to be substantially speeded up (at least to a point that lap times matched the V10

Magnussen's form
has been impressive
in opening races



era of a decade earlier), and in their wisdom they concluded that the answer was bigger tyres – and sledgehammer downforce. If any seasoned F1 fan could see this would inevitably damage the racing, why could not the ill-named F1 Strategy Group?

Melbourne may have been a godsend for insomnia sufferers, but two things stick in my mind from that weekend. One, some absurdly suggested that the track – not the cars – needed to be changed to facilitate overtaking; two, Hamilton, chasing Vettel in the late stages, said that ultimately he backed off because in his mind was that he had only three engines for the season.

This is a particular lunacy of the contemporary sport: so crazily expensive are these hybrid power units, with all their

ancillary bits, that the FIA restricts each driver to three, down from four last year. Ask any of the manufacturers, and they will tell you it has cost a *huge* amount to enable this to happen, to increase engine longevity from five races to seven. And so it goes...

In recent days Liberty has revealed its 'broad brush' proposals for the next Formula 1, in 2021, while the FIA has announced its suggested engine specification. Fans will have been dismayed, if not surprised, to note that, while simplified, the hybrid concept is apparently set in stone. If we are never again to hear a screaming grand prix engine, let us hope one day at least to see sensible aerodynamics. For now, maybe we need a safety car every weekend. ✎

Magnussen's absence
of spin makes him a
refreshing voice



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Refuelling didn't
create on-track
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THE MAN THE BIG THREE SHOULD WANT

All three of Formula 1's top teams have potential vacancies next season, and Daniel Ricciardo has proved himself eminently worthy of a seat at this table

EDD STRAW

Four of the drivers in Formula 1's big three teams are out of contract at the end of this season. While there's no doubt Lewis Hamilton has a Mercedes deal waiting for him to sign if he wants it, there remain question marks over where the other three will ply their trade in 2019. Of those, one stands head and shoulders above the rest in terms of what they offer to a team.

While Valtteri Bottas and Kimi Raikkonen have both had strong starts to the 2018 season, Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo reminded everyone in the Chinese Grand Prix that he brings a little magic to a team. He has the consistent ability to make things happen, to force the issue in a race situation in a way few others can. How many times have we seen drivers fail to capitalise on such an advantage in race conditions? It wasn't easy; Ricciardo just made it look that way.

Some drivers are criticised for their inability to win races from further down the grid. All six of Ricciardo's victories have come from fourth place on the grid or lower. Not one of Sebastian Vettel's 49 victories has eventuated from a lower starting position than third, and of Lewis Hamilton's 62 wins only two have sprung from worse than fourth on the grid.

"RAIKKONEN DOESN'T HAVE THE SAME ABILITY TO SEIZE A RACE AS RICCIARDO"

You can take different perspectives on such statistics, and you could easily argue that Ricciardo is a qualifying underachiever. Or, to modify a saying from football about goalscorers, he's a winner of great races rather than a great race winner. It's true he's been giving away a smidgen to Max Verstappen in qualifying of late (the average gap this season is 0.201s, though that figure uses Q1 rather than Q3 in Bahrain since Verstappen's crash kept him out of the rest of Saturday), but he's far from a poor qualifier. And he would have claimed more wins given stronger machinery.

An important factor in comparing Ricciardo with the other out-of-contract top guns (Hamilton excluded) is that he is capable of doing something they are not – right now at least. Raikkonen has won a remarkable eight of his 20 grands prix

from fourth on the grid or lower. But Raikkonen now lacks that dynamism and hasn't won since 2013.

As for Bottas, two of his three wins came from pole position, while his first in Russia last year was from third on the grid. As we saw in Bahrain, there are question marks about whether Bottas exhibits sufficient killer instinct.

What Ricciardo is able to do is launch moves that seem optimistic. He seemingly comes from too far back, but after hitting the brakes is able to modulate the retardation to put his car insistently up the inside. So regularly does he do this that, like the days when drivers used to fear the yellow-and-green helmet of Ayrton Senna in their mirrors, Ricciardo has his prey defeated before he even attacks.

That clarity of purpose, the ability to jeopardise a solid result to get a great one, is not to be underestimated. In order to win, you must be willing to risk losing. Ricciardo does not fear that.

For all their qualities, neither Bottas nor Raikkonen offers the same thing. Bottas has had, Australia qualifying shunt aside, a fine start to the year and is making a good case to be retained by Mercedes. When the team is struggling he generally is able to outperform Hamilton, but when things are going well he seems to slide back into the number-two role.

As for Raikkonen, he's now proving to be the perfect number two to Vettel and, if he keeps doing what he's doing, seems more likely than not to pick up a first victory in half a decade this year. But he doesn't have that ability to seize a race as Ricciardo did in China and it's a shame Ferrari will probably balk at the idea of signing a driver who gave Vettel a hard time at Red Bull in 2014.

That said, there are indications that Ferrari is thinking about modifying its approach, and that it is seriously considering bringing Ricciardo in for 2019. This would represent a change of philosophy and also be an impressive statement of intent. Mercedes may not see any reason to sign Ricciardo, provided Hamilton inks his new deal. As for Red Bull, it's a team Ricciardo knows can produce a good car but which has question marks over the engine – it's keen to keep him but won't wait forever.

By rights, if the top teams are all picking a driver purely based on getting the strongest available option in the car, then they should all be chasing Ricciardo. He's the ideal blend of experience, hunger, racecraft and speed – as well as seemingly having the ability to fit into any team without being disruptive thanks to his phlegmatic attitude.

That's why they should all be after Ricciardo – the man who makes things happen like no-one else. ✎

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YOUR SAY

I urge you to watch a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon. I am of course referring to Marc Marquez, whose exploits on the bike are nothing short of extraordinary

DAVID C BERKEY

Motorsport's must-see megastar

If you haven't caught the MotoGP bug yet, I urge you to as soon as possible if for no other reason than to get a glimpse of a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon. I am of course referring to Marc Marquez (right), whose exploits on the bike are nothing short of extraordinary.

His ability to cling to the machine (Valencia, Malaysia, Czech Republic) and efforts to stay on in the face of disaster (qualifying at Austin) make clear that the bike is a part of his being. Yes, he is incredibly aggressive to the point of recklessness (can you say 'Max Verstappen?'), but if you haven't seen him ride, you owe it to yourself to do so.

David C Berkey

New York

Verstappen relies too much on luck

Feisty or foolish, sublime or stupid, challenger or childish – which box would you put Max Verstappen in? Unfortunately I am currently for each second instance. In China he admitted before qualifying he needs some 'luck', which suggests he doesn't rely on the skilled brilliance some think he has – he just puts the car there and hopes luck gets him through.

He proved this three times in China. One worked at the start and two failed, with Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel.

Daniel Ricciardo's performance, however, was feisty, sublime and challenging – that of a future champion.

Justin Lyle

Glasgow

Grassroots motorsport in trouble

Congratulations to Stephen Lickorish for shining a light on the growing problem of motorsport regulation and administration in this country ('Juniors in trouble', April 19, p59). It seems time and again that it gets forgotten who the actual customers are here. Is it time to 'take back our motorsport' and make it competitor friendly?

Steven Connor

By email



Don't make changes for change's sake

With an F1 cost cap coming in, there's no need to make changes for the sake of doing it. That, along with financial redistribution and simpler wings on cars, will do the trick. Racing and overtaking will be back! People won't all of a sudden watch or like racing because, for example, grid layouts have changed or a qualifying race has been introduced.

I note the qualifying race has been mooted as one way of potentially attracting a bigger audience. May I suggest going exclusively 'pay per view' isn't the way to get a bigger audience?

MA Smith

By email

Scrap qualifying and go racing instead

Here's a wacky idea that could make the whole F1 thing more fun! Instead of qualifying, which is tedious, have a one-hour qualifying race on Saturday to determine the grid for the two-hour race on Sunday and scoring half points. The start position of the qualifying race is a televised lottery with the drivers picking their start position out of a hat!

David Fidgeon

By email

HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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INSIGHT

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WHY MERCEDES
ANOTHER **DIVA**
ITS HANDS



HAS ON

All the signs from testing suggested that Mercedes would again be the team to beat, and that the tricky tendencies of its 2017 car had been banished. But the squad has yet to win in '18, so what's going on?

EDD STRAW

MERCEDES POINTS AFTER THREE ROUNDS

2014	-	111
2015	-	119
2016	-	114
2017	-	102
2018	-	85



D

URING LAST YEAR'S Monaco Grand Prix weekend, Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff famously described the Mercedes W08 as "a bit of a diva" after encountering early-season troubles persuading it to remain within its performance window. Mercedes had

some success in taming the car, and duly took both the constructors' and drivers' titles. Since this year's Mercedes W09 is an evolution of the 2017 car, designed to improve upon the original diva, it was hoped that this would be the last Mercedes would hear of that word.

"We hope that we keep the good character traits of the diva," said Wolff before the season began. "While we all like divas, sometimes she was a bit difficult to understand, and this is the area where we worked the most, trying to understand and preserve what we have in terms of speed in the car and, equally, find more driveability."

So when Mercedes struggled in Bahrain, in qualifying in particular, it was reasonable to ask whether it had produced another diva.

"No, it's different," said Wolff when this was put to him after qualifying. "She's not a diva. I think the drivers feel that the car is very much together. But we just lacked the pace."

The outcome of the third race in China changed all of that and confirmed the diva is back. Mercedes drivers Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton were on the second row, just over 0.5 seconds behind the two Ferraris. Bottas could have won the race but for the timing of the safety car, but Hamilton was never happy with the W09 and it's clear that getting the best out of it in qualifying is a problem.

"It was just that we lacked pace from yesterday onwards," said Hamilton after the race. "Everything was good on Friday and then the car kind of turned upside down yesterday. It's been the same since."

So if the diva is back, what exactly does that mean? To answer that, we have to look at the qualifying sessions for the first three races of the year. In Australia, there was much talk about high-performance qualifying 'party modes' after it was nip and tuck with the Ferraris until the final run of qualifying, but it was all about tyre preparation. Thanks to being stuck behind Daniel Ricciardo on his final out-lap, Hamilton backed off dramatically in the last sector. While he had struggled to avoid overheating the rear tyres on previous runs, now they were at about the right temperature to nail the lap, with the rear end planted in the crucial final sector rather than becoming overheated.

Given the difficulties Mercedes was having in keeping the rear tyres alive for a whole qualifying lap, Bahrain was always going to be a tricky track for the Silver Arrows. It's one where Mercedes, despite good results, has often struggled in recent years and is a traction-heavy circuit. But Shanghai is a different story, a track where Mercedes has generally been strong and which is actually front-axle limited. During Saturday morning practice, Mercedes struggled to avoid overheating

"MERCEDES COULDN'T PROTECT THE REAR TYRES IN CHINA WITHOUT THE FRONTS SUFFERING"

the rears for a flying lap on the ultrasofts but, in trying to protect them on the out-lap in qualifying, it lost temperature in the fronts. This was down to a combination of the low track temperatures, and the fact that there are two long straights before the long first corner that demands so much of the front left.

Mercedes couldn't protect the rears without the fronts suffering thanks to the low temperatures. So it was no surprise that most of the time loss to Ferrari came in the first half of the lap.

Mercedes has generally struggled more with this on the softer Pirelli compounds, which have a lower temperature working range. The ultrasofts and supersofts have a working range of 90-110C, compared with 105-135C for the softs. In this range, the tyres are chemically 'switched on', meaning you get maximum grip, so on ultrasofts you'd ideally want to start low in the range and end at or near the top of it. But go too high and you lose rear grip. >>



Ferrari proved to be very fast in Bahrain and qualified one-two



Red Bull demonstrated impressive pace on the soft tyre in China



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WHAT THE DRIVERS FEEL



SUTTON/SUTTON IMAGES

WHY BOTTAS CAN HANDLE THE DIVA

For all the technology, data and engineering brilliance in Formula 1, it's in the driver that all of these factors meet to dictate the performance of the car. So it's Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas who are best placed to explain exactly what happens when the Mercedes diva is not in the window.

"It's very unstable," said Hamilton after the Chinese Grand Prix, when asked to describe how the car's behaviour diverges from what he wants it to do. "It can't turn in to a lot of corners. So it was a lot of performance we were losing today."

"I definitely feel like I was on top of my game this weekend. I came and prepared exactly as always; I just struggled with the car. I was uncomfortable with the car this weekend and did not have the pace. I've got to take it upon myself to try and figure it out and move it forward. Definitely on my side we struggle more."

"I'VE GOT TO TAKE IT UPON MYSELF AND FIGURE IT OUT – ON MY SIDE WE STRUGGLE MORE"
HAMILTON

Bottas seems to struggle less with controlling the tyre temperatures, and he suggested after qualifying in China that the lap-time difference to Ferrari was only partly explained by this problem.

"I think there's a little bit in terms of getting the tyres absolutely perfect for the lap, but it's not half a second," said Bottas. "You could feel it if it was that big, so I think they have a really strong car. We can see it especially in long corners; in Turns 1 and 2 they make some good gains."

Hamilton suggests the fact that the Mercedes tends to be more comfortable on the harder tyre compounds indicates that being able to build tyre temperature more progressively while being more aggressive is an advantage. In China this also helped with building front-tyre temperature, which allowed Bottas to complete his undercut pass for the lead on Sebastian Vettel thanks to nailing his out-lap on the medium-compound Pirellis.

"The harder the tyre, the harder you have to push on the out-lap," says Hamilton. "It just takes more time to get the temperature into them. The tyres are quite peaky."

"FERRARI HAVE A STRONG CAR – IN LONG CORNERS THEY MAKE A BIG GAIN"
BOTTAS



ANDRE/SUTTON IMAGES

TRACKSIDE VIEW

THINGS HAVE CLEARLY CHANGED

It was during Saturday morning practice in China that things started to go wrong for Mercedes, in particular Lewis Hamilton. The conditions were cool, around 12C, and with a gusty wind that made life difficult for everyone. But Hamilton looked more uncomfortable than most.

During pre-season testing at Barcelona, it appeared that the Mercedes was perfectly suited to Hamilton's style. At the chicane, he was able to hit the brakes hard and turn in aggressively, rotating the rear to perfection and carrying good speed through the left/right flick. The rear end always stayed with him, never sliding too far.

Contrast that with Shanghai in the slow Turn 11, 11 left-hander that leads into the long right onto the back straight. There, the rear end was far more sketchy and unpredictable, partly as a result of tyre temperature and partly

down to the wind. Several times at the exit of Turn 11, the rear kept sliding at the point when he wanted to set the car up to turn into the right hander, costing significant time. The resulting adjustments meant his line through the

first part of Turn 12 was inconsistent. It was clear he wasn't comfortable in a car that he later described as "night and day different" to how it was the day before.

Valtteri Bottas looked more comfortable. When grip is at a premium, he's

one of the best in F1, able to hustle the car through the corner. It didn't look elegant, but it was more effective. When Mercedes is struggling, it's Bottas who can make the best of it.

"Lewis has today suffered from colder temperatures on his tyres than Valtteri," said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff after qualifying. "We have discrepancies in tyre temperatures with the two cars, and the colder the tyre the worse the grip level is."

This is consistent with what the eye can see. By working the car harder, Bottas could mitigate the problem. But when Hamilton is happy with the car and has the grip, his genius shines through.



You may think it's easy enough to control the temperature, but it's an inexact science because these temperatures apply to the bulk of the compound, the temperature of which can only be inferred by measurements from the surface above and the carcass below.

"These are the temperatures you must have in the compound to make it work," explains Pirelli racing manager Mario Isola. "You have the surface temperature that can be different because you slide so it's more spikey, but this does not mean you lose performance because when the temperature goes down you get it back.

"The carcass temperature is a good indication for teams to understand if the bulk is working at the right temperature. They usually calculate an average of the surface and carcass because we don't have sensors inside the compound."

The trouble is that the way energy goes into the tyre varies and is dictated by a wide range of characteristics. From the moment the tyres are pre-warmed before being bolted onto the car, teams are exerting a chemical effect on the rubber.

"There are a lot of characteristics," says Isola when asked what factors in a car dictate the tyre temperatures. "The level of downforce, because obviously if you push down the tyre you can make it slide less and this increases the temperature less, but you generate more energy because you stress the tyre. The suspension geometry [has an impact], and the balance between the front and rear as well. If you are too heavy on one of the axles, you generate additional degradation on this axle, so they protect the rear axle."

This is what dropping in and out of the window means. Too low or too high a temperature and you get more sliding, less grip and less performance. If it was easy to explain where specifically the Mercedes problem lies, then it would have been solved. Mercedes does have unusual front-suspension geometry, which will have an impact on the front/rear balance of the car and, combined with the aerodynamic characteristics of the W09, could be contributing to the problem. There have been suggestions that successive technical directives

reducing the freedom of teams to manage the platform through trick suspensions has played a part. But when technical director James Allison was asked how big a part this played in last year's tyre troubles, his reply was an emphatic "naught". He did, however, point to the fact that last year's Pirellis, as this year's, had a stronger front, shifting the front-to-rear balance. This perhaps means the energy going into the rear end and the surface of the tyre as it rotates is greater. Realistically, it will be a delicate confluence of factors, both inherent to the car and external.

Given that the Mercedes is usually strong on race pace, what this means is that we have a fascinating set-up to the season, with the relative performance of the big three swinging back and forth depending on the track characteristics and the tyre-compound allocation – as Mercedes chief strategist James Vowles explains.

"I think the tyres this year are having an impact, but more so than that there's a second aspect as well, which is you've got three teams – Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull – that all, depending on what tyre it is, and what track it is, are able to have different levels of performance," he says. "In the case of Melbourne, we were very fast on both compounds. In the case of Bahrain, Ferrari were very fast on that supersoft tyre, but had more degradation. And in the case of the Chinese GP, Red Bull were extraordinarily fast on that soft tyre.

"And what that's creating is different cars with different levels of performance depending on what the track temperature is, what the conditions are, and what tyre they have fitted to the car.

"What you're seeing is a shift in environmental factors for a track. As you go to a track and it becomes windy or not windy, or cold or hot, you can see a swing of up to a second in lap times because of those environmental factors."

Given enough time Mercedes will surely get on top of its problem, but as with all divas it is unlikely to dial out the capriciousness entirely. With the Ferrari seemingly working well in all conditions, and the Red Bull the best tyre manager in race conditions, that's a mouthwatering prospect for the 18 races to come. ✎

"AT BARCELONA, THE MERCEDES SEEMED PERFECTLY SUITED TO HAMILTON'S DRIVING STYLE"

Environmental factors seem to have a disproportionate effect on the W09's performance



PORTLOCK
LAT IMAGES

GARY ANDERSON'S VERDICT

WHY F1'S ONCE-UNSTOPPABLE STEAMROLLER HAS RUN OUT OF PUFF

On face value it certainly looks as if things are getting a bit strained within Mercedes, and having two teams biting at its heels is definitely exposing the team's weaknesses.

It seemed like business as usual at the start of the season, with Lewis Hamilton on pole position for the Australian Grand Prix by 0.664 seconds. We talk about tenths being a lifetime in Formula 1, and when a team is more than half a second clear of its nearest rival it looks like the season is more or less done and dusted. Thankfully, that's not the case in 2018 and a battle royale is just beginning.

The relative performance in the races is closer and Mercedes is making more strategy mistakes. You'd have to say that, after three races, Ferrari has

the upper hand. Nobody expected that following pre-season testing.

During those winter sessions Mercedes spent the majority of the time on the medium-compound tyres. This was the most stable tyre to rack the miles up on while testing car set-ups, but when push comes to shove on a Saturday afternoon in qualifying you need to get the softer tyres working for that one lap. So tyre warm-up is critical, and that is something Mercedes struggled with in both Bahrain and China.

To get a perfect full lap out of softer tyres is never easy. You need the front grip to be there at the start of the lap and the rears to

last to the end, which is particularly important at a circuit such as Shanghai with its long, front-left limited first corner.

On a lot of occasions the driver will need to make a small compromise to achieve this by protecting the rears on the out-lap, which means not being able to work the fronts enough for the start of the lap.

This is what seems to hurt Mercedes more than Ferrari.

During pre-season we commented on how the Mercedes, and especially Hamilton, could rotate the car around its front end. And while this looks great, any sliding that the rear is doing on corner entry is hurting the rear for corner

exit when traction is vitally important. By the team's own admission, the 2017 Mercedes was a bit of a diva. Judging by these first three races, the '18 car looks like it has the same characteristics. But relative to the competition it doesn't look quite as fast.

The Mercedes seems to have a very small operating window, and that always makes it difficult to hit the sweet spot, especially on new tyres when car balance is everything in getting the best from the rubber. After a few laps, when the tyres lose their initial bite, the problems diminish, but they are still there and will be making the tyres degrade that little bit faster than if

the inherent balance of the car was spot-on.

I have had cars in the past that were pretty quick, but the drivers never really felt comfortable with them, and I've had cars that were a bit slower but the drivers felt they had confidence in them. The latter is normally just a simple lack of grip, but the former is a bit more of a problem that usually comes down to an inherent airflow-separation problem.

There is no way in the world that you can windtunnel or CFD test all the aerodynamic components that make up a current F1 car and hope that it will 100% correlate to what happens on the track. There is always something waiting just around the corner to bite you, and I would say Mercedes is suffering from that problem. While you can normally alter the set-up to camouflage small issues, they are still inherently there and will

"THE RELATIVE PERFORMANCE IN THE RACES IS CLOSER AND MERCEDES IS MAKING MORE STRATEGY MISTAKES"





Should Mercedes have used Bottas to put Vettel under pressure in Bahrain?

rear their ugly heads when least expected.

But that's all just engineering, and Mercedes has a very strong team of people who will be trawling through bucketloads of data to try to identify why these things are happening. The solutions can only be found after you identify the problem, and if you can't

identify why it is happening and just keep on blindly looking for more downforce it's very easy to make the problem worse. Then you multiply your problems and frustration sets in.

There are two other problems that are probably more major. The first is the reaction to strategy situations. At the moment

Mercedes doesn't have as big a performance advantage as in previous seasons. So instead of seconds making the difference, you are talking tenths.

In Melbourne Mercedes thought it had a big enough window when the virtual safety car came out to retake the lead from

Sebastian Vettel when he stopped, but it didn't.

In Bahrain the Mercedes drivers went around in second and third protecting their tyres because they thought Vettel was going to stop again. He didn't and went on to win the race, albeit on tyres that were well past their sell-by date.

Why didn't Merc get

Valtteri Bottas to close up to the back of Vettel earlier and put a little pressure on him so he would have had to use the tyres that little bit harder? If he had dived for the pits then Bottas could have done the same, leaving Hamilton in the lead trying to make a one-stop work.

In China I don't think it really did that much wrong, certainly not with Bottas. The Red Bulls were on the right piece of asphalt when the safety car came out, took the gamble and fitted soft tyres. It paid off and probably Mercedes could have done the same with Hamilton, but elected not to. If a computer programme says something, then Mercedes just does it.

Sometimes you also need someone on the pitwall sticking their finger out to check which way the wind is blowing. That's what Red Bull did by double stacking its cars at both the pitstops. Sometimes you need that gut feel to force open an opportunity. ❗



Race 2. Bahrain GP

Mercedes thought Vettel would pit again. But he didn't – and he won

MAUGER LAT IMAGES



Race 3. Chinese GP

Could a seat-of-the-pants Red Bull-style call have put Mercedes on top?

MAUGER LAT IMAGES

HOW TO BEAT FORMULA E'S BIG HITTERS

The series has been making headlines for the manufacturer teams on its roster, but they're playing second fiddle to the customer Techeetah squad

ANDREW VAN DE BURGT

The Formula E narrative over the past 12 months has been driven by the influx of manufacturers into the all-electric racing series. And with Mercedes, Porsche, BMW and Nissan signing up to take on Audi, DS, Jaguar, NIO and Mahindra (Renault is leaving at the end of this season) that can come as no surprise. But on-track the story is very different. Despite the resources — both financially and technically — of the manufacturer teams, it's an independent squad sitting at the top of the points table: Techeetah.

The story of how the Chinese-owned and backed customer team has been able to take on and beat the best of the rest is a classic David-and-Goliath tale. It's also testimony to how the rules the FIA and Formula E have put in place have found a perfect balance between allowing technological development while at the same time keeping a handle on costs, which in turn creates the sort

of unpredictable results and races the fans crave.

"The biggest thing in this series is that the power is capped," says Techeetah team principal Mark Preston, an F1 veteran of Arrows, McLaren and Super Aguri. "I don't think people have fathomed that that is such a huge thing. If you are in F1 and the MGU-H has unlimited development and you're Mercedes you keep going and going and going, and if you're Honda you're always trying to catch up.

"In this series, at least in qualifying, you all have the same peak power and you should be able to be with the other guy, and if your driver is great and you do a good job you should be able to deliver pole. Maybe you won't survive in the race, because your energy and stuff can't handle it over the race distance. This is the only series in the world where the power is capped. I'm 100% sure that that's a huge parameter that allows us to compete."





Andre Lotterer and Vergne celebrate team one-two in Santiago

“WE DON’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE STUFF RENAULT DOES”

MARK PRESTON

Despite having no manufacturer affiliation, Techeetah has been able to win three of the past eight races (and take three further podiums) because it was able to buy a complete powertrain — motor, inverter and gearbox — off the shelf from Renault, the only entity to have won the teams’ championship so far in the series’ short history. And not only does Renault have to supply any potential customers, the amount it’s able to charge is affordable (a low six-figure amount). This means for a small organisation like Techeetah, which is not

much bigger than a frontrunning Formula 2 operation, the limited resource that it has can be more focused on maximising efficiencies — the essential element in electric-racing success.

“A big benefit of being a customer team is that we don’t have to worry about the stuff Renault has to worry about,” Preston confirms. “They give us a great powertrain and we run it. We are decoupled from that side of things, so we kind of end up having more resources as Renault is doing some of the hard bits for us. And the drivers can make a bigger difference as there are so many more things that are limited in the series that push everything to driver ability. We have a short day of racing — we joke with the guys from F1 about all the time they have — and I think that benefits drivers who can just go bang!, and JEV can do that, so we benefit from that.”

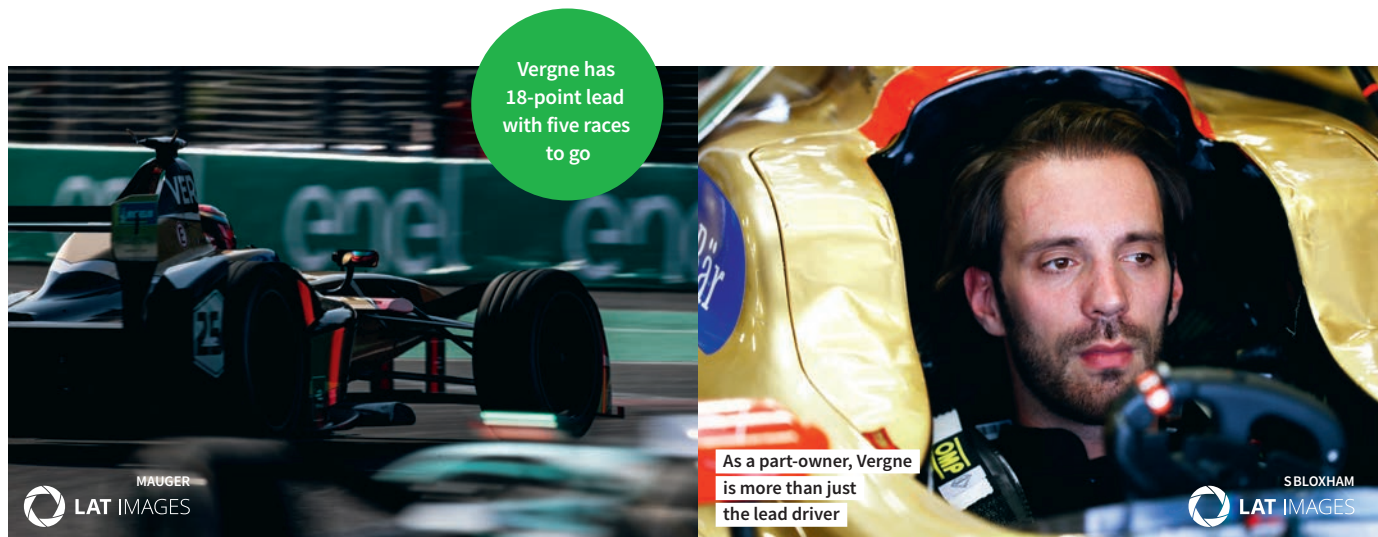
The importance of JEV (Jean-Eric Vergne) in Techeetah’s success should not be underestimated. The Frenchman arrived in the series early on in the first season as a reluctant convert after losing his Toro Rosso F1 drive. His pace was immediately apparent as he took pole for Andretti on his debut in Punta del Este, but his ability to manage the energy was at first abject.

A move to DS Virgin for season two initially meant he failed to gel with the tricky car and its heavy twin-motor concept, and then couldn’t gel with the team after an acrimonious spat in Buenos Aires. Switching to Techeetah, which was born out of the ashes of Team Aguri, was on the face of it a step down.

But JEV has a share in the ownership of the team, and as a result a much greater say in its running. He’s been inspired by the additional responsibility and, after finally ending his victory hoodoo in the season-three finale in Montreal, has been far and away the most consistent driver, averaging 18 points a race from then on. His nearest rival is Sam Bird on 14.1.

“I believe I’ve worked much harder than before in my career, because I have more influence in the team compared to other places I’ve been,” he states. “I have a lot more to say in this team and I’ve had quite a lot of input in not making mistakes and making sure everything is right on the car and in the team. I spend quite a lot of energy with the management trying to make those things happen.” >>





Following the Rome round, Vergne holds an 18-point lead over former DS Virgin team-mate Bird. There are still five races and 145 points to play for, but this is the first time since 2011 and Formula Renault 3.5 that he's been in a championship fight.

The closeness of the Formula E field — 11 drivers from eight teams have scored a podium this year — means that while gunning for victory at every race may not be a necessity, the margin for playing it safe is negligible.

"Now the focus is on making sure the car finishes the races, that when we finish the races we don't get disqualified for a stupid reason," says Vergne. "We have to make sure that everyone in the team is doing their job properly, especially the engineers, and that they keep pushing hard and find new things to help us try to improve the car. And that's the key: everybody else has improved their cars and they have a lot more resources than we do, so everybody has to stick together and keep working hard, regardless of where we are in the championship."

Vergne's insistence that the team keeps its eye on the ball is understandable. In its first race in Hong Kong in 2016 he suffered reliability problems on both his cars, while next time out in Marrakech he suffered the ignominy of missing his slot in the superpole shootout as the team misunderstood the rules about when he needed to take to the track!

A lot of this can be put down to the lack of preparation the

team had. As a customer entry it was only entitled to three days' pre-season testing, so it was still coming to terms with how to best run the car in the glaring scrutiny of a race environment.

Going into this season, it was much better prepared. It stuck with Renault as the powertrain supplier and, while this has been updated, the concept is fundamentally the same, which has allowed the team to spend more time on improving its operational performance.

"We obviously made a bunch of mistakes in Hong Kong and Marrakech," Preston admits. "The thing you can do differently in this series is processes, procedures and operational aspects. The powertrain that Renault delivered is nice and reliable and the drivers can deliver. The rest came about through operations and processes and that's one thing you learn a lot in F1. Working for the McLarens of this world, you know what the extremes are — we didn't go that far, but did enough to change the way we do things. In the first two seasons with Aguri, we only had two of the car lifters for example, so we bought four and that made it easier to do things in the garage."

"This year we've been kind of a bit lucky, some others have dropped the ball, and we hope we don't from now on as there are still a lot of races to go. But, as we have seen in F1 this season, even the big teams with lots of resources can still make mistakes. When I was back at Arrows, every year we had a new powertrain. And then I went to McLaren and they had the same powertrain year on year and that was really smooth. We didn't have to redesign the gearbox every year, relearn software, relearn cooling systems and all that. So having the same powertrain from last year to this year also helps because it's a small group of people — way smaller than if you were in a bigger series — and we didn't have to change that much."

On-track success has also been rewarded commercially. In Uruguay the team revealed its first major sponsor — Dragon Inc, a crypto-currency exchange (surely the ultimate 2018-style sponsor!) — while a couple more are expected to be confirmed ahead of the next race in Paris.

Techeetah commercial director Keith Smout, another F1 veteran with the likes of BAR, has sensed the team is on a massive upward trajectory in terms of its ability to attract sponsors: "The advantage that we have is the sustainable nature of our sport. We can approach companies on two levels. One is traditional marketing and sponsorship, the other is the CSR [corporate social responsibility], and we have a real ability to go after those budget areas. And it's genuine. It's not that we say we are green, we actually *are* green. I watch what's going on in F1 and I see us in a better space."

Techeetah is owned by SECA CMC, which is also an investor in the series itself. It owns numerous sports rights in China, including the NBA, NHL and ATP, and sees all these as well as Formula E as key parts of its portfolio.

"They want to unlock the market in China for Chinese companies to go out internationally and vice versa, and they see



"OTHERS HAVE DROPPED THE BALL AND WE HOPE WE DON'T FROM NOW ON" MARK PRESTON



Formula E regulations help privateers take on the factory teams

the team as a perfect conduit for that," Smout adds. "They also want to look to the development of Chinese drivers. We recognise that there's nothing there right now, but it's in its infancy and we know that it's going to take time.

"The Chinese like to win and we like the David-v-Goliath attitude. For me it's been incredible – although I've been in teams where we've had podiums, I'd never had a win until this year! Also, not since I was at BAR have I had a company call me and then convert that into a deal, and that's happened since we've been in first place."

It's a remarkable story, one with echoes of Leicester City's improbable run to the Premier League title. But the job is by no means done just yet. In Rome, Felix Rosenqvist was on course to wipe out most, if not all, of JEV's points lead before one bash over the kerb too many broke the left-rear suspension and all but ended his title hopes. Such are the margins in street racing. ❧

USING YOUR 'ROOKIE' DRIVERS TO THE MAX

With a combined age of 71, Fred Makowiecki and James Rossiter stretched the definition of rookie to breaking point, but their deployment by Techeetah at the mid-season test in Marrakech may well prove to have been the masterstroke in delivering the title.

Techeetah's customer status means it has drastically fewer test days in which to prepare pre-season than its manufacturer rivals. Bringing in two drivers with such an enormous wealth of experience – Rossiter was an F1 tester at a time of virtually unlimited running, while racing in Japan comes with reams of tyre testing, and Makowiecki

has equally been pounding around the test tracks evaluating various rubber compounds – meant that rather than assessing the drivers' abilities, the team could work on the car instead.

"We found out after Marrakech we had suspension that was basically not working in some corners," says Jean-Eric Vergne. "I was losing a lot of time because of that. We did some work on this. Our rookie drivers did a great job. They helped us understand things on the car. We went for a better direction on set-up and it helped us."

Preston adds: "We had 33 per cent more testing than we'd had previously. That really gave us a great boost."



Makowiecki has helped move Techeetah along



THE NEARLY MAN FINALLY GETS THERE

James Rossiter has been within touching distance of so many top-level single-seater drives in the past. Now he's pinching himself that, at last, he is representing TOM'S and Toyota in Japan's Super Formula series

MARCUS SIMMONS



When James Rossiter lined up on the grid for last weekend's Super Formula opener at Suzuka with TOM'S, it represented something of a Holy Grail for a 34-year-old talent who has frequently been so close to a top single-seater drive, only to be denied at the last gasp. From Formula 1, via IndyCar, to his later career in Japan, he'd seen chance after chance fall at the final hurdle...

MISSING A GRAND PRIX DEBUT

After success in Formula Renault and Formula 3, Rossiter became an established part of the BAR/Honda/Super Aguri axis as an F1 test driver. When Takuma Sato was taken ill before the 2007 Turkish Grand Prix, it appeared that Rossiter would finally get his chance for a race debut with Super Aguri. "I was told on the Wednesday that I was going to race, and I flew there with full expectations to race," he says. "I knew the car inside out, because it was effectively a 2006 Honda and I'd already done a year and

a half testing in it. Even on Friday morning I was ready to do free practice, and the decision was made that Taku would try. He was OK, and it never materialised for me."

Rossiter looks back on that era as a great learning experience, with Jenson Button, Rubens Barrichello and Anthony Davidson among his team-mates. "I feel sorry now for young drivers who don't get that opportunity," he says. "I think I did more kilometres than there was racing." Not only in the pukka F1 tests, but off the radar in Japan, where among his projects was development of what became the 2009 world title-winning Brawn. "Err, yeah," he laughs cagily. "We did quite a lot of testing with a couple-of-years-old car that was used to learn many useful pieces of information that were then used for '09. It was parts that made the chassis go faster [the double diffuser, in other words]... I had some super-interesting projects. Beyond the testing people knew about, I probably did almost double that in Japan as well." >>



Rossiter tested with KV IndyCar team in early 2010, before losing seat

KINRADE
LAT IMAGES

SIGNING FOR USF1

With Honda out of F1, Rossiter signed up for latter-day motorsport.tv presenter Peter Windsor's USF1 team for 2010. "My father [ex-BTCC racer Jeremy Rossiter] still has the signed race-driver contract at home!" he reveals. "At the time I believed it would happen. I went to America, went round the factory, thought it was going to be a massive challenge. But then, for whatever reason, it didn't come good. Peter was a good supporter of mine, and he was fighting for me. It was a shame it didn't happen."

INDYCAR FALLS THROUGH

Never mind, eh? USF1 had fallen through, but there was an IndyCar seat going at KV Racing Technology. Rossiter should have revived his relationship with fellow Honda F1 refugee Sato, and he even took part in the official IndyCar media photo shoots. "I moved to Indianapolis, everything was signed," he recalls. "I tested at Barber Motorsports Park, and that was all good. Then the team lost a big sponsor at the eleventh hour and [he laughs ruefully]... I was left stranded. I'd come over in 2008 and done some races in the American Le Mans Series with Andretti Green Racing [this, with the Acura, was part of the Honda connection, and Rossiter won at Detroit Belle Isle with Franck Montagny]. Andretti were pushing a lot for me to join them in IndyCar, and that's how the whole thing with KV came around. Unfortunately, with the economy, it was very difficult for motorsport, definitely in America. All the teams were struggling."

THE FIRST CHANCE WITH TOM'S

TOM'S star Andre Lotterer had decided he was going to step out of Super Formula for 2013, due to his Audi commitments in the World Endurance Championship. Then he realised there were only two date clashes, and decided to carry on, with Rossiter subbing for the races Lotterer had to miss. But, simultaneously, another chance arose...

"I came to do my first seat fit in late 2012 [in the Super Formula Swift] and I saw the Super GT Lexus, and I asked them if I could test it," says Rossiter. "The Super GT thing kind of happened almost by accident. I fell in love with it almost immediately. I went to Fuji, and it was very favourable conditions, and I did the lap record on my first day in the car." Rossiter went back to England, and had a phone call calling him back to Japan: Loic Duval had secured a full-time Audi WEC seat, leaving a berth free in the Super GT squad alongside Kazuki Nakajima.

In 2013, his first season, Rossiter fought for the title with Nakajima in their Lexus, finishing third. They repeated that in '14, and to date Rossiter has six wins in the series, five with Nakajima and one with veteran Daisuke Ito. The relationship with Nakajima has been key to that success. "We have a great friendship inside and outside the car," points out Rossiter. "From a driving perspective you can't tell who's in the car if you look at the data – we have almost identical technique, which makes it so easy. Since I came to



Rossiter and Nakajima, now SF team-mates, are Lexus's top GT combo

"WHAT ANDRE LOTTERER HAS ACHIEVED HAS BEEN AMAZING. THEY'RE BIG SHOES TO FILL"

Japan the two of us have won more races than any other Lexus drivers." And Rossiter also has a strong bond with TOM'S co-founder Nobuhide Tachi. "Tachi-San has become like a Japanese father to me," he adds.

From 2014-16, Rossiter also raced in Super Formula, but this was not with top Toyota team TOM'S, and instead with the smaller Kondo Racing operation. His joining of Kondo coincided with the introduction of the new Dallara chassis, and Rossiter finished second at Suzuka first time out. "We literally set the car up from the Dallara manual and away you go," he says. But, as the bigger teams got into their stride, it became increasingly tough. "When you have a team like Kondo, the people have the greatest intentions, but the financial resources aren't quite allocated in the right areas, and the personnel are possibly not at the same level," explains Rossiter. "You have the opportunity to get the odd great result if everything comes together at the right time, but to put together a season is incredibly difficult because you have the odd weekend where you turn up and something's wrong, or even the team sets something up wrong in the workshop, or somebody made a mistake. These things just don't happen when you drive for TOM'S. It's small things. If you don't spend the money in the right areas on the chassis side, you only need to miss a couple of tenths to really struggle."

Rossiter took a gamble in quitting Kondo at the end of 2016: "I said I didn't want to race anymore in Super Formula unless I was in a top team, and I didn't know if the chance would come around. In all honesty, after watching the first couple of races last year I regretted it, but now I'm very happy about it..."



GIBSON
LAT IMAGES

Testing the Force India.
Sadly, the weather wasn't
this good at Silverstone

FERRARO
LAT IMAGES

Rossiter had three
years with Kondo
in Super Formula

ISHIHARA
LAT IMAGES

THE FORCE INDIA FP1 EPISODE

Around the time he started in Japan, Rossiter became part of the Force India F1 team, thanks to his links with team COO Otmar Szafnauer, who had been part of the BAR/Honda hierarchy during the 2000s. It led to Rossiter being penned in for an FP1 debut at the 2013 British Grand Prix. He had been working on the team's new simulator programme, then testing the car itself to prove the correlation. All was well, Silverstone was happening, and then the rain washed it out... "I was really gutted when that happened," he muses. "It was wet, and we decided it was much better for the race drivers to do it. To have the opportunity to drive in FP1 at your home grand prix, after being a test driver for so many years, was very exciting. And didn't happen!"

FULL CIRCLE AT TOM'S

Lotterer did leave Super Formula — five years late, at the end of 2017! That was in the wake of his dual European-based programmes with Techeetah in Formula E and Rebellion Racing in the World Endurance Championship. He's also left the Tokyo apartment he shared with Rossiter, who at last has the chance to join Nakajima in the Toyota-powered TOM'S line-up. "Yes! Finally, finally he left," jokes Rossiter. "He told me, 'Come and race in Super Formula in 2013, I'm leaving,' and finally he decided to leave five years later. He's been an example to any foreign driver who wants to race over here, and what he's achieved has been amazing. They're certainly big shoes to fill inside TOM'S, but I know the team

very well and I know the job in hand."

And Rossiter knows he will combine well with his pal Nakajima: "Always one of the key things with the TOM'S success in Super Formula is that the relationship between the drivers and the engineers is very open. Andre had a very good relationship with Kazuki as well. We can go in different directions with the set-up and come back and find the right window for where we think we should be. So hopefully that's going to be very beneficial on race weekends, with such limited testing. And if we're both fighting at the front then we know how to fight, and if we're struggling a little bit we know how to get the car in the right direction."

Simultaneous with landing the Super Formula gig, Rossiter found out he wasn't continuing full-time in Super GT. "There was some pressure I think inside Toyota for some younger drivers to move up," he hypothesises. "I found out very late — it wasn't until the beginning of December, which was a bit of a shock." But he will stand in for Nakajima — who is on WEC duty at Spa — for TOM'S at Fuji next month, and for Felix Rosenqvist (who has the clashing Berlin Formula E race) at the Team Le Mans Lexus squad in the following round at Suzuka.

Still, that frees Rossiter up to focus on what he's wanted since he went to Japan in late 2012. "I know that this opportunity to drive for TOM'S is an amazing one, especially given my age, to get this seat so late in my career in single-seaters," he admits. "Most drivers would have given up, but to have stayed here and fought for it, and earned it on speed, is really nice." And fully deserved. ✂

FINDING THE LOVE AGAIN WITH LOTUS

The failed IndyCar link-up with Lotus-backed KV Racing (see main story) kick-started a relationship for James Rossiter with the sportscar manufacturer that, he says, allowed him to "fall in love again with the sport after being frustrated so many times."

It took Rossiter through GT and LMP2 projects in the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup, which morphed into the World

Endurance Championship, via racing in GT4 and even the Britcar 24 Hours at Silverstone. "Lotus had big ambitions in motorsport and I felt it was a good place to be, considering who they'd got involved," he says. "It led to some very different forms of racing, and it made me open my eyes to a bit of the rest of motorsport and to really why I became a racing driver. I did some really crazy things."

Rossiter has kept a toehold in the WEC ever since, latterly with the ByKolles LMP1 team. Indeed, he looks set to again be part of the German squad's Le Mans 24 Hours line-up in 2018: "I really enjoy racing in the WEC," he enthuses. "There are a lot of really talented drivers in every category. I can use all the experience I've managed to accumulate in all the different championships, all at one time."



STOMMELEN

AN UNDERRATED TRAILBLAZER

Rolf Stommelen, who was killed 35 years ago this week, was that rare thing in the 1970s: a German in F1. And he was a sportscar superstar. What made him so good?

GARY WATKINS

A Formula 1 record of 54 starts, 14 points and a single podium doesn't suggest that Rolf Stommelen was any kind of superstar. But talk to those he drove with or for in the sportscar ranks, and they will tell you that there was something a bit special about the German.

Stommelen, whose career was tragically cut short 35 years ago this week, is arguably one of the overlooked sportscar greats of his era. Overlooked, probably, because he didn't win the big one, the Le Mans 24 Hours. But he did triumph in the Targa Florio road race in 1967 with Porsche at the age of just 23 and he claimed four victories – including a run of three in five years in 1978–82 inclusive – at the Daytona 24 Hours.

He might have won more big races had he not left the Porsche fold – temporarily as it turned out – at the end of 1969 to take a big-money offer to join Alfa Romeo in what became a five-year stint. He missed out on the German manufacturer's successes in 1970–71 with the 917, a car he'd been one of the first to tame. And when he went back in the mid-1970s, he was used very much as an extra, brought in when Jacky Ickx and Jochen Mass were not available. Stommelen was always given a seat at Le Mans in a 935 rather than the 936 Group 6 prototype that won in 1976 and '77.

The legend of Rolf Stommelen, however, is founded as much on the way he did things rather than what he did. He was a natural, blessed with amazing car control, and phenomenally brave – witness his pole position lap in the still-new 917 at Le Mans in 1969. Both facets of his driving probably go some way to explaining why he was one of the most successful drivers aboard Porsche's rear-engined 935 Group 5 monster, and also explain his prowess in wet conditions.

His drive through the rain to third place at a particularly dank Le Mans in September 1968 confirmed his star qualities. His pole position lap for the 24 Hours a year later in the new Porsche 917LH, at the time an unstable beast that many of Stommelen's

team-mates didn't want to drive, has gone down in legend.

Then there was his drive in the brand-new 936 at the Nurburgring 300Km in 1976, where he split the proven Renault-Alpines in qualifying and subsequently overcame a jammed throttle, using the master switch, to finish fifth. His efforts at Le Mans in '79 at the wheel of Dick Barbour's 935 deserve credit too. But for a jammed wheel late in the race, he might have finally notched up a victory in the 24 Hours as part of a line-up that included Hollywood actor Paul Newman.

His starring performance at the wheel of a factory Porsche 908 at Le Mans in 1968, the year that the 24 Hours was moved to September as a result of the student riots in Paris that summer, played a pivotal role in Stommelen's career. His team-mate that wet weekend was Jochen Neerpasch, who was soon to become head of motorsport at Ford in Germany. Alternator problems meant the Porsche drivers were instructed to drive on side lights only and without the benefit of windscreen wipers in one of the wettest Le Mans on record.

"We had to use as little electricity as possible, because the team didn't want to have to change the battery," recalls Neerpasch. "The conditions were terrible, but in that situation Rolf was unbelievable. It was raining so hard that the lap times were more than two minutes slower than usual, but Rolf was by far the fastest."

Two years later, Neerpasch brokered the deal that would take Stommelen into F1 for the first time in 1970. (That's not counting his one-off in the 1969 German Grand Prix in a Formula 2 Lotus fielded by Winkelmann Racing.) "We wanted to promote a young German driver, and he was the best one at that moment," recalls Neerpasch. "Ford was in F1 [with the increasingly ubiquitous Cosworth DFV powerplant] and we wanted a German driver in the family, but it wasn't Ford's money."

The money, in fact, came from the publishers of German car magazine *Auto Motor und Sport*, and it paid for a season with Brabham. Stommelen had a solid first year, notching up the only >>

**"THE CONDITIONS WERE TERRIBLE,
BUT IN THAT SITUATION ROLF WAS
UNBELIEVABLE, FASTEST BY FAR"**

podium of his career at the Österreichring. The same finance took him to Surtees the following year, with a best result of fifth at Silverstone.

No worthwhile results were forthcoming when Stommelen raced for the Eifelland team (for which he'd already competed in F2 in 1970 and '71). Its rebodied March 721 wasn't a competitive proposition even when the team started to abandon the avant-garde aerodynamics that had been mocked by the rest of the paddock.

Stommelen's stock in F1 hadn't disappeared with the Eifelland disaster, though. When Brabham needed a stand-in driver for the final races of 1973 it turned to Stommelen. The British team did so again for the Italian Grand Prix three years later after Carlos Reutemann's departure to Ferrari.

Contemporary reports state that his strong performances at Monza in 1970 and '73 with Brabham were behind the decision. It had also, rather bizarrely, put him out in the spare Alfa Romeo-powered BT45 at the Nurburging earlier that season after the privateer RAM Racing BT44 he was meant to have driven was impounded as the result of a legal dispute following the first day of running.

Graham Hill, too, had turned to Stommelen at the end of 1974 after Guy Edwards broke his wrist in a Formula 5000 car that the team boss had told him not to drive. Ian Flux, the team's teenage gopher at the time, recalls Stommelen as Hill's first choice to drive its vacant Lola from the Austrian GP on. "As soon as it became clear that Guy wasn't going to be with us anymore, Graham said, 'Rolf's joining us,'" recalls club racing legend Flux. "He might not have looked like the obvious choice, but to Graham he was. He rated him very highly."

What might have been Stommelen's big break in F1 turned sour when he suffered serious injuries at the 1975 Spanish Grand Prix at Mountjuich Park in the accident that claimed the lives of five spectators. He recovered in time to compete in two more end-of-season races, only for the team to close its doors in the wake of



Stommelen starred at Le Mans in 1968 (top) with Neerpasch, who pushed his career (this pic)

the aircraft accident that claimed the life of its founder, four key crew members and driver Tony Brise.

Stommelen's last F1 hurrah came with the new Arrows team in 1978 courtesy of Warsteiner beer sponsorship – the team wanted a German to keep its new backer sweet. After a stop-start F1 career over the previous five years, he didn't impress against young gun Riccardo Patrese, and that was the end of his single-seater career at the age of 35.

It has been argued that Stommelen didn't have the necessary technical skills demanded by F1, even in the 1970s. That's what Neerpasch believes. "He was a naturally gifted driver, but I'm not sure he understood the car or why he was quick," says Neerpasch, who would also make use of Stommelen's talents after he moved to head up BMW Motorsport. "He wasn't what I would call an engineer-driver. You need that understanding of the car in F1. He was perhaps a little bit like Ronnie Peterson, though not quite in >>



Alfa Romeo came calling,
Stommelen pictured here
at the Nurburgring in 1972

the same class. He was a natural. When he was at Porsche, he was usually the quickest, except maybe for Jo Siffert."

Long-time Porsche man Jurgen Barth, a key player for the marque on both sides of the pitwall, offers a similar view. "He only knew how to drive one way and that was flat-out; he didn't understand the technical side of the car," says the 1977 Le Mans winner. "When you drove with him you'd always have to bring back the brakes when you got in because he was so hard on them. It was just foot down with Rolf, and sometimes he'd come back with a broken engine."

Porsche design legend Norbert Singer, the architect of the 935, 936 and 956/962, offers a different opinion. He suggests that Stommelen was actually a good test driver, even if his technical understanding was limited. "Some drivers come in and say we should do this to the front springs and this to the rollbar," he says. "Engineers actually don't want that. They want to be told what the car is doing and Rolf could do that."

An even stronger counter argument is offered by former head of Porsche Motorsport North America Alwin Springer, who hired Stommelen to drive his Andial Racing Porsche 935 for the 1981 IMSA season. He recounts a story from that year's Daytona 24 Hours that suggests Stommelen had an intuitive feeling for what was going on with a race car.

"I had been told that Rolf always complained a lot, and he did one lap in practice, came straight back in and told me the car was undrivable," remembers Springer. "He explained that when he got up on the banking, he could hardly turn the steering wheel. I sent out Harald Grohs [who co-drove with Stommelen for the majority of the season] and he came back in saying the steering was a bit heavy, but it wasn't a big deal. I remember we had the whole front axle out of the car looking for this problem that Rolf was telling us about and we couldn't find anything wrong."

"A couple of hours before qualifying we decided to have a look at the only thing we hadn't checked. The 935 had a fibreglass shell



Early F1 podium in 1970
Austrian GP for Brabham
squad augured well

LAT IMAGES

around the fuel tank and the steering rack went around it. The moment we looked at it we saw that the shaft was hitting the fibreglass shell as it moved on the banking. We didn't have any time but we hammered a wooden block between the fibreglass shell and the chassis, Rolfy went out and bang, pole position! From then on, we took notice of whatever he said."

John Fitzpatrick has not-too-dissimilar memories from the one, fateful occasion that Stommelen joined his eponymous team. They had been friends since sharing a Fiat Abarth 1000 TC at the Nurburgring in 1966, and Fitzpatrick brought him in to drive his low-downforce Joest-built 'Moby Dick' 935 at Riverside together with Derek Bell in April '83. "Up to that point the 935K4 I was driving was quicker than the 'Moby Dick' at all tracks except Le Mans," says Fitzpatrick. "Rolf spent two days testing the car and worked like hell, after which it was as quick or quicker than the K4."



"THE TRAGIC FINISH TO THE 1975
SPANISH GP OVERSHADOWED THE
FACT HE WAS LEADING THE RACE"

LAT IMAGES

Taking the Hill F1 team
into the lead of the ill-
fated 1975 Spanish GP...



We both started and I had to drive like a lunatic to keep up with him."

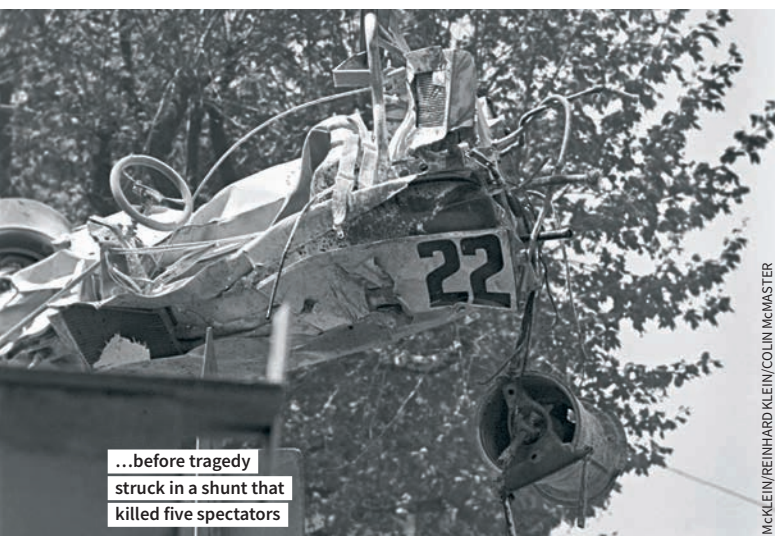
Stommelen would die as the result of a heart attack on the way to hospital after a 190mph shunt during his second stint. The rear wing had failed and the John Fitzpatrick Racing crew was distraught.

"We believed we'd killed poor Rolf, one of my best pals; it was terrible," says Fitzpatrick. "It was two or three months later that we were contacted by a marshal whose son had taken a photograph with the wing drooping to one side. I don't know exactly what happened, but we were told that Rolf had to swerve to avoid a backmarker and half spun backwards into the barrier. It didn't bring Rolf back, but it was kind of a relief for the crew."

Fitzpatrick puts Stommelen up there with anyone he ever drove with, including Peterson. "I think he was as quick as Ronnie, though if Ronnie had worked harder at it, he might have been quicker still," he says. "But Rolf really was a worker, at least in my experience."

Toine Hezemans, who was a team-mate of Stommelen's at Alfa in 1970 and '71, reckons there was no-one quicker. "He was bloody fast," says the Dutchman, who also won Daytona in '78 in a Brumos Porsche 935/77 with Stommelen. "When Piers Courage came to Alfa Romeo, he was quicker than most of us, but not Rolf. He was the only one who could match him."

Stommelen didn't get the breaks in F1 for whatever reason, but he did lead a grand prix. The tragic early finish to the 1975 Spanish GP has always overshadowed the fact that Stommelen was leading the race when a newfangled carbonfibre wing support failed, pitching his Hill-Ford GH1 over the barriers. "I saw Rolf leading a grand prix in one of our cars," says Flux. "Tony Brise and Alan Jones never actually led a grand prix for us. Rolf did. It was a strange race, but you had to be in it to lead it." ❧



A LITTLE BIT CRAZY; A POPULAR MAN

When Rolf Stommelen arrived on the German national racing and hillclimb scene in 1964, some immediately labelled him a playboy. He was, after all, driving a Porsche 904 GTS bought for him by his father.

It's clear that Stommelen certainly liked the limelight. Porsche engineer and future race team manager Peter Falk recalls a story from the 1968 Gaisberg Hillclimb near Salzburg, the debut of the marque's lightweight 909 'Bergspyder', that illustrates the point.

"Gerhard Mitter drove the 909 in practice, but decided the car was not good enough," says Falk. "We also had two 910s with us and he drove one in the event, and won. Stommelen didn't drive his normal 910; he wanted the worse car in the 909 because he knew the media would want to take photographs of him in the new car."

Falk suggests that there was a certain naivete to Stommelen. "He was not afraid of driving an untested new car as fast as possible, thinking there was no danger, no possibility of some weak parts, no untightened bolts," he says. "He was a little bit naive in those things."

Some have labelled Stommelen as slightly mad, though that's as much for his off-track antics as his performances on it. "Rolf was a little bit crazy," recalls Toine Hezemans. "We played billiards once, and he took the wrong end of the cue and used it like a golf club to hit the balls. I can tell you some unbelievable stories about him."

One involves sending a hire car off the edge of a cliff: "I was pushing and Rolf was at the wheel – he jumped out just before it went over. Gijs van Lennep was also there, but he didn't want to push. He was the serious one." There are a few more stories, reckons Hezemans, that can't be told.

Stommelen appears to have been universally popular with his fellow drivers. Hezemans and John Fitzpatrick counted him as one of their best friends in the paddock. "We really were good friends," says Hezemans. "He was always fun to be with and he had a great sense of humour, especially for a German!"

Fitzpatrick reveals that Stommelen's death in one of his cars hit him hard. It was the principal reason for what he now regards as a premature retirement from the cockpit at the end of the 1983 season.

"Rolf's death was really the reason I gave up driving," he says. "My wife was there at Riverside. She had given Rolf a kiss before the race and said, 'Do well', and then never saw him again. It hit her harder than it hit me. That's why I stopped at the end of the year. We had two tiny kids at the time and I could see that if anything happened to me, it would destroy her."





King Marquez retains his American crown

MOTOGP
AUSTIN (USA)
APRIL 22
ROUND 3 / 19

Marc Marquez continued his extraordinary dominance around Austin's Circuit of the Americas with his sixth consecutive victory there last Sunday, despite copping a grid penalty for a qualifying misdemeanour.

In his 93rd MotoGP start, the #93 Honda rider gave another Stateside masterclass, taking just 12 corners to rebound from being demoted from pole to the second row of the grid. Although Suzuki's Andrea Iannone put up an early fight, the result was never truly in doubt. Marquez's record on US soil is unreal, three wins at Indianapolis and one at Laguna Seca all adding to his domination.

He took pole in typical Marquez style, setting a scorching pace, falling off while pushing beyond the limit, then jumping on his spare bike and going even faster. But on that run's out-lap, he was too preoccupied with the ambling Iannone (who was looking for a tow) to notice Yamaha's Maverick Vinales tearing up behind on a hot lap. He realised too late, to Vinales's arm-windmilling disgust, and the new approach to harsher stewarding, agreed in Friday's Safety

Commission meeting, claimed its first victim. He 'kept' his pole in the record books, but was demoted three places on the grid. "They said there will be stronger penalties – I already checked!" he quipped. "Before it was a warning, [but now] no warning, just a penalty."

From second on the grid, Iannone made a quick start to lead Marquez and Vinales, who made a poor launch from his inherited pole. Marquez soon hit the front, but Iannone surprisingly stuck to his tail.

Iannone set fastest lap on the second tour, then lunged past Marquez at Turn 11 on lap three. That seemed to be the spur for Marquez to unleash his true pace, and he dropped Iannone by over a second per lap at will. He won by 3.5 seconds, but led by as much as 7.7s. Marquez admitted to an "extra push" in his motivation, harking back to his controversial travails last time out in Argentina. "I like to speak on the track," he said through an assassin's grin.

Not only was Iannone unable to keep pace with Marquez, he couldn't keep Vinales behind either. Vinales wrested away second by slicing past Iannone at Turn 1. Iannone was able to contain Valentino Rossi to ensure his maiden podium with Suzuki, and his first since 2016.

Attention turned to a fierce duel for fifth, between Cal Crutchlow (LCR Honda), Johann



GOLDMAN
LAT IMAGES

Zarco (Tech3 Yamaha) and Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso. Crutchlow ran as high as fourth on the opening lap, but slipped down the order after opting for a hard rear tyre. In his fight to recover lost ground, he twice passed Zarco (on a medium rear) under braking for Turn 12, but each time overran the corner, and allowed not only Zarco but Dovizioso past again.

Just as he was lining up Zarco for another attack into Turn 1 just before half-distance, Crutchlow got too greedy as he transitioned from brakes to throttle in the middle of the final corner, and sprawled off his bike, rejoining in last place.

"I was faster than them, and I'm not just going to sit behind," said Crutchlow, who drops back from first to fourth in the standings. "But it was my own fault; a stupid mistake."

As Crutchlow trailed home 19th, Dovizioso beat Zarco to fifth, benefiting from his hard rear tyre in the closing stages and passing at Turn 12 with four laps remaining.

Brave Dani Pedrosa, who wasn't even sure he'd go the distance with his fractured wrist, finished an admirable seventh for Honda. "In the end I had no strength, the bike was slipping away," he winced.

Tito Rabat produced another stirring ride on his Avintia Ducati, following up his seventh in Argentina with eighth here, and beating Pramac Ducati's Jack Miller in an elbows-out dust-up that was only decided on the final lap.

Aleix Espargaro rounded out the top 10, taking advantage when Miller muscled past the works Ducati of Jorge Lorenzo, who trailed home a lamentable (and livid) 11th.

CHARLES BRADLEY

RESULTS ROUND 3/19, AUSTIN (USA), APRIL 22 (20 LAPS – 68.512 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Marc Marquez (E)	Honda	41m52.002s
2	Maverick Vinales (E)	Yamaha	+3.560s
3	Andrea Iannone (I)	Suzuki	+6.704s
4	Valentino Rossi (I)	Yamaha	+9.587s
5	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	Ducati	+13.570s
6	Johann Zarco (F)	Tech3 Yamaha	+14.231s
7	Dani Pedrosa (E)	Honda	+18.201s
8	Tito Rabat (E)	Avintia Ducati	+28.537s
9	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+28.671s
10	Aleix Espargaro (E)	Aprilia	+28.875s
11	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	Ducati	+31.355s
12	Danilo Petrucci (I)	Pramac Ducati	+34.993s
13	Pol Espargaro (E)	KTM	+37.264s
14	Takaaki Nakagami (J)	LCR Honda	+39.335s
15	Alvaro Bautista (E)	Aspar Ducati	+40.887s
16	Bradley Smith (GB)	KTM	+48.475s
17	Scott Redding (GB)	Aprilia	+49.995s
18	Thomas Luthi (CH)	Marc VDS Honda	+51.115s
19	Cal Crutchlow (GB)	LCR Honda	+59.055s
20	Xavier Simeon (B)	Avintia Ducati	+59.747s
21	Franco Morbidelli (I)	Marc VDS Honda	+1m00.513s
R	Alex Rins (E)	Suzuki	10 laps-accident
R	Hafizh Syahrin (MAL)	Tech3 Yamaha	8 laps-accident
R	Karel Abraham (CZ)	Aspar Ducati	8 laps-wrist pain

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2 AUSTIN

- 1 Francesco Bagnaia
Kalex
- 2 Alex Marquez
Kalex
- 3 Miguel Oliveira
KTM

MOTO3 AUSTIN

- 1 Jorge Martin
Honda
- 2 Enea Bastianini
Honda
- 3 Marco Bezzecchi
KTM



Bagnaia

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 98.186mph. **FASTEST LAP** Marquez 2m04.605s, 98.970mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Vinales 2m04.064s; 2 Iannone 2m04.209s; 3 Zarco 2m04.210s; 4 Marquez 2m03.658s*; 5 Rossi 2m04.229s; 6 Lorenzo 2m04.294s; 7 Crutchlow 2m04.456s; 8 Dovizioso 2m04.865s; 9 Pedrosa 2m04.963s; 10 Petrucci 2m05.058s; 11 Rins 2m05.260s; 12 P Espargaro 2m05.829s.

*Grid penalty.

QUALIFYING 1 1 P Espargaro 2m05.169s; 2 Petrucci 2m05.245s; 3 Nakagami 2m05.457s; 4 Rabat 2m05.686s; 5 Smith 2m05.761s; 6 Syahrin 2m05.873s; 7 Morbidelli 2m05.943s; 8 Miller 2m05.966s; 9 A Espargaro 2m06.035s; 10 Luthi 2m06.222s; 11 Bautista 2m06.296s; 12 Redding 2m06.370s; 13 Abraham 2m06.537s; 14 Simeon 2m06.726s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Dovizioso 46; 2 Marquez 45; 3 Vinales 41; 4 Crutchlow 38; 5 Zarco 38; 6 Iannone 31; 7 Rossi 29; 8 Miller 26; 9 Rabat 22; 10 Petrucci 21; 11 Pedrosa 18; 12 Rins 16; 13 Syahrin 9; 14 P Espargaro 8; 15 A Espargaro 6; 16 Lorenzo 6; 17 Morbidelli 6; 18 Nakagami 5; 19 Redding 4; 20 Bautista 4; 21 Abraham 1.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Honda 70; 2 Yamaha 56; 3 Ducati 49; 4 Suzuki 39; 5 Aprilia 10; 6 KTM 8.



Vinales (left) and Iannone (right) joined Marquez on the podium



Audi beats Merc to break Monza jinx

**BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE CUP
MONZA (I)
APRIL 22
ROUND 1/5**

Audi didn't look like potential race winners for much of the opening Endurance Cup round of the Blancpain GT Series at Monza. But the Belgian WRT squad played a long game to pull off a first victory for the German manufacturer at what has always been its bogey circuit, with Christopher Mies, Alex Riberas and Dries Vanthoor.

The winning Audi had been nowhere in free practice on Saturday before ending up third after qualifying. But the car didn't appear to have the pace of the frontrunners for the first two thirds of the three-hour race.

Mies dropped to fifth at the start and then Riberas quickly lost the couple of

places that a typically swift WRT pitstop had gained the car at the first round of stops. But the team's eyes were on the final stint of the race, when it could deploy the pair of aces it held up its sleeve.

The first was the younger of the Vanthoor brothers, who is looking ever more impressive in what is only his third season of sportscars and his second as an Audi factory driver. The second was a fresh set of Pirelli tyres, held back from Saturday when the team only ran on used rubber, which combined with Vanthoor's talents to give WRT a crucial edge over the final hour.

"It was all about not making any mistakes and bringing the car to the final pitstops as close as possible to the leaders to allow Dries to do his job," said Riberas. "We were trying to be smart, because we knew how easy it is to lose these races."

Vanthoor emerged from the final round of pitstops in second position, three seconds down on Maximilian Gotz in the best of the Strakka Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3s. The Belgian quickly closed down the German, before making it past after getting a better run out of the Parabolica with just over half an hour to go. The Audi, however, had strayed over the white line that sits a couple of metres out from the pitwall and was ordered from race control to give back the position for a track-limits violation. A couple of laps later, Gotz edged Vanthoor onto the grass into the first chicane as he defended his position and was told that he now had to hand over the lead to the Audi.

The Strakka Merc had moved into the lead after Maximilian Buhk took over from Alvaro Parente. He chased down Mikhail Aleshin in SMP Racing's Ferrari 488 GT3, sweeping into the lead with a dramatic move around the outside of the Parabolica.

WRT's job at the sadly renamed Monza Eni Circuit was made easier by the woes of others. Three manufacturers might have won the opening BGTS endurance but for their own disparate problems.

The SMP Ferrari that had taken the pole at the end of the three 15-minute mini-sessions from which the times are now aggregated led the opening hour in the hands of Miguel Molina. Aleshin was second into the final pitstops, only for a throttle problem, caused by a loose bolt, to strike when Davide Rigon took over for the run to the flag. The car returned to the track after vital seconds were lost, and then



Venerable Jag starred on way to fifth, and took Silver Cup honours



Inspired Vanthoor
defeated Strakka
Mercedes of Gotz

SRO/BOGAERTS

completed a couple of slow laps before returning to the pits. The problem was solved and the car got back out on track, before the team parked it in the realisation that there were no points to be won.

The Black Falcon Merc team ended up third with Maro Engel, Luca Stolz and Yelmer Buurman, despite having to take a drivethrough penalty for an infringement during a full-course yellow at the end of the opening hour. Engel had run behind Alex Fontana in the Emil Frey Racing Jaguar G3, before catching the second-placed man by surprise when the race went green.

The penalty was actually awarded for his speed into the yellow period as a result of radio problems rather than his speed out of it. It was definitely a case of what might have been for Black Falcon, given that the Merc finished only 14.6s behind the winning Audi.

Lamborghini's problems struck before the race. Reigning BGTS enduro champions Mirko Bortolotti, Andrea Caldarelli and Christian Engelhart took fourth in their Grasser Lamborghini Huracan GT3, despite an overnight Balance of Performance change ahead of qualifying. The Lambos were given an extra 15kg of ballast after it was claimed that their engines showed more performance than at the official BoP tests.

They came through from 13th on the grid, after a perfect race, Engelhart only losing a podium spot to Buurman in the closing stages. He then had to fight off Mikael Grenier in the XKR-based Frey Jag to hang onto fourth.

GARY WATKINS



Renault F1 junior
Lundgaard now leads
the Eurocup standings

RENAULT

Lundgaard jumps to the top with maiden win

RENAULT EURO CUP
MONZA (1)
APRIL 21-22
ROUND 2 / 10

Double Formula 4 champion Christian Lundgaard continued his progression up the Formula Renault Eurocup leaderboard at Monza. Fifth and third at the Paul Ricard opener, the MP Motorsport driver claimed second in the opening race in Italy and then notched up a maiden series victory at only the fourth time of asking.

The Renault Sport Academy recruit couldn't do anything on Saturday about Josef Kaufmann Racing driver Yifei Ye, who became the first Chinese to win in the Eurocup. But on Sunday, Lundgaard jumped to the front on lap eight with an around-the-outside manoeuvre on polewinner Lorenzo Colombo into the second chicane straight after the second of two early-race safety cars.

The Dane got his head down and

edged away, only to come under increasing pressure as the 30-minute race drew to a close. JD Motorsport driver Colombo, also a rookie from F4, erred on the side of caution and had only one half-hearted stab at getting back to the front on the way to finishing four tenths in arrears.

Eurocup stalwart Max Defourny, who had qualified only eighth in his MP Tatuus, was a further two seconds behind in third position.

"I knew there was a risk going around the outside," said Lundgaard, "but once his front wing disappeared from view on my inside, I knew the move was more or less done. The race pace wasn't quite there and it was pretty intense at the end."

Ye had converted his pole position into the lead in race one and was unchallenged over the duration. He was a second up on Lundgaard inside five laps on the way to a 1.7s victory.

Italian Colombo, who lost a front-row starting spot with a five-place grid penalty carried over from Ricard, came through to third.

Max Fewtrell, the championship leader coming into Monza, endured a disastrous weekend. The Briton and Lundgaard touched going into the first corner on Saturday, sending the R-ace GP car into a marker board and on to the pits to have a slab of polystyrene removed from the front suspension.

He was running third in race two when he was punted across the Ascari Chicane gravel by Ye on lap four. He dropped outside the top 20, but a damaged diffuser meant he could recover to no higher than 10th.

GARY WATKINS

WEEKEND WINNERS

BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE CUP MONZA

Christopher Mies/Alex Riberas/Dries Vanthoor
WRT Audi R8 LMS

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP MONZA

Race 1 Yifei Ye
Josef Kaufmann Racing
Race 2 Christian Lundgaard
MP Motorsport



Whincup (right) got ahead of McLaughlin (17) in race one, but things soon went wrong

KLYNSMITH
LAT IMAGES

McLaughlin Island double puts him on top

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
PHILLIP ISLAND (AUS)
APRIL 21-22
ROUND 4 / 16

Scott McLaughlin was in unstoppable form at Phillip Island, storming into a healthy points lead thanks to a pair of wins.

The Penske Ford driver was in a class of his own all weekend, adding his fifth and sixth consecutive poles at the circuit and taking all 300 points on offer from the pair of 250-kilometre races.

He's now 60 points clear of David Reynolds at the top of the Supercars standings, and a whopping 142 ahead of former leader Jamie Whincup thanks to a disastrous weekend for the reigning champ.

McLaughlin's perfect weekend started with a measured win on Saturday, after a race-long battle with Whincup.

It was the Red Bull Holden that actually led the majority of the race, Whincup having made the better start from the

front row to get by McLaughlin. However he was never a comfortable leader and spent two stints with mirrors full of McLaughlin, before the Penske Ford finally slipped past at Southern Loop on lap 41 of 57 to take a lead it would hold until the finish.

The win initially gave McLaughlin a one-point championship lead, but a post-race investigation saw the gap ultimately blown out significantly. It was later proved that Whincup momentarily switched off his pitlane limiter while leaving the bay after his second stop, which resulted in a post-race 38-second penalty and the Holden being dumped down to 14th.

That wasn't just good news for McLaughlin; Rick Kelly, who was third on the road, was elevated to second in what was his 500th Supercars start.

Sunday was a similar story for McLaughlin, with an on-track pass needed for the victory. This time it was because the early leader was shuffled back to fourth thanks to pitlane traffic

during the first round of stops.

McLaughlin's fourth became second behind David Reynolds as the next round of stops shook out, before McLaughlin pulled a carbon copy of his Saturday move on lap 30.

"I've had an awesome rocketship all weekend," he said. "We had to fight a bit there. [Engineer] Ludo [Lacroix] said to back off just that lap and I said, 'Give me one more lap and we'll try to get past him,' and we did."

"Everyone knows I need to be consistent all year to be able to get it [the championship] done, which we didn't do last year, and today was a good start."

Reynolds came home second on Sunday to cement his spot behind McLaughlin in the standings, with Kelly, who led the second stint after short-filling on his first stop, capping off a decent event with third.

Whincup was well off the pace on Sunday, finishing ninth behind Fabian Coulthard, Michael Caruso, Shane van Gisbergen, Craig Lowndes and Chaz Mostert.

His issue, according to Triple Eight, was related to set-up. "We just didn't hit the sweet spot," said team manager Mark Dutton. "We missed it by a little bit."

"In qualifying on Sunday, [race engineer David] Cauchi tried something, and it all made sense — of course it did, otherwise you wouldn't do it. But it didn't make the car faster and it didn't make a tangible change to the characteristic of the car either."

"He was definitely conserving, the car had more pace in it than he was showing. But not enough to do anything exciting."

McLaughlin now leads Reynolds in the points, with van Gisbergen third and Lowndes fourth. Whincup has slipped to fifth and has some work to do.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



KLYNSMITH
LAT IMAGES

Reynolds, McLaughlin and Kelly enjoy the race-two podium

WEEKEND
WINNERSAUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
PHILLIP ISLAND

Race 1 Scott McLaughlin

DJR Team Penske
Ford Falcon FG X

Race 2 Scott McLaughlin

DJR Team Penske
Ford Falcon FG XSUPER FORMULA
SUZUKA

Naoki Yamamoto

Team Mugen Dallara-Honda

JAPANESE F3
SUZUKA

Race 1 Sho Tsuboi

TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F317

Race 2 Sho Tsuboi

TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F317

NASCAR CUP
RICHMOND

Kyle Busch

Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry

NASCAR XFINITY
RICHMOND

Christopher Bell

Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry

INDY LIGHTS
BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK

Race 1 Pato O'Ward

Andretti Autosport

Race 2 Pato O'Ward

Andretti Autosport

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS
VELOPARK

Race 1 Caca Bueno

Cimed Racing

Race 2 Daniel Serra

Eurofarma RC

24 HOUR SERIES
NAVARRA 12 HOURS
Matteo Malucelli/Josef Kral/Jiri Pisarik

Scuderia Praha Ferrari 488 GT3



Yamamoto starred on
a weekend where
Honda had the edge

ISHIHARA
LAT IMAGES

Yamamoto's Mugen power

SUPER FORMULA
SUZUKA (J)
APRIL 22
ROUND 1 / 7

Naoki Yamamoto jumped into the lead of the Super Formula standings by winning from pole position at Suzuka in his Honda-powered Team Mugen car.

Yamamoto, the 2013 champion, is something of a Suzuka specialist — all four of his Super Formula wins have come at the circuit, as have seven of his nine poles. And Team Mugen was on astonishing form, with series debutant Nirei Fukuzumi completing a lock-out of the front row. Honda definitely had the edge, with Tomoki Nojiri (Dandelion Racing), Takuya Izawa (Nakajima Racing) and Kodai Tsukakoshi (Real Racing) completing a qualifying sweep of the top five for the manufacturer. Top Toyota runner was reigning champion Hiroaki Ishiura, sixth in his Cerumo-Inging machine.

Yamamoto made a great start followed by Fukuzumi, but Tsukakoshi passed Fukuzumi for second after two laps. Tsukakoshi was on a low-fuel strategy, but could not pass

Yamamoto before he made an early stop to switch from medium to soft tyres.

It was obvious that Tsukakoshi would not be able to make the soft rubber last, so it was clear that he was on a two-stop strategy. He led briefly for a couple of laps, after Yamamoto had stopped for his switch to softs, before pitting again. Fukuzumi pitted at this time too, but gear-paddle failure put him out of the race after a superb debut.

Up to second was Yuhi Sekiguchi's Team Impul Dallara-Toyota. Sekiguchi had qualified down in 14th, so started on soft tyres and made an early stop for mediums. Now he went on a charge and, as Yamamoto struggled for grip on his soft rubber, Sekiguchi brought the gap down to 1.7 seconds at the finish. Nojiri was third from Ishiura, Izawa and the two-stopping Tsukakoshi.

James Rossiter qualified last but one on his TOM'S SF debut, but had very strong race pace. He pitted to change onto soft tyres on the same lap as Yamamoto and Ishiura made the same switch, and outpaced everyone to set fastest lap of the race on his way to 11th position.

JIRO TAKAHASHI



LaBOUNTY
LAT IMAGES

Busch shepherds it home

NASCAR CUP
RICHMOND (USA)
APRIL 21
ROUND 9 / 36

Kyle Busch matched Kevin Harvick's earlier streak of three wins in a row.

Busch had claimed in the build-up that Harvick still held the edge, and seemingly backed that up by qualifying his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota 32nd after a strategic error.

But a series of adjustments and clean racing through stages one and two allowed Busch to join Harvick in the lead pack. He used the penultimate caution to go around the outside of Harvick's Stewart-Haas Racing Ford for second late on.

At the final caution, Busch stole a march on reigning champion Martin Truex Jr. Chase Elliott also jumped to second ahead of Denny Hamlin as Hendrick Motorsports continues to recover from a poor start to the year.

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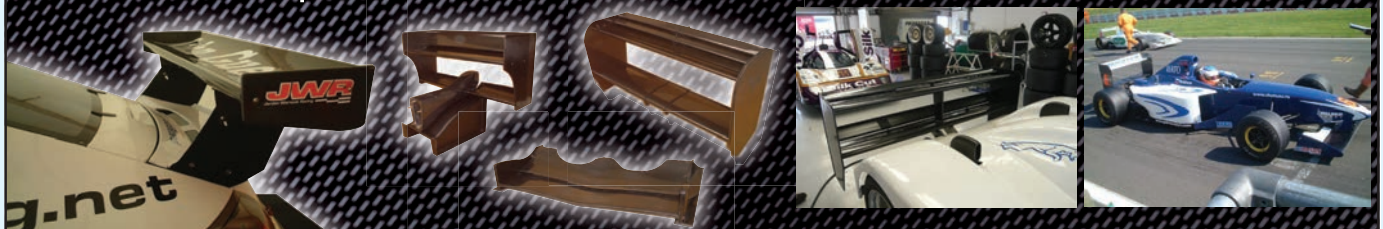
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RYDELL TO RACE HIS BTCC TITLE WINNER

SILVERSTONE CLASSIC

Rickard Rydell will race the Volvo S40 in which he won the 1998 British Touring Car Championship at July's Silverstone Classic, as well as driving the infamous Volvo 850 estate in a demo to commemorate 60 years of Britain's touring car top tier.

Swede Rydell, 50, steered the Tom Walkinshaw Racing S40 to race wins at Thruxton, Brands Hatch and Croft during the height of the Super Touring period.

"I really enjoyed that time, especially since at that time there was no touring car championship as big as that one," said Rydell. "In 1998 there were eight manufacturers and 16 works cars – it meant a lot of testing and it was a way for a driver to be involved in the development, which I really enjoyed.

"In 1998 there were some geometry changes to the car and we were able to have a better balance – the front of the car worked much better. There were quite

a few things changed on the car."

The changes sent the S40 up the pecking order in Rydell's hands. He'd won just one race during the previous year in the car's debut season.

Rydell will race the machine in a pair of Super Touring Challenge races at the Classic on July 20-22. The Volvo proved competitive last year, as car owner and historics regular Jason Minshaw took a race victory.

Rydell will be reunited with period rivals Patrick Watts and John Cleland, who are also set to race, but played down any talk of pressure to win during the weekend.

"Jason has told me that I have to be careful with the car, but it will be fun to race with John and Patrick again," added Rydell.

"When you put the helmet on you're trying to do your best. But I'm there for the race and probably won't have any testing, so it will just be fun to do the event and see all the people again."

Looking back on his career, which



Rover's return at Donington

HISTORICS

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards and Fred Wakeman will branch out from racing period sportscars to field a Group 2 Rover Vitesse in the Historic Touring Car Challenge.

They have recently bought the car, which raced in South Africa in period and contested the Kyalami 9 Hours in 1981 and '82. It was originally built by David Price Racing and came back to the UK to be restored by BGM Sport in 2014 for Tim Summers.

Now Blakeney-Edwards and Wakeman will race it, alongside their sportscars, in the Historic Touring Car Club-run series starting at the Donington Historic Festival.

"We had a shakedown at Silverstone and it's fantastic," said Blakeney-Edwards.

This year the series heads to Thruxton for the 50th Anniversary Celebration, then to the Silverstone Classic, Oulton Park Gold Cup and the Algarve Festival, which swaps from season opener to become the 2018 curtain closer.

PAUL LAWRENCE



Blakeney-Edwards will debut Rover at Donington Park

LAWRENCE

ended in 2015 after competing in sporadic rounds of the World Touring Car Championship, Rydell has the 1998 title at the top of the list.

"Among my achievements, it's BTCC, Macau [won Grand Prix in 1992] and Le Mans [won GT1 class in 2007 with Aston Martin] which stand out. But the BTCC is a full season and a full championship, so I have to rank that above the others."

Rydell spent from 1994-1999 in TWR cars before one season in a Prodrive-built Ford Mondeo in 2000, which yielded third in the points. He will be reunited at Silverstone, the track where he sealed the 1998 championship, with a number of TWR engineers and personnel.

"The BTCC is celebrating 60 years so we'll be doing a parade with the estate – it will be a good celebration," he said. "It will be nice to see the mechanics and engineers, and some of the drivers from the era as well."

The 850 estate was uncompetitive in 1994, with Rydell finishing 14th in the points. It was swapped for the saloon model the following year. This proved far more competitive and delivered third in the standings. After that, he never finished lower than fourth in the points.

JACK BENYON



Minshaw owns Volvo S40

JEP

Holden V8 to Combe race

DAVE ALLAN TROPHY

Pre-2003 Touring Cars champion AJ Owen will drive a V8 Holden Commodore in 2018, racing with his father Craig in the Dave Allan Trophy race at Castle Combe.

Owen Sr has dreamt of racing a V8 Supercar, having driven a Ford Sierra Cosworth in recent years after starting racing in the early 1990s.

"It's not been raced in Australia, but it's one of the ones they used in Bahrain in a championship they set up out there," said Owen Jr, the 2015 Pre-2003 Touring Car champion, who will return

to that championship alongside racing in the Nippon Challenge in his Honda Civic. "It's in the '06 HSV livery. It doesn't have history in V8 Supercars but has all the right ingredients and look of a Supercar."

"We've done some test days in it. We went to watch the Dave Allan last year and thought, 'We'll have a go at that.'"

The Dave Allan Trophy race has been running at Castle Combe since 2013, in memory of the late Swindon-based Honda test driver who passed away following an accident in 2012.

JACK BENYON



Owen will drive V8 Supercar

New racing club gains MSA approval

CMMC

A new racing club already boasting 60 members has gained recognition by the Motor Sports Association, and is hoping to establish itself in the motorsport community over the coming years.

The Classic and Modern Motorsport Club has been founded by Richard Culverhouse, formerly of the Classic Sports Car Club.

The new club already has two meetings planned for 2018, including the Classic and Modern Motorsport Festival at Mallory Park on June 10 and Snetterton on September 22, as well as classic races at Donington Park on June 24 and Silverstone on August 4.

"It came to fruition in the last couple of months," said Culverhouse.

"I actually vowed never to start another club, but I was away in America and when I was there I had three people approach me saying they were having difficulty trying to find slots in other



Classic and Modern Motorsport Club will race at Mallory Park

JONES

people's race meetings.

"I said, 'If I formed a new club and got our own race meeting would you come on board?'; and so far we have 60 members.

"It has taken me a little bit by surprise but it has come at the wrong time of the year and we're already planning for 2019."

The club will host races for classic and modern cars, as well as groups, and intends to hold five or six meetings in 2019.

"When the CSCC was formed it was because at that time there was a need for that kind of club," added Culverhouse.

"It's grown and is bursting at the seams and that's one of the reasons possibly why some of the people joining me now were on board with us at the CSCC.

"The main thing we need is the circuits to support us and give us dates."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Monger still searching for sponsorship

BRITISH F3

Billy Monger will be on the grid for the second round of the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship at Rockingham this weekend, but a question mark remains on whether he will complete the entire season as he still seeks funding.

The 18-year-old made his racing return last month at Oulton Park — almost exactly a year after a British Formula 4 crash led to a

double leg amputation — and took a best finish of third with Carlin.

Both Monger and the team had hoped to secure a sponsorship deal after Oulton, but this fell through at the last moment, meaning Carlin will continue to fund his racing.

A team spokesperson said: "Trevor [Carlin] has made clear from the start that the team won't take a penny of the [JustGiving] money raised by the public,

as that was donated to help Billy's rehabilitation.

"It's hard to believe that a driver with such an incredible story, talent and personality is still looking for funding. He's deserving of this opportunity."

• Monger took part in a charity electric karting race organised by Formula E driver Jean-Eric Vergne in Paris yesterday, to raise funds for Spinal Track.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Monger took a podium on his racing return

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More cars for new series

BMW CAR CLUB RACING

The new BMW Car Club Racing series expects a grid of over 30 cars for its next round at Silverstone, following a successful debut at Castle Combe on Easter Monday.

The series had a strong start with a grid of 21 cars across five classes, ranging from M1s to a tightly regulated Cup class for E46 325ti models.

Series coordinator Neil McDonald says that the aims of the series are to bring together BMW club racers, ensure low costs and get new people involved in racing.

"What has attracted many of the drivers is racing for fun, without costing a fortune," said McDonald. "The club's trackdays have been a friendly and welcoming community for years and

we want to extend this with BMWCCR."

"For Silverstone, we already are looking at over 30 cars because all the ones who have had issues [ahead of Combe] have all faithfully promised [to attend].

"We even had one driver who went to another race meeting to buy a car because he was so upset his car wasn't ready!"

Reigning Civic Cup champion Lee Deegan took part in the Castle Combe races, and claimed two class wins.

"It's getting bigger and bigger, and hopefully for Silverstone we should be above 30," he said. "A lot dropped out [for Combe] with car problems and some people not liking the weather, so hopefully Silverstone will be warmer and we'll have a bit more competition and have some good races."

GRAHAM KEILLOH

Bratt returns in Porsche

CARRERA CUP GB

Former British Touring Car driver Will Bratt will return to racing in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB at Donington Park this weekend.

The 30-year-old has struck a deal to compete in the Donington round with the In2Racing squad.

Bratt, who won the T-Cars title in 2004, hasn't regularly competed since a BTCC campaign in an Audi A4 back in 2013 and, at present, has only signed to contest this

weekend's Carrera Cup races.

"We've got the sponsorship budget for a couple of rounds and will see how it goes from there," said Bratt. "I haven't tested the car yet and I haven't driven a race car since a one-off World Series Formula Renault 3.5 race in 2015.

"I'm looking forward to it – for me, I just want to have a good time, really, and do what I can. I should get a day in before the Friday [practice] to shake things down. It's a new car and I just need seat time."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

IN THE HEADLINES

MORGAN'S TCR APPROVAL

British Touring Car Championship driver Adam Morgan is open to racing a TCR car again after sampling one for the first time earlier this month. Morgan, third in the BTCC standings after the opening round, shared a SEAT Cupra TCR car with former BTCC driver Stewart Lines in the 50-minute Sprint and two-hour Britcar Endurance contests at Rockingham. "I'm certainly open to the idea of driving these cars again if an opportunity came up," said Morgan.

GORNALL TO JCW MINIS

Former British GT champion James Gornall will make his front-wheel-drive racing debut at Rockingham this weekend when he joins the Mini Challenge JCW grid. Gornall will take the wheel of the Mini UK-entered guest car. The 33-year-old, who lifted the British GT title in 2008 and won the BMW Compact Cup crown in '16, said: "I always want to race in competitive championships and the JCWs look like one of the best grids in the country at the moment."

THEN THERE WERE THREE

Questions have been raised over the future of Renault UK Clio Cup Junior after one of its four competitors has left. Jamsport racer Louis Doyle turned 16 recently and will move into the Mini Challenge JCW series with the team. "For him, what's the point in just driving around and around? He needs to get stuck in," said team boss Jamie Going. "Even if he's at the back in Minis, he'll still have people to race with and learn his craft."

JSCC DRIVERS EXCLUDED

Junior Saloon Car title contender Ben Kasperczak was stripped of his win at Rockingham earlier this month after failing post-race scrutineering for using the wrong airbox. Third and fourth-place finishers Scott McIntyre and Steven Chandler were also excluded for ride-height infringements. The revised podium consists of Joel Wren, Frankie Taylor and Charlotte Birch in first, second and third respectively.

BARC SALOONS 'FUN'

Former Classic Touring Car Racing Club driver Andrew Smith believes the new BARC Saloons category can be a success, despite the series only attracting six entries for its first race earlier this month. The series shared a grid with the VTEC Challenge at Rockingham for its inaugural round, but Honda Civic driver Smith believes numbers will quickly rise. "The reason I like the BARC Saloons idea is, put simply, it is all about putting the fun back into motorsport," he said.



STAT
22

The number of cars that started the first-ever Heritage Formula Ford race

EXTREME HEATWAVE The new Heritage Formula Ford series got off to a scorcher at Donington Park last weekend – literally. Chris Hodgen had to make a quick exit from his Van Diemen RF89 in the opening race when it caught fire. He had qualified eighth and was up to sixth when his car began to misfire and erupted in flames, causing a red flag. **Photograph by Peter Scherer**

O'Connell wins on debut

FIA MASTERS HISTORIC

Two new race winners, including Martin O'Connell on his series debut, kicked off the 2018 FIA Masters Historic Formula 1 Championship in sensational style at Imola last weekend.

O'Connell qualified Belgian Marc Devis's newly restored ATS D4 on pole, and the double British F3 National Class champion dominated Saturday's leg until the battery went down. Pursuer Mike Cantillon seized the opportunity, powering his Williams FWo7 home ahead of CGA team-mate Christophe d'Ansembourg's sister car.

Former champion Greg Thornton (Lotus 77) completed the podium.

O'Connell shot from 21st on Sunday's grid to a resounding victory as he chased down an inspired Steve Boulton Brooks (Lotus 81). Boulton Brooks raised his game when O'Connell shot past, chasing the ATS home in the Classic Team Lotus-run car.

Graham Wilson/David Pittard (Chevron B8) won in FIA Masters Historic Sportscar race of high attrition, and Alex Kapadia (ORECA-Nissan o3 P2) won both Masters Endurance Legends races.

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

MALLOCK PROBLEMS

F3 Cup racer Adrian Holey's attempt to debut the ex-Creighton Brown Mallock Mk20B in Saturday's Classic Clubmans race at Snetterton was thwarted by a crankshaft oil seal failure in qualifying. Built uniquely as a Formula Atlantic chassis with Swindon BDA engine, it was raced by Alan Webb in 1979 before being reconfigured. The car was last raced in the mid-'80s by Hugh Chamberlain, from whom Holey bought it.

NOT A PIECE OF ART

Renowned artist Jason Brooks's Historic Sports Car Club '70s Road Sports outing at Snetterton was curtailed after barely three laps of qualifying when his 1973 Porsche 911 hit the inside barrier at Riches. The Austin A40 convert's new-build TVR 3000M was not quite ready, so he substituted the ex-Des Winks 911, fresh from a four-year restoration.

'AUSSIE' MORGAN STARS

The first Moss Box Morgan +8 exported to Australia made a fine UK race debut at Snetterton on Saturday. Morgan Challenge racer Jonathan Edwards finished a close runner-up to Kevin Kivlochan's sister car in the first of two Historic Sports Car Club Historic Road Sports races, before a third-place finish in race two.

NEW HGPCA CHAIRMAN

Long-time Lotus ace Peter Horsman, 62, succeeded double-stinter Barry Cannell as chairman of the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association on the eve of Saturday's season opener at Silverstone. Horsman won numerous HGPCA events in his ex-Tony Shelly 18/21.

F2 meeting honours Clark

HISTORIC F2

Fifty years on from Jim Clark's death in a Formula 2 race at Hockenheim, the life of the double world champion and Indy 500 winner was celebrated at the German circuit's annual historic festival last weekend.

Having topped practice and qualifying, Swiss racer Hans Peter won the two races with ease in his two-litre Ralt-BMW RT1.

He led the March 712M of reigning champion Robert Simac home in both

encounters, and the Frenchman was dominant in the 1600cc class. The March-BMW 782 of Torgny Johansson took third in both races.

Paying tribute to Clark, Hockenheim presented a cheque for €5000 to the Jim Clark Trust, which plans to open a museum next year. The donation was made to representatives during a special ceremony attended by Clive Chapman, Jochen Mass and Historic Sports Car Club chief Grahame White, who was officiating at the fateful race.

KEVIN RITSON



A cheque was presented to the Jim Clark Trust



CAN DECLINING GRID NUMBERS BE REVERSED?

The ageing demographic of club racers demonstrates a worrying social trend

MARCUS PYE

The issue of falling numbers has been on my radar before, a recurring nightmare. But declining grid sizes across many strata of British racing — from the professional ranks downwards — over recent seasons is a worrying trend.

With fewer MSA competition licences being issued, it's a malaise that will be difficult to stem. At least without clear focus on the future of attractive, financially accessible and sustainable classes, and some judicious reshuffling of existing ones to achieve new goals and avoid the dreaded date clashes.

A topical case was last weekend's Historic Sports Car Club meeting on Snetterton's 200 circuit. Positioned earlier than before — a fortnight after the club's championship-opening event at Donington — the compact closed-wheel bill spanned five categories. While the two diverse Road Sports grids were strong (with 25 entries, the 1970s set is enjoying a well-deserved boom), takers for the Guards Trophy mini-enduro (which has a thriving rival for its Pre-'66 GT runners in Equipe GTS) were well down. Only nine Historic Touring Cars arrived; some owners prefer the 300 layout and other regulars were at Imola with FIA Masters Historic.

While a flurry of late entries — now the norm, since a lot of racers have to get through one event before committing to the

"THE EVER-INCREASING COST IS ONE OF MANY FACTORS BEHIND A DROP-OFF IN SUPPORT"

next — brought the overall turnout to 90, it was the club's smallest event in years. Fortunately, it only takes two cars to make a race: four HRS lead battlers (three Morgan +8s and a very rapid Lotus Elan S1) and new winners elsewhere rewarded spectators. Competition across the board was top notch, indeed the pits, paddock and podium were imbued with a wonderful spirit of camaraderie under glorious sunny skies.

The ever-increasing expense of competing is just one of many key factors behind a widespread drop-off in support for club events, although the CSCC's catch-all structure looks an inspired model. Faced with implementing the MSA's annual demands for safety improvements, what else can circuit owners with huge overheads do but pass the root cost on to customers?

Unlike equivalent venues in continental Europe, which are used less often and can be run on skeleton staffing levels, the best-equipped on these isles are labour intensive to operate.

Look deeper, though, and you'll see that it goes beyond that. Younger aspirants (beyond the teenagers in junior categories struggling for numbers because the ability of a few to throw money at testing has narrowed the marketplace) are mired in university debts these days. Getting onto the property ladder or established in business has assumed far greater importance than taking up even hobby racing like enthusiasts of previous generations did because they could.

It's no surprise, therefore, that the competitor demographic has changed radically over the past two or three decades. There are youngsters in club racing (often from racing families), but relatively few in their 20s or 30s — in stark contrast to the spectrum when I first attended clubbies regularly in the 1970s. Today's racers are largely successful businesspeople in their 40s, 50s and 60s, many of whom engage in frontline historic categories where the best cars are investments. Their agenda is all about winning regardless of cost and, in extreme cases, what preparers are instructed to do to develop their steeds.

With this shift towards older competitors comes attitude changes. While many favour expensive 'elite' events such as the Monaco GP Historique and Le Mans Classic — both coming up this summer, with knock-on effects for preparation teams — those cutting their cloth more humbly at home are becoming choosier. It's not the rising cost of fuel or accommodation and subsistence that drive this, but increasingly the likelihood of being snarled up in jams on trunk roads afterwards that turns people off some great venues.

As a huge fan of Historic and club sport — with a 1971 Formula Ford Merlyn I'm delighted to loan out to a talented young driver because, with three dependant daughters, I can't afford to race it — I sympathise with all sides, but unfortunately there is no simple panacea to evolution. The underlying fact remains that there is too much racing, and duplication of series, which inevitably dilutes the product in a fast-paced era with so much competing for disposable income.

Are championships counter-productive too? The best remain sensational and well supported, but others require amalgamation. For those who cannot afford to contest every round they are irrelevant, beyond the potential satisfaction of defeating a title contender at your local circuit. And, as I've often witnessed, the drop-out rate once competitors are out of contention hits grid sizes, quality and spectator appeal. That's why special stand-alone events work for everybody. ✎



Larger LMP3 Cup grids are a matter of time

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To mildly misquote *Field of Dreams*, if you build it they will come. And yet one year in, the LMP3 Cup can claim to have all the prerequisites for a strong series, but it still awaits the arrival of a grid size to match.

Last season the fields varied between five and 10 cars. Changes for 2018, including a secondary PT4 class, and Michelin tyres to bring the Cup in line with the European series, were expected to yield double-figure entries. Yet in the Donington season-opener there were seven LMP3s plus one PT4.



Series boss Chris Haynes cannot explain the paucity. "As far as we're concerned there's no excuses left [not to participate]," he says. "Everything is in place — we have invested for the future and we're still committed to the LMP3 Cup. In theory it's a fantastic championship, we just need the cars. We believe we're providing the best environment nationally for their racing and we're always listening to our customers. We've listened and made those changes. We can't do the racing as well. We can't sustain a championship with eight cars on the grid."

"The teams are telling us that the drivers are just being a bit coy, holding out for deals. We've targeted Brands Hatch [round two] as an important round. We're expecting more cars there."

Among existing LMP3 Cup competitors there is virtual unanimity that it's a high-quality series — in terms of teams, drivers and cars — as well as being competitive, well-run and cost-effective.

"There's nothing that would put us off competing," confirms United Autosports co-owner Richard Dean. "I keep reading about what a success LMP1 is [in the World Endurance Championship] and they've only got eight cars."

Driver Jamie Spence adds: "I look at the GT Cup and I believe the budgets are very

similar, and these cars are head and shoulders above them."

Haynes thinks that could be a double-edged sword: "The P3 is a proper racing car. I think some of the other racing cars out there make it a lot easier with their trickery. I think that might have an influence."

"It's chicken and egg," adds United Autosports driver Bonamy Grimes. "You've got to have the grids to get the people, but if you don't get the people you don't get the grids. It always takes a while with these things. And if you look at Europe and how LMP3 is going great guns, I'm sure it will ramp up."

Many LMP3 Cup drivers and teams agree. "There is a lot of interest in the series; it's just getting people across the line," states Speedworks Motorsport team principal Christian Dick. The consensus seems that it's all a matter of time.

Nielsen Racing took a 1-2-3 in the first Donington race after all its cars started on slicks in damp-but-drying conditions. Newcomer Christian Olsen won in what was only his second-ever LMP3 race, and with no previous dry running in the car.

Driving alone, Olsen was around 10 seconds behind team-mate Colin Noble, who led the first stint, hounding his other stablemate Johnny Mowlem in second.

DONINGTON PARK
WEEKEND WINNERS

7 RACE SERIES

Race 1 Lee Wiggins

Race 2 Danny Winstanley

F3 CUP

Race 1 Jacopo Sebastiani (Dallara F312)

Race 2 Stephen Daly (Dallara F308)

Race 3 Shane Kelly (Dallara F308)

GT CUP

Race 1 Nigel Hudson (Aston Martin GT3)

Race 2 Dan Gibson (McLaren 650S)

Race 3 Gareth Downing (Mosler)

HERITAGE FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Mike Gardner (Crossle 30/32F)

Race 2 Oliver White (Van Diemen RF89)

LMP3 CUP

Race 1 Christian Olsen (Ligier JSP3)

Race 2 Bradley Smith/Duncan Williams
(Norma M30)

RADICAL CHALLENGE

Race 1 Steve Burgess

Race 2 Steve Burgess

Race 3 Jerome de Sadeleer

SPORTS 2000

Tom Stoten (Gunn TS11)

For full results visit:
www.tsl-timing.com

Olsen had a 10s shorter pitstop than either of the others' mandatory times, and Noble's car then lost a further 15s due to a pitstop problem. This gave Olsen a 23s lead, which he extended to 40s by the end.

"It would be a bit blasé to say it's not a surprise!" said Olsen.

Tony Wells brought Noble's car home second, and Grimes held off a late attack from Spence's 360 Racing entry to take third alongside Mowlem.

Bradley Smith/Duncan Williams, in the Norma M30's LMP3 Cup debut for Mectech Motorsport, were one of three entries to finish a lap down after starting on wets. But they made amends by winning the second race comfortably.

Smith's pole mark was nine tenths clear of the rest, and while Williams spun when running among the leaders – losing around 15s – Smith recovered to win by 16s.

"Mectech have put together a fantastic car," Smith said. "We've had fantastic help from Norma in terms of set-up. We're still learning – hopefully we can still improve throughout the year."

Noble/Wells took second ahead of United Autosports' Charlie Hollings and Andrew Bentley. Noble passed Hollings at Coppice late on following a long dice.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

THIRD TIME LUCKY FOR DOWNING IN GT CUP



Downing's Mosler had problems at Donington before winning race three

There were three different winners in the GT Cup at Donington Park. Nigel Hudson's Aston Martin GT3 was never headed in race one but, after a pitlane start, Gareth Downing climbed rapidly through the order in his Mosler. Having ousted Michael Igoe's Porsche for third at the chicane, he took second from Paul Gibson's McLaren at Redgate. Downing began to encounter gear-selection problems, enabling Gibson to briefly regain the position, but Downing was able to fight back and secure a second-place finish.

Although Downing led into Redgate at the start of race two, Dan Gibson had taken over the family McLaren and scythed ahead into the Old Hairpin on the opening lap. Downing was forced to pit from second when his door came open after just three laps, leaving a distant Hudson and Igoe to complete the podium.

It finally came good for Downing in the third race, which he dominated from the outset. Hudson and Adam Wilcox were an equally comfortable second, with the Gibson car pulling clear of Igoe for third.

Reigning F3 Cup champion Jacopo Sebastiani took a lights-to-flag victory in the first race of the weekend. Stephen Daly spun out of second exiting the chicane on the opening lap, leaving Shane Kelly chasing Sebastiani to the flag. Daly recovered to complete the podium.

In race two Daly secured his maiden F3 victory, shaking off an early threat from

Stuart Wiltshire. Kelly was third, after demoting Sebastiani on the sixth lap.

Kelly became the third winner of the weekend, heading Wiltshire in the finale. Daly lost touch with the leaders and then spun, elevating Cian Carey to third.

It was almost three abreast into the first corner in the first Radical Challenge race as Steve Burgess, Dominik Jackson and Mark Richards battled for the spoils. Burgess asserted himself for the lead at the Old Hairpin, which compromised Jackson's line and briefly let Jerome de Sadeleer into second. Jackson was able to reclaim the position exiting McLeans.

Burgess and Jackson's breakaway was negated by a safety car. Though the rest of the field changed to wets as rain started to fall, Burgess and Jackson both stayed on slicks. It proved to be the right decision as they held station, and Kristian Jeffrey retained third from the closing Marcello Marateotto and de Sadeleer.

Burgess, Richards and Jackson ran at the front again in race two, and there were two safety-car spells before Burgess got away for his second win. Jackson jumped Richards from the restart to seal second, with de Sadeleer following him past.

Richards looked set for his first win in the final race, but a short pitstop earned him a stop-go penalty, handing a maiden victory to de Sadeleer. Burgess and Jackson completed the podium.

A misfire put favourite Oliver White out of the first Heritage Formula Ford race, which had to be restarted after Chris Hodgen's Van Diemen caught fire. Mike Gardner took the spoils in his Crossle, almost three abreast across the finishing line, from Ben Edwards's Van Diemen RF92 and the Mondiale of Conor Murphy.

Despite starting from the back, White led race two from lap four, leaving Murphy to head home Gardner for second.

PETER SCHERER



White headed Murphy in Heritage Formula Ford

Graham Gant headed
Daniel Hands in
Formula Vee opener



HAWKINS

Gant charts success from lowly grid slot

BRANDS HATCH
750MC
APRIL 21-22

Graham Gant took victory in the opening Formula Vee race aboard his WEV FV01, having surged through the field from 10th on the grid.

Reigning champion Ben Miloudi, driving the Storm GKBK 2015, initially battled with Craig Pollard (Bears GAC) for the lead but, while they were scrapping, both were passed by former Vee champion Daniel Hands (GAC Vee) at Druids. Gant eventually slipstreamed past Hands on the Brabham Straight to take the lead and the win. Peter Belsey (Spyder Mk2) took the final podium spot from Pollard, while Miloudi lost his nosecone after tangling with a backmarker.

Miloudi and Pollard did battle again in race two, jockeying lap after lap, with Miloudi the eventual victor; his win made it four different winners in four races. James Harridge took Class B in both races, despite having to start at the back after a loose valve-head forced him out of qualifying.

Reigning 750 Formula champion Bill Cowley took an unfancied win in an overheating and misfiring Cowley MkIV. He nabbed second when Peter Bove (Darvi 88 P) ran wide while attacking leader Mark Glover's Racekits Falcon. Cowley took the lead with a tight manoeuvre on Glover at Paddock Hill Bend while avoiding traffic.

After retiring from race one with a blocked fuel filter on his PRS 1b, Ed Pither won race two, having dived with Cowley for the lead. Bove was denied a chance at a second podium as he ran into the Paddock Hill gravel, avoiding a wheel that came off James Jeffery's car as he was being lapped.

Billy Albane began his RGB title defence in perfect style with a pair of victories in his Spire GT3. His Mittell-mounted rivals

hit trouble, with race leader Paul Smith suffering a stuck throttle, causing him to spin at McLaren. Smith's team-mate and polesitter Chippy Wesemael ran wide in avoidance, which promoted Albane into the lead. Rookie Wesemael later had a clutch issue, which left Daniel Larner, in the older MC-52b, as the top Mittell in second.

Wesemael led race two until he was wrong-footed in traffic, with the more experienced Albane taking full advantage to snatch the lead. A close call with the gravel at Paddock Bend dropped Wesemael behind four-time Vee champion Smith, but he still came away with a second podium finish.

Ben Powney won two Locost races, as the capacity grid was split into three groups. He took the lead from Jack Coveney on the inside of Paddock Hill Bend in race one, and pulled a similar move to pass reigning champion Ian Allee – who scored his season-best result in second – for the race-two win. Mark Burton won race three by just 0.03 seconds from Martin West.

Chris Thomas fended off fierce competition in the first of three similarly split MR2 Cup races. Ben Rowe took the wins in the second and third races as Mick Nicholls took Class C honours in both his races, with two overall second places. Josh Brooks took his first podium in race two, but spun while defending a second rostrum position from Paul Cook in race three.

Current Sports Specials champion Paul Boyd missed both races after crashing his Eclipse SM1 at Paddock Hill Bend in qualifying. Fellow Eclipse driver Clive Hudson beat the similar car of Martin Gambling, who lost fuel pressure but benefited from a red flag – for the beached Sylva Clubman of Olly Samways – to maintain second. In race two, a stuck throttle led Hudson to spin at Clearways while chasing eventual race winner Matthew Booth (MK Indy RR).

Ben Rushworth's Honda Integra DC2 was dominant in the first Hot Hatch race, until his car refused to fire up for the restart following a red-flag period. That opened the door for Ali Camp to take his Ford Fiesta ST to the top step in both races, with the Honda Civics of Jon Peerless and Rodren Vella taking a Class B win apiece.

After switching from the BRSCC Mazda MX-5 Championship, Paul Maguire took the points for three MX-5 wins. Invitational class driver Chris Lovett won on the road in the reversed-grid race three.

Matt Rozier's bid to retake the Classic Stock Hatch title began with back-to-back victories over reigning champion Lee Scott.

Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon Eurocup) took Roadsports victory when Lucky Khera retired his BMW 1 Series with a fuel leak.

CHRIS STEVENS



Andrew Thorpe's Citroen AX
runs wide in typically close
Classic Stock Hatch battle

BRANDS HATCH
WEEKEND WINNERS

750 FORMULA

Race 1 Bill Cowley (Cowley MkIV)

Race 2 Ed Pither (PRS 1b)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Race 1 Matt Rozier (Peugeot 205 GTi)

Race 2 Matt Rozier (Peugeot 205 GTi)

FORMULA VEE

Race 1 Graham Gant (WEV FV01)

Race 2 Ben Miloudi (Storm GKBM 2015)

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA

Race 1 Martin Depper (Centaur Mk14)

Race 2 Ben Myall (Gerrel Mk1)

HOT HATCH

Race 1 Ali Camp (Ford Fiesta ST)

Race 2 Ali Camp (Ford Fiesta ST)

LOCOST

Race 1 Ben Powney

Race 2 Ben Powney

Race 3 Mark Burton

MR2

Race 1 Chris Thomas

Race 2 Ben Rowe

Race 3 Ben Rowe

MX-5

Race 1 Paul Maguire

Race 2 Paul Maguire

Race 3 Chris Lovett

ROADSPORTS

Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon Eurocup)

RGB

Race 1 Billy Albone (Spire GT3)

Race 2 Billy Albone (Spire GT3)

SPORTS SPECIALS

Race 1 Clive Hudson (Eclipse SM1)

Race 2 Matthew Booth (MK Indy RR)

For full results visit:
www.750mc.co.ukPROMOTIONAL PUSH AND RULE TWEAKS
LEAD TO INCREASED ENTRIES IN
HISTORIC 750 FORMULAA large grid of Historic 750
Formula cars took the start

On a weekend with a grand total of 319 entries for the 750MC at Brands Hatch, the Historic 750 Formula stood out with a significantly larger field than in 2017.

New driver representative Lyndon Thruston has been working hard to make the series better known, advertising it at Vintage Sports-Car Club events and the Kop Hill Climb, and keeping those interested up to date via a mailing list. The results are clear.

"We started rebranding the series probably 18 months ago," Thruston says. "It's all about publicity. We've always had a great series with really great people, but it's about letting other people know."

"We were very lucky to get an invite to the VSCC festival at Snetterton last year, and we took quite a few of our cars up there, just to show who we were, to make us accessible. If the people can't come to you, go to them."

"We had loads of interest. At 11am, I rang the guys at the display asking how they were getting on and I got a picture of six cars surrounded by people, really interested in something."

"We had 16 cars enter last year. It was a little bit low and less than we wanted. This year, 27 entered today, we're expecting a full grid of 26 at Mallory Park, and we've got 32 registered drivers, 10 of which are brand new to the series."

The eagerly anticipated supercharged Warren, which had drawn significant crowds at Race Retro, appeared at Brands in the hands of Kevin Welsh.

But even with increasing numbers of Austin 7s and 500cc Formula 3 cars on the grid, the series is still pushing to promote itself by holding a handicap race.

"The idea is to invite anyone with a historic car under 1500cc, which is a similar performance to us, to come and join us, to give them a feel for what we're doing," says Thruston. "In the handicap, they won't have to necessarily comply to all our rules, they can just come out, get some interesting cars on track and open up to people who maybe haven't got somewhere to race."

A new cam belt and control Dunlop Crossfire tyre have had a hand in levelling the playing field, which demonstrated itself well in the two races at Brands.

Christian Pedersen's Austin 7 led off the line in race one but was passed by the Gerrel Mk1 of Ben Myall out of Graham Hill Bend, and then Martin Depper's Centaur Mk14 also found a way through on the following lap. Depper and Myall dived for the lead, with Myall completing a pass into Druids as Depper ran slightly wide. A mistake from Myall on the exit of Graham Hill Bend meant Depper got back through at Surtees. They were split by just 0.03 seconds at the finish line.

Myall was unchallenged in race two after Depper spun at Graham Hill Bend and hit the barriers, bringing out red flags. Thruston (Historic 750 DNC) and Trefor Slatter (Centaur Mk11) battled for second, squabbling through Surtees and Clearways, with Thruston coming out ahead.

CHRIS STEVENS

Martin Depper beat
Ben Myall

Grimwade headed diverse
Frazer Nash field in
Freddie Giles Memorial

WALKER



Grimwade wins amid Frazer Nash variety

SILVERSTONE
VSCC
APRIL 21-22

By its nature, one-make racing doesn't inspire thoughts of great diversity. When it comes to the likes of Ginettas, the Renault UK Clio Cup or the Mini Challenge, little more can be used to tell entries apart than a car's number and livery.

As an exception to the rule, the 33-strong grid of Frazer Nashes in the inaugural Freddie Giles Memorial Race at the Formula Vintage curtain raiser for the Vintage Sports-Car Club was awash with variety.

They may have all entered under one company's illustrious history, but engine capacities ranged from 1500cc up to Justin Maeers's 6.1-litre GN Parker. The models spanned the 1920s through to the '50s, when the cars were running Bristol gearboxes and engines borrowed from BMW following wartime reparations.

Such was the appeal that two-time Historic Formula 1 champion Martin Stretton joined the grid along with three of the renowned racing Blakeney-Edwards family – Patrick, Simon and Jo.

It was Julian Grimwade who emerged the eventual victor, despite "playing catch-up" having lost both first and second gear in his Alvis-engined single-seater during practice. The current holder of the Brooklands Trophy – earned for scoring the highest number of aggregate points throughout last year's Formula Vintage series – overcame a sluggish start to charge through the entry.

His car had started life as a TT Replica. To some that's considered an unfair label as all Frazer Nash Replicas were built from the factory as an exact copy of their respective race cars rather than being mere recreations. Later, in 1936, it was converted to its current one-seat, 3.6-litre specification with 205bhp.

Over 40 years Freddie Giles established himself as one of the VSCC's leading competitors, and the race was a fitting tribute to the marque with which he earned great success. After taking victory by 3.8 seconds from Martin Hunt, Grimwade was happy: "I met Freddie's widow, won a plate to keep for the year, and then was presented with one of Freddie's old trophies which I can keep forever. That is fantastic."

The solid-rear-axle chain-drive cars from the pre-war era captured the attention of the packed Brooklands grandstand; the fans were delighted by their controlled oversteer as they battled overheating rear tyres at the expense of laptime.

Also of note, Julian Majzub was running in a Mille Miglia that had been raced by Mike Hawthorn several times in 1952, most significantly to a class win in the British Empire Trophy. Majzub added: "Then it got sold to a guy who really wanted it and so part exchanged two cars for it – a lightweight [Jaguar] XK120 factory car, a three-litre Bentley, and a load of money."

The Freddie Giles race also served to dispel a stereotype that vintage car racing is aimed squarely at older competitors. Thanks to half-price entry fees for under 30s, 13th-placed Eddie Williams headed up

a growing contingent of young drivers.

The Super Sports racer said: "You never get bored at a VSCC meeting. The deal is very generous and it really helps put more people forward."

"Giles was a real legend in the Frazer Nash world. He raced lots of cool cars and was a very good driver. For the older generation, he was a hero."

"[The popularity of the race] is a lot to do with the cars because they're so unique with the rear axle. They require a special way of driving. They're really fun to drive and really fun to watch. It's one of the clubs people want to be involved in."

Martyn Corfield had been challenging fellow Le Mans Replica driver Hunt in the opening stages. Hunt tried to pick his way through to the lead with a dive down the inside under braking into Brooklands, but Corfield held strong to retake track position as they snaked into Luffield.

Navigating lapped traffic proved decisive, however, as Corfield found himself squeezed out onto the gravel while exiting onto the home straight. Two wheels kicked up a cloud of dust and he had to gather the car as it tried to break away, costing him time and four positions. Despite the diminished returns in an eventual fourth, Corfield remained enthusiastic.

"I was only 0.08s off Martin's pole time – in a historic racing category," he said. "It's a fabulous race to be a part of. Where else do you get such a good comparison between the Frazer Nashes?"

MATT KEW

SILVERSTONE WEEKEND WINNERS

70s ROAD SPORTS

Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z)

ALL-COMERS SHORT HANDICAP FOR PRE-WAR CARS

Race 1 David Seber (Wolseley Hornet Special)

Race 2 James Whitmore (Riley 12/4 Special)

Race 3 Douglas Martin (Hillegass Sprint Car)

ALL-COMERS SHORT SCRATCH FOR PRE-WAR CARS

Race 1 James Baxter (Riley ERA)

Race 2 Julian Grimwade (Frazer Nash Single Seat)

FISCAR – THE TOM COLE TROPHY RACE

Martin Hunt/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards
(HWM Jaguar)

FOX & NICHOLL TROPHY FOR STANDARD & MODIFIED PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS

Richard Pilkington (Talbot T26 SS)

FREDDIE GILES MEMORIAL RACE FOR FRAZER NASHES

Julian Grimwade (Single Seat)

HGPCA FOR PRE-1966 GRAND PRIX CARS

Race 1 Barry Cannell (Brabham BT11A)

Race 2 Barry Cannell (Brabham BT11A)

HIGH SPEED TRIAL FOR PRE-WAR 1941 SPORTS CARS

Alexander Hewitson (Riley 12/4 Special)

MORGAN CHALLENGE

Race 1 Philip Goddard (+8)

Race 2 Philip Goddard (+8)

PATRICK LINDSAY MEMORIAL & AMSCHEL ROTHSCHILD TROPHIES RACE FOR PRE-1961 RACING CARS

Frederick Harper (Kurtis Indy Roadster)

STANDARD & MODIFIED PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS

Edward Williams (Frazer Nash Super Special)

THE GP ITALIA AND LANCHESTER TROPHIES RACE FOR VINTAGE RACING CARS

Robin Tuluie (Riley Menasco Pirate)

SILVERSTONE TROPHY FOR SPECIAL PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS

Ruediger Friedrichs (Alvis Firefly)

1950s SPORTS RACING CARS

Charlie Martin (Lotus 15)

For full results visit:
www.vsc.co.uk



GRAND PRIX PROVENANCE Julian Majzub's 1927 Bugatti Type 35B was one of three examples to feature in the GP Italia and Lanchester Trophies Race, where he finished third. In the family for nearly 40 years, his 35 has remarkable provenance: it was a genuine works car and contested every grand prix of the 1927 season. It then returned to Bugatti, which uprated the brakes and found an extra 800cc to take the eight-cylinder engine up to 2.5 litres. Latterly it joined Bluebird among a collection of cars raced by land and water speed record holder Malcolm Campbell.



CAT AND MOUSE FORMULA 1 Ex-BTCC racer Andy Middlehurst was reunited with the John Bowers-owned Lotus 25 in the HGPCA Pre-66 GP races. Ahead of the car and driver's fifth Historic Monaco Grand Prix together later this year, Middlehurst opted for a competitive shakedown. Chassis R4, in which Jim Clark won the 1963 Oulton Park Gold Cup before taking his first Formula 1 title, finished second to Barry Cannell's dominant 2.7-litre Brabham BT11A. Middlehurst reversed that order in race two until a spike in engine temperature forced him to back off.



RACE OF TWO WORLDS For 1957 and '58, Formula 1 and Indycars competed together on the banking at Monza, and across various heats Ray Crawford scored a best result of fourth in this 4.2-litre Kurtis Indy Roadster at the event. Later revisions, including inverted suspension and a redesigned nosecone, have prevented current driver Frederick Harper from attaining FIA papers to make the grids at Goodwood. Nevertheless, he won the Patrick Lindsay Memorial race for pre-1961 racing cars, having passed Gareth Burnett's Alta 2-litre in the closing laps.

STYLES

Leverett's Lotus Europa chased Clark in Elan in first race



Clark's Lotus takes Road Sports glory

**SNETTERTON
HSCC
APRIL 21**

Attleborough ace Jeremy 'Jez' Clark's credentials are well established, with three Formula Vee and two Porsche Club titles, but two fine '70s Road Sports victories on home soil – despite braking issues in the ex-Howard Bentham Lotus Elan – opened his HSCC account on Saturday's jolly closed-wheel bill.

After initial leader John Williams's Porsche 911 broke, Will Leverett's

overheating Lotus Europa led the chase in the opener once Donington winner Charles Barter's Datsun 240Z lost second gear. Swamped at the start, Howard Payne (Europa) recovered to fifth ahead of Dave Karaskas (TVR 3000M). Leverett and father Mark (Elan) hared after Clark in the afternoon, when Leverett Sr bagged a career-best second.

An emotional Kevin Kivlochan (Morgan +8) narrowly won the gripping Historic Road Sports opener. "Gerry Marshall died 13 years ago today, so this is for him," said 'Keki'. Having outbraked the Moggie – and

himself – into Murray's, John Davison (Elan S1) contained a hairy excursion on the exit brilliantly, falling behind Jonathan Edwards and Robin Pearce (+8s) who he split at the chequer. Series debutant Edwards finished just 0.195 seconds shy of Kivlochan.

Buoyed by Guards GT success in his Ricketts Racing Elan 26R, Davison won the second HRS race, suppressing the Rover V8-motivated Morgans of Kivlochan, Edwards and Pearce. Jonathan Rose was fourth in his ex-Paul Tooms/Roger Waite Elan, chased by the pristine S1 of Witchampton Garage's Larry Kennedy.

Thomas and Hunter on top as Minis star in South Wales

**PEMBREY
BARC
APRIL 21-22**

The Mini 7 Racing Club returned to Pembrey for the first time in eight years, and did not disappoint in a thrilling weekend in South Wales. Darren Thomas took pole position for the opening Se7en race, and despite taking the win it was a tense affair for him.

Max Hunter moved to the front and began to extend his lead, but a fifth-lap safety car neutralised the field. When racing resumed, Thomas went around the outside of Hunter at the Hatchets Hairpin, only for Hunter to nip back through later in the lap.

Thomas pulled almost a carbon-copy move at Hatchets next time around, and

Hunter's mistake at Honda quickly settled the opening contest, although they were rarely separated by more than 0.5 seconds.

In Sunday's second race it was a routine victory from sixth on the grid for Hunter, who took the lead on the first tour and never relinquished the position. Joe Thompson and Daniel Budd completed the podium.

The opening race for Mini Miglias produced a cagey defensive drive from poleman Aaron Smith. He led from lights to flag, but it was not comfortable in the sweltering conditions, as Colin Peacock led a chasing pack, hounding the leader lap after lap.

The gap between the frontrunners never exceeded 0.6s, but Peacock was unable to find a way past, with reigning champion Rupert Deeth taking the final podium spot.



Hunter won second
Mini Se7en race

Smith doubled up in Sunday's race, held in cooler conditions, with nearest challenger Alfie Brown unable to keep pace with the leader, finishing 5.8s down. Peter Hills took both Libre class wins, finishing 11th in the first race overall and 12th in the second.

"Due to extra track time being available", Hyundai Coupe Cup series director Jon Winter opted to run three races for the first time in the history of the series.

Steve Kite continued his winning form from Brands Hatch in race one, just holding off Wayne Rockett by less than half a second to take his third successive win. But Rockett was unstoppable in both the second



Harrison took double win in Classic Clubmans

STYLES



Watts' Mustang won twice

STYLES

Having snapped his Chevron B8's driveshaft in practice, Philip Nelson anchored team-mate Charles Allison's — Trevor Twaites's 1970 RAC British Sportscar title winner, fifth in the championship opener here 48 years ago — to a tense Guards Trophy victory. He was almost caught by Guy Sheppard, who set fastest lap in Jeremy Deeley's Rawlson-ised Lotus 23B before it went lame, and Yorkshiresmen Jon Waggitt/Peter Needham's Lenham, which ran out of fuel.

Nick Thompson/Shawn McClurg (Chevron B6) were thus thrilled with second

from Nick Pancisi (Elva Mk7S). Paul Tooms (Elan) and Vicky Brooks, wrestling dad Bob's TVR Griffith, pursued GT king Davison.

Drama laced the Classic Clubmans season openers, the first restarted after poleman Mark Charteris's diff exploded at the lights and his Mallock was clipped as the field jinked round it. John Harrison won it from Greek commuter Alan Cook, whose final drive had let go in qualifying, and the brakeless Mike Lane. B-Sport (FF1600-engined) victor Clive Wood worked hard to shrug off Dave Facer, while Trevor Welsh (breaking a 16-year layoff in John Bowles's Lola T492) hounded down Roger Waite (Royale S2000M) for Sports 2000 gold.

A first-corner melee in the sequel, as Charteris shot from the back, put paid to Facer, thumped in the rump by the spinning Brian Hunter, and triggered a safety-car interlude. Charteris led by lap four, streaking clear of Harrison before a rod ventilated his engine block. Harrison won from Lane, who enjoyed a great tussle with fast invitee Michelle Hayward in her Rover K-Series car. Wood and Welsh doubled up.

Only eight Historic Touring cars appeared, yet both races were superb. Despite Bob Bullen's feisty 1500cc Ford Anglia being omnipresent in his mirrors — alongside at Chapman and Murray's — Mustang man Mark Watts scored his first wins courtesy of V8 muscle in Bentley and Senna Straight drag races. Class rivals Rob Wainwright (in Pete Wright's Austin A40) and Adrian Oliver (Hillman Imp) saw off two Lotus Cortinas for thirds.

MARCUS PYE



Allison/Nelson took Guards Trophy honours

STYLES

SNETTERTON

70s ROAD SPORTS

Race 1 Jeremy Clark (Lotus Elan S4)

Race 2 Jeremy Clark (Lotus Elan S4)

CLASSIC CLUBMANS

Race 1 John Harrison (Mallock Mk21)

Race 2 John Harrison (Mallock Mk21)

GUARDS TROPHY

Charles Allison/Philip Nelson
(Chevron-BMW B8)

HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS

Race 1 Kevin Kivlochan (Morgan +8)

Race 2 John Davison (Lotus Elan S1)

HISTORIC TOURING CARS

Race 1 Mark Watts (Ford Mustang)

Race 2 Mark Watts (Ford Mustang)

For full results visit: www.mstworld.com

PEMBREY

TRUCK CHAMPIONSHIP

DIVISION 1

Race 1 Ryan Smith (MAN TGA)

Race 2 Ryan Smith (MAN TGA)

Race 3 Ryan Smith (MAN TGA)

Race 4 David Jenkins (MAN TGX)

Race 5 Ryan Smith (MAN TGA)

DIVISION 2

Race 1 Luke Garrett (MAN TGX)

Race 2 Craig Reid (Iveco Stralis)

Race 3 Steve Powell (MAN TGS)

Race 4 Luke Garrett (MAN TGX)

Race 5 Steve Powell (MAN TGS)

HYUNDAI COUPE CUP

Race 1 Steve Kite

Race 2 Wayne Rockett

Race 3 Wayne Rockett

MAX5

Race 1 Paul Roddison (MX-5 Mk4)

Race 2 Paul Roddison (MX-5 Mk4)

MINI MIGLIA

Race 1 Aaron Smith

Race 2 Aaron Smith

MINI SE7EN

Race 1 Darren Thomas

Race 2 Max Hunter

TRACK ATTACK SERIES

Race 1 Will Di Claudio (Peugeot 106 GTI)

Race 2 Will Di Claudio (Peugeot 106 GTI)

WELSH SPORTS AND SALOON CARS

Race 1 Damian Longotano (Westfield SE)

Race 2 Chris Everill (Ginetta G50)

For full results visit:
www.tsl-timing.com



Aaron Smith took Miglia wins from pole position

BARRINGTON



Rockett leads Kite. They shared Hyundai Coupe wins

BARRINGTON

race and reversed-grid race three, storming to two wins. He started from 12th place in the final race, but by the end of lap one he was at the front. Rockett left the rest to fight for second, which was taken by Kite.

The two divisions of the British Truck Racing Championship held five races apiece in Carmarthenshire, with Ryan Smith and Luke Garrett hoping to extend their championship leads.

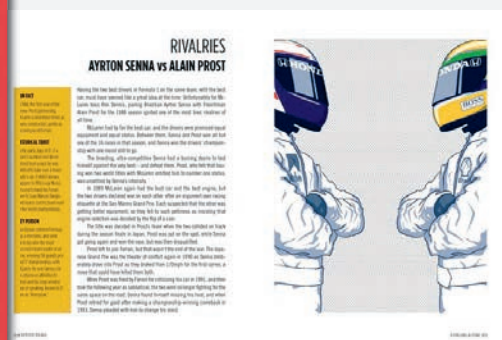
Smith's weekend was nearly perfect in Division 1. He took four of the five available wins in his MAN TGA, and was second in the red-flagged fourth race, only losing out to David Jenkins by 0.2s.

Division 2 was more open, with three drivers taking class victories. Garrett extended his championship lead with two wins, a feat echoed by Brands winner Steve Powell (MAN TGS), with Craig Reid (Iveco Stralis) also picking up a win.

Damian Longotano (Westfield SE) and Chris Everill (Ginetta G50) traded Welsh Sports and Saloons wins. Longotano's win was a thrilling battle between the two, while Everill's was more routine.

Paul Roddison beat Jeremy Shipley to the flag twice to take both Max5 wins in relatively untroubled style.

JAKE NICHOL



FORMULA 1 AT FULL PELT,

BOOK SPEED READ: F1

After punctually wedging ourselves into the vivid yellow-and-blue seating of our plane to Rome, Autosport is somewhat frustrated to hear we're unlikely to take off from London Stansted for at least another hour thanks to some mist.

"No matter," we think, "this gift of time we can use to catch up on some work." So, having crashed through some previously neglected feature-planning before the flight finally gets under way, and read through our pre-race Formula E notes in the first half-hour of the journey, we're now in need of some alternative in-flight entertainment. A quick rummage in the bag crammed under the seat in front of us produces the reading material we'd ended up ignoring on two other trips to races in recent weeks: *Speed Read F1*, written by our own Stuart Codling.

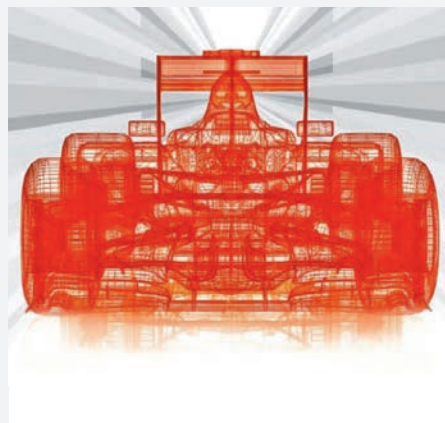
"Speed Read, eh?", a challenge quickly forms in Autosport's mind. Phone stopwatch ready, one-hour-50-minutes

before landing and 159 pages to get through – "Let's see what we can do..."

After a brief introduction on the history of F1, the book is split into seven sections – 'Technology', 'Drivers', 'Rivalries', 'Racing Circuits', 'Flag to Finish', 'Staying Alive' and 'Taking Care of Business' – each ending with a glossary, which (full disclosure) we skip since time is pressing.

Speed Read F1 "demystifies the world's most exciting motorsport" to ensure "you'll be an instant expert by the time you're ready to watch your next Formula 1 round", and so the chapters are kept to a simple page of text and an illustration, which allow for full-pelt consumption.

Each spread includes a colourful sidebar containing extra information on the topic via a 'Fun Fact', 'Historical Tidbit' and 'Key Person'. If we're being as thorough as we know the author would be when it comes to sub-editing pages of Autosport each week, then we should mention that on occasion these are slightly hard to read owing to the background colour, but their bite-size additions are thoroughly worthwhile. We also enjoy sporadic snipes at debunked motorsport myths and legends – particularly the one regarding Nelson Piquet's 1983 Brabham-BMW being powered by fuel first developed by



"DESCRIPTIONS OF BATTLES BETWEEN F1 LEGENDS SUCH AS FANGIO AND FARINA ARE INSIGHTFUL"

STAT
60
Bespoke colour
illustrations by
Chris Rathbone

TECHNOLOGY
ENGINES

IN 99MINS

Nazi scientists for V2 rockets, which Codling informs us “still pops up on blogs and web forums”.

Autosport is pleased with our progress through the book – despite myriad irritatingly cheery attempts by cabin staff to sell us overpriced food and tat we don’t need – when we arrive at the ‘Rivalries’ section. At twice the length of the others, this is where *Speed Read F1* offers its best teachings. The descriptions of the on and off-track battles between F1 legends such as Juan Manuel Fangio and Giuseppe Farina, Jim Clark and Graham Hill, and Emerson Fittipaldi and Clay Regazzoni are detailed and insightful, adding a sense of knowledge depth. We’re also pleased to see that an author we know to be so fond of cultural references manages to cram a *Dynasty* “superbitches” reference into the Nigel Mansell versus Piquet chapter.

With the cabin lights dimmed for landing, we’re left flying through the final pages thanks to the reading light in the panel above our heads. It’s fair to say the topics covered are somewhat simplistic, but Codling has nevertheless packed a lot in. The book covers much ground a fan already steeped in motorsport knowledge would know, but then its target audience is not yet at “expert” level. Handy guide, stocking-filler, travel book – it ticks the boxes.

Still several minutes from touchdown in the Eternal City and we finish the final ‘Tire Wars’ chapter. After briefly despairing once again at Codling deviating from the Autosport style guide he enforces so assiduously (“US publisher, US spelling,” he will no doubt harrumph) we stop the clock: 1hr39m01.81s.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

NATIONAL RALLY
For an eclectic mix of current stars and glorious machinery from the past, national rallying is the perfect blend of old and new. From the *Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship* to the top-flight British Rally Championship, plus Belgian and Irish series, there’s no shortage of sideways action. Go to <http://bit.ly/MSTVnationalrally>

THIS WEEKEND’S EVENTS

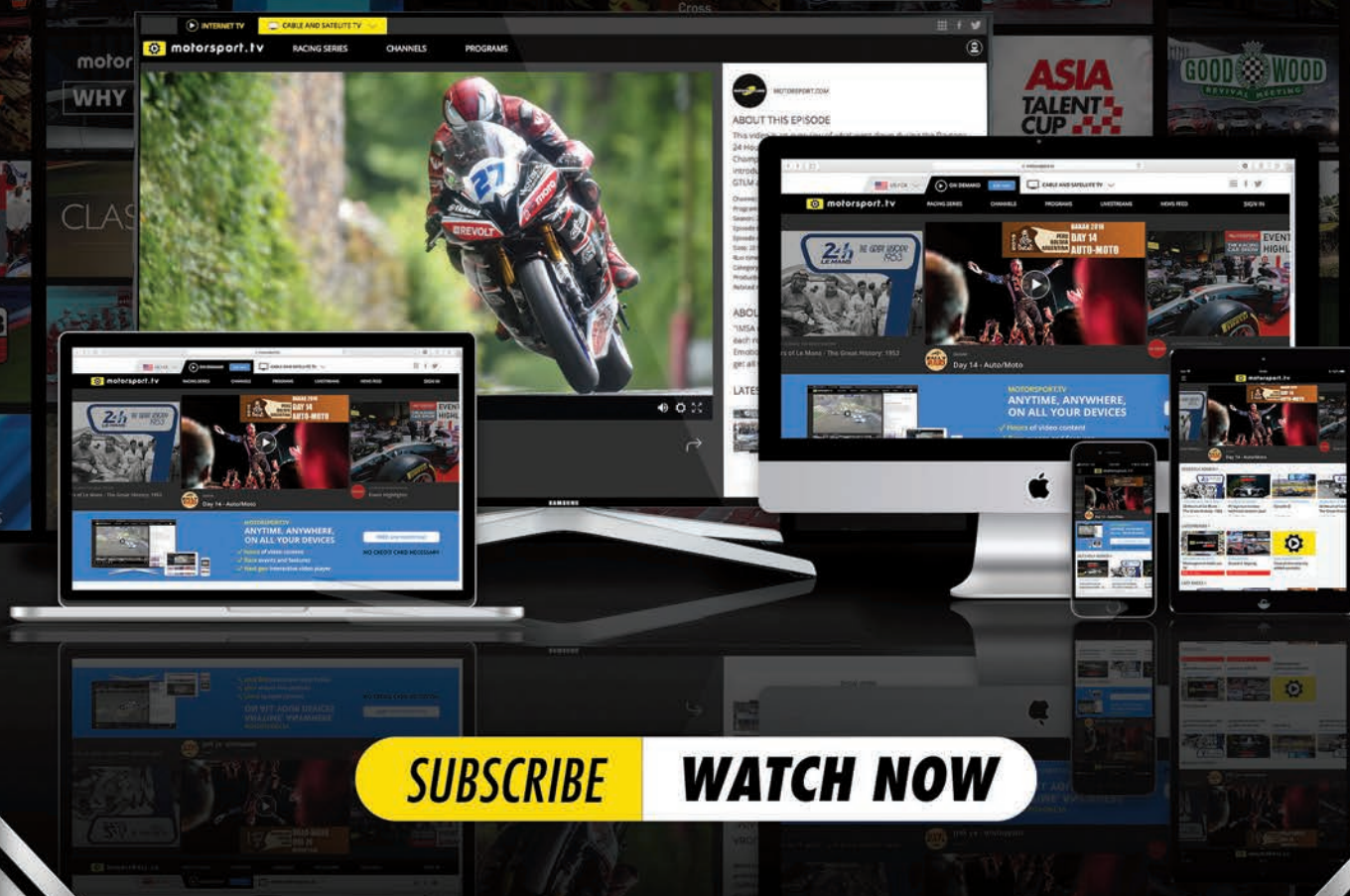
INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX Formula 1 World Championship Rd 4/21 Baku, Azerbaijan April 29 TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sunday 1130. Channel 4, Sunday 1200. Radio BBC Radio 5 Live, Sunday 1400. Highlights Sky Sports F1, Sunday 2330	RALLY ARGENTINA World Rally Championship Rd 5/13 Villa Carlos Paz, Argentina April 26-29 TV Live BT Sport 2, Saturday 1300, Sunday 1300. BT Sport ESPN, Saturday 1800, Sunday 1600. Red Bull TV, Saturday 1845. Live coverage of every stage on wrc.com All Live service (available via WRC+). Highlights Motorsport.tv, Saturday, Sunday and Monday 0930	WORLD TOURING CAR CUP Rd 2/10 Hungaroring, Hungary April 28-29 TV Live Eurosport 2, Sunday 0900, 1430 and 1530	SUPER TC2000 Rd 3/12 San Martin, Argentina
FORMULA 2 Rd 2/12 Baku, Azerbaijan April 28-29 TV Live Sky Sports F1, Saturday 0855, Sunday 1005	FORMULA E Rd 7/10 Paris, France April 28 TV Live 5 Spike, Saturday 1430	NASCAR CUP Rd 10/36 Talladega, Alabama, USA April 29 TV Live Premier Sports, Sunday 1830	UK MOTORSPORT Donington Park BARC April 28-29 BTCC, F4, Carrera Cup, Clio Cup, Ginetta GT4, Ginetta Junior TV Live ITV4, Sunday 1040
		WORLD RALLYCROSS Rd 2/12 Montalegre, Portugal April 28-29	Rockingham BRSCC April 28-29 British GT, British F3, Ginetta GT5, VWs, Ginetta RDC
		ADAC GT MASTERS Rd 2/7 Most, Czech Republic April 28-29	Brands Hatch MGCC April 28-29 Tin Tops, MG Cup, MG Metros, Midgents and Sprites, BCV8s, Iconic 50s, MG Trophy, Triple M, Equipe GTS, Equipe Pre '63
			Anglesey BRSCC April 28-29 FF1600, TVRs, Fiesta ST-XRs, Alfa Romeos, Fun Cup, Civic Cup, Karts



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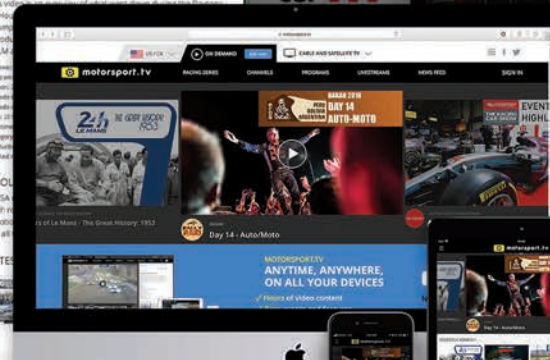


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WHEN DRIVERS CROP UP IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

ISHIHARA
LAT IMAGES

TONY KANAAN

IndyCar star relished the opportunity of a 'prize drive' at Suzuka

DAVID MALSHER

Y

ou may think that Tony Kanaan's remarkable 2004 IndyCar season would have been reward enough in itself.

In only his second year in the then-all-oval Indy Racing League, he won the championship and, most remarkably of all, he finished every single racing lap. But a reward from Honda came three years and eight IndyCar wins later — the chance to race in the 2007 season finale of Formula Nippon (now Super Formula) at Suzuka.

"Are you kidding me? Of course I said yes right away!" recalls Kanaan more than 10 years on. "I'd watched Ayrton Senna in some big races at Suzuka, and it had become a track I'd always wanted to try."

IndyCar had added a few road/street courses over the previous three seasons, so Kanaan wasn't too rusty — he'd won at Detroit a couple of months earlier, in fact. But still his learning curve was steep in the Lola, which was strikingly liveried to echo his helmet design.

"I'D WATCHED SENNA RACE AT SUZUKA. IT'S A TRACK I'D ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY"

"I didn't know the circuit except from videos; it's one of the most difficult ones to learn," he says. "I didn't know the car, and I seem to remember there was hardly any track time, so not great conditions! There was a half-hour practice, then qualifying..."

"I remember going to Japan not caring about where I finished, but then you get competitive as race a driver, so I was disappointed we only started 18th. But it was Satoru Nakajima's team and they were really good, had really fast cars. So then when the race started, I just went as hard as I could and came through to sixth."

"The track was even more awesome than I'd expected, and the car was fast — much faster than our IndyCars on road courses at that time, and much more physical. It had a weird gearbox too. They didn't have paddleshift, but something where you had to press a lever and then something on the steering wheel to do a flat-shift. Can't remember totally, but I do know it was different from anything I'd tried before."

"But the whole experience was awesome, and if I hadn't made my life already in America, Super Formula is something I would definitely have considered. They made me feel really welcome."

Asked if he would consider a repeat performance, Kanaan says: "One hundred percent. And in case those teams have forgotten my cellphone number, tell Autosport to print it!" ✽

STAT

17

Kanaan Indycar victories

ISHIHARA
LAT IMAGES

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Lotus boss Colin Chapman demonstrates his fulsome appreciation of his driver Ronnie Peterson's victory in the 1973 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. You'd be forgiven if this image of unalloyed joy provoked a twinge of nostalgia for an era when podium celebrations were a gloriously chaotic free-for-all...





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



WHO IS THIS?

Born into a world of two-wheel racing, this venerable Latin fittingly grew up in the 'City of the Bicycle'.

He enjoyed domestic and European success in the third tier of car racing, before being fast-tracked into the big time when his fellow countryman was taken ill. He was given a one-off chance to fulfil every racing driver's dream and went half way to making his point. A recurring theme throughout his career would be tin-top salvation whenever funding ran dry, but he used some fancy footwork to stand among the best.

He rolled into the world's top national saloon car series, but never lived up to expectations and retreated to the continent, where he would have sporadic success, until he finally became a superstar on the rings.

Despite reaching the half century, he still has total control of his racing in a new global venture.

ON THIS DAY

1 Which team locked out the front row for the Bahrain GP, held on this day in 2009?

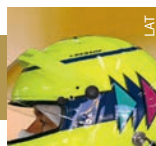
2 Today is Johnny Dumfries's birthday. Where did he score his only F1 points?

3 Which Dutch Indycar driver started from his only front-row position at the Kansas oval race held on this day in 2009?

4 Who recorded his first WRC win on this day in Argentina 2015?

5 Today is Jean-Pierre Beltoise's birthday. He took BRM's last win at the 1972 Monaco GP. How many cars finished on the lead lap in that race?

NAME THE HELMET



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Alan Jones, Lola-Cosworth T900, Road America, August 4 1985. **Who is this?** Walter Rohrl.

On this day 1) 30. 2) 1 lap. 3) Vancouver 1995. 4) Townsend Bell. 5) Alex Criville. **Name the helmet** Tom Kristensen.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

CAN RED BULL HIT THE 'BAKU THE NET'?



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