

F1 Red Bull bosses demand apology from Daniel and Max

Formula E Emotional Vergne moves closer to the crown

F2 Brit Russell storms to victory after heartache



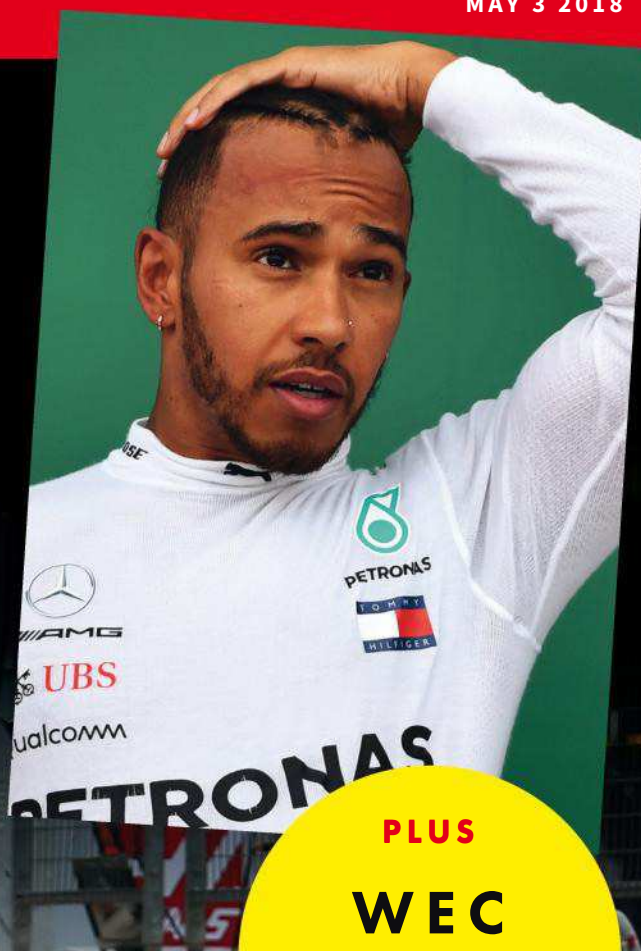
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How Red Bull implosion handed Vettel's race to Hamilton



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AN ALTERNATIVE TAKE ON THE F1 TITLE FIGHT

What a crazy start to the Formula 1 season we're having. You could easily argue that all four of the 2018 grands prix held so far have been won by the 'wrong' driver.

It's dangerous to make assumptions, but without the safety-car interventions and strategic blunders the world championship standings would look rather different. Lewis Hamilton would have won in Australia, Valtteri Bottas could have won in Bahrain and should have been victorious in China, while Sebastian Vettel probably deserved to win in Azerbaijan last weekend.

If the races had gone this way, the drivers' world championship would be even closer than it is now. As it stands, Hamilton leads on 70 points, with Vettel second on 66. Kimi Raikkonen is third on 48, with Bottas next on 40. But in the alternative scenario outlined above, Vettel would be leading on 76, Bottas would be second on 72 – arguably a fairer reflection of his efforts in the tricky Mercedes W09 so far – with Hamilton only third on 67. Bottas would be right to feel a little aggrieved so far, particularly after his late tyre failure on Sunday (above).

Of course, motorsport is full of ifs and buts, and the fact that Hamilton leads the points despite not currently driving at his best is ominous for the rest. But it's good to know that there would be a good championship fight this season even without the random elements that have made the races entertaining so far.

Joining that fight could be Red Bull duo Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen, but only if they can avoid the sort of calamity that ruined their races in Baku. Although Ricciardo has to take responsibility for the contact that put both out of the race, before then we had seen several examples of Verstappen once again overstepping the mark. The team was right to criticise both.



Kevin Turner

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DTM 2018 CALENDAR

May 5-6	Hockenheim (D)
May 19-20	Lausitz (D)
June 2-3	Hungaroring (H)
July 14-15	Zandvoort (NL)
August 11-12	Brands Hatch GP (GB)
August 25-26	Misano (I)
September 9-10	Nurburgring (D)
September 22-23	Red Bull Ring (A)
October 13-14	Hockenheim (D)

CAN WEHRLEIN USE TIN-TO

DTM

The DTM kicks off this weekend at Hockenheim, and much of the focus will be on 2015 champion Pascal Wehrlein as he returns to the Mercedes tin-top fold after two seasons in Formula 1.

This is the final year for Mercedes in the DTM before it turns its focus to Formula E. So this represents just one opportunity for Wehrlein to get back to winning form after two inconclusive years in F1 with Manor and Sauber, and reboot his stalled career.

There is no doubt that expectations are high within the Mercedes camp heading to Hockenheim. "I want him to win on Saturday, win on Sunday, lead the championship on Monday!" the marque's sports boss Toto Wolff told Autosport. "It's not easy, but he performed well in the tests, his impact in the team was great, people in the team were happy. Now we just have to see how it all starts."

Wehrlein arrived in F1 with Manor in 2016 amid much fanfare, and he was clearly positioned by Mercedes as its potential homegrown superstar. There were some good performances, but the consensus was that he did not do enough relative to his team-mates. Esteban Ocon leapfrogged him as the man most likely to one day race for the works team, and Mercedes had nowhere to place him in '18.

"Definitely my target was to be in F1 this

year," he said. "We tried with Williams, but it didn't work. Of course I was hoping for it. Now it's a new challenge for me with DTM. I've been three years there, but now for two years I haven't driven a touring car, and it's a big challenge."

"It's the last season of Mercedes in DTM, and many things have changed. The cars are different – they don't have tyre blankets anymore, and you're driving out with cold tyres. And I've only had two days in the car before the first race. I want to win races again – I was missing this feeling in the last two years – and my expectations are high, of course."

Mercedes has given him an F1 lifeline in the form of a reserve-driver role, shared with Formula 2 star George Russell. If there is an F2 race on the schedule, Russell will be the reserve that weekend, and if there is not – and that means most of the flyaway races – Wehrlein will be present. He is also doing a lot of running in the F1 team's Brackley simulator.

"My target this year is just focusing on DTM, and travelling to at least half of the

"MY TARGET WAS F1 THIS YEAR. WE TRIED WITH WILLIAMS, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK"



Button joins Russians for Le Mans 24H

WEC

The World Endurance Championship has a new star signing to go with Toyota driver Fernando Alonso. Fellow ex-Formula 1 world champion Jenson Button will make his debut in the series at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

The Briton will then continue with SMP Racing's ART Grand Prix-run privateer LMP1 squad for the remainder of the 2018-19 superseason in the #11 BR Engineering-AER BR1 alongside Vitaly Petrov and Mikhail Aleshin. Button, 38, is unable to compete in this weekend's WEC opener at Spa because he will be at Fuji racing in the Super GT series for the Kunimitsu Honda team, which means his Russian team-mates will compete in Belgium as a duo.

"It's always been a dream of mine to race at Le Mans," said the 2009 F1 champion, who made his sportscar debut in last summer's Suzuka 1000Km Super GT round. "I think it's every driver's dream to take part and hopefully go on to clinch that win at Le Mans, and I'm definitely no different."

"We go to Le Mans to fight for the win. Every driver aims to win every race they go in for, but I think we really do have a good chance of being competitive at Le Mans."

The arrival of Button in the WEC means that there are scheduled to be a total of 16 ex-F1 drivers, with 51 grand prix victories and three world titles between them, racing regularly in the WEC over the course of the superseason. The tally for Le Mans in June currently stands at 22.

GARY WATKINS

PSO WEC PREVIEW



PS TO GET BACK TO F1?

F1 races with Mercedes, and being the reserve driver in case I'm needed," he said. "If they need a driver, I'm here. It's very clear that my target was or still is to be in F1, and to have a very long and successful career there."

"If you're fighting in the least competitive team for two years in a row, and the maximum you can do really is score a point once or twice in a year, you really have to change your mindset. I think I was strong in that, but still I'm looking forward to hopefully being back on the podium and winning races again."

The impending demise of the Mercedes DTM programme means that Wehrlein will have to look elsewhere at the end of this season. With Russell winning in F2 and gaining momentum, the chances of Mercedes finding a way to help him back into F1 appear to be slim. So is the marque's Formula E programme, which starts at the end of 2019, a realistic target?

"I think with Pascal anything is possible," said Wolff. "Formula E is possible; he could equally come back to F1. Formula E is growing in popularity among the drivers, so it's definitely one of the options."

The problem is that there is no shortage of candidates with Mercedes affiliations, so Wehrlein will really have to perform to stake his claim. "There are just two seats and we are six [DTM] drivers," said the 23-year-old. "Most of the time it's like that

— if you show good performances a door will be open for you. It's up to everyone to have a good year and be in a good position for the year after, not only for Formula E, but also for other categories. You have to show something, you have to deliver, and be in a position that someone really wants to have you in the team."

If FE does not happen for Wehrlein, logic suggests that he will have to cut his ties with Mercedes and break out on his own. He says he has not looked that far ahead. "I think first of all when you have a contract with a team you should first discuss with the team you are in, 'What's the plan for the following years?'" he said. "I have a contract with Mercedes at the moment."

"But I'm interested in a few other categories. I'm a big fan of V8 Supercars, but is it realistic to drive there next year? I don't know. Japan [to race in Super Formula] was a possibility for this year, but 10 weekends DTM, 10 in F1, then with Japan, every weekend to race and be in a different timezone was quite difficult, so we decided together to not do it. I would have loved to do it because the cars are great, the tracks are really nice."

"Let's see what will happen next year. Hopefully there will be some doors open for me. Like I said, I'm also watching some other categories, but at the moment I'm in DTM and hoping to be back in F1 in 2019."

ADAM COOPER



Last-gasp approval for aero changes to boost F1 overtaking

FORMULA 1

Aerodynamic modifications to promote overtaking in Formula 1 in 2019 were voted through on Monday, the last possible day for any changes to next year's technical rules to be agreed.

Enough teams voted at the F1 Commission to allow the plans tabled by the FIA and FOM to be rubberstamped by the World Motor Sport Council. It's believed that five or six teams voted no.

The decision is also a victory for both Liberty and the FIA as they work towards 2021 and the full package of changes to technical, sporting and commercial aspects of F1.

The changes agreed for 2019 are as follows:

- a simplified front wing, with a larger span, and low outwash potential;
- a simplified front brake duct with no winglets;
- a wider and deeper rear wing.

A separate extra package involving bargeboards, added at a late stage, was not agreed.

The proposals were a direct response to the lack of overtaking in the Australian GP, which prompted the FIA and Liberty to look for ways to make improvements for 2019. They were able to draw on some of the research already conducted by F1's team of engineers for the 2021 package, and which indicated that outwashing front-wing endplates made it harder

for the car behind to follow.

It was believed that simplifying front wings and brake ducts, and adding a bigger rear wing with a stronger DRS effect, would boost overtaking. The theory was backed up when teams conducted some CFD research, with the FIA noting: "These studies indicated the strong likelihood of a positive impact on racing and overtaking within F1."

At last weekend's Azerbaijan GP several teams expressed doubts about the package, suggesting that it would be better to wait for 2021.

"They're a snapshot of 2021, but taken in isolation," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner. "There are consequences that are detrimental, so better to leave things alone as they are for now, and then do a complete package for 2021."

But Williams technical chief Paddy Lowe, the staunchest supporter of the package, is adamant that it is the right move. "We have had eight teams working with the most advanced CFD supporting the project and what it will deliver," he said, "whereas the 2017 rules were not researched at all and people were quite happy to adopt them, and we've seen now the result. Any talk of risk, poor research etcetera, is purely misplaced."

ADAM COOPER

Radical route for Rally GB

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Rally GB organisers have revealed a ground-breaking route, to include competition on closed public roads for the first time in the October 4-7 event.

Link roads and lanes will be used to build longer forest stages in North Wales, but it was the final day's flat-out test through the centre of Llandudno that took centre stage at the event launch on Monday. Used twice on the Sunday, the Great Orme Llandudno stage will make history as FIA World Rally Championship competition comes to town-centre roads on mainland Britain for the first time.

The five-mile stage will come off a clockwise run around the Great Orme headland and steer down one side of the A456 before going around a roundabout, up the other side, turning right to South Parade and the seafront where the stage, and the event, will finish.

Agreement has been made with the FIA to ditch plans for the Great Orme Llandudno stage to be the powerstage, because the governing body felt the use of the all-asphalt headland road wasn't reflective of the rest of the rally. The Sunday powerstage will instead be the first run through the 10-mile Gwydir test, which has been extended with the use of a stretch of closed road.

An all-new crowd pleaser features on Friday: Slate Mountain, which breaks up the run back to service at lunchtime. On the same day, Penmachno and Brenig are both extended by running sections of closed road.

Saturday is where the biggest changes have taken place, with last year's two mid-Wales days combined into one. The organisers have labelled this nine-stage, near-400-mile (100 of which are competitive), 14-hour day 'Super Saturday'.

Rally GB managing director Ben Taylor said: "There was always a degree of frustration in North Wales that we had these amazing roads, but they were crossed by public roads, so we couldn't combine them to make the kind of classics they could so easily become. We can now. The change in legislation has allowed us to develop a fantastic opening day in North Wales. Penmachno and Brenig are longer than they've ever been and the drivers are going to love them."

DAVID EVANS





F2 plans clutch-crisis fix

FORMULA 2

Formula 2 organisers are to use their test car this week in a bid to improve the troublesome clutch on the new 2018 machine, after 14 stalls in four races.

Drivers have called for the clutch to be improved on the grounds of safety.

The difficulty comes in engaging the clutch, with drivers labelling the ability to get off the line a 'gamble', and series leader Lando Norris has called for changes before next week's Barcelona round.

"People are just swerving everywhere and eventually you [are going to] get a guy at the back who has built up some speed and can't avoid anything, and it's going to be a big crash," said Norris (above).

F2 organisers refused to comment on any impending tweaks, but race director Charlie Whiting confirmed a change to the mapping was being investigated. "They can improve the mapping of the clutch paddle, and they can improve the way the clutch itself works," he said.

"There is a problem there, they understand that, and they are going to run the F2 test car this coming week in order to try and find some things that they think can improve and have it ready for Spain. It's a wholly unsatisfactory situation."

Autosport understands that the mapping change could have been made before last weekend's Baku round, but was deferred because it had not yet been tested.

JACK BENYON

'Mario Kart' Formula E plan

FORMULA E

Formula E is evaluating a 'Mario Kart' style of race format that could be introduced for the 2018-19 season.

In a bid to shake up races when there will be no need for pitstops following the introduction of FE's Gen2 cars, it is understood that the series is looking at creating a special section at each circuit that will slow down drivers before allowing them access to the alternative power modes that will be mandatory from next season.

Once drivers have moved offline and taken the special part of the track – which is not comparable to the joker-lap sections

used in rallycross – they will be able to use the higher power modes.

"That is something we're looking at – it would be like Mario Bros when they get the little star and go faster," said FE CEO Alejandro Agag. "We will do a joint communication on how the race format is going to be together with the FIA [which has responsibility for race formats]. I'm really excited about it."

In other FE news, Alain Prost will leave the Renault e.dams squad, where he had been a part owner, ahead of its partnership switch to Nissan at the end of the current 2017/18 campaign.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

IN THE HEADLINES

FORCE INDIA JUNIOR TRIO

Force India will run three junior drivers in this month's post-Spanish Grand Prix Formula 1 test at Barcelona. Reserve and test pilot Nicholas Latifi and development driver Nikita Mazepin will be joined by Mercedes junior George Russell, who will be Pirelli tyre testing. Russell has also been tipped for more Force India FP1 runouts this year, following from his activities in 2017.

McLAREN CHIEF LEAVES

McLaren chassis chief Tim Goss is understood to have left his post at the squad. It is unclear whether Goss, who has been a key player on the squad's technical team since 1990, has moved to another role within the company.

HONDA/RED BULL MEET

Honda and Red Bull have had their first formal meeting over a possible 2019 engine-supply deal in F1. Red Bull motorsport boss Helmut Marko met Honda chief Masashi Yamamoto at last weekend's Azerbaijan GP, ahead of a May 15 deadline enshrined in the F1 sporting rules to confirm engine supply for the following season.

EXHAUST BLOWING MOVE

The FIA imposed a fresh clampdown on trick engine modes that help exhaust blowing of rear wings ahead of last weekend's Azerbaijan GP. Renault's blown rear wing had been under the spotlight pre-season, and there was speculation that Ferrari was working in this area after a mystery third paddle was spied on Sebastian Vettel's steering wheel at the Bahrain GP.

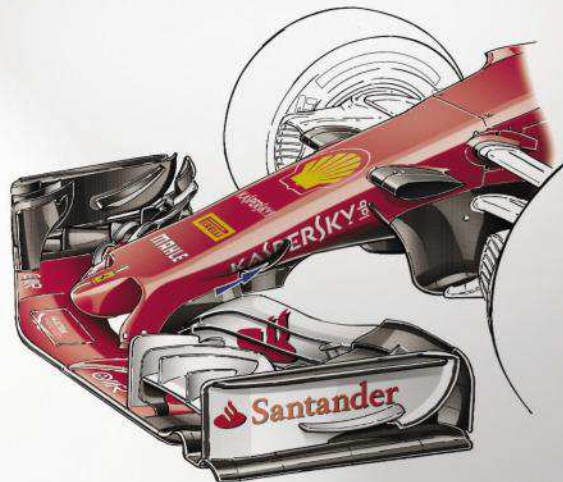
NASR FOR LE MANS

Ex-F1 driver Felipe Nasr will get his first taste of the Le Mans 24 Hours next month after joining the Villorba Corse team for the remainder of the season. Nasr, who is also racing in IMSA SportsCar, replaces Andrea Belicchi, who suffered back pain in last month's European Le Mans Series opener, in Villorba's LMP2 Dallara. He will join Giorgio Sernagiotto and Roberto Lacorte for the 24 Hours and the rest of the ELMS.

FILES IN EURO CHANCE

Up-and-coming tin-top stars Josh Files and Attila Tassi have secured drives in the TCR Europe series, which kicks off at Paul Ricard this weekend. Briton Files, a double winner of the TCR Germany series, and Hungarian Tassi, runner-up in last year's TCR International rankings, will race Honda Civic Type Rs run by Hong Kong-based Super Formula and sportscar team KCMG. Files and Tassi are both test drivers for JAS Motorsport, which builds the TCR Civics.

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THE SECRETS OF MERCEDES' FRONT SUSPENSION

Packaging the front suspension of a Formula 1 car is no easy task. There are just so many components to find space for – and on top of what we can see there are things we can't, such as the pedals, master cylinders and, importantly, the driver's feet, which means there is a place for everything and everything has to be in its place. The 2018 Mercedes is no exception.

It has the common top-and-bottom carbon wishbone and a carbon pushrod operating inboard rockers (1). Where the black top part of the pushrod changes to the silver part there are shims (slightly darker silver) to alter the rideheight. As the angle of the pushrod is about 45 degrees, adding a 0.5mm shim will raise the rideheight by roughly 1mm.

Looking at the car from the front, it has torsion/springs on both sides (3). The left-hand torsion/spring will be splined into the machined-out rocker. As the two additional rockers (4) are joined together in the middle with a solid link that effectively creates a third connecting rocker to help the other two drive the anti-roll bar, the small-toothed plate on the right-hand side rocker is to locate the torsion/spring to that rocker. Having this small plate will allow adjustment so there is no preload on the system.

The interesting thing is where Mercedes has fitted the front anti-roll bar. It is inside the left-hand torsion spring (3 indicates the left and right). Its lower spline will fit into a spline on the inner diameter of the left-hand torsion/spring and its top spline will be driven by the small-toothed plate.

When the car sits on the ground and the aerodynamic force starts to build up, the left-hand rocker will rotate clockwise. The right-hand rocker will rotate anti-clockwise and with the solid link connecting them in the middle they will rotate at the

same ratio, closing the gap between them, effectively acting as a central damper.

When the car reaches a certain speed that central gap will become zero and the car will then sit on the silver mesh-style bump stop. In a straight line, this will then reduce the car's vertical movement dramatically as this bump stop is very stiff.

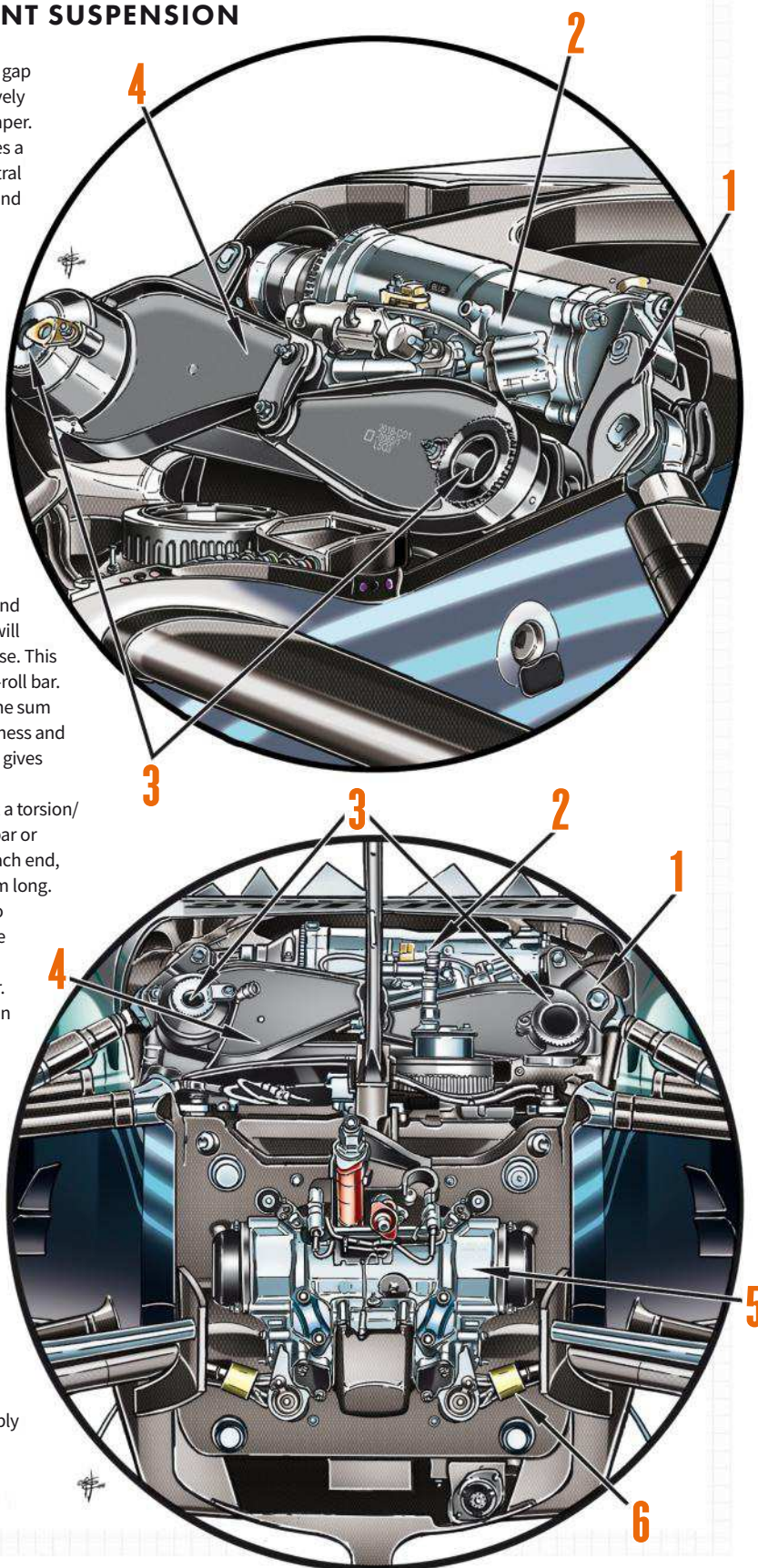
However, in a right-hand corner when the car builds up lateral force and the chassis rolls, the left-hand rocker will rotate anti-clockwise and the right-hand rocker will also rotate anticlockwise. This will then twist the anti-roll bar. In this condition, it is the sum of the anti-roll bar stiffness and the torsion/spring that gives the car its roll stiffness.

Just to explain what a torsion/spring is, it is a round bar or tube with a spline at each end, something like 15-25cm long. One end is anchored to the chassis down at the driver's feet and the other end to the rocker.

When the suspension moves downwards, it twists the bar and this is the stiffness that supports the car. A larger diameter, a thicker wall thickness, or a shorter torsion/spring will increase the vertical stiffness. The anti-roll bar design is very similar but the function is very different.

The torsion bar (2), power-steering assembly (5) and tyre tethers (6) are also shown.

GARY ANDERSON





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WHY HAMILTON IS OFF HIS GAME

Yes, Lewis Hamilton is wrestling to get the best out of his Mercedes again this year; and no, it's nothing to do with his celebrity lifestyle

EDD STRAW

Has Lewis Hamilton had a good or a bad start to the season? This is a far more difficult question to answer than it seems, since he has many reasons to be delighted with what has happened so far despite his analogy about piecing together a golf round of pars and bogeys after winning the Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

Not convinced? Well, it's all a question of perspective, because from one angle it has been pretty poor. Aside from during the Australian GP – which he had in the bag before a coincidence of virtual safety car timing and Mercedes miscalculation handed victory to Sebastian Vettel – Hamilton has looked ill-at-ease with the 2018 Mercedes. The combination of Hamilton and W09 hardly looks like a world-beating one, and there are several clear reasons for that.

From another angle, it has been an outstanding start to the season. Why? Because he leads the points table and has been the only driver to finish on the podium in every race. Even though you can legitimately argue that either Valtteri Bottas or Vettel should

“TO ASSUME THERE’S SOME UNDERLYING HAMILTON MALAISE IS DANGEROUS”

be up top, they aren't. What Hamilton has done here is live up to the old adage that you win world championships on your bad days. Every other driver in the top three teams has thrown away points with errors, and while Hamilton hasn't been mistake free, such as when he went off-track twice in Baku, it has not compromised his final result.

You can see, out on track, that he's not always at ease with the Mercedes. Having watched from trackside during testing and on all four grand prix weekends, I've been able to see clearly when things aren't quite right. And boring as it is, the key is the tyres. When the car is working, he is a quite brilliant exponent of turning in with confidence and rotating the rear to perfection. When he can't quite be confident that the grip is under him, he's not the same driver. By contrast, Bottas is one of the best out there in those situations and would probably be 'green track world champion', were such a thing to exist.

Mercedes has struggled at times both with warm-up of the front tyres and overheating of the rears. Hamilton hasn't always had the front end needed to turn in as he wants, or the stability to allow him to control the rotation of the rear to perfection. When the axles are in balance, he drives beautifully – just look at the onboard footage of his final sector in qualifying in Melbourne. When the capriciousness of the car doesn't allow him to, he's more hesitant. And if things aren't working, let's say the front end isn't responding, then Hamilton leans towards overdriving to try to make it work. That's what makes life more difficult for him, but it's hardly making him slow.

To assume there is some kind of underlying Hamilton malaise to capitalise on is dangerous. He's 33, more settled in himself and the old criticisms of him spending too much time jet-setting around the place enjoying a 'Hollywood' lifestyle don't stand up. It's true that there have been times when he has had on-track struggles that seem to be connected to goings-on off track. In 2011, his worst season in F1, he made a litany of mistakes (many of them involving hitting Felipe Massa's Ferrari) and there were times when he seemed an almost ghostly presence.

Within his McLaren team, there was a feeling he was overextending himself. But there's no obvious sign of that here, despite it being a tediously popular go-to criticism for those who dislike a life and personal style that really shouldn't be considered controversial. Sometimes a driver is struggling to deliver their best for on-track reasons. What we've seen this year is entirely consistent with what we saw in 2017.

Some question whether he's struggling because he's more focused on snapping at the team over the radio or complaining about the car not being right, but let's not confuse cause and effect here. That's a consequence of the struggles, not the root, and most drivers react like that.

There is the possibility that, after three titles in four seasons, some of the hunger has gone. Again, there's no obvious evidence of that but it does happen. But if that was the case, would he have faded more dramatically in Baku after the big lock-up took him out of the victory battle? He kept plugging away, and the race came to him. He was hardly coasting.

Mercedes and Hamilton will get it right this season, although given how close things are it's going to swing from team to team depending on conditions and track layout. And when Hamilton and Mercedes are strong, they will take some beating.

And if he does win the title, the 70 points he's banked so far will look far more significant than the difficulties he's been having. 🏆



PASSING NOTES

Were the Formula 1 teams ambushed into waving through the newly announced aerodynamic changes, or are they looking at the bigger picture?

ADAM COOPER

The fans worldwide who want to see more action on track have something to shout about this week. From next season Formula 1 will introduce aerodynamic modifications with the aim of increasing the number of on-track overtaking opportunities. It's also one of the first clear signs that Liberty and the FIA are working well together to improve the show as they continue to formulate the definitive new rules package for 2021.

The way the proposals were approved reflects how complex the road ahead will be over the next two or three years. They were rushed through at the very last minute, and much against the wishes of several teams. What the process demonstrated was that the FIA and Liberty have sufficient clout, and are able to get enough teams on side, to enact change very quickly – even if it leaves some participants with their noses out of joint.

It all kicked off when Jean Todt reacted to what many people viewed as a boring Australian Grand Prix by getting together with F1 boss Chase Carey and discussing what could be done. Just five weeks later some significant technical changes have been proposed, debated, researched, voted upon and ratified on the very last day that the 2019 regulations could be modified.

"OVERTAKING HAS BEEN A SUBJECT OF DEBATE ALMOST SINCE NUVOLARI WAS A BOY"

F1 may be associated with speed, but away from the track business such as this moves slowly and is prone to derailment by powerful voices representing vested interests. For Todt, Carey and Ross Brawn this week's development has to be seen as a major victory. Indeed, last weekend in Baku Carey sounded as if he was resigned to failure, telling Autosport he understood the objections and "wouldn't tear my hair out" if the package wasn't approved. The fact that enough teams voted 'yes' came as a surprise to many.

So how did this story develop? Overtaking has been a subject of debate almost since Nuvolari was a boy, with particular focus on the ability of drivers to remain close enough to the car ahead through corners to be able to line up overtaking moves.

But when the 2017 high-downforce package was being put together, the emphasis was on slashing lap times and boosting cornering speeds. Overtaking wasn't part of the remit – although everyone involved was fully aware that higher downforce levels

would have a negative impact on the ability of cars to follow one another. And sure enough, when the new cars appeared last year, drivers quickly reported that it was harder to overtake.

It took this year's processional Melbourne race to trigger a proper reaction. Todt called on Nikolas Tombazis, the former Ferrari man who had recently been installed as the FIA's top single-seater technical expert. Before joining the FIA, Tombazis had done some consulting for FOM, and he was therefore up to speed with the research for the 2021 package that was being conducted by a group of in-house engineers led by F1's chief technical officer Pat Symonds. Tombazis believed it would be possible to cherry-pick a key finding from the '21 work and apply it to the current package in '19.

The research suggested that 'outwashing' front-wing-endplate elements, designed to control the airflow over the front wheels to the benefit of the car's overall aero 'map', were a key contributor to the overtaking problem. It's the wake generated by these parts that makes life particularly hard for the car behind. The theory is that by removing these elements and simplifying front brake ducts – while also creating a stronger DRS effect with a bigger wing flap – will make following and passing a lot easier.

Team technical bosses discussed the evidence in Bahrain. Unsurprisingly, there was some scepticism about the validity of the findings and the timescale. With the April 30 deadline for the 2019 rules looming, a compromise was agreed and the teams were invited to conduct their own CFD research; between Bahrain and Azerbaijan eight of them did some homework. Everything was collated in an FIA report that was presented to the teams last Friday, giving them just the Baku race weekend and Monday to study it and decide which way they would vote.

A cynic might suggest that the teams were ambushed, in that they had little time to make a proper evaluation. And it was all done by e-vote, with no face-to-face debate on the final report. In the end, just enough of them sided with the FIA and FOM to push the changes through the F1 Commission.

One view is that those teams who voted for change saw the bigger picture of putting the show first, while those who opposed were protecting their own interests in time-honoured fashion because they have a stable aero package they don't want to compromise. An alternative take is that those who voted 'yes' had their own reasons for wanting to mix things up, and that the 'no' supporters were protecting the integrity of the sport by not going with something that wasn't fully proven and would create unnecessary expense. Take your pick...

One thing is clear – this was just one of the opening moves in what promises to be an intriguing political chess game as we head towards 2021. There are plenty more to come. ♣

YOUR SAY

We don't know what was said by the Red Bull race engineers during the race, but whatever it was, it wasn't strong enough or listened to

PAUL HEWITT

Writing was on the wall for Red Bull crash

I said it last year and I'll say it again, Mercedes needs to run the softer compounds during winter testing so it can get a better handle on them...

Another manic and exciting race, with various drivers suffering bad and experiencing good luck (particularly hard on Valtteri Bottas). As for the Red Bulls, the writing was on the wall throughout the race as to the outcome. We don't know what was said by their race engineers during the race, but whatever it was, it wasn't strong enough or listened to.

Apologising to the whole workforce may bring it home to both drivers for the future (but I doubt it in the heat of battle).

Paul Hewitt
Luton, Beds

A Formula 1 car is not a go-kart, Max

Dear Max, an F1 car isn't simply a bigger go-kart and a grand prix simply a longer and faster kart race.

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland, West Yorks

Verstappen must control his impetuosity

Partway through the Azerbaijan GP I was mentally composing a letter to you praising the maturity of Daniel Ricciardo in not overdefending the very aggressive overtaking moves of his team-mate Max Verstappen, any one of which could have meant both cars being eliminated, had Daniel been so inclined.

Later, we have the opposite situation: Daniel is clearly faster, aims right; Max moves right to defend, Daniel moves back left to overtake, but Max comes back left again in the braking area and they crash. What a difference! Max is entirely to blame. He is an exciting and very talented driver, but won't progress until he learns to control his impetuosity.

Andy Bradshaw
Guildford, Surrey

There must be a better way to clean up an F1 track

Why, in what is arguably the pinnacle of motorsport, do the



marshals still have to clear debris from the racing line with brooms? Other race series use vehicles to clear the track following incidents, why not F1?

Obviously there are risks putting a slow, heavy vehicle on track, but these can be minimised and the clean-up should be quicker and more thorough than doing it by hand.

This is not intended to be disrespectful to the marshals, whose bravery I admire. I just think that they should be given the right tools to do their job safely.

Jerome Perkins
By email

Great work, whatever the weather

Thank you to the marshals who did a sterling job at a cold and windy Donington Park last weekend, especially the Redgate crews who dug out the #7 car in the last Ginetta race, enabling it to park in a safe position for retrieval.

It is because marshals are so skilled and so willing to put up with uncomfortable weather that we get the exciting motorsport we so enjoy.

Alianora La Canta
By email

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HOW SUB-PAR HAMILTON CLAIMED HIS BAKU LOTTERY WIN

*The Mercedes star has suffered his share of misfortune over the years,
so was more than happy to accept a helping hand from lady luck*

EDD STRAW, GRAND PRIX EDITOR

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
LAT IMAGES/SUTTON IMAGES



WHEN YOU WATCH ONE OF YOUR RIVALS LOCK UP AND SLIDE OFF THE TRACK ON ONE LAP, and the other drop out with a right-rear blowout a lap later, you know fortune is on your side. Lewis Hamilton understands what it takes to win grands prix better than any other driver on the grid; this was his 63rd grand prix victory, and after winning a race he described as “a lottery” the Mercedes driver was quick to pick holes in a performance that he felt fell short of his usual high standards.

This wasn't an undeserved victory, far from it, but — as race engineer Pete Bonnington said over the radio after Hamilton took the chequered flag — lady luck was with them in Azerbaijan. But to capitalise, Hamilton had to show all of the grit and determination you'd expect of a world champion to take advantage of how the Azerbaijan Grand Prix played out.

“It's quite a humbling feeling,” said Hamilton of his win. “I just kept telling myself, ‘Keep pushing, don't give up, something might happen’, and it did. It was a reminder to me that my whole life I've been through experiences like today where you feel you're climbing a hill and you just keep slipping down [and you say to yourself], ‘I'm going to get there, I'm going to get there, I'm going to get there.’

“Of course, it was affected by other things, but I don't feel

completely unworthy of the win. I still drove really well through the race. But for me, if my normal level is ‘eagle, birdie’, today was like some pars and then a couple of bogies.”

To extend Hamilton's golfing analogy, Friday practice was definitely a bogey as he struggled for pace. Significant overnight set-up changes got him back in the game and he qualified second behind Sebastian Vettel.

The early stages of the race were all about being at even par for Hamilton. He retained second place behind Vettel and settled in for a long stint on the supersoft Pirellis that all of the big three team drivers had started on, save for ultrasoft-shod Raikkonen. The first part of the battle lasted only a few seconds, as the race was neutralised by a safety car deployed because Esteban Ocon's



Force India was in the Turn 3 wall after turning in on Raikkonen while the pair disputed sixth on the first lap.

Building up to the lap-six restart, Vettel opted to delay gunning the throttle until close to the safety car line (the first point at which cars can overtake, which is before the start line). This frustrated Hamilton, who pointed out that the regulations do not allow the leader to get on and off the throttle and brakes repeatedly. But Vettel did exactly that and was almost half a second clear by the start of the lap, meaning he didn't have to work too hard to build enough of a lead to keep Hamilton out of DRS range.

Vettel soon extended his lead to around 3.5 seconds, then to a peak of 4.6s at the end of lap 15 of the 51. Hamilton subsequently picked up the pace and edged back to under 4s behind when he locked up at Turn 1 and briefly took to the escape road on lap 22, costing himself a couple of seconds. His flatspotted supersofts were finished and he had no choice but to dive into the pits. As in golf, while this particular bogey was a driver error, it was explained by a sudden shift from a 25km/h (around 15mph) headwind to a 15km/h tailwind that transformed the dynamics of the car while he was on the brakes.

"If I stay on this trajectory, I'm going to catch him," said Hamilton of how he felt about the phase of the race when he started to edge back towards Vettel. "Then I had this lock-up and I was completely

baffled. I hit the brakes, the car was working and then all of a sudden the wheels just locked. So the car must have unloaded; that was definitely a bit frustrating because I think I'd driven pretty well until that point and after it was a bit of a struggle."

The next battle Hamilton faced was with his own team-mate. Valtteri Bottas ran third from the start and was eight seconds behind his Mercedes team-mate when Hamilton had his moment. But with Vettel and Bottas continuing on supersofts that were in good nick, and Hamilton far out of range of being an undercut threat to the Ferrari driver thanks to his off, there was no pressing need for either to pit. Doubly so given Hamilton struggled to warm up his fresh softs and wasn't exactly flying.

When Vettel eventually pitted at the end of lap 30, he was 9.3s ahead of Bottas and 28.2s clear of Hamilton. He slotted back in on new softs between the two, with a deficit of just under 12s to Bottas. Hamilton was around 20s behind his team-mate, and Bottas was still lapping fast enough that he might potentially have eked out enough of a lead to pit and emerge ahead of his team-mate. Had he been able to do so, and taken ultrasofts for a late-race charge, he would surely have had the pace to challenge Vettel in the closing stages. But this race never happened thanks to another safety car being triggered by the 'Red Bullagaddon' on lap 40, at which point Bottas had extended his



Poleman Vettel takes charge at the start

QUALIFYING

IT'S ALL BECOMING A BIT REPETITIVE FOR KIMI RAIKKONEN, but at least he's getting closer to sealing the deal and taking a pole position in 2018. In Bahrain he was on top after the first runs in Q3, but didn't deliver on his second set of tyres. In China he was ahead for much of the lap before slipping behind Sebastian Vettel late on. And in Azerbaijan he made it all the way to the final proper corner, the Turn 16 left-hander, before the rear got away from him and he fishtailed his way onto the long drag to the line. Until that point, he looked nailed on for pole position.

"I took it easier on the entry because obviously it's been a bit tricky with the wind all day," he said. "I don't know [why], it just got sideways. I got it back but I knew it was all gone because it's a long straight."

Raikkonen didn't improve on his first-run time in Q3, leaving him down in sixth place on the grid. He was also the only one of the top six not to set his Q2 time using supersofts after locking up and heading down an escape road on his first run. Defeat from the jaws of victory indeed.

This meant pole position for the third consecutive race went to Raikkonen's Ferrari team-mate, Sebastian Vettel. After a difficult time during Friday practice thanks to having no confidence in the SF71H, he was far stronger on Saturday with a trimmed-out car that remained quick in the twistier middle sector, and his first run in Q3 was enough to secure pole. Lewis Hamilton was Vettel's closest challenger, 0.179s down, with Vettel's pace advantage in the twisty middle sector decisive.

The two Red Bulls slotted into fourth and fifth behind Valtteri Bottas, who rued not getting the perfect lap but actually got closest to stringing together his three personal best sector times than anyone. Daniel Ricciardo was the quicker of the two Red Bull drivers, with a slight tow from Raikkonen helping on his final run.

Esteban Ocon and Sergio Perez were best of the rest in seventh and eighth, completing a remarkable turnaround for Force India. Nico Hulkenberg picked up a five-place gearbox-change penalty, so beating Renault team-mate Carlos Sainz Jr to ninth meant little.

"It just got sideways. I got it back but knew it was all gone"

Kimi Raikkonen



"IT WASN'T A FULL-ON WEAWE FROM VERSTAPPEN, BUT IT WASN'T LEGAL AS HE DID MOVE TWICE"



lead over Vettel to more than 13s, and to almost 21s over Hamilton.

Red Bull duo Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo were never the victory threat their long-run pace in practice had promised, but they provided a huge amount of entertainment kicking lumps out of each other even before their mutually assured destruction act at Turn 1.

Early on, the Renaults of Carlos Sainz Jr and Nico Hulkenberg had battled past both of them while Verstappen and Ricciardo complained about struggling to harvest battery power. It turned out there were some settings problems to be addressed, although the main reason for Renault's relative pace was that both drivers were on ultrasofts. Once Hulkenberg eliminated himself by hitting the wall and Sainz pitted, the Red Bulls were back up to fourth and fifth ahead of the recovering Raikkonen.

Verstappen was determined to keep Ricciardo behind, and after being blasted past on the main straight he managed to dive back up the inside to retake his position — making contact with Ricciardo in the process. They survived this skirmish but trouble was clearly brewing. When Ricciardo finally found a way past Verstappen on lap 35, it seemed this tense battle was over. But when the duo made their pitstops on laps 37 and 38 respectively — Ricciardo stopping first as he had track position — Verstappen moved back ahead thanks to a quick in-lap assisted by picking up some DRS help from the lapped car of Pierre Gasly.

What had seemed inevitable from the very start of their battle happened two laps later. Ricciardo had a run on Verstappen down the main straight, partly thanks to the Dutchman's poor exit from Turn 16. Verstappen moved to the inside to cover, but still Ricciardo had a speed advantage. When Verstappen jinked slightly right, apparently to take a more orthodox line and cede the corner, Ricciardo committed fully to the inside only for Verstappen to straighten up and inch back to the left. It wasn't a full-on weave from Verstappen, but it wasn't legal as he did move twice. As for Ricciardo, he was committed to a gap he expected to appear but that never quite did. When it became clear



they were on a collision course, he had no choice but to hit Verstappen square in the rear and both flew up the escape road and into retirement.

Some argued the twin reprimands they received were a cop-out, but both played their parts in shooting each other, and their team, in the foot. Verstappen, however, needs to be very careful about moving twice in braking areas. He created the conditions for the collision. Ricciardo, usually so good at risk assessment in such situations, perhaps let his desperation to assert himself over his team-mate cloud his judgement and got sucked into committing himself with no escape route. They both had a stake in this collision.

The whole field dived into the pits for fresh rubber under the safety car. Vettel was too far behind to have jumped Bottas had he stayed out under the safety car, so it was logical to stop and take on fresh rubber for an equal fight after the restart. This set up a fascinating dash to the flag, one reduced in length by Romain Grosjean crashing while trying

to warm his tyres and extending the safety car. Apparently, a mistake in a setting played a part in this, but it was a stupid error that cost Haas and Grosjean a sixth place that would at least have turned into fifth.

When the race did restart for a four-lap sprint to the chequered flag, Bottas aced the restart, only for Vettel to tow his way back into contention heading into Turn 1. He hit the brakes on the inside line, but locked up over a bump and ran wide, letting Hamilton and Raikkonen through.

"I saw the gap on the inside and unfortunately I locked up," said Vettel. "Braking at the same point without the lock-up – it was quite bumpy there – I think I'd make the first corner and it turns out to be a good move. It's easy to say it didn't work, it was the wrong thing, but I had to try. The rest of the race there are only positives, we had a strong race, good pace, controlled the race. That's how it goes."

Bottas had the lead, and the race, in his pocket with Hamilton





TRACKSIDE VIEW

TO WATCH
OUR TRACK
GUIDES VISIT
[AUTOSPORT.COM/
VIDEO](http://AUTOSPORT.COM/VIDEO)

NOWHERE ON THE FORMULA 1 calendar does the new contrast with the old more jarringly than in the Turn 8-12 sequence at Baku. Here, the fastest racing machines of the 21st century wend their way around the 12th century (some say even earlier) walls of the old city. But watching the first free practice session from the grandstand between the right-hander of Turn 11 and the uphill left-hander of Turn 12 offers more than just a glorious world heritage site backdrop.

The elevation of the grandstand allows you to look down into the cockpit as the drivers turn in to Turn 12. On a very green track during the early stages of the session, most struggle to turn in as decisively as they want to. Kimi Raikkonen suffers the biggest moment, with the front end initially not biting, then turning to oversteer mid-corner once the front end finds the grip to respond to the extra steering lock.

Later in the session, Raikkonen shows the benefit of being committed on the inside kerb – taking more than any other driver but in doing so hooking the car up beautifully. It's no surprise he sets the fastest time of the weekend through this sector on Saturday.

But the Red Bull stands out.

While Max Verstappen only looks good until he shunts out of sight at Turn 5, Daniel Ricciardo seems completely at home in this tight and twisty part of the track. With the circuit only three car widths wide at some points, he's nimble, precise and fast.

"The second sector's good, through the castle; I thought the car was really strong in that part of the track today," said Ricciardo on Friday evening. "I felt

comfortable there, confident. It's a very tight part of the circuit, but it was probably the place where I felt most comfortable. The RB14 was feeling strong!"

He tuns in decisively and, crucially, just does so once rather than having a few bites. The front end has grip, the rear matches it and usually he's able to feed in the power without any struggle for traction for the drag up the hill.

The starkest contrast is Fernando

Alonso. He's spectacular and quick, but is having to hustle the car to within an inch of its life. For many, the exit of the right-hander of Turn 11 is a non-event, but multiple times he comes into view with a touch of opposite lock applied to keep the car on line for the entry to the left-hander that follows. Stoffel Vandoorne looks less confident, which is reflected in his pace as the weekend progresses.

EDD STRAW



Alonso is quick and spectacular, but has to manhandle his McLaren



**"HAMILTON HAD THE CLASS
TO COMMISERATE WITH BOTTAS
BEFORE THE PODIUM CEREMONY"**

ready to complete a Mercedes one-two. And that's what would have happened had Bottas not run over a chunk of debris on the main straight three laps from home and suffered a right-rear blowout to hand his team-mate a fortuitous victory. It also gifted second to Raikkonen, who had to battle his way back from 12th at the first restart after pitting for a new front wing following the Ocon crash.

It should have given Vettel third too, but suddenly it was Sergio Perez who had the final podium position after passing the Ferrari at the same time Bottas hit trouble. That's the same Perez who was rear-ended by Sergey Sirotkin at Turn 2 on the opening lap and hit the back of Raikkonen's Ferrari. He disappeared into the pits for a new front wing and a fresh set of supersofts under the safety car and took the early restart 15th.

Perez soon started picking up places, dispatching Brendon Hartley, Stoffel Vandoorne and Gasly within four laps. Two laps after Hulkenberg hit the wall while running fifth, Perez passed

Grosjean to get back into the points. He jumped Sainz and Charles Leclerc when they pitted, and passed Lance Stroll on track to run seventh when the Red Bulls wiped each other out.

The original plan was to run to the end, but Perez pitted under the second safety car. The team expected to lose a place to Grosjean thanks to having to serve a five-second penalty for overtaking Stroll illegally while heading into the pits under the early-race safety car, but the Haas team's slow turnaround ensured he didn't.

So when Bottas's world, and right-rear tyre, fell apart and Perez blasted past the flat-spotted Vettel on the main straight, the remarkable comeback was complete. Well, almost, because Perez was the only driver not on ultrasofts at the end because he didn't have any fresh sets left.

"I think today I did the best two laps of my whole career," said Perez. "The last two laps with Sebastian behind, with cold tyres, it was so difficult. I was on the supersoft tyre and I had to keep a very strong rhythm, trying to keep close to Raikkonen to make sure that Sebastian didn't get close enough."

It was a great performance from a driver with an uncanny knack for being there to pick up the scraps left by the big three teams. After all, three of the five podium finishes claimed by teams outside the big three since the start of 2016 have gone to Perez and Force India. As the man himself put it, "it's not a coincidence that we are always there to take anything that is offered to us".

Which brings us back to Hamilton, who was delighted to take his first win of the season but also had the class to seek out and commiserate with Bottas before the podium ceremony. Hamilton knows how painful it is to lose apparently guaranteed wins through no fault of his own, as he's lost more that way than he's gained through fortune. That's why you can't begrudge him a little help from lady luck on this occasion.

After all, on a day when others are making mistakes or hitting trouble, sometimes a bunch of pars and some bogeys is enough to win. *W*



Sainz 'sad' on way to fifth place

Carlos Sainz felt sad on his way to scoring Renault's best result since returning to Formula 1 as a works team in Baku.

The Spaniard admitted "it was a bit depressing" to drop to the tail of the top 10 after a starring opening stint on ultrasofts that vaulted him to fourth ahead of the two Red Bulls.

"We knew that we were on the slower strategy," said Sainz. "So we were super, super aggressive."

The late safety car both helped and hindered Sainz, who called the second half of the grand prix "a new race", as it allowed his longer-running rivals to stop without losing time but at least bunched the field together.

He gained a place when Romain Grosjean stuffed his Haas into the wall under that safety car, then passed Charles Leclerc after the restart.

"There's still a lot of work to do, especially to extract the last two tenths of the car in qualifying," Sainz said. "I feel in the race I am a lot closer. Today is a good example – if I can still finish P5 without having 100% confidence in the car, when I get that little 5-10% more that I need, I will be on top of it."

Team-mate Nico Hulkenberg was already out of the picture after ending a superb start to the 2018 season by clouting the wall early on.



GASPEROTTI/SUTTON IMAGES



2018

BRATIS/SUTTON IMAGES

Red Bull drivers reprimanded

Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo were both given formal reprimands for their collision during the Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

Ricciardo hit the rear of Verstappen's Red Bull while challenging for fourth place on lap 40 after the Dutchman jinked right then left in the braking zone. The stewards deemed the pair shared the blame.

"Both drivers contributed to the collision," said the stewards' statement. "The driver of car 33 [Verstappen] made two moves, both of which were relatively minor. The driver of car 3 [Ricciardo] admitted he left his move to overtake on the left too late."

"It was obvious to the stewards that although the incident had its origins in the moves by car 33, the driver of car 3 also contributed to the incident. Both drivers expressed regret about their respective contributions to the incident, during the stewards' hearing."

Ricciardo admitted he perhaps overcommitted, although he grew increasingly frustrated with Verstappen's driving during the race. Earlier, Verstappen hit Ricciardo's front-left wheel at the exit of Turn 1 while repassing Ricciardo after losing the place into the corner.

"I thought there was some space on the inside, then that felt like it closed up pretty quickly," said Ricciardo. "I think just sorry for the team that both cars are out and I know that everyone's pretty heartbroken, so it's a shame and I apologise."

Verstappen described much of their battle

as fair, but accepted that the accident should not have happened.

"We had this little brush with the tyres but that was just unfortunate," he said. "In general it was hard but fair racing, it looked good on TV as well because we were basically just drag racing on the straight all the time. Afterwards when the crash happened, that's not what you like as a team – doesn't matter who's to blame, just shouldn't have happened."

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner has instructed the drivers to apologise to the Milton Keynes-based team's staff.

"As a policy we want to let our guys race, and we've let them race hard against each other," said Horner. "And unfortunately today has resulted in the worst possible scenario where you've had both drivers make contact and retire from the grand prix, which is enormously disappointing."

"There's no blame apportioned more in one direction than the other – they're both equally responsible. What is obviously annoying is that we've given away an awfully large amount of points."

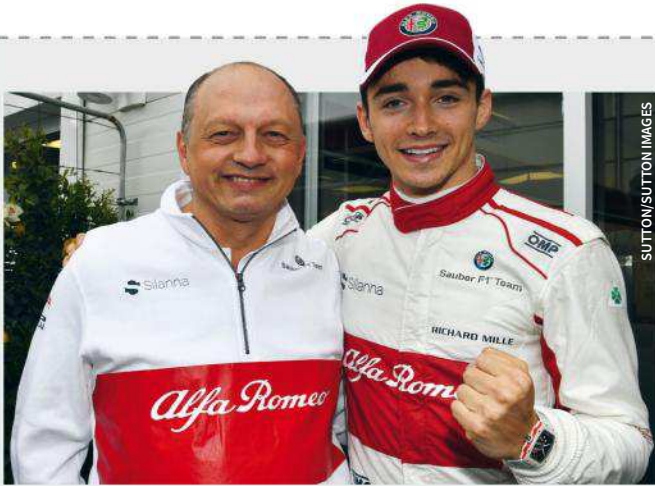
"Both drivers will be apologising to all the members of staff that work so hard to put these cars together, and the important thing is to learn from it and ensure we avoid a repeat in the future, because we want to allow the drivers to continue to race."

The accident had echoes of the 2010 Turkish Grand Prix, when Sebastian Vettel hit Red Bull team-mate Mark Webber on the straight and put both out of the race.



2010

CRIPPA
LAT IMAGES



SUTTON/SUTTON IMAGES

Q & A CHARLES LECLERC

Sauber driver

The start of Charles Leclerc's Formula 1 career has not been a baptism of fire, but it has included two "very difficult" races. In Baku he was one of the star performers, earning his first Q2 appearance of the year before charging to sixth and his first points.

Were you surprised to be chasing Red Bulls in the race?

Yeah, and also actually with Renault; when I had some clear laps, I could really stay with them. It was quite a big surprise in the car, seeing that. I also had Kimi [Raikkonen] behind. I think he had some damage, but we could keep him behind, which was also very, very strange.

How satisfying was it to pass Fernando Alonso?

Yeah, definitely. OK, we had a tyre advantage, but even at the end of the race we were looking strong compared to McLaren. It's a great boost for the future.

How significant is this result for you early in your F1 career?

It's very important for my personal confidence. It's good to have one good race where we put everything together. I've had two very difficult first grands prix [after Australia]. To be finally coming here and get our first points, it feels great.

Any congratulations from Ferrari folk?

I will go to see Maurizio [Arrivabene] later. I still have very close links with Ferrari; I could see [that they were] all very happy, and this is very good to see.

Will anything less than making Q2 and scoring points be disappointing now?

This is something I need to be careful of. Being realistic, this is not going to happen at every race. Nobody should expect the same race next time. It would be stupid. Obviously, we'll work to have a result as good as this one, but it'll be a combination of everything.

Leclerc stuns with sixth

Sauber rookie Charles Leclerc has endured a difficult start to his grand prix career, but the Ferrari junior underlined his potential with a starring drive to sixth in Azerbaijan to net his first points in Formula 1.

Leclerc made it into the second part of qualifying, and a strong first lap, allied with the frenzy around him, lifted him into the top 10. A blend of pace, strong driving and a swathe of incidents involving others helped him score Sauber's best result since the 2015 Russian Grand Prix.

Leclerc's opening stint was the highlight, when he passed Lance Stroll's Williams and was in touching distance of the squabbling Red Bulls

and Renaults. Later he passed and kept Fernando Alonso's McLaren behind.

"It was quite a big surprise in the car, seeing that," Leclerc said of having the Red Bulls and Renaults ahead. "Fernando was a driver I was watching when I was five years old in Monaco, so to race with him today is quite crazy."

Leclerc's team-mate Marcus Ericsson almost added to his 2018 points tally despite starting the race by sliding into Kevin Magnussen and later partially running down an escape road.

He picked up damage in that first-lap contact and fell half a second shy of a point after a late post-safety-car charge.

Alonso in 'best race of my life'

McLaren continued its tendency to qualify poorly and race slightly better in Azerbaijan, with Fernando Alonso seventh and Stoffel Vandoorne ninth after both qualified outside the top 10 again.

Alonso started 12th, but took the restart 17th and ahead only of Marcus Ericsson after pitting under the safety car with right-side punctures after contact with Sergey Sirotkin, who had been squeezed by Nico Hulkenberg on the run to Turn 3 on the opening lap.

Despite floor damage, Alonso continued to show good pace and recovered to seventh,



GASPEROTTI/SUTTON IMAGES

passing Lance Stroll on the final lap.

Alonso did not shy from bombastic statements after a strong race. "I think it was the result of persistence and pride, because I think no-one [else] would have reached the pitlane, first of all," he said.

"They would have parked the car and if they could reach the pitlane they would have retired the car. But we didn't park or retire

the car and fought for every tenth, every lap, close to the walls all race long, and I think it was the best race of my life."

Vandoorne did not share Alonso's pace, but fought from 16th on the grid to finish ninth.

This double points finish consolidates McLaren's fourth place in the constructors' championship despite having, on outright pace, on average the seventh-fastest car.

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Specific Gravity	0.781
RON	102
MON	90
Reid Vapour Pressure, psi	7.11
Distillation, °C	
Initial Boiling Point	45
E70°C, % volume a	16
E100°C, % volume	56
E150°C, % volume	100
Final Boiling Point	132
Unleaded	
Colour	Light Green
Oxygen, Wt. %	3.7



R 5SR

Specific Gravity	0.736
RON	101
MON	90
Reid Vapour Pressure, psi	9
Distillation, °C	
Initial Boiling Point	38
E70, % volume	40
E100, % volume	65
E150, % volume	95
Final Boiling Point	180
Lead, g/l	0.10
Colour	Light Blue
Oxygen, Wt. %	1.8



Sunoco FR

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

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GALLOWAY/SUTTON IMAGES



Toro Rosso's qualifying near-miss

After colliding during the previous race in China, the Toro Rosso drivers were supposed to be on their best behaviour. But when Pierre Gasly happened upon a touring Brendon Hartley during Q1 in Azerbaijan it almost resulted in a massive accident.

Gasly was on a hot lap and on target to set a time good enough to make Q2 when he came

across Hartley, who had a front-left puncture after glancing the wall. Hartley was in the middle of the track at the flat-out Turn 14 kink on the approach to the Turn 15 left-hander. Gasly jinked to the right just in time to avoid hitting Hartley and, after running across the Turn 14 kerb, ended up taking to the Turn 15 escape road.

"It was really scary, the scariest moment of

my career," said Gasly. "I didn't know if he was going left or going right. I could already see myself in the air, I don't know how I avoided it."

Hartley was apologetic: "I was going half-speed, trying to figure how bad the problem was and I completely messed it up. I owe him a big apology for getting in the way and nearly causing a huge accident."

Sirotkin punished for Perez punt

Williams driver Sergey Sirotkin squeezed two collisions into a race that lasted only until Turn 3 on the first lap, earning a three-place grid penalty for the upcoming Spanish Grand Prix for hitting Sergio Perez.

Sirotkin, who started 11th, punted Perez into the back of Kimi Raikkonen's Ferrari at Turn 2, but survived the incident. He then got squeezed by Nico Hulkenberg into Fernando Alonso on the run to Turn 3 and retired with

the resulting damage.

"I think it was Kimi slowing down a lot and then Checo [Perez] slowing down and I just touched him," said Sirotkin. "Up to this point it was still looking perfect because I didn't even get a scrape on my front wing. Then I was squeezed in the middle of the sandwich in the straight."

On a weekend of improved form for Williams, Lance Stroll converted 10th on the grid into a strong race to eighth place.



GASPEROTTI/SUTTON IMAGES

Ocon out after clash with Raikkonen

Esteban Ocon and Kimi Raikkonen escaped punishment after their Turn 3 clash on the opening lap of the race, which led to the Force India driver crashing out.

Ocon passed Raikkonen around the outside of Turn 1, but came under attack on the drag to the second corner. Despite moving left to squeeze Raikkonen on the approach to Turn 3 before moving to the right of the track, Ocon claimed he was unsighted and criticised Raikkonen to French TV station Canal+ after the incident.

"I was ahead of him on the straight, he was behind," said Ocon. "I don't know what he did; he released the brakes and hit me."

The stewards accepted Ocon did not believe Raikkonen was on his inside, but added that he had no right to assume there was no car there given the



GALLOWAY/SUTTON IMAGES

limited visibility in the mirrors of current grand prix cars.

Raikkonen pitted under the first safety car for a new front wing and recovered from 12th at the restart to finish second, surviving a late, high-speed, brush with the wall to capitalise on the retirements of the Red Bulls and Valtteri Bottas, as well as team-mate Sebastian Vettel's restart error.



FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m44.242s
2	Ricciardo	1m44.277s
3	Perez	1m45.075s
4	Hamilton	1m45.200s
5	Ocon	1m45.237s
6	Verstappen	1m45.559s
7	Alonso	1m46.465s
8	Sirotkin	1m46.480s
9	Gasly	1m46.492s
10	Vettel	1m46.513s
11	Stroll	1m46.590s
12	Hartley	1m46.747s
13	Hulkenberg	1m46.749s
14	Grosjean	1m46.856s
15	Raikkonen	1m46.861s
16	Leclerc	1m46.875s
17	Ericsson	1m47.073s
18	Magnussen	1m47.434s
19	Vandoorne	1m47.967s
20	Sainz	1m48.741s

WEATHER 23C, sunny

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Ricciardo	1m42.795s
2	Raikkonen	1m42.864s
3	Verstappen	1m42.911s
4	Bottas	1m43.570s
5	Hamilton	1m43.603s
6	Alonso	1m43.700s
7	Ocon	1m43.814s
8	Sainz	1m43.834s
9	Magnussen	1m43.977s
10	Hulkenberg	1m44.091s
11	Vettel	1m44.127s
12	Perez	1m44.142s
13	Grosjean	1m44.425s
14	Stroll	1m44.459s
15	Gasly	1m44.712s
16	Leclerc	1m44.940s
17	Sirotkin	1m45.007s
18	Hartley	1m45.051s
19	Vandoorne	1m45.288s
20	Ericsson	1m46.042s

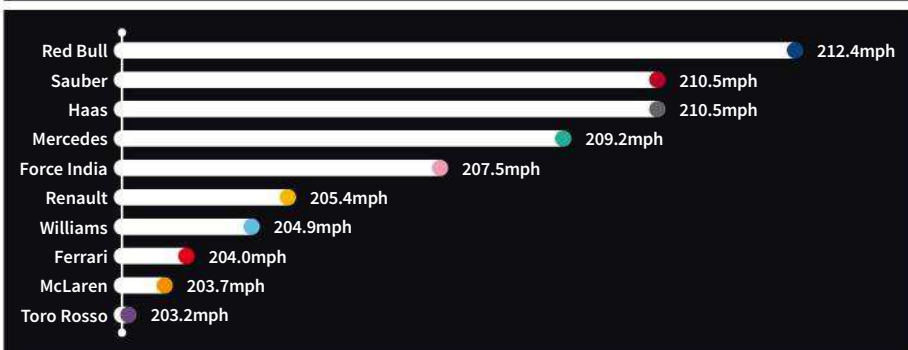
WEATHER 20C, sunny

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m43.091s
2	Hamilton	1m43.452s
3	Raikkonen	1m43.493s
4	Verstappen	1m43.519s
5	Bottas	1m43.569s
6	Perez	1m43.936s
7	Magnussen	1m43.958s
8	Stroll	1m44.123s
9	Ocon	1m44.220s
10	Sirotkin	1m44.534s
11	Alonso	1m44.763s
12	Ricciardo	1m44.861s
13	Gasly	1m44.905s
14	Leclerc	1m45.218s
15	Grosjean	1m45.261s
16	Sainz	1m45.432s
17	Hulkenberg	1m45.456s
18	Vandoorne	1m45.505s
19	Ericsson	1m45.910s
20	Hartley	1m46.186s

WEATHER 23C, sunny

SPEED TRAP



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Raikkonen	1m42.538s
2	Verstappen	1m42.642s
3	Hamilton	1m42.693s
4	Vettel	1m42.762s
5	Ricciardo	1m42.857s
6	Ocon	1m43.021s
7	Bottas	1m43.355s
8	Sainz	1m43.426s
9	Magnussen	1m43.674s
10	Hulkenberg	1m43.746s
11	Leclerc	1m43.752s
12	Perez	1m43.992s
13	Alonso	1m44.010s
14	Sirotkin	1m44.261s
15	Stroll	1m44.359s
16	Vandoorne	1m44.489s
17	Gasly	1m44.496s
18	Ericsson	1m45.541s
-	Hartley	1m57.354s
-	Grosjean	notime

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Raikkonen	1m42.510s
2	Hamilton	1m42.676s
3	Bottas	1m42.679s
4	Verstappen	1m42.901s
5	Ocon	1m42.967s
6	Vettel	1m43.015s
7	Hulkenberg	1m43.232s
8	Perez	1m43.366s
9	Sainz	1m43.464s
10	Ricciardo	1m43.482s
11	Stroll	1m43.585s
12	Sirotkin	1m43.886s
13	Alonso	1m44.019s
14	Leclerc	1m44.074s
15	Magnussen	1m44.759s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m41.498s
2	Hamilton	1m41.677s
3	Bottas	1m41.837s
4	Ricciardo	1m41.911s
5	Verstappen	1m41.994s
6	Raikkonen	1m42.490s
7	Ocon	1m42.523s
8	Perez	1m42.547s
9	Hulkenberg	1m43.066s
10	Sainz	1m43.351s

WEATHER 21C, windy

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Hamilton	70
2	Vettel	66
3	Raikkonen	48
4	Bottas	40
5	Ricciardo	37
6	Alonso	28
7	Hulkenberg	22
8	Verstappen	18
9	Perez	15
10	Sainz	13
11	Gasly	12
12	Magnussen	11
13	Leclerc	8
14	Vandoorne	8
15	Stroll	4
16	Ericsson	2
17	Ocon	1
18	Hartley	1
19	Grosjean	0
20	Sirotkin	0

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Ferrari	114
2	Mercedes	110
3	Red Bull	55
4	McLaren	36
5	Renault	35
6	Force India	16
7	Toro Rosso	13
8	Haas	11
9	Sauber	10
10	Williams	4

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	2	2	Bottas
Vettel	3	1	Raikkonen
Ricciardo	2	2	Verstappen
Perez	2	2	Ocon
Stroll	2	2	Sirotkin
Hulkenberg	4	0	Sainz
Gasly	2	2	Hartley
Grosjean	1	3	Magnussen
Vandoorne	0	4	Alonso
Ericsson	2	2	Leclerc

WINS

Vettel	2
Hamilton	1
Ricciardo	1

FASTEST LAPS

Bottas	2
Ricciardo	2

POLE POSITIONS

Vettel	3
Hamilton	1



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STARTING GRID



RACE RESULTS 51 laps - 190.18 miles

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Lewis Hamilton (GB)	Mercedes	1h43m44.291s	3	SSu, Sn, USn
2	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Ferrari	+2.460s		USu, Sn, USn
3	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Force India-Mercedes	+4.024s		USu, Sn, SSn
4	Sebastian Vettel (D)	Ferrari	+5.329s	30	SSu, Sn, USn
5	Carlos Sainz (E)	Renault	+7.515s		USu, Sn, USu
6	Charles Leclerc (MC)	Sauber-Ferrari	+9.158s		SSn, Sn, USn
7	Fernando Alonso (E)	McLaren-Renault	+10.931s		SSn, Sn, USu
8	Lance Stroll (CDN)	Williams-Mercedes	+12.546s		SSn, Sn, USn
9	Stoffel Vandoorne (B)	McLaren-Renault	+14.152s		SSn, Sn, USn, USu
10	Brendon Hartley (NZ)	Toro Rosso-Honda	+18.030s		Sn, USn, SSn, USn
11	Marcus Ericsson (S)	Sauber-Ferrari	+18.512s		SSn, Sn, USn, USn
12	Pierre Gasly (F)	Toro Rosso-Honda	+24.720s		USn, Sn, USn
13	Kevin Magnussen (DK)	Haas-Ferrari	+40.663s		SSn, Sn, USn
14	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	-3 laps	18	SSu, USu
R	Romain Grosjean (F)	Haas-Ferrari	42 laps-accident		Sn, SSn, USn
R	Max Verstappen (NL)	Red Bull-Renault	39 laps-collision		SSu, USn
R	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Red Bull-Renault	39 laps-collision		SSu, USn
R	Nico Hulkenberg (D)	Renault	10 laps-accident		USu
R	Esteban Ocon (F)	Force India-Mercedes	0 laps-collision		USu
R	Sergey Sirotkin (RUS)	Williams-Mercedes	0 laps-collision		SSn

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Bottas	1m45.149s	-	37
2	Hamilton	1m45.412s	+0.263s	35
3	Ricciardo	1m45.419s	+0.270s	34
4	Vettel	1m45.530s	+0.381s	38
5	Verstappen	1m45.771s	+0.622s	31
6	Perez	1m46.206s	+1.057s	51
7	Raikkonen	1m46.523s	+1.374s	50
8	Stroll	1m46.815s	+1.666s	50
9	Sainz	1m46.856s	+1.707s	50
10	Grosjean	1m46.880s	+1.731s	34
11	Leclerc	1m47.403s	+2.254s	31
12	Alonso	1m47.449s	+2.300s	32
13	Vandoorne	1m47.666s	+2.517s	50
14	Ericsson	1m47.925s	+2.776s	51
15	Gasly	1m48.035s	+2.886s	38
16	Magnussen	1m48.155s	+3.006s	35
17	Hartley	1m48.288s	+3.139s	51
18	Hulkenberg	1m48.867s	+3.718s	10
-	Ocon	no time	-	-
-	Sirotkin	no time	-	-

WEATHER 17C, windy

TYRES n - New set u - Used set Available | SH - Superhard H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft SS - Supersoft US - Ultrasoft HS - Hypersoft Int - Intermediate W - Wet

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 110.00mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 127.71mph

RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

GROSJEAN Five-place penalty for gearbox change

HULKENBERG Five-place penalty for gearbox change

RACE PENALTIES

SIROTKIN Three-place grid penalty for next race

and two points on licence for colliding with Perez

ERICSSON 10-second penalty and two points on licence for colliding with Magnussen

PEREZ 5s penalty and two points on licence for overtaking before the safety car line

MAGNUSSEN 10s penalty and two points on licence for colliding with Gasly

STAT

8

Perez scored his eighth Formula 1 podium with third place

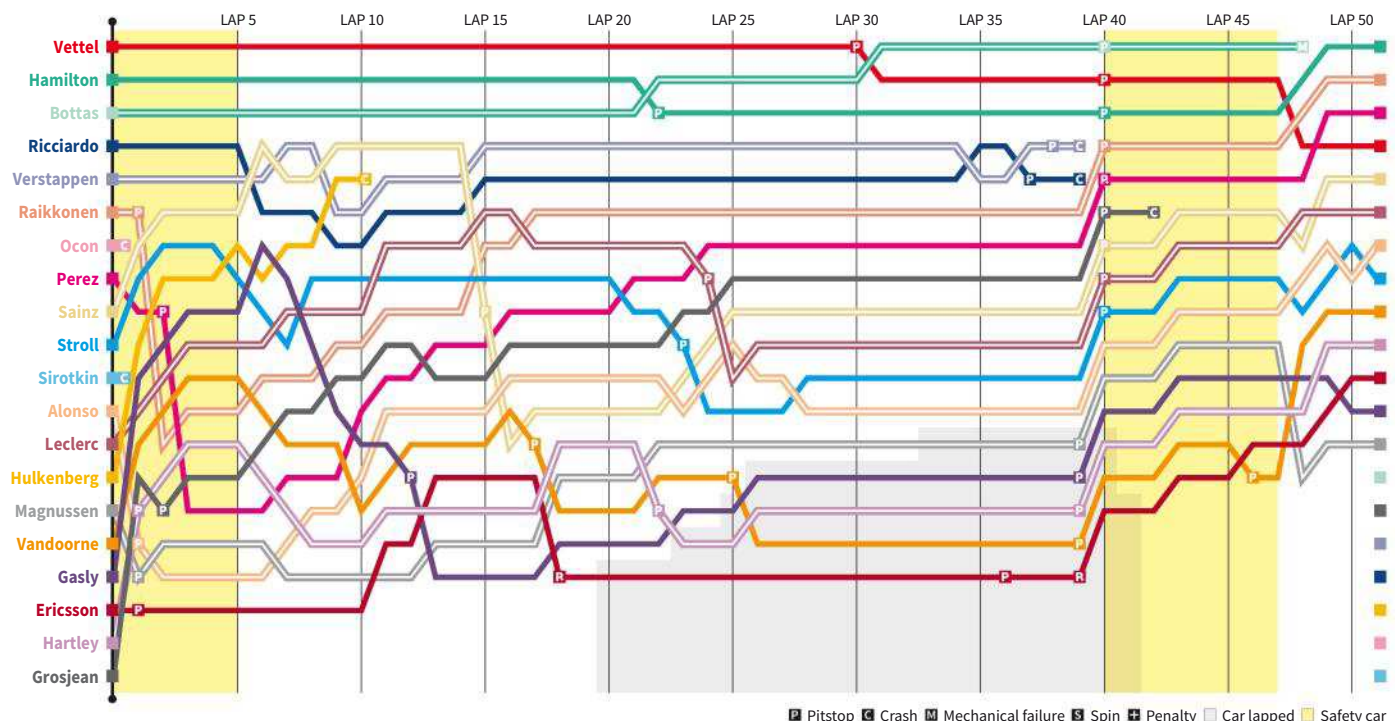
NEXT RACE

MAY 13
SPANISH GP

Barcelona, Spain



LAP CHART What happened, when

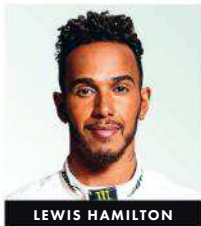


PEREZ AND LECLERC ARE THE STARS OF AZERBAIJAN

In a weekend marred by scrappy qualifying and incident-strewn racing, two drivers stood out by maximising their potential in challenging circumstances

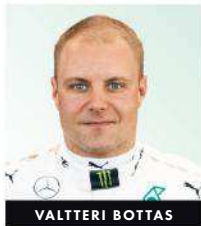
EDD STRAW

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

8 Rating Hamilton is tricky. As he said himself, he delivered below his usual exceptional standards, with a couple of off-track moments in the race, one of which forced him to curtail his first stint. It's a sign of his quality that even when underperforming he could still win, albeit with some luck.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

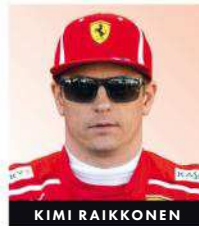
9 Toto Wolff suggested Bottas was perfect, and he merited a victory, although he was 0.160s off Hamilton in qualifying. His pace on ageing supersofts was remarkable and he was in with a chance of forcing a win even without the help of the safety car. He didn't deserve the puncture.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

8 Vettel did an excellent job for much of the weekend but is marked down for two things, one minor and one very major. The small criticism is that Raikkonen had greater underlying qualifying pace, and the big one is that he lost a victory shot with that ill-judged attack on Bottas at the restart.



KIMI RAIKKONEN

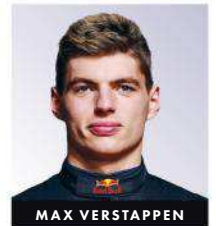
7 Judge Raikkonen by what he could have done, such as taking pole, or getting in among the frontrunners on ultrasofts on the first lap, and he would be a 10. But he continued the trend of turning the capacity to do something special into much less. Like Hamilton he relied on fortune for his result.

RED BULL



DANIEL RICCIARDO

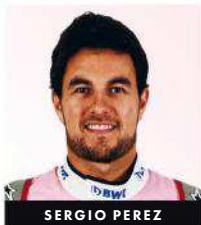
6 Ricciardo was quick, and had a touch more qualifying and race pace, so that carries weight in his rating. But while Verstappen's two moves were the catalyst for their crash, Ricciardo seemed to allow frustration with his team-mate to cloud his usually precise judgement.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

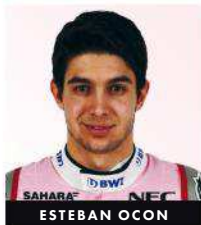
4 Shaded by Ricciardo in qualifying, then seemed to lack his team-mate's pace in the race. His foolish movement under braking created the conditions for the Red Bull wipeout. It was an immature performance from a brilliant driver having a sustained shaky spell.

FORCE INDIA



SERGIO PEREZ

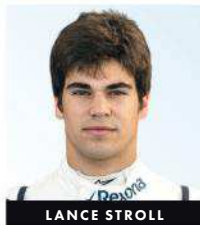
10 Perez can't be blamed for being punted into Raikkonen's Ferrari on the first lap, and although he was the second-best Force India in qualifying he was only 0.024s off Ocon's pace. Luck played a part in his result, but he passed six cars including Vettel's Ferrari.



ESTEBAN OCON

6 Things went superbly on Friday and Saturday as he shaded Perez in qualifying. Ocon inched ahead of Raikkonen on the run to Turn 3 before turning in on the Ferrari and being turfed into the wall. No action was taken, but he should have known he might be there.

WILLIAMS



LANCE STROLL

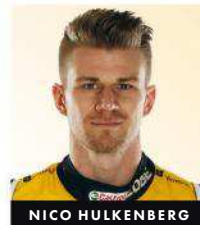
8 Stroll had the legs of Sirotkin in qualifying and, as usual, made progress on the opening lap to run seventh in the early stages. He might have finished there but for losing a place to Alonso on the final lap. It wasn't a perfect race but it was a perfectly decent performance.



SERGEY SIROTKIN

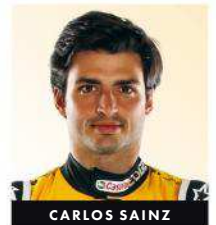
5 Looked more comfortable than Stroll at times, but when it came down to it in qualifying he was 0.5s off his theoretical best. Hitting the rear of Perez on the first lap was his mistake, getting squeezed between Hulkenberg and Alonso wasn't, but it was an ultimately unfulfilling weekend.

RENAULT



NICO HULKENBERG

5 Hulkenberg did a lot of good work during the weekend, again outpacing Sainz in qualifying and then compensating for his five-place grid penalty by getting up to fifth behind his team-mate. But he threw it all away by losing the rear and striking the barrier. A costly error.

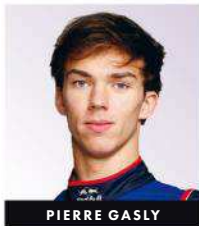


CARLOS SAINZ

9 Sainz couldn't match his team-mate in qualifying, but put in a battling performance even with the disadvantage of starting on ultrasofts thanks to making Q3. He led the Renault charge early on and, as is always the case, kept his head when others around him were losing theirs.



TORO ROSSO



PIERRE GASLY

8 Gasly was the stronger of the Toro Rosso drivers and would have made Q2 but for the incident with his team-mate in qualifying. Did a great job in the early stages of the race but found it difficult to keep cars behind him. He might have claimed a point but for being barged into the wall late on.



BRENDON HARTLEY

7 Regardless of what role the team's poor communication played, a driver of his experience shouldn't have been in the middle of a fast piece of track with a puncture as he was in qualifying. But he did what he could with a difficult car in the race and was rewarded with a first F1 point.

HAAS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

3 This was Grosjean at his most frustrating. He was confident about pace before his gearbox gave out in qualifying. An early stop allowed him to climb to sixth come the race. And while an accidental setting change led to his shunt under the safety car, it was still an embarrassing error.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

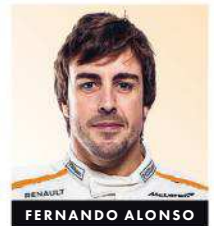
6 Having bits flying off the car compromised him in Q2 and the assault by Ericsson on the first lap meant he was also carrying damage in the race. Although he took the final restart 10th it was inevitable he would slide back. But he did make Gasly – and the stewards – very unhappy.

McLAREN



STOFFEL VANDOORNE

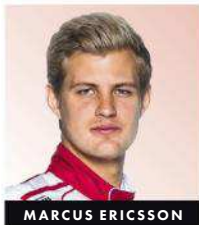
7 Tough weekend for Vandoorne, who never looked as comfortable as Alonso. Flat-spotting his first set of tyres in the race didn't help, but on a day when others would have wilted he partly made up for his struggles with a superb run after the final restart, climbing from 14th to ninth.



FERNANDO ALONSO

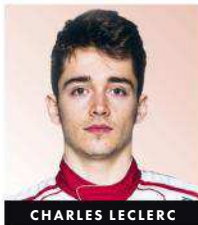
9 Alonso hustled the McLaren effectively around the streets of Baku, and looked a cut above Vandoorne. The damage from first-lap contact with Sirotkin held him back, but he stuck to his task. A strong race drive, but perhaps should have beaten the Williams drivers in qualifying.

SAUBER



MARCUS ERICSSON

5 This was a very messy weekend for Ericsson, who can at least point to losing much of Friday's second free practice session to a gearbox problem for struggling to match Leclerc's pace. But he didn't have an excuse for hitting Magnussen on the opening lap, even though he did a decent salvage job.

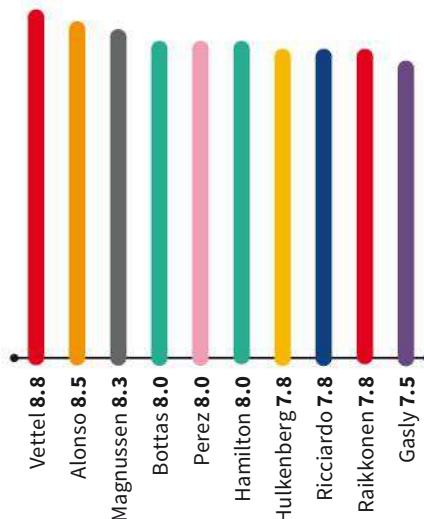


CHARLES LECLERC

10 From Friday practice, in which he set eye-catching long-run pace, he had his first exceptional grand prix weekend in Baku. Sixth place was a just reward for such an accomplished performance, in which he blended speed with keeping his head while others were making mistakes.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS

AUTOSPORT'S RATING AFTER ROUND 4



READERS' RATING AFTER ROUND 4



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Vergne redeems himself in Paris

Victory on the French streets enabled Jean-Eric Vergne to banish the pain of temps perdu – and extend his championship lead with three rounds to go

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

For Jean-Eric Vergne, victory in Paris – his third win of the 2017/18 season – provided triple redemption. First, he bounced back from a poor event in Rome two weeks before, where he lacked pace while struggling with a finger injury, the impact of which he played down at the time.

Second, he banished the ghosts of his first podium in the 2016 Parisian event, which was his best result for the Virgin Racing team, but which came against the background of an increasingly fraught relationship with the squad and a tetchy on-track battle with his then team-mate, Sam Bird. Finally, Vergne made triumphant amends on his home streets after the bitter disappointment of the suspension failure that struck as he chased Sebastien Buemi for the win here 11 months ago.

“If there was a race that I wanted to win this year, it was clearly Paris,” he said. “And to have done it in such a good way today with pole position and the race win was absolutely amazing.”

After taking second place in practice behind Lucas di Grassi, whose search for a first win of the current campaign goes on, Vergne was not headed thereafter. The eighth pole of his FE career, and his fourth of 2017/18, was peerless. He achieved this after topping group qualifying despite having to run in the opening-five car collection that also contained his nearest championship challengers – Bird, Felix Rosenqvist, Buemi and Daniel Abt.

Bird also impressively made it through to superpole from the first qualifying group, but wound up 0.277s adrift of his title rival. From there, given the tight confines of the Circuit des Invalides, the start was crucial.

Under grey skies, the spring air heavy with enough pollen to bring tears to the eyes of many a hayfever sufferer, the pack formed up. Vergne’s Techeetah team-mate

Andre Lotterer was third, ahead of another star of qualifying, Maro Engel.

Vergne, knowing his home track had a reputation for being a tough place on which to pass, had to make a perfect getaway, and that’s exactly what he did. Bird was fractionally slower away and that put him under severe pressure from Lotterer heading down to the first corner. In a taste of the anarchy that was to come, Lotterer squeezed Bird hard, but the Briton held his line and stayed ahead.

A breathless first stint ensued. After a short full course yellow – called in the aftermath of Ma Qing Hua failing to get off the grid and Tom Blomqvist rear-ending

“Vergne made triumphant amends after the bitter disappointment here 11 months ago”

Nico Prost at the Turn 9 hairpin, before getting the same treatment from Mitch Evans a split-second later – Vergne pulled out a small gap on his pursuers. But Bird and Lotterer set about erasing that advantage, and the trio ran nose-to-tail for much of the first half of the race.

On a weekend where it was hard to find fault with Vergne’s performance, Bird just had the edge on energy management before the car swaps, which allowed him to increase the pressure as the stint wore on, though he later claimed “[Vergne] was trying to back me into Andre”.

But Bird couldn’t make his small advantage pay – what he described as a “token nibble to tell him I was there” ➤



on lap 23 of 49 was the closest he came to making a move, and he locked up while going slightly offline approaching the braking zone for Turn 3. The leaders pitted at the end of that lap, and a change that was 0.748s faster gained Vergne breathing space over Bird of around a second, while Lotterer lost a further 2.281s.

After the car swaps, the race's second half felt very different. Vergne adjusted his approach from full-on defence to a consolidation of his new gap, while Bird had to fend off Lotterer as the stint wore on.

On lap 35, Vergne was 2.146 clear in the lead when the battle between Bird and Lotterer reached a new level of intensity. The duo had been joined by the Audi of di Grassi, who (along with Buemi) had saved enough energy to run until lap 25 in stint one, which got him ahead of Engel and into fourth, where he showed his car's pace by surging up to the podium scrap.

Lotterer attacked Bird at Turn 10, moving fully alongside as he locked up dramatically before getting it stopped – it appeared almost fully – at the apex. Bird turned in to the left-hander and struck the rear of Lotterer's car hard enough for the stewards to deem it worthy of investigation but not, after due consideration, any punishment.

Di Grassi "used that opportunity" to pass Bird and charged after Lotterer. The pair of them soon homed in on Vergne, who continued to have everything under control up front with 14 laps to run.

The next moment of controversy came late in the closing stages, when di Grassi got alongside Lotterer in the tight sequence of Turns 8 and 9. Both lost momentum (and blamed each other for the incident), giving Vergne enough breathing space to sail into a 4.193s lead at the start of the final lap. Victory and redemption were his.

"It was clearly my most emotional win, by far," he said. "I cannot be happier, especially [as] it was my birthday this week. So, it's been an incredible week and I think I'm going to need a few days to [relax]."



Behind the triumphant home hero, chaos reigned. Techeetah boss Mark Preston thought his team was on for a second one-two of the year as he began cheering Vergne's win, but the celebrations were stunted when di Grassi rather than Lotterer appeared around the final corner in second place. Then, to add further confusion, Bird crossed the line in third – with the right-front wheel hanging off his car.

Lotterer had run out of energy during his battle with di Grassi on the final lap. The car "just faded out initially and then

it just cut", the triple Le Mans winner explained. The power loss meant di Grassi got by at Turn 10 – fuming that Lotterer had "tried to block me without energy".

Lotterer quickly earned another rival's wrath: as he tried to coast to the finish, he was hit hard at the rear by Bird at the Turn 12 kink. Bird got by to secure his third podium of the season, but remained disgruntled. "You can't do a late swerve when people are obviously going to be overtaking," he said. "It's not correct, in any form of motorsport."





Lotterer, who ended up sixth, responded: “Everything happened so quick I didn’t know which side he was coming and I went for the inside and that was it. In the end he finished third and I lost out.

“I was just racing [with di Grassi],” the Formula E rookie continued. “I don’t know what he was complaining about. He actually drove into me twice in this race – I don’t care what he says.

“I missed [second] not by much because if I’d had regen a tiny bit earlier, then that would have allowed me to accelerate out of Turn 10 and then finish the race.”

The FIA stewards investigated the collision at the final corner and handed Lotterer a 10-place grid penalty for the next round in Berlin. Their rationale was that he “turned left of the racing line” because of his energy shutdown, and “then rejoined the racing line causing [Bird] to hit the rear [of Lotterer]”.

“The stewards noted that immediately prior to the collision, [Lotterer] attempted to move out of the way but it was too late.”

Behind the podium finishers came Engel, who put in quietly impressive drive after his qualifying heroics, although he explained that he was nevertheless “a bit disappointed that my superpole lap didn’t yield a better position because it was a pretty good lap”.

Engel had appeared to lose touch with Vergne, Bird and Lotterer early on >>

FELIX DRIFTS AWAY



Unfortunately for Felix Rosenqvist, it looks as though the 2017/18 Formula E title fight has turned into a two-horse race. After picking up just 20 points in the last four races – six for taking two poles in races he led before retiring – compared with Jean-Eric Vergne’s 76 and Sam Bird’s 55, the Mahindra Racing driver is now 61 points adrift of the top spot.

Rosenqvist was extremely strong in Berlin – when FE heads next – last year; only a penalty denied him a double weekend triumph. He also shone in the championship’s first visit to Rome last time out, which suggests he won’t be fazed by the new track in Zurich.

So all is not totally lost. But, in the championship reckoning, things look very tough for a driver who has arguably been the series’ quickest during this campaign.

Reliability dramas in Mexico, Uruguay and Italy stunted Rosenqvist’s charge,

and he struggled with the handling of his car in Paris, crashing in FP1 at the bumpy Turn 12 following a snap of oversteer, bringing out the red flags. Then in qualifying he had little confidence in what he called an “unpredictable car”, which resulted in 11th on the grid and a grinding race to eighth place.

“[In qualifying] compared to Rome when I went out and my heartbeat was super low and I just knew exactly what to do... here it felt like I was going out in FP1 again. I didn’t know where to brake, I didn’t know what to expect from the car – going on the throttle, back on the brakes, throttle [again] – no rhythm.”

Rosenqvist is not ready to concede the title at this stage – and nor should he – but he did say he’d prefer to “try to forget about the championship a little bit”, settle down and find a way to get back to the top step of the podium.



IN THE HEADLINES



VIRGIN SELLS STAKE

Virgin Racing announced it has partnered with renewable energy and technology company Envision, which is also now the majority owner of the squad. Envision is claimed to be the second largest wind turbine maker in China and the seventh largest in the world. It is heavily involved in finding global energy applications for the Internet of Things and smart city tech.

DILLMANN TO BERLIN

Tom Dillmann will replace Edoardo Mortara in the Venturi line-up for Berlin, while Mortara races for Mercedes in the DTM. Dillmann could replace Mortara again at the season finale in New York, since it is yet to be decided if the Swiss-Italian driver will race there or at Zandvoort in his tin-top seat. At Techeetah, European Formula 3 racer Guan Yu Zhou has been signed as a development driver.

JAGUAR'S DISASTERS

Jaguar endured a very difficult weekend in Paris. Mitch Evans' precautionary gearbox change meant he started last; he was caught up in the first-lap melee and eventually finished 15th. Nelson Piquet Jr crashed in both practice sessions, which meant he missed qualifying altogether. Piquet then retired from the race with a seatbelt issue for the second event in a row.

PENALTIES APLENTY

Techeetah was fined €2500 for releasing Andre Lotterer from his pitstop before the crew was clear of the car. Venturi was forced to forfeit €1000 for sending Maro Engel out in what an official bulletin described as an "unsafe manner causing a 1m cable to fall on the racing circuit". Jean-Eric Vergne was fined €1000 for speeding in the pitlane in qualifying, while Dragon's Jose Maria Lopez earned himself an €800 fine for a similar offence.



despite mirroring their energy strategy, but he later explained the the early full-course yellow had cost him ground.

"We have a clear rule for FCY [that] you count down five seconds after the race director says 'FCY now,'" Engel said.

"At that point you have to be at 50km/h [30mph] and it looks like I was the only one to count down those five seconds. The others counted in a different manner because I lost a good three seconds to the cars ahead and the cars behind closed up."

Although di Grassi got past Engel, the Venturi driver kept Buemi and Abt at bay in the second half of the race, even though

Buemi had a big energy advantage thanks to his later stop. For his part, Abt seemed capable of pulling off stunning passes at will until he reached this fight over what looked to be fifth place in the final order.

"Somehow I was struggling to use the extra energy," said Buemi. "I had too much front end and I was sliding, and had the energy but I could not use it."

That allowed Abt to successfully pull off a fanboost-aided ambush on him at Turn 3 on lap 44, but the pair clashed again on the final lap and they came home either side of Lotterer, with Buemi ahead. Each blamed the other, but no penalty was given.



Bird finished on the podium despite last-lap shunt



Engel drove a solid race under pressure from Buemi and Abt



Abt's stirring drive made up for a poor qualifying lap

GRIFFITHS
LAT IMAGES

Abt's drive was a swashbuckling response to him being "super-annoyed about qualifying", in which he'd gone slower than his best time in free practice. Audi boss Allan McNish said his team had to get on top of what appears to be a recurring issue – di Grassi was also slower than in practice and a similar situation arose in Rome. McNish said Audi has "got to be towards the front [in qualifying]" to use its "quick, efficient package".

From 14th on the grid Abt made swift progress with a series of stunning moves in the race's first half. A notable victim was Felix Rosenqvist, who lost more ground to Vergne in the championship after a "boring" race where he struggled with "feeling the car too much – it sort of surprised me every now and then with some oversteer and that sort of wrote the story of the day".

Vergne's lead over Bird now sits at 31 points with four races left to run. He still claims not to be thinking about the title and is keen to make sure that his Techeetah squad doesn't take its foot off the accelerator as the climax approaches.

"I want us to keep focused and keep working like if we were equal in the rankings," he said. "It's always better to be chasing than being chased – even though I'm the one being chased. Every race I arrive, I think that Sam or Felix or whoever has the same amount of points [as me], and I want to leave with more points than them. It's as simple as that." ❄

RESULTS ROUND 7/10, PARIS (F), APRIL 28 (49 LAPS – 59.416 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah / Renault Z.E.17	54m49.102s
2	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE04	+4.882s
3	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing / DS Virgin DSV-03	+8.897s
4	Maro Engel (D)	Venturi / Venturi VM200-FE-03	+9.287s
5	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault e.dams / Renault Z.E.17	+10.194s
6	Andre Lotterer (D)	Techeetah / Renault Z.E.17	+10.855s
7	Daniel Abt (D)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE04	+13.918s
8	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M4ELECTRO	+15.271s
9	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NIO / NextEV NIO 003	+19.557s
10	Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-2	+20.989s
11	Nick Heidfeld (D)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M4ELECTRO	+21.698s
12	Jerome d'Ambrosio (B)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-2	+26.723s
13	Edoardo Mortara (I)	Venturi / Venturi VM200-FE-03	+29.937s
14	Alex Lynn (GB)	DS Virgin Racing / DS Virgin DSV-03	+43.112s
15	Mitch Evans (NZ)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-type 2	+43.989s
16	Nicolas Prost (F)	Renault e.dams / Renault Z.E.17	-1 lap
17	Ma Qing Hua (PRC)	NIO / NextEV NIO 003	-3 laps
R	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-type 2	32 laps-seatbelts
R	Tom Blomqvist (GB)	Andretti / Andretti ATEC-03	32 laps-withdrawn
R	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Andretti / Andretti ATEC-03	2 laps-software

Winner's average speed 65.031mph. Fastest lap di Grassi 1m02.367s, 68.865mph.

SUPERPOLE 1 Vergne 1m01.144s; 2 Bird 1m01.421s; 3 Lotterer 1m01.487s; 4 Engel 1m01.541s; 5 da Costa 1m02.805s.

QUALIFYING 1 Vergne 1m01.508s; 2 da Costa 1m01.563s; 3 Engel 1m01.756s; 4 Bird 1m01.771s; 5 Lotterer 1m01.818s; 6 di Grassi 1m01.823s; 7 d'Ambrosio 1m01.836s; 8 Buemi 1m01.837s; 9 Turvey 1m01.888s; 10 Lopez 1m01.902s; 11 Rosenqvist 1m02.012s; 12 Heidfeld 1m02.058s; 13 Prost 1m02.092s; 14 Evans 1m02.122s; 15 Abt 1m02.125s; 16 Lynn 1m02.139s; 17 Blomqvist 1m02.823s; 18 Mortara 1m02.834s; 19 Ma 1m02.998s; 20 Piquet no time.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Vergne 147; 2 Bird 116; 3 Rosenqvist 86; 4 Buemi 70; 5 di Grassi 58; 6 Abt 56; 7 Piquet 45; 8 Evans 43; 9 Lotterer 41; 10 Turvey 34.



Tanak in a class of his own

Tweaks to the Toyota Yaris helped Ott Tanak stamp his authority on the WRC field in Argentina

DAVID EVANS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN





There are various ways to say it. There's 'Ert' or 'Oy-T' or even 'Huyt'. But when Kris Meeke reached the end of the Las Bajas test on Friday afternoon, he cared nothing for pronunciation or enunciation. Running second, the time he most wanted to know about wasn't there on the board.

Before he'd even got his balaclava off, the Northern Irishman leaned out of the door of his Citroen and offered one word, sounding surprisingly like a London cabbie who'd been asked what was the opposite of cold.

"Ott?" shouted Meeke. "Where is he? What's his time?"

Going into the stage, Meeke had been just 3.1 seconds down on Tanak's Toyota and he knew any kind of issue would have played nicely into his hands. Unfortunately for Meeke, the Estonian's time simply hadn't been written on the board.

Tanak's Yaris was fastest. And 3.1s had become 11.7s. And that was just the start of it.

What we saw in South America was a masterclass from pre-event test to powerstage of how to run a rally. And how to dominate a round of the World Rally Championship. Tanak was brilliant. And so was Toyota Gazoo Racing.

Tanak's a tough character to read, with the perfect poker face rarely giving anything away. But there was no hiding his emotions at the end of the first stage proper on Friday morning. He was cross.

He'd clipped a rock on the inside of a right-hander, which had half-spun his Yaris WRC and left its nose kissing the inside bank. The problem — and the vast majority of the 23.8s dropped to fastest man Sebastien Ogier — came as he tried to get the car facing in the right direction. The Yaris is 4085mm long and Tanak had wedged it into a gap between two banks that seemed to measure 4086mm.

Just for a moment, the rest of the service park felt a false sense of security. What Toyota threat? Jari-Matti Latvala was third, Esapekka Lappi sixth and Tanak level with Craig Breen in ninth. Nothing to fear.

Fast forward 14 miles into the following

Amboy stage and reality was biting hard. Tanak had lifted the thick end of 10s out of Ogier, two cars ahead of him on the road. The Toyota threat was very real.

Or at least half of it was. Latvala's attack was undone by a sneaky rock lurking in the shadows. He whacked it, smashed his suspension and ripped an oil pipe out of the engine. The Finn took 25s finding a parking space, by which time the Toyota's dash lit up like a Christmas tree in an effort to convey the message that switching off might be a good idea. J-ML was out and a couple of Friday punctures finished Lappi's charge. It was down to Tanak.

Tanak's stage-three time rocketed him from ninth to third. Two stages later he was in the lead and he didn't look back.

Where had that Amboy pace come from? Had he been fueled by pure anger?

"No," he smiled. "Not anger. It was a good feeling. I have good confidence in the car. It's coming..."

Did he want to say more? Maybe. Actually, no. Not for now. "We have to concentrate."

Total domination of the dirt roads on Friday afternoon built a 22.7s lead and a demand for an explanation.

"The pre-event test in Sardinia was really important for us," said Tanak. "It went really well. Really well."

This is part of the game with Tanak. Like most drivers, information is on a need-to-know basis. But he knew we wouldn't be letting it rest there. With a wry smile he spilled at least some of the beans.

"You know since the start of the year I struggled a lot with the suspension," he said. "I was complaining quite a lot. Before this rally we had a big step with the development in this area. We have been trying to go softer and find more traction with a setting that suits these mountain roads. We found it."

We've seen these sort of suspension steps before, and what works down south around Santa Rosa doesn't necessarily follow on the Punilla Valley tracks out west on day two. Added to that, a day of baking early South American autumn



sunshine was expected to give way to torrential rain on Saturday. How would the Toyota stand up to that?

Certainly, Tanak's nearest rivals were adamant that a major change in the weather was their only hope. "If the fog comes in [Los] Gigantes then we could see some differences," said Meeke, who was second at the end of Friday. "And those differences could be measured in minutes, not seconds. I think that's about the only hope to try to catch him."

Three places behind Meeke after supping from the championship leader's poisoned chalice at the front of the field was Ogier. He wasn't so sure about the weather theory. "I'm fighting for second place," he said. "Ott's gone."

The fog came — more of that later — but the rain stayed away and the story stayed the same. Tanak was fastest on five of seven stages to take 46.5s into the final day. Tanak was on another planet and taking time for fun.

Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen knows a thing or two about what it takes to win in this part of the world. For three years, between 1996 and '98, he was unbeatable down these roads.

"I remember when everything is working as a driver, it comes almost easily and you can control everything," he said. "He obviously understands really well the way to drive the car — the package is on a very high level right now. I think





Tanak (right) celebrates dominant victory with co-driver Martin Jarveoja

VARIED FORTUNES OF THE FLEDGLING FINNS

Esapekka Lappi found a new face in Finland. It was an entirely impassive, ask-me-a-question-the-answer's-the-same middle-distance stare. "Puncture". That was the one-word answer.

The Toyota driver had three of them. One was enough to ruin his rally. One of three factory-employed Finns coming here for the first time, Lappi (below) talked the talk of looking for experience and readying himself to come back for a more spirited charge in 12 months' time. Then the rally started. He moved from sixth to fourth and looked comfortable on Friday morning until that first deflation, which dropped him back to eighth and left his chin on the floor.

It stayed there for the rest of the rally. There was a brief moment on Sunday morning – as he ventured out to the wild west and the epic El Condor stage – when he cheered up. Then his Toyota got another puncture.

Lappi's fellow Finn, M-Sport Ford's Teemu Suninen, was short of the Yaris man's pace, but he picked up plenty of experience on his first time on these stages. And, most importantly, he did so by following team principal Malcolm Wilson's advice on making the finish. Wilson had warned Suninen that if he put the Fiesta WRC off on the final day, he should return ready for a rollicking. Rather amusingly, Teemu asked if he could get the rollicking over breakfast, then if he went off he could go straight to the airport...

And then there was Finn #3, Skoda's 17-year-old sensation Kalle Rovanpera. Like his older countrymen, Harri's boy was here to learn. If rally fans have learned anything in the past few years, it's that Jr's not only very quick, but he's also a very quick learner.

Rovanpera binned Skoda's script about team-mate Pontus Tidemand waltzing to another WRC2 win. He got up in his face and led the class from Saturday afternoon until he rolled his Fabia R5 over a tent and into a car park on Mina Clavero.

Lessons learned...



"We've been working hard on gaining traction while not compromising in the faster places"

he can control the game now."

Makinen paused and leaned in, almost conspiratorially. "Look at the way he's making the fastest times on every stage. It's so consistent. When you are fighting like hell, the performance can go up and down. Not here. Not with him – Ott is on the edge of the risk, but on top of the performance and his times are very, very stable. How do we say this? Good things have been welded together between driver and car."

But what about this suspension step, Tommi? "It's not such a big thing," he said. "We worked with what we've got."

Rather more insight was on offer from the man who knows the most about this rocketship Yaris, technical director Tom Fowler. "It's no secret that the Toyota is working well in the stages where the average speed is very high," he said. "That's related to our traction."

Translation: the Yaris has been crying out for more traction on low-grip events.

But finding it without compromising that speed in the quick stuff is where people like Fowler earn their wage.

"One of the biggest challenges in the whole car is that balance," he explained. "If you make the car very soft you will have traction, but it doesn't feel stable. This is where it becomes quite driver-specific: some drivers tolerate much more instability in the fast places to get that traction out of slow corners, and they don't lose any confidence when the car is moving about at high speed. Other drivers take that same philosophy, make good time at slow speed, but then they lose it when they don't have enough confidence when the car is moving around turning in to corners at high speed.

"Finding that balance is the magic ticket. We've been working hard on gaining traction while not compromising ourselves in the faster places. Getting the two things is tricky, but that's what we've worked on and have delivered for here.

"We haven't homologated anything new on the suspension: the inserts on the struts are all the same parts [we've run all season]. But the valving inside [the damper] is free from homologation and that's what we've changed here: the shims, pistons and all the pieces outside of homologation. It's more of a set-up change than a development really."

A set-up change that carried a car into the sweetest of sweet spots and a driver into the deepest of purple patches. >>



Neuville took second
but had no answer
to Tanak's pace

Sunday's three stages aside – where Tanak had no need to risk anything – the only place he reckoned he had lifted off was in Saturday's two foggy stages. Yet still, across the pair, he whipped 10s out of the best of the rest.

And that's possibly the greatest testament to a driver full of confidence and never more comfortable than sitting where he was sitting last week. Even when he couldn't see, he knew where he was going. He knew everything was going to be all right.

The same couldn't be said for everybody else when the roads rose into the hills and the mist descended. In preparation for the fog, Andreas Mikkelsen asked the Hyundai team to configure a specific page on the small screen that sits behind the steering

wheel usually telling him which gear he's in. On Saturday he wanted it to count metres for him. When co-driver Anders Jaeger called a note with, for example, a 400-metre straight, Mikkelsen hit a button and the trip started counting. While the Norwegian couldn't see the corner, he had a good idea when to brake and turn in.

"It was working well," he said, "but then it was a bit late and we were in sixth gear when a corner came out of nowhere. This was not a nice feeling! We ran wide, hit a bank and knocked the tyre off the rim. And then in the next stage, the page with the trip on disappeared from the screen and I couldn't get it back. I didn't enjoy the fog at all."

He wasn't alone. There was something of a running joke in Argentina that the

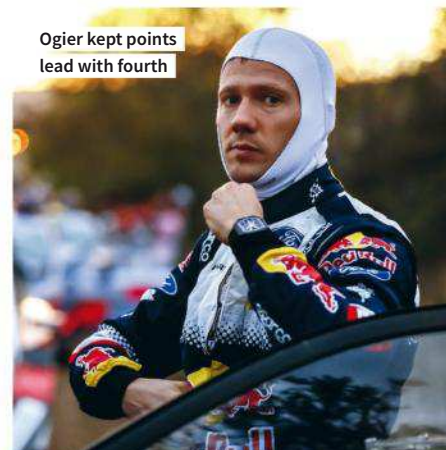
Brits had a better idea than most about driving in fog. Meeke laughed. "It's nothing like at home," he said. "At home you have some reference in the fog; you'll have trees, ditches, something. Here you're on the top of a mountain and there's absolutely nothing, no reference at all."

"To drive a 400bhp rally car with a load of aerodynamics and you can't see the end of the bonnet is quite tricky. OK, you could see 20 metres, but when you're doing 180km/h [110mph] that's very little. To be honest, it feels stupid, it feels wrong, it's unnatural, but you just keep telling yourself, 'Keep the foot down, keep going...'

"All that's in your head at times like that is surviving and getting to the end of the stage. It's unreal to be turning into corners at 100mph when you can't even



Breen's return
did not go well



Ogier kept points
lead with fourth

see the corner coming.”

Meeke's team-mate Breen was the highest-profile victim of the fog. Slightly disorientated turning into a right-hander over a crest, he turned in too much, dialled the steering out and was spat into a ditch and a sixth-gear roll. A damaged rollcage meant he would play no part in the event's second half. This wasn't what the Irishman had been dreaming about for the previous eight weeks, while Sebastien Loeb had been in *his* car.

What he had been dreaming about came on Sunday. The world's most iconic – and technically tricky and demanding – stages. El Condor and Mina Clavero run through the very heart of Rally Argentina and the near-million-strong crowd of fans who follow it every year.

Being among the thousands of

“To drive a 400bhp rally car and you can't see the end of the bonnet is quite tricky”

Argentinians who had camped out for two or three nights to bag the best spot was a humbling experience. It's worth pointing out that Autosport hadn't done any camping – one of the great privileges of the job is the stickers that adorn a hack's rental car, allowing it to pass police roadblocks with a cheery wave.

Arrival shortly after sunrise was followed by a tiptoe through the tents that had been set up between the rocky outcrops. Seeing bleary-eyed fans emerging from their slumber to pour themselves a Fernet Branca for breakfast was a sight to behold. As were the condors that soared overhead enjoying some early morning thermals as the sun warmed the air around the 2000-metre peaks.

But the birds and the booze were soon forgotten when the first car arrived. The place erupted into a wall of noise, cheers and seemingly endless chants of ‘Arrrrrgentiina’. The atmosphere, like the view, was out of this world.

You'd like to think that the biggest cheer came for Tanak, the master of this world we'd all come to appreciate. But the noise never changed. It was just as loud for everybody.

One thing Tanak had done was give the headline writers at *La Voz*, Cordoba's local newspaper, something to think about. Saturday morning's front page proclaimed: ‘un rally muy ajustado’.

They got that wrong. This was anything but a very tight rally. 🏆

RESULTS ROUND 5/13, RALLY ARGENTINA, APRIL 26-29

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Ott Tanak (EST) Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	3h43m28.9s
2	Thierry Neuville (B) Nicolas Gilsoul (B)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+37.7s
3	Dani Sordo (E) Carlos del Barrio (E)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m15.7s
4	Sebastien Ogier (F) Julien Ingrassia (F)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m58.6s
5	Andreas Mikkelsen (N) Anders Jager (N)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2m02.6s
6	Elfyn Evans (GB) Daniel Barritt (GB)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+3m06.3s
7	Kris Meeke (GB) Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	+3m25.7s
8	Esapekka Lappi (FIN) Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+4m32.6s
9	Teemu Suninen (FIN) Mikko Markkula (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+5m38.6s
10	Pontus Tidemand (S) Jonas Andersson (S)	Skoda Motorsport / Skoda Fabia R5	+12m15.8s
OTHERS			
14	Khalid Al-Qassimi (UAE) Chris Patterson (GB)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	+21m18.3s
R	Craig Breen (IRL) Scott Martin (GB)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	SS13-accident
R	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN) Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	SS3-suspension/engine

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ogier 100; 2 Neuville 90; 3 Tanak 72; 4 Mikkelsen 54; 5 Sordo 45; 6 Meeke 43; 7 Lappi 40; 8 Latvala 31; 9 Evans 26; 10 Breen 20.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 144; 2 M-Sport Ford WRT 129; 3 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 124; 4 Citroen Total 93.



STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 SSS Ciudad de Cordoba (1.18 miles)	Neuville 1m54.4s	Neuville	Tanak +0.3s
SS2 Las Bajadas / Villa del Dique 1 (10.35 miles)	Ogier 8m55.7s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +4.0s
SS3 Amboy / Yacanto 1 (20.87 miles)	Tanak 19m19.9s	Mikkelsen	Ogier +3.6s
SS4 Santa Rosa / San Agustin 1 (14.82 miles)	Tanak 13m42.6s	Mikkelsen	Tanak +1.0s
SS5 SSS Fernet Branca 1 (2 Laps) (3.75 miles)	Sordo 4m42.0s	Tanak	Mikkelsen +0.8s
SS6 Las Bajadas / Villa del Dique 2 (10.35 miles)	Tanak 8m43.4s	Tanak	Meeke +11.7s
SS7 Amboy / Yacanto 2 (20.87 miles)	Tanak 19m18.7s	Tanak	Meeke +16.8s
SS8 Santa Rosa / San Agustin 2 (14.82 miles)	Tanak 13m35.0s	Tanak	Meeke +22.7s
SS9 Tanti-Mataderos 1 (8.65 miles)	Tanak 9m00.1s	Tanak	Meeke +26.5s
SS10 Los Gigantes-Cuchilla Nevada 1 (9.95 miles)	Tanak 8m16.7s	Tanak	Meeke +34.0s
SS11 Cuchilla Nevada-Rio Pintos 1 (25.15 miles)	Tanak 24m31.0s	Tanak	Neuville +43.1s
SS12 SSS Fernet Branca 2 (2 Laps) (3.75 miles)	Neuville 4m40.8s	Tanak	Neuville +42.2s
SS13 Tanti-Mataderos 2 (8.65 miles)	Tanak 8m59.9s	Tanak	Neuville +44.4s
SS14 Los Gigantes-Cuchilla Nevada 2 (9.95 miles)	Tanak 8m15.5s	Tanak	Neuville +46.5s
SS15 Cuchilla Nevada-Rio Pintos 2 (25.15 miles)	Sordo 24m03.0s	Tanak	Neuville +46.5s
SS16 Copina-El Condor (10.21 miles)	Mikkelsen 13m09.5s	Tanak	Neuville +49.0s
SS17 Giulio Cesare-Mina Clavero (13.92 miles)	Neuville 18m31.3s	Tanak	Neuville +40.9s
SS18 El Condor (Power Stage) (10.21 miles)	Neuville 13m00.8s	Tanak	Neuville +37.7s





Cook and Vauxhall make their point

Power Maxed Racing and Josh Cook delivered on their promise with a peerless points tally and a jump to third in the title chase

MATT JAMES

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP/LAT IMAGES

At the start of the 2018 British Touring Car Championship campaign, Power Maxed Racing boss Adam Weaver said that he wanted his Vauxhall Astras to win races on genuine pace to show what a threat they had become.

The team had sampled podiums before, but that didn't bother him. He wanted a non-reversed-grid win. At Brands Hatch's opening round three weeks ago, he got one when Senna Proctor claimed victory in race two. But the wet-but-drying nature of that topsy-turvy race had left him yet to be fully satisfied.

After race one at Donington last Sunday Weaver was beaming, and so was driver Josh Cook, who had powered from his maiden BTCC pole on Saturday to victory in the opener, and then backed that up with a narrow second place in the weekend's finale. Tom Ingram took his Speedworks Toyota Avensis to a well-thought-out win in race two, while Adam Morgan turned up

the heat in race three with scorching pace in his Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes A-Class to prevail.

Cook's form in the second event of the year was devastating. He walked away having scored 48 points over the three races, which was 14 more than any other driver, pushing him up to third in the title race.

Cook, now in his fourth season of the BTCC, feels the breakthrough has been a long time coming. "It's a lot easier when the car is as good as it has been," he said. "It was this good at Brands, but we were unlucky. We set the fastest lap [in race one], so that showed the promise, but it just didn't happen. I was pretty comfortable coming to Donington Park though. I like the circuit and we've done well here in the past."

Not even Cook could have expected the points avalanche that was coming his way. The pace was genuine from the damp qualifying session to the dry-but-freezing races on Sunday. The Bath racer says that

it is his relationship with the Astra – a car only designed last season – that has helped him take the next step as a driver.

"The car reacts to changes the way that we expect," he explained. "When I ask for a bit more from it in the areas that I would like, it responds in a way that some of the other cars I have driven don't. I can muscle this car the way I like it. The weight transfer is strong and these are all signs it's a well-put-together car."

"Also, I still have the same engineer I had when I came to the BTCC – Mick Cook [unrelated] – and that continuity means that when we have a bit of an issue, we can draw on our experience."

"Everywhere we went testing, we weren't worried about the times, we just pounded around. We did all the changes that we wanted to. We wanted to know what every change would do – we came away from some places a second off the pace, but happy that we had learned a lot, and we've reaped the rewards of that now."



The rewards mean he is a real title threat, just 15 points from the summit. But Cook isn't letting himself get carried away: "We've had one good weekend but I'm not overwhelmed. I'm here to look for the title. That's why the team and I live. People are saying, 'Why aren't you smiling? Why aren't you happy?' I am happy – but it's on to the next one. We can be pleased with what we've done here, but I'm already thinking about [the next round at] Thruxton."

Ingram's race-two win was a product of an increased tactical nous from both him and the Speedworks Motorsport team. One of the big talking points at Donington was tyres and how they would be used. The option tyre was the harder version of the covers, and the very low temperatures all weekend meant that those saddled with them could expect to lose out to rivals on the prime rubber.

With that in mind, and coming to Donington as title leader with 75kg of ballast, Ingram's plan was to take the hit in race one when the Toyota was fully loaded, and then fly with a lighter car over the next two races. It worked beautifully.

A truncated qualifying session left him in 16th spot, and he could only inch forward to 14th in the opener. Then he picked his way to the front in race two as heavier cars and those on the harder rubber wilted. He finally performed a sublime pass on Chris Smiley's BTC Norlin Honda to wrest the top spot.

"We knew that the car, with no weight on, flies, so that was all part of the plan," said Ingram. "The traction from apex to corner exit is just unreal, and it was that ability that helped me get a run on Smiley to pass him. It worked perfectly."

Weight was back on the car for race >>

WOE FOR BMW TRIO

It's hard to have imagined a worse weekend for WSR and its trio of drivers Colin Turkington, Andrew Jordan and Rob Collard. The first problem for WSR was the weather. The mixed conditions on Saturday were never suited to the rear-wheel-drive BMW 125i M Sports, which prefer either full-wet or full-dry asphalt. But it was Jordan's woes that were the worst, with a scavenge-pump failure on the turbo (below). When a replacement was fitted for qualifying, that broke too.

Turkington rescued some pride by qualifying 11th with a stellar lap given the circumstances, and took 10th in the opener despite being spun down the order halfway through. That was as good as it would get for him: in race two a water pump failed, which cooked the engine, and there was then a yet-to-be revealed engine issue in race three.

Collard's weekend was compromised by poor qualifying, and he set about building

for race three, where he claimed fourth, just ahead of Jordan. That was one glimmer of light for the crew.

Turkington was disconsolate afterwards. BMW has struggled at Donington before, but the Northern Irishman thought that last weekend could have been crucial.

"Maybe historically we haven't gone too well here, but now more than ever it's your bad weekends where you have to try to score well," explained Turkington. "You have to get something. You can't afford to have a write-off weekend any longer given how competitive it is. You always have to put something in the bag and we have to bounce back from this. We will work twice as hard."

Team boss Dick Bennetts was also carrying a frown as he walked out of the track. "We've had tiny component failures that have hit us hard this weekend," he said. "We're going to make sure that this never happens again."



three and Ingram performed a damage-limitation exercise for eighth, but that was enough for him to maintain his place at the top of the points table.

Ingram's strategy was copied by Jack Goff in the Eurotech Racing Honda Civic, which came to the event second in the points and carrying 66kg of ballast. But he felt he had blown the plan by over-performing in qualifying, and lined up sixth.

"We honestly thought we would struggle more," he said. "Sixth was a shock, but we'd opted for the harder tyres. Maybe we gave away some points there..."

Goff dropped to 13th in race one, and then shadowed Ingram up the order for third in race two. Things looked good, until he and Smiley went side-by-side for fifth in the early stages of race three. Goff was bumped wide onto the grass on the exit of the Old Hairpin, and the delay and subsequent damage to the car dropped him out of the points. It was a bitter pill to swallow.

Morgan was another who had his share of ups and downs. His day started with a down, then ended with a huge up. He qualified 13th for race one, but a clash with Ciceley team-mate Tom Oliphant left him skittering through the gravel and out of the points. But that pre-empted a tigerish climb to fifth in race two and a tense reversed-grid win in race three under pressure from Cook.

Morgan's father, Ciceley team principal Russell, said that the performance was a mark of work done on the car, and a new approach from the racer himself. "The engineers have made quite a radical change to the car over the winter," said Morgan Sr. "It's all in different springing and damper settings. It seems to work in the dry. We still have work to do in the wet, but we're a lot closer than where we used to be.

"The results were down to Adam too – he is making progress. I think he has that level of maturity now and he's understanding when he can and when he can't put his nose in. In race two, though, I was shutting my eyes at some of the moves he was pulling..."

That race-three win put Morgan second in the points, just seven away from Ingram.

Another standout racer last weekend was



Ingram played a smart game and kept his points lead

Smiley. He was on the pace from the moment the cars took to the track and he was very unlucky not to put his older-specification Honda Civic Type R, fitted with the bespoke Swindon engine, on pole. He was only robbed in the dying moments.

In race one, his front-row start was undone by the harder tyres and he was pleased to limit the damage to seventh place. Then, while the others were struggling with their rubber, he took control of race two from the works Honda of Dan Cammish, only to lose out to the flying Ingram. A more rash Smiley could have thrown it all away in search of his breakthrough result, but he settled for his first podium. Contact with Cammish in race three ended both of their races at the Craner Curves, but the right impression had been made.

"This is where we could have been if we'd had a more modern car than the one we had last year," said Smiley. "I didn't forget how to drive. We've worked hard on this programme. We've had a lot of tough days, and this is a good day.

"I had the hard tyres in race one and I knew I was in trouble. It never comes on and it never goes off. It's like driving on

a normal road tyre. But the car came alive in race two and then race three was just an unfortunate bit of contact. Without that, I should have been second or third. I was going forward.

"This is where we should be. We're not here to make up the numbers. I don't train five nights a week and I don't spend every penny I have to finish in 19th place. We want to be frontrunners."

Rookie Cammish is becoming a regular fixture at the front in his Team Dynamics Civic. He took a strong fourth in qualifying and pressed Cook in race one. Things got better in race two when he led until his hard tyres refused to grip, but he limited the pain to fourth. A crash in race three with Smiley was a blip, but he was still satisfied.

"Race two was arguably better than race one, where I finished second, with the way I drove," said Cammish. "I think people have looked at me and said, 'Will he get stuck in? Will he get his elbows out?' Yes, I will! I'm not here to be walked over, I've got to show I can get stuck in as well as anybody else and that's the only way I'll get any respect."

His team-mate Matt Neal had a patchy weekend, caught out in the truncated qualifying session. He nevertheless charged to sixth in race one, but a mixture of tyres and weight clipped his wings in the later events to limit him to just one more points finish, seventh in the finale.

While the WSR BMWs hit trouble (see page 43), the Subarus tried to uphold rear-wheel-drive honour. All three struggled with pace and handling, but reigning champion Ash Sutton again led the line. From 22nd on the grid, his march to 12th in race one set him up. Eighth in race two was a positive and put him in with a shout in race three, but the hard tyres meant that his spell in the lead was brief. He still took sixth and was the seventh highest scorer of the weekend. ❧



Morgan's pace was rewarded with win in finale

RESULTS ROUND 2/10, DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 29 RACE 1 (16 LAPS – 31.626 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Josh Cook (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	19m02.642s
2	Dan Cammish (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	+3.449s
3	Aiden Moffat (GB)	Laser Tools Racing / Mercedes A-Class	+5.520s
4	Brett Smith (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+6.105s
5	James Cole (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+11.642s
6	Matt Neal (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	+13.489s
7	Chris Smiley (GB)	BTC Norlin / Honda Civic Type R	+16.971s
8	Senna Proctor (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (27kg)	+17.176s
9	Tom Oliphant (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class	+17.995s
10	Colin Turkington (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport (33kg)	+18.464s
11	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+18.844s
12	Ash Sutton (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg (39kg)	+24.430s
13	Jack Goff (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R (66kg)	+24.568s
14	Tom Ingram (GB)	Speedworks / Toyota Avenis (75kg)	+25.090s
15	Rob Austin (GB)	HMS Racing / Alfa Romeo Giulietta (39kg)	+25.466s
16	Tom Boardman (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6	+25.896s
17	Jake Hill (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+32.319s
18	James Nash (GB)	BTC Norlin / Honda Civic Type R	+32.778s
19	Ollie Jackson (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon (21kg)	+33.948s
20	Bobby Thompson (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+34.207s
21	Andrew Jordan (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+34.209s
22	Rory Butcher (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6 (15kg)	+34.382s
23	Adam Morgan (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class (57kg)	+34.610s
24	Michael Caine (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+35.287s
25	Jason Plato (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	+36.096s
26	Josh Price (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	+36.791s
27	Mike Bushell (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC (9kg)	+44.410s
28	Sam Smelt (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon	+45.900s
29	Tom Chilton (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+55.721s
30	Stephen Jelley (GB)	Team Parker Racing / BMW 125i M Sport	-1 lap
31	Matt Simpson (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	-2 laps
R	Sam Tordoff (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	10 laps-electrics

Winner's average speed 99.64mph. **Fastest lap** Chilton 1m10.174s, 101.52mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Cook 1m19.816s; **2 Smiley** 1m19.846s; **3 Tordoff** 1m19.983s; **4 Cammish** 1m20.095s; **5 Moffat** 1m20.311s; **6 Goff** 1m20.338s; **7 Nash** 1m20.338s; **8 Chilton** 1m20.396s; **9 Smith** 1m20.481s; **10 Oliphant** 1m20.520s; **11 Turkington** 1m20.580s; **12 Cole** 1m20.615s; **13 Morgan** 1m20.617s; **14 Simpson** 1m20.665s; **15 Proctor** 1m20.685s; **16 Ingram** 1m20.718s; **17 Neal** 1m20.727s; **18 Smelt** 1m20.908s; **19 Butcher** 1m20.941s; **20 Austin** 1m20.981s; **21 Plato** 1m21.004s; **22 Sutton** 1m21.044s; **23 Jelley** 1m21.326s; **24 Thompson** 1m21.333s; **25 Collard** 1m21.361s; **26 Price** 1m21.396s; **27 Jackson** 1m21.482s; **28 Bushell** 1m21.538s; **29 Boardman** 1m22.072s; **30 Jordan** 1m22.322s; **31 Hill** 1m20.610s*; **32 Caine** no time. * excluded



Smiley's work is finally starting to pay off



Cook has leapt to third in the table

RACE 2 (16 LAPS – 31.626 MILES)

1 Ingram 19m08.525s; **2 Smiley** (27kg) +0.834s; **3 Goff** +3.484s; **4 Cammish** (66kg) +6.214s; **5 Morgan** +6.555s; **6 Cole** (39kg) +7.696s; **7 Cook** (75kg) +7.873s; **8 Sutton** +8.396s; **9 Butcher** +12.803s; **10 Chilton** +14.495s; **11 Tordoff** +15.164s; **12 Oliphant** (15kg) +16.515s; **13 Collard** +18.590s; **14 Smith** (48kg) +19.016s; **15 Moffat** (57kg) +21.024s; **16 Neal** (33kg) +21.306s; **17 Boardman** +21.748s; **18 Jordan** +24.417s; **19 Jelley** +24.603s; **20 Plato** +25.237s; **21 Austin** +25.699s; **22 Proctor** (21kg) +25.912s; **23 Hill** +26.517s; **24 Thompson** +27.001s; **25 Simpson** +27.545s; **26 Price** +28.659s; **27 Caine** +30.236s; **28 Bushell** +31.411s; **29 Jackson** +1m08.515s; **R Smelt** 8 laps-driveshaft; **R Turkington** (9kg) 8 laps-water system; **R Nash** 0 laps-engine. **Winner's average speed** 99.13mph. **Fastest lap** Morgan 1m10.160s, 101.54mph.

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1, but Proctor forced to start from back due to penalty for contact with Turkington in race one.

RACE 3 (19 LAPS – 37.563 MILES)

1 Morgan (39kg) 27m15.756s; **2 Cook** (27kg) +0.368s; **3 Moffat** +9.500s; **4 Collard** +10.023s; **5 Jordan** +10.266s; **6 Sutton** (21kg) +11.831s; **7 Neal** +12.109s; **8 Ingram** (75kg) +12.577s; **9 Chilton** (9kg) +14.932s; **10 Hill** +15.147s; **11 Austin** +18.694s; **12 Nash** +19.046s; **13 Butcher** (15kg) +19.513s; **14 Simpson** +22.747s; **15 Bushell** +24.411s; **16 Jackson** +25.453s; **17 Jelley** +25.647s; **18 Plato** +27.450s; **19 Caine** +28.110s; **20 Thompson** +28.497s; **21 Turkington** +29.002s; **22 Oliphant** +38.524s; **23 Goff** (57kg) +42.987s; **24 Smelt** +55.817s; **NC Smiley** (66kg) 15 laps-damage; **R Cammish** (48kg) 11 laps-accident damage; **R Boardman** 10 laps-spin; **R Proctor** 1 lap-accident damage; **R Cole** (33kg) 0 laps-spin; **R Tordoff** 0 laps-spin; **R Smith** 0 laps-spin; **R Price** 0 laps-accident damage. **Winner's average speed** 82.67mph. **Fastest lap** Morgan 1m10.242s, 101.42mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top nine reversed.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ingram 71; **2 Morgan** 64; **3 Cook** 56; **4 Goff** 55; **5 Sutton** 49; **6 Moffat** 45; **7 Cammish** 44; **8 Smiley** 33; **9 Austin** 32; **10 Turkington** 31.

He was denied on Saturday, but Russell starred on Sunday

HONE
LAT IMAGES

Russell finally breaks down the walls

FORMULA 2
BAKU (AZ)
APRIL 28-29
ROUND 2 / 12

Sixth. That's the championship position of arguably the fastest driver in the Formula 2 Championship this year. George Russell has been lightning quick, but the reigning GP3 champion has endured bad luck in spades.

Despite his best efforts, Baku wasn't the place for a full turnaround, but a heroic Sunday win could be the launchpad for it.

At the opening round in Bahrain, a failed start and a botched getaway – common phenomena thanks to the new-for-2018 F2 car's tricky clutch – wasted Russell's second place in qualifying, but there was hope in

Azerbaijan, with third on the grid for the feature race. The Mercedes Formula 1 junior must have started to believe that his season was finally on the correct track when his ART Grand Prix car jumped polesitter Alexander Albon's DAMS machine during the pitstop phase, but a crash for Roy Nissany at Turn 5 erased the King's Lynn driver's hard-earned five-second advantage.

As quickly as the turnaround in fortunes looked complete, it was over. McLaren junior Nyck de Vries threw his Prema Racing car down the inside of Russell at Turn 1 after the safety car restart but, like a shih tzu on laminate flooring, he had no grip and began to run wide. That forced Russell into evasive action, and at the same time Renault F1 protege Artem Markelov locked

up and divebombed into the runoff in a ball of smoke, serving up third place to the chasing hounds in kindly fashion.

That left Albon to pick up the pieces and take a step closer to a permanent deal with DAMS – which is apparently close, but in its current spec is on a race-by-race basis.

Albon still had work to do, harrying the back of Antonio Fuoco's Charouz Racing System car, the Czech team in its first season of F2. Fuoco claimed he could have won had Markelov's engine not detonated, leaving plumes of smoke from the Russian Time machine's expired flux capacitor. Fuoco was first on the scene and feared hitting the Russian through the smog clouding his vision, while Albon was able to watch, follow Fuoco's car and avoid trouble.

Incredibly, after being pushed into the pitlane following his startline stall, Russell's team-mate Jack Aitken also moved past Fuoco on the penultimate lap, the Brit making the most of the searing pace of the ART cars – plus help from the safety cars – to work his way up to a phenomenal finish.

Another epic comeback came from Albon's DAMS team-mate Nicholas Latifi, who won the wooden spoon for spinning on his final qualifying lap having not yet set a representative time. He dealt with the ego blow to recover to fifth, behind the Carlin car of Sergio Sette Camara.

Having lambasted de Vries for his miscue, Russell would surely be on a charge in the sprint race. But could he rebound to a decent position? The first lap would be key. And, from 12th on the grid, he was fifth as they crossed the line for the first time.





Fuoco led, until he drove into a smokescreen



De Vries redeemed himself for feature gaffe with sprint podium

Russell was helped in part by more cars stalling. The front-row-occupying MP Motorsport cars of Roberto Merhi (on pole) and Ralph Boschung were both slow away, leaving those behind to desperately avoid them on the run to Turn 1.

Russell was masterful. Every bit of frustrated energy expended, he fought his way past Latifi and Carlin's Lando Norris, who locked up at Turn 1 and fell backwards, and began hunting down Sette Camara. Like Fuoco in the feature race, Sette Camara would struggle at the front. His issue was a lock-up just past the halfway point, and a sea of purple on the timing screens from Russell was to be the Brazilian's undoing. It took two goes at Turn 1, but Russell was through and clear with three laps to go.

Sette Camara's second lap was taken away by the powers-that-be as he ran out of fuel not long after the chequered flag, leaving insufficient juice for a scrutineering sample. That meant de Vries was promoted to second – after an awkward conference in the pre-podium room with arch-rival Russell. And it promoted Latifi to a podium, completing a miraculous turnaround.

The weekend was tough for Norris, who fought back to fourth in the sprint. His brilliant Bahrain weekend seemed well in the past as his lock-up followed a stall in the feature race. But he still leads the championship over sprint-race staller Albon, by 14 points. Russell is 28 points behind, but if that luck changes he'll be back in the hunt in no time. He's a force to be reckoned with, and Baku proved it.

JACK BENYON

RESULTS BAKU (AZ), RACE 1 (29 LAPS – 108.108 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Alexander Albon (T)	DAMS	1h03m41.627s
2	Jack Aitken (GB)	ART Grand Prix	+1.992s
3	Antonio Fuoco (I)	Charouz Racing System	+2.958s
4	Sergio Sette Camara (BR)	Carlin	+5.846s
5	Nicholas Latifi (CDN)	DAMS	+7.099s
6	Lando Norris (GB)	Carlin	+7.612s
7	Ralph Boschung (CH)	MP Motorsport	+12.698s
8	Roberto Merhi (E)	MP Motorsport	+14.324s
9	Tadasuke Makino (J)	Russian Time	+15.619s
10	Sean Gelael (RI)	Prema Racing	+20.826s
11	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	Trident	+45.720s
12	George Russell (GB)	ART Grand Prix	+59.009s
13	Nirei Fukuzumi (J)	Arden International	+1m55.517s
R	Nyck de Vries (NL)	Prema Racing	24 laps-accident damage
R	Artem Markelov (RUS)	Russian Time	22 laps-engine
R	Roy Nissany (IL)	Campos Racing	17 laps-accident
R	Arjun Maini (IND)	Trident	7 laps-engine
R	Maximilian Gunther (D)	Arden International	6 laps-suspension
R	Luca Ghiotto (I)	Campos Racing	0 laps-accident
R	Louis Deletraz (CH)	Charouz Racing System	0 laps-accident damage

Winner's average speed 101.838mph Fastest lap Russell 1m56.385s, 115.378mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Albon 1m54.480s; 2 Norris 1m54.694s; 3 Russell 1m54.842s; 4 Ghiotto 1m54.980s; 5 Sette Camara 1m55.212s; 6 Aitken 1m55.236s; 7 Maini 1m55.474s; 8 de Vries 1m55.728s; 9 Boschung 1m55.761s; 10 Makino 1m56.139s; 11 Merhi 1m56.532s; 12 Fuoco 1m57.090s; 13 Deletraz 1m57.105s; 14 Gelael 1m57.508s; 15 Markelov 1m57.604s; 16 Nissany 2m01.902s; 17 Gunther 1m55.970s; 18 Fukuzumi 1m57.351s; 19 Ferrucci 1m55.200s; 20 Latifi 2m02.970s. * excluded from qualifying.

RACE 2 (21 LAPS – 78.267 MILES)

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1, with top eight finishers reversed.

1 Russell 41m32.101s; 2 de Vries +4.774s; 3 Latifi +5.016s; 4 Norris +5.842s; 5 Maini +13.606s; 6 Ferrucci +19.108s; 7 Merhi +22.391s; 8 Boschung +24.379s; 9 Makino +25.130s; 10 Deletraz +46.561s; 11 Aitken +1m20.531s; 12 Fukuzumi +1m27.942s; 13 Albon +1m33.104s; 14 Ghiotto -1 lap; 15 Gunther 18 laps-plastic bag; EX Sette Camara +2.604s; R Gelael 11 laps-accident; R Nissany 2 laps-mechanical; R Markelov 1 lap-no power; NS Fuoco-electrical. Winner's average speed 113.062mph. Fastest lap Aitken 1m56.774s, 114.994mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Norris 55; 2 Albon 41; 3 Sette Camara 40; 4 Markelov 30; 5 de Vries 28; 6 Russell 27; 7 Aitken 20; 8 Latifi 20; 9 Fuoco 17; 10 Gunther 16.



Latifi (left) and Aitken both starred on track, and on karaoke duet



The grand old man beats the local hero

WTCR
HUNGARORING (H)
APRIL 28-29
ROUND 2/10

Had Norbert Michélsz carried his one-lap pace advantage into either of the two World Touring Car Cup races he started from pole at the Hungaroring, the local hero would have won at a canter.

Michélsz spoke after Sunday's final race – his second defeat in the space of 24 hours – about no longer feeling the pressure of performing in front of his home fans and, even if there was an additional weight this year of being in Hyundai's much-fancied machinery, from the get-go he was head and shoulders clear of the rest in Hungary.

His first flying lap in practice? The fastest of FP1. His first lap in Saturday qualifying? Make that pole by quarter of a second. His shootout effort in Sunday qualifying? A full

0.442 seconds clear of the next best car.

But as impressive as those times were, the hard work behind them was all too easily undone. Race three offered Michélsz a shot at redemption, having been passed at the start of Saturday's first race. But he had a major force to fend off in Sunday's main event: team-mate Gabriele Tarquini.

Sure enough, Tarquini thrust his Hyundai 130 N ahead on the run to Turn 1 and held Michélsz at bay – and, to an extent, that was that. A pre-race agreement was in place at BRC Racing to protect whoever took the lead from attack – something Michélsz agreed with, although the message had to be reiterated to him in the early laps.

Michélsz did press Tarquini in the closing stages – the other side of a red-flag stoppage for rain to allow teams the option to change to wet-weather rubber, which proved pointless by the time the race restarted because the shower had since

dissipated – but there was no cracking the Italian, who claimed his third win (the first time he has achieved that feat in a World Touring Car season since 2010) from the first six races.

There was no Tarquini rocketship for Michélsz to contend with on Saturday. Instead, Esteban Guerrieri's Munnich Motorsport Honda proved just as potent as the Argentinian blasted into the lead. Guerrieri ran wide off the first corner, and Michélsz spotted an opportunity to retaliate before Turn 2, but that only served to drop him further back.

Braking late, Guerrieri ran deep (forcing Michélsz and Tarquini wide too) and left a perfect pocket for Yann Ehrlacher to drop his sister Munnich Civic into the lead, one he held for the remainder of the race. Guerrieri finished a close second, while Michélsz completed the podium after passing Yvan Muller's YMR Hyundai late on.

While Ehrlacher's win, which put him second in the points, was opportunistic, Rob Huff's reversed-grid race-two triumph was measured, as the Sebastien Loeb Racing man resisted the wildcard M1RA Hyundai of Daniel Nagy to score Volkswagen's first World Touring Car win. It was a textbook example of the consistent points-scoring the Briton needs to do while the Hyundais and Hondas shoot ahead up the road. It also means four brands have won from the first two rounds of 2018.

There was no headline result, then, for Michélsz on home soil, but once his starts become "consistent" a first WTCR win cannot be far away.

JACK COZENS



WEEKEND
WINNERS

WTCR

HUNGARORING

Race 1 Yann Ehrlacher

Munnich Motorsport
Honda Civic Type R TCR

Race 2 Rob Huff

Sebastien Loeb Racing
Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR

Race 3 Gabriele Tarquini

BRC Racing Team
Hyundai i30 N TCR

WRX

MONTALEGRE

Johan Kristoffersson

PSRX Volkswagen Sweden Volkswagen Polo R

NASCAR CUP

TALLADEGA

Joey Logano

Team Penske Ford Fusion

NASCAR XFINITY

TALLADEGA

Spencer Gallagher

GMS Racing Chevrolet Camaro

ADAC GT

MOST

Race 1 Jeffrey Schmidt/Stefan Mucke

Mucke Motorsport Audi R8 LMS

Race 2 Maximilian Gotz/Markus Pommer

HTP Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3

PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE

VIRGINIA INT'L RACEWAY

Race 1 Maxime Soulet/Rodrigo Baptista

K-PAX Racing Bentley Continental GT3

Race 2 Mike Skeen/Scott Heckert

Lone Star Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3

SUPER TC2000

MENDOZA

Facundo Arduso

Renault Sport Renault Fluence

BRC

PIRELLI INTERNATIONAL RALLY

Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod

M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5



Not very Portuguese
weather: no wonder a
Swede won the event

Kristoffersson is mint in Polo

WORLD RALLYCROSS

MONTALEGRE (P)

APRIL 28-29

ROUND 2/12

Johan Kristoffersson extended his championship lead by heading the snow-hit final in Portugal all the way for his second win of the season in his PSRX Volkswagen Sweden Polo Supercar.

Kristoffersson put himself on the front row for the final by making a crucial first-corner move on the EKS Audi Sport machines of Andreas Bakkerud and Mattias Ekstrom at the beginning of his semi-final. He then led the factory Peugeot of Timmy

Hansen in the final, before Hansen crashed into the Armco at the final corner on lap two.

Hansen's team-mate Sebastien Loeb was on the move, passing Bakkerud at the start of lap four to take second place. Bakkerud then took his joker lap, promoting Petter Solberg to third. This was a good recovery for Solberg, who had stalled at the start of his semi but recovered to qualify on the back row of the grid for the final.

Bakkerud was fourth ahead of the GC Competition Renault of Guerlain Chicherit, who put the Prodrive-built Megane into a final for the first time by overhauling Ekstrom in his semi-final.

HAL RIDGE

Logano bounces back for win

NASCAR CUP

TALLADEGA (USA)

APRIL 29

ROUND 10/36

Team Penske's Joey Logano ended a 364-day streak without a NASCAR Cup win as Ford continued its dominance of restrictor-plate racing at Talladega.

Not even forced last-minute changes to the restrictors following an airborne practice shunt for Jamie McMurray prevented the Blue Oval from controlling proceedings.

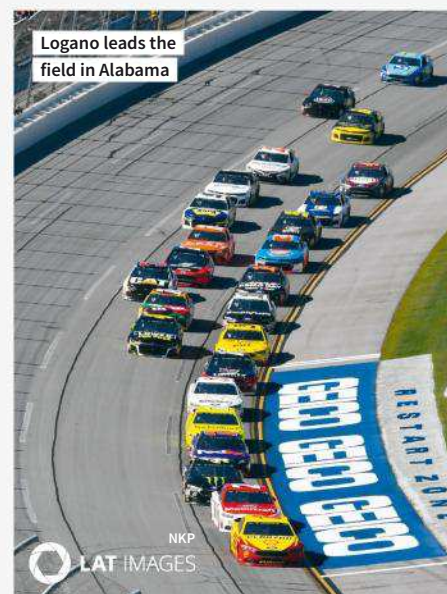
Logano and Penske had been consistent frontrunners in 2018 without reaching Victory Lane, and they started Talladega much the same way, with Logano running second in the first two stages. But he

charged to the lead on lap 139 of 188 and led a total of 70 laps to end a drought that stretched back to Richmond last year.

Stewart-Haas Racing, often Ford's benchmark in 2018, finished second through Kurt Busch. The 2004 Cup champion had to do it the hard way when his steering wheel was replaced, and he had communication problems before the pace laps.

Busch fell to a lap down and worked his way back through the pack, meaning Hendrick Motorsports driver Chase Elliott was third as the Chevrolet team continues to recover from a woeful start to the year.

Kevin Harvick salvaged fourth after starting on pole, while Kyle Busch and Martin Truex Jr crashed out, ending Busch's streak of three wins in a row.



Logano leads the field in Alabama

NKP
LAT IMAGES

INSIGHT

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW



WHY TOYOTA CAN'T BE BEATEN (EXCEPT BY ITSELF)

A convoluted system of checks is in place to make sure that the privateers can push the Japanese giant, but not quite get the edge

GARY WATKINS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP

Can Toyota be beaten by the new wave of privateers to enter the World Endurance Championship for the 2018-19 superseason? The answer has to be no – and not just because, as the only manufacturer still standing in LMP1, it has more resources, the best drivers, a higher level of organisation and a proven three-year-old design in the TS050 HYBRID.

P1 privateers running non-hybrid machinery were promised lap time parity with manufacturer hybrids when

the WEC and promoter the Automobile Club de l'Ouest outlined their bold vision for the future of the series last September. Saving LMP1 was an important tenet of the rescue package announced at the Mexico City round, which includes the 14-month superseason that straddles two editions of the Le Mans 24 Hours. Something had to be done to ensure the survival of the top class in the wake of Porsche's announcement that it was quitting P1.

The promise appeared to be that the privateers would be given whatever they needed to allow them to run at the >>



"TOYOTA KNEW IT HAD TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IF THE LMP1 CATEGORY WAS TO SURVIVE"

2018-19 WEC SUPERSEASON CALENDAR

2018

May 5	Spa (B)
June 16-17	Le Mans 24 Hours (F)
August 19	Silverstone (GB)
October 14	Fuji (J)
November 18	Shanghai (PRC)

2019

March 15	Sebring 1000 Miles (USA)
May 4	Spa (B)
June 15-16	Le Mans 24 Hours (F)



same pace as the Toyotas. What they wouldn't be allowed was to run so long on a tank of fuel. That wouldn't sit well with the fuel-flow formula, with its emphasis on efficiency, which is still at least meant to be at the heart of the P1 regulations.

It would be wrong to say that the WEC, the ACO and the FIA have reneged upon their promise. It would be more correct to say that they have been unable to deliver on it. They arguably made a promise they couldn't keep.

That's because Toyota was in a strong position when it came to negotiating the regulations for the superseason and the first WEC winter series in 2019-20. Not only was it the only manufacturer left in P1 after the withdrawals of first Audi and then Porsche, but it had FIA statutes on its side. Porsche's announcement that it was quitting P1 at the end of July came after the point at which the regulations could be unilaterally changed by the rulemakers. All changes had to be negotiated with – and accepted – by the existing competitors.

Toyota, of course, knew it had to make concessions if the category was to survive beyond the withdrawal of its two rivals from the past two seasons. "We understood that there was no point in having two cars running much faster than the others and running longer," says Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon. "Definitely we have agreed to have the non-hybrid cars a bit closer, but not at the same pace. Again, from our point of view, it doesn't make sense."

That's an admission from Toyota that it wasn't prepared to agree to lap time parity for privateers running to a different rulebook. Vasselon calls them "artificial competition".

It is important to remember that the Toyotas haven't been slowed for the coming season. It is also not entirely correct to say that the privateers have been sped up. The changes that should allow the indies to run close to the pace of the hybrids were actually put in place for last season. The more-efficient rear wing and the bigger front dive planes allowed for the privateers were announced in June 2016. That meant they came into force at the same time as changes for factory P1 machinery designed to slow them, or rather prevent a further tumbling of lap times in the class. The Porsche and Toyota had to work around new aero rules designed to rob them of 30% of downforce.



It was these regulations that encouraged SMP Racing with its BR Engineering spin-off organisation and Ginetta to start work on LMP1 projects for this season. They were long since in the works when the WEC made its bold promise last autumn.

Privateers are also not being given a higher rate of fuel flow – one of the major tools in increasing performance – than last year under the Equivalence of Technology. That's the grand title the rulemakers give to their attempts to balance hybrids and non-hybrids and, back in the old days, petrol P1s with Audi's turbodiesels.

The ByKolles team's Nissan-powered ENSO CLM P1/01, the only privateer car to compete in the WEC last season, was allowed 115kg of petrol per hour, whereas the figure for this year's series opener at Spa on Saturday is only 110kg/hour.

It appears that this was what Toyota was willing to accept. The lower figure is an admission that Dallara and ORECA, which have respectively designed and built the new BRE BR1 and the Rebellion R-13, are likely to do a better job than a minnow such as ByKolles. The rulemakers even privately admitted after the announcement of the 2017 rules package that they may have to slow the indies should someone really get their teeth into the regulations.

Toyota has made sure it still has an advantage. Exactly how much of one isn't clear, because it isn't in the public domain. Some say it

TEAM BY TEAM LMP1

REBELLION RACING

Rebellion-Gibson R-13

#1 Andre Lotterer/Neel Jani/Bruno Senna

#3 Mathias Beche/Thomas Laurent/Gustavo Menezes

The Anglo-Swiss team, which is heading back to P1 after a title-winning season in LMP2 in 2017, appears to be the least prepared of the privateers on paper. Yet the first of its new ORECA-built R-13s performed impressively on what was effectively a shakedown at the official WEC test at Paul Ricard. The car, powered by the Gibson normally-aspirated V8, had only completed a handful of miles earlier in the week, yet ran largely without problems over more than 100 laps and ended up a close second in the privateer times in the hands of Lotterer.

BYKOLLES RACING TEAM

ENSO CLM-NISMO P1/01

#4 Oliver Webb/Tom Dillmann*/Dominik Kraihamer*

*Spa only

The form of the German-based ByKolles squad at the Ricard WEC test suggests that its decision to duck out of the second half of last year's championship in favour of test and development was the correct one.



is half a second per lap, measured over the 8.47 miles of the Le Mans circuit, others that it's 0.5%, which equates to a second if you work on the basis of a 3m20s race lap. The TS050s will also have an advantage in the pits. The diameter of the refuelling restrictors should mean the Toyotas should be stationary for five seconds less than the privateer cars.

But Toyota has made a concession. A massive one. It has agreed to a dramatic cut in the amount of petrol it can use over a stint. Last year at Spa it could use 44.1kg, this year only 35.1kg. The TS050 could go 14 laps between stops at Le Mans. The intention is that it will now do 11-lap stints in the 24 Hours, which will give it a one-lap advantage over the non-hybrids. For Spa, which is roughly half the length of the Le Mans, that will be two laps, so expect 19 laps for Toyotas and 17 laps for the chasing pack. The changes made to the EoT last week were to ensure this margin.

Add Toyota's advantage out on the track to less time spent in the pits, and it's difficult to see how the privateers can compete. Unless, of course, the sole manufacturer left in P1 runs into problems. "We can't beat the factories on pace," says 2016 WEC champion Neel Jani, who has returned to the Rebellion Racing fold for the coming season. "Our job is to be there or thereabouts so that we can profit if Toyota chokes." ❧

The 2018 version of the ENSO CLM design, now with revised aerodynamics and an upgraded version of the Nissan twin-turbo V6, completed more laps than any of its non-hybrid rivals and ended up within eight tenths of the privateer pace. And the car's time stood as the quickest by an indie when Dillmann posted it.

CEFC TRSM RACING

Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1

#5 Charlie Robertson/Dean Stoneman*/Leo Roussel*

#6 Oliver Rowland/Alex Brundle/Oliver Turvey

*Spa & Le Mans only

The Manor squad, which after two years in LMP2 has graduated to P1 with two cars in what is a close tie-up with Ginetta, brought up the rear of the privateer pack at Ricard. The team arrived with only two proper tests – both at Motorland Aragon – under its belt and an unfinished second car, but there was cause for optimism. The quickest Ginetta lap from Williams F1 protege Rowland may have been more than a second and a half off the privateer pace, but it was posted on day two when the conditions were at their least favourable.

TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Toyota TS050 HYBRID

#7 Kamui Kobayashi/Mike Conway/Jose Maria Lopez

#8 Fernando Alonso/Sebastien Buemi/Kazuki Nakajima

Toyota returns with a mildly tweaked version of the TS050 HYBRID that was the class of the WEC field at the close of last year – it notched up an end-of-season hat-trick to outscore Porsche five-four in race victories. That hasn't stopped it undertaking the kind of extensive pre-season testing programme that the privateers can only dream of, though it has largely been focused on simulating the unexpected niggles that could derail its bid for a belated first Le Mans victory. There's also a new cooling system and, of course, the signing of a rather big name in Alonso.

DRAGONSPEED

BR Engineering-Gibson BR1

#10 Ben Hanley/Henrik Hedman/Renger van der Zande/Pietro Fittipaldi*

*Spa & Fuji only

DragonSpeed, a US team based in France, expands into P1 for its first full season in the WEC after two years in the ELMS, in which it was a race winner in its first year and champion (under the G-Drive banner) in its second. It runs the first customer BRE chassis, though it has opted for the Gibson V8 rather than the AER turbo of the works SMP entries. That explains its late arrival on the test track. The team managed a brief shakedown prior to Ricard, where it was in the mix if not quite on the pace.

SMP RACING

BR Engineering-AER BR1

#11 Mikhail Aleshin/Vitaly Petrov/Jenson Button*

#17 Stephane Sarrazin/Egor Orudzhev/Matevos Isaakyan

*will miss Spa

Russian entrant SMP appears to be the best prepared of the privateers after running its Dallara-built BR1 for the first time last October, though it did receive a setback with a shunt in testing in November. It showed well at Ricard: the two cars, run by the ART GP squad that formerly raced in the DTM with Mercedes, completed more than 200 laps between them and ended up first and third privateers. That backs up its claims that the AER turbo engine, which proved problematic in the ENSO CLM and the Rebellion R-One in 2014-16, has been running without issue.

MALDONADO MAKES HIS COMEBACK

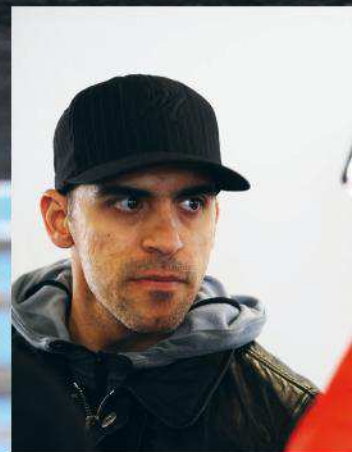
*DragonSpeed has underlined its championship ambitions by luring
the 2012 Spanish Grand Prix winner back to racing*

GARY WATKINS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



DragonSpeed is
expected to be
a title contender



You may remember Elton Julian as a race winner from the British Formula 3 Championship in 1992 who suddenly reappeared in the mid-2000s as a jobbing sportscar racer. But if his efforts over the winter are anything to go by, his fame as a team owner could soon surpass his credits as a driver.

An Ecuadorian brought up in the United States, who established his DragonSpeed squad as long ago as 2008, Julian has put together a line-up around sometime Champ Car driver Roberto Gonzalez that could challenge for the LMP2 title in the team's first full-season campaign in the World Endurance Championship. He has recruited a grand prix winner in Pastor Maldonado and a former WEC champion in Anthony Davidson to drive DragonSpeed's ORECA-Gibson 07, and he also had another ex-Formula 1 driver in his line-up at one point. Overalls had been ordered for Esteban Gutierrez — the deal was that far down the line.

The presence of Maldonado and Davidson — as well as the near-miss with Gutierrez — in the DragonSpeed line-up resulted from what Julian calls “a bit of creative thinking”.

“If you look at the obvious candidates, the established stars of P2 like Nicolas Lapierre aren't available,” says Julian of the 2016 WEC P2 champion, who is very much an established part of the Signatech Alpine squad's line-up. “Clashes with IMSA in North America ruled out a lot of others too. Roberto wanted to make a real effort on the championship and we wanted to follow up on our European Le Mans Series title last year [under the G-Drive Racing banner], so I had to think outside the box.”

A mutual friend had put Julian in contact with Maldonado a couple of years ago, and he had already tried to pique the Venezuelan's interest in sportscar racing.

“I asked him if he wanted to come back to racing and have some fun,” says Julian. “The first occasion I asked, the time wasn't right. Now it is. He's over Formula 1 and is ready to go.”

Maldonado explains that he wanted to back off a little and draw breath after his two-year stint with Lotus finished at the end of 2015. His only time in a racing car between then and now came with some Pirelli tyre testing in 2016.

“I wanted to spend more time with my family,” he says. “I've had a second child, so I was involved in another championship, the nappy-changing championship. I needed everything settled at home before I started looking around for other experiences and thinking about coming back to racing.”

Maldonado didn't get his first taste of an LMP2 car until the official pre-season WEC test at Paul Ricard last month. He was immediately impressed by the package and quickly jumped to the top of the timesheets with a series of rapid laps, the fastest of which stood as the best in P2 from the two days. “I was actually surprised by the performance,” he continues. “The power is good and it's a very well-balanced combination.”

Maldonado is happy to be in P2 right now, though he does admit to LMP1 aspirations: “I have the right experience for P1, but there are a lot of differences between the packages. This is a good place to start.”

That's why he's excited about the prospect of Davidson joining the team in the wake of the Le Mans 24 Hours after experienced P2 hand Nathanael Berthon fills in for two races. “Anthony can help me learn, and we can both help Roberto, our silver driver, learn,” says Maldonado. “Our job is to help him be the best silver on track. I'd say it's all looking quite promising.”

Toyota LMP1 test and reserve driver Davidson is also enthusiastic about his LMP2 opportunity, describing Julian as a “can-do” team boss. Which is why we may be hearing a lot more about DragonSpeed in the years to come. ✎



TEAM BY TEAM LMP2



TDS RACING

ORECA-Gibson 07

#28 Loic Duval/Matthieu Vaxiviere/Francois Perrodo

A team that has twice been a runner-up in its class at Le Mans is back for its second full WEC season with a single car (its entry under the G-Drive banner races only at Spa and Le Mans). Duval comes in as amateur Perrodo looks to step up the team's game.

RACING TEAM NEDERLAND

Dallara-Gibson P217

#29 Jan Lammers/Giedo van der Garde/

Frits van Eerd/Nyck de Vries

The all-Dutch team, run by former Racing for Holland technical chief Davy Lemmens, has recruited ex-F1 driver van der Garde for its move from the ELMS. Lammers will step down after making his 24th start in the 24 Hours to be replaced by F2 frontrunner de Vries.

DRAGONSPEED

ORECA-Gibson 07

#31 Pastor Maldonado/Roberto Gonzalez/Anthony Davidson/Nathanael Berthon

An American entrant with workshops in France doubles up in LMP1 and P2 after moving up to the prototype ranks in the ELMS two years ago. The driver line-up is proof of the aspirations of a team that will be running on Michelin rather than the benchmark Dunlops.

SIGNATECH ALPINE MATMUT

ORECA-Gibson 07

#36 Nicolas Lapierre/Andre Negrao/Pierre Thiriet

Signatech, winner of the WEC P2 crown in 2016, returns with its Alpine-badged ORECA chassis. Former Toyota driver Lapierre heads a line-up completed by Negrao, one of his team-mates in the second half of 2017, and respectably quick amateur Thiriet.

JACKIE CHAN DC RACING

ORECA-Gibson 07

#37 Jazeman Jaafar/Nabil Jeffri/Weiron Tan

#38 Ho-Pin Tung/Gabriel Aubry/Stephane Richelmi

The Jota-run DC squad that bears allegiance to Hollywood star Chan again fields two cars as it bids to improve on second in class last year. Formula Renault graduate Aubry is the team's new 'secret silver', while the all-Malaysian line-up gives the team two strong cars this time.

LARBRE COMPETITION

Ligier-Gibson JSP217

#50 Erwin Creed/Romano Ricci/Julien Canal

Larbre, best known for its successes in the GT ranks with multiple Le Mans class victories and championship wins in the LMS and FIA GTs, is making a rare foray into the prototype division. Full-season drivers Creed and Ricci are joined by Canal for Spa-Francorchamps.

FINALLY BACK ON THE WORLD STAGE

BMW believes the time is right for a return to world championship sportscar racing as a key element of its long-term motorsport plans

GARY WATKINS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



M8 will battle showroom
rivals from Porsche
and Aston Martin...

BMW is making a belated return to world championship sportscar racing this season. You have to go back 40-odd years to its short-lived campaigns in the World Championship for Makes with a variety of Group 5 machinery to find the direct predecessor of its new-for-2018 programme with the M8 GTE.

That's not counting its time racing in the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup, the precursor of the WEC, with the E92-shape M3 GT, which incorporated BMW's most recent forays at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2010 and '11. Even if you do, it's been a long road back to the forefront of international sportscar racing for BMW, which is making a full-factory entry in the 2018-19 WEC with a pair of GTE Pro entries run by the MTEK squad.

The V8-engined Z4 GTE, which was already in the works when the WEC was reborn in 2012, wasn't deemed suitable for the demands of the circuits that made up the world series, most pertinently the Circuit de la Sarthe at Le Mans. That's why its exploits were largely confined to the American Le Mans Series and then the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

"The Z4 was far away from being an ideal base for a race car," says BMW Motorsport boss Jens Marquardt. "To really make a low-drag, high-speed package out of that car was impossible. To have a car that is not competitive in the major event and only reasonably competitive in some of the other events didn't make sense."

But BMW might have been racing in the WEC much earlier. Had the drive for so-called convergence, a coming-together of the GTE and GT3 rulebooks, been successful, BMW would probably now be entering its third season in the series. It didn't happen, and BMW developed a car out of its M6 GT3 that was accommodated by IMSA to enable the make's long-running North American sportscar programme to continue through 2016 and '17.

"If convergence had happened we would have had a car in the M6 that would have run in GTE and GT3 and our programme would have looked very different," suggests Marquardt. "That is the easy explanation of why we were not present at Le Mans for some period of time."

Now the time is right, with the arrival of a new 8-Series this year. "The M8 is exactly the right car for us because it will go up against the Porsche 911 and the Aston Martin Vantage in the marketplace," says Marquardt. "The WEC is the right environment for this car to go up against this opposition on the racetrack."

Marquardt makes a comparison between the M8 and the mid-engined M1 of the late-1970s, a car whose 40th birthday BMW is celebrating this year. But producing some kind of super-sportscar akin to the M1 of old or the modern-day Ford GT, against which the M8 is racing this year in the WEC and in IMSA, was never on the agenda for the German manufacturer. "BMW is not the type of company right now that



...but turning it into an effective racing car was a big challenge, says Marquardt



Z4 (pictured here at the 2015 Petit Le Mans) was not suited to the rigours of the WEC

would build a prototype for racing and then try to create out of it a street car to be built in very limited numbers," reckons Marquardt.

That means BMW has taken on a greater challenge than its rivals in turning a mass-production car into a GTE racer capable of competing with the Ford, the Aston, the Ferrari 488 GTE and the Porsche 911 RSR. "It's not easy," says Marquardt. "The biggest challenge is starting with a structure that is designed to run at around two tonnes on the road."

The programme received a major setback early doors. BMW Motorsport's engineers wanted to make some dramatic changes to the structure of the car to create a lower and sleeker M8 than the one racing this year. This was vetoed by some of the manufacturers already racing in the WEC.

Marquardt describes this as a "fairly big wrinkle" in the programme: "We more or less had to go back to square one with regards to the aero concept when the decision was made."

The WEC assault is part of a realignment of BMW's motorsport programme announced at the back end of 2016. That includes its Formula E commitment, which becomes a full-factory engagement on the commencement of season five in the autumn, as well as the DTM and IMSA.

Marquardt insists each of what he calls the "four pillars" has equal importance. That suggests that BMW's latest foray in world championship sportscar racing may be rather longer than the last. ✎

TEAM BY TEAM GTE

AF CORSE

Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

#51 James Calado/Alessandro Pier Guidi

#71 Sam Bird/Davide Rigon

Ferrari's factory representative in the WEC defends the marque's 2017 drivers' and manufacturers' crowns with an unchanged full-season line-up and an 'evo' version of the 488 incorporating aerodynamic developments. AF enters a third factory car at Le Mans for the first time.

FORD CHIP GANASSI RACING TEAM UK

Ford GT

#66 Stefan Mücke/Olivier Pla/Billy Johnson*

#67 Andy Priaulx/Harry Tincknell/Tony Kanaan*

*Spa & Le Mans only

Ford, which claimed GTE Pro honours on its return to Le Mans in 2016, is back in the WEC with the Silverstone-based team that runs under the Ganassi name looking to make up for its near-miss in last year's championship. Kanaan comes in for his Le Mans debut and drives at Spa.

BMW TEAM MTEK

BMW M8 GTE

#81 Martin Tomczyk/Nicky Catsburg

#82 Augusto Farfus/Antonio Felix da Costa/

Tom Blomqvist** **Spa only

BMW joins the WEC with the new M8 and a two-car entry from the MTEK squad. Established for a 2013 DTM campaign, the team moved over to focus on the GTE programme last year. Andretti Formula E racer Blomqvist comes in for Spa in place of Farfus, who is on duty in the DTM at Hockenheim.

PORSCHE GT TEAM

Porsche 911 RSR

#91 Gianmaria Bruni/Richard Lietz

#92 Kevin Estre/Michael Christensen

Porsche undertakes a second campaign with its mid-engined 911 RSR still seeking a first series victory with the car. Bruni, a former class champion, joins the WEC line-up after a spot of gardening leave and a partial IMSA campaign since his move from Ferrari.

ASTON MARTIN RACING

Aston Martin Vantage GTE

#95 Darren Turner/Nicki Thiim/Marco Sorensen

#97 Maxime Martin/Alex Lynn/Jonny Adam

Aston Martin introduces the second-generation Vantage in its bid to regain the WEC title it won in 2016 – and defend its Le Mans crown. Martin has been recruited from BMW, while Lynn undertakes his first full campaign in sportscars.

GTE AM

The expanded GTE Am class, which is up from five to eight cars for the superseason, has a mix of old and new faces. Pedro Lamy, Mathias Lauda and Paul Dalla Lana return with Aston Martin Racing after finally winning the class title in 2017, while AF Corse spin-off Spirit of Race is back with Ferrari factory driver Giancarlo Fisichella alongside Francesco Castellacci and Thomas Flohr. Newcomers include the British TF Sport team, a race winner in the ELMS last year, and the Project 1 squad from the world of the Porsche Supercup and Carrera Cup.

Q & A

PIERRE FILLON AND GERARD NEVEU

The president of the ACO and the boss of the WEC talk about their early days in motorsport, the founding of the WEC and what the future holds

GARY WATKINS



JEP
LAT IMAGES

What is your first motorsport memory?

PIERRE FILLON Sitting on my grandfather's shoulders at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1966. He was very passionate about motorsport and was supposed to have driven in the first 24 Hours in '23, but my grandmother stopped him because she said it was too dangerous. I've been to Le Mans every year since, even when I was studying for some very important exams. I had decided not to go in '77, but I heard the story of how Jacky Ickx had changed cars at Porsche and I had to go to the track.

GERARD NEVEU It is from Paul Ricard. I was only 15 and it was difficult because I had to find someone to bring me from my home in Toulon. We used to jump the fence to watch Formula 1 testing and the first meeting I came to was a big French Supertourisme weekend.

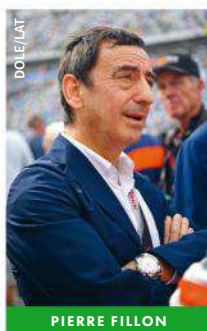
What was your first job in racing?

PF This is my first real job in motor racing, but I have been involved at Le Mans since 1971 when I was a boy scout. You had to work for three hours, maybe distributing timetables, and then you had three hours off to go where you wanted. It was amazing because I was able to meet drivers such as Ickx and Henri Pescarolo. I was also a volunteer helper for Jean-Paul Driot and the DAMS team over many years. Jean-Paul even allowed me to test Allan McNish's Lola Formula 3000 car in '91, and I was there at the start of the Panoz adventure in '97.

GN I was a volunteer medic at Paul Ricard; my first grand prix was 1982. I did many different jobs, including working as track announcer in the old Marlboro tower at Ricard. I joined the circuit staff in 2000, joining as track manager and eventually becoming CEO.

How did the WEC come into existence?

PF We already had the American Le Mans Series, which we



PIERRE FILLON



GERARD NEVEU

had helped create with Don Panoz, and the Le Mans Series in Europe, but our big manufacturers in P1 at the end of the 2000s, Audi and Peugeot, were pushing for a global championship. We were looking very much towards Asia and had the Okayama event in Japan in 2009, the first Asian Le Mans Series race. After a lot of discussions, we created the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup for '10, initially with one race in Europe and two outside. Jean Todt had just been elected president of the FIA and was very enthusiastic about the idea of a full world championship. Because of the ACO's history with the FIA, no-one believed it would work. There has been a big change in the mentality inside the ACO and here we are seven years later.

GN This, for me, is the story of two presidents working well together. They give the direction that everyone else follows.

How was it that Gerard ended up as CEO of the championship?

GN I was race director for the ILMC, so I had an existing relationship with the ACO. Pierre invited me to dinner and told me about his dream of a world championship and asked me to be part of it and help make it a reality.

How do you regard the era now coming to a close of high-technology hybrids in which Audi, Porsche and Toyota battled so hard?

PF I agree that it was a special time for endurance racing. These were some of the most sophisticated racing cars ever seen. The level was so high and the racing so close. The idea of giving a certain amount of energy to the cars was a fantastic idea in sporting terms.

Is there a sense of satisfaction that the championship has emerged from the tumult that followed Porsche's

Toyota fights Porsche
at the start of last
year's Le Mans



withdrawal from LMP1 last summer with a big P1 field and a record grid?

GN We are happy at the moment because everyone was saying that the WEC would be dead in a few months, but we do not have time to be satisfied because we are always working for the future. It is our responsibility to help write another chapter in the history of endurance racing.

We had to find an immediate solution for the LMP1 platform to make sure the WEC survived. The other thing we realised was that we had to maintain the position of the amateur driver in the championship. We had to find a way to ensure a sustainable grid for the next two years before the introduction of new P1 regulations in 2020.

We were able to make some big announcements in Mexico last September. We talked about the reverse winter calendar, the superseason for 2018 and '19, a race at Sebring together with the 12 Hours. All these things put us back in the middle of the story. People were getting excited about the WEC.

We had some trouble, but now we have more members of the family around the table. We can be happy about that.

What will the calendar for the first winter season of the WEC look like in 2019-20?

GN Going back to a regular season of seven, eight or nine races is the plan. We will have a race once every month more or less, and

we will have a quiet period around the Daytona 24 Hours in January, because we have to respect this period for IMSA. It's too early to say whether it will start at the beginning, the middle or end of September.

What can you tell us about the new LMP1 regulations for the 2020-21 season?

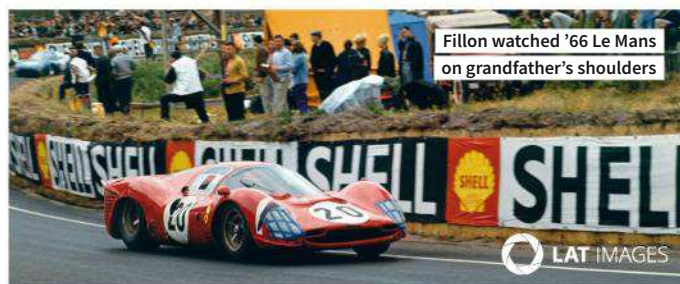
PF The idea is to announce the rules at the 24 Hours in June. We want to make something that is affordable for multiple manufacturers, not just two or three, and also for the private teams. But the idea is not to reduce the performance of the cars.

The power will come more from the conventional engine and less from the hybrid system. We have to keep hybrids, because it is essential to maintain the link between road and race cars, but not at any cost. We want the fans to be able to identify the brand of each car, which is also important for the manufacturers.

Where will the WEC be in five years' time when Le Mans is celebrating its centenary in 1923?

GN We want to protect the DNA of the prototype class, but also to maintain a balance on the grid with GTE. We also have to ensure the position of privateer teams, because they are part of the story of Le Mans and we are just the son of Le Mans.

PF We also want to point the way to the future for the automotive industry. 🏆



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STAT
4TH
The best starting position for the ATS D4, with Lammers at Long Beach 1980



HISTORIC ACE O'CONNELL TO RACE ATS AT MONACO

HISTORICS

Ex-Formula 3 competitor and historic racing star Martin O'Connell will drive an ATS at the Monaco GP Historique on May 11-13, having won on his first outing in a Formula 1 car last month.

O'Connell made his FIA Masters Historic F1 debut at Imola (April 20-22), driving the ATS D4 owned by Belgian Marc Devis. He retired from the first race, which he started from pole, but won the second encounter by three seconds from the Lotus 81 of Steve Boulton Brooks.

'Doc' Shepherd's A40 returns

HISTORICS

The Austin A40 in which Cambridge GP George 'Doc' Shepherd won the 1960 BRSCC British Saloon Car Championship is to race again having been laid up for 48 years and restored by the enthusiast who bought it in '67.

Supplied by Marshalls of Cambridge, the car was prepared for the 1959 championship by tuner Don Moore, with engine work by Harry Weslake. Shepherd won his class and finished second overall to Jeff Uren in John Willment's Ford Zephyr.

Modifications to the new-for-1960 'Supa Tura' regulations – a freer silhouette formula





Lammers drove ATS at Monaco in 1980



O'Connell won at Imola last month

British F3 National Class champion in 1997 and '99 on the back of his '92 FVauxhall Junior title, O'Connell had only completed a shakedown run in the ATS at Donington Park prior to Imola.

"I'd tested Peter Meyrick's March 761 a few years back but not raced an F1 car, although my recent experience racing DFV-powered sportscars helped," he said. "There's not such a big difference."

The 46-year old will now drive the D4, a model that was raced in period by Jan Lammers, Marc Surer, Harald Ertl and Slim Borgudd from 1980-81, in one of a trio of three-litre F1 races at the ACM's biennial Monaco event. The car is entered in the most modern field of the three races,

for 1977-80s F1 machinery.

"Imola only came about because Marc couldn't get there until Saturday morning," he added. "They wouldn't let him race without qualifying, so he cancelled his entry. When he offered me the Monaco drive, I said yes if I could do Imola for practice. I'd raced there before – it's one of the best places – but was amazed to qualify on pole."

"I've been to Monaco but not driven the track. I was talking to Martin Donnelly about it and his advice was, 'Don't crash on the Friday and you'll be fine!' It's an honour and a privilege to be able to race there, but I've nothing to prove. I want to enjoy it."

O'Connell, whose O'C Racing team

prepares the Gustav Brunner-designed 1980 car, will compete against FIA Masters HF1 champions Michael Lyons (Hesketh 308E) and Nick Padmore (Shadow DN9) and Thoroughbred Grand Prix title winner Joaquin Folch (Brabham BT49) on the streets of Monte Carlo in a 36-car field.

"Will I be challenging for victory? I don't know," said O'Connell. "We've tried to keep the ATS as original as possible. There are too many 'new' cars out there for my liking."

"For those of us who race often, in a wide variety of cars, it's easy to get a bit blasé about a special event like this. I haven't forgotten where I started though, so Monaco ticks all my boyhood-dream boxes."

MARCUS PYE

for cars with a maximum capacity of 1000cc – brought greater success. Shepherd won six rounds, clinching the crown despite crashing in the Brands Hatch finale.

"We've prepared it to current safety regulations," said new owner Trevor Parfitt. "With detail changes, it should be eligible for both FIA [1000cc] and HRDC [1300cc] events, hopefully including Goodwood, where 'Doc' Shepherd won his class on Easter Monday 1959."

Shepherd switched to racing a Mini in 1961 and sold the A40 in November that year. The second owner fitted full interior and had the car repainted from Farina grey to red, reregistering it 937 ACE. Parfitt worked in the same garage as its new owner, but its racing heritage emerged only when he bought the machine from friend Howard Dyson five years later.

In the 1990s Parfitt and toolmaker son Simon founded their own prep shop, Scott Racing, in Suffolk.

MARCUS PYE

New Midget, Sprite series

HSCC

The HSCC will run an Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget Academy Challenge within its popular '70s Road Sports championship's Class E in 2019.

Draft regulations call for 1275cc and 1493cc engines with restricted crankshaft, con rods and carburation. Autosport understands cars could be on track for under £10,000, or for less if they can be self-built and maintained at home.

The new series has been launched "to encourage those thinking about having a go or coming back to racing for a bit of fun at the budget end of historic racing", said championship

chairman Charles Barter.

Mechanical and suspension configurations are virtually identical to those of the Midget-based Arkley SS, which has won its class championship each year since 2013 and finished second overall in '17 driven by Chris Fisher, one of the club's younger members.

No challenge rounds will require licences of a higher grade than National B. Minimum weights of 680kg (1275cc) and 720kg (1493cc) will apply.

BMC A-series engine specialist Peter May Engineering is supporting the initiative, full details of which are available from coordinator Ted O'Day at ted.oday@btinternet.com.

MARCUS PYE

Ligier boss says LMP3 Cup and GT Cup should pair up



LMP3 Cup has struggled with small numbers

READ

LMP3 CUP

Ligier UK managing director Richard Dean has suggested that the LMP3 Cup and GT Cup should combat the issue of low entries by combining to become a World Endurance Championship-style multi-class event.

LMP3 Cup, while commended for its high quality of cars and cost-effectiveness, has struggled with small grids. In its inaugural 2017 season numbers varied between five and 10, while in the '18 season opener

at Donington Park last month there were eight cars present, seven of which were Ligiers. Both the LMP3 Cup and GT Cup are run by the Bute Motorsport concern.

"Everybody's saying, 'Isn't it fantastic that LMP1 in WEC has taken off', and they've got eight cars," said Dean, who is also co-owner of United Autosports, which entered three cars in the LMP3 Cup at Donington.

"I can only presume that a vast majority of it is perception, that it gets a bit lost that there's only eight cars because it's part of a

30-car grid and historically prototypes have always run in multi-class grids.

"Perhaps if the British championship was looked upon like a little British Le Mans series where you had the top class as prototypes among GT cars, the perception would be different. GT Cup – that's got 14 cars on the grid, and with eight prototypes you put those two together. Maybe there's a solution staring everybody in the face."

Bute Motorsport's Chris Haynes expressed caution about the wider effects of combining the two series.

"It would be easy to simply open up the LMP3 Cup to our GT cars," said Haynes, "but this would be missing the point of what the two championships are about at their respective core values."

"Having said that, never say never and we will always listen to our drivers and teams. Therefore if there is a desire for our GT cars to join the field then we would have to consider this option."

"I accept numbers are below where we would like them to be, for both our championships. We expect to bounce back at [the next round at] Brands Hatch."

Dean also confirmed there will be no increase in Ligier JSP4s entering the next LMP3 Cup round, following the car's debut at Donington where it was the sole PT4-class participant. Only one other car – the development model – currently exists.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

Rivett hails WDE team after repair job

CLIO CUP

Three-time Renault UK Clio Cup champion Paul Rivett said his WDE Motorsport team performed an "incredible job" to repair his car in time to compete in race two following a hefty shunt at Donington Park last weekend.

Rivett spun off while heading through the Craner Curves on the first lap of the opening contest and

hit the tyre wall hard, causing extensive damage to the rear of his car. Despite the impact, Rivett's mechanics were able to fix it in time for him to finish fourth in race two.

"Nobody thought we would be back out but we knew we would," said Rivett. "I just missed the tyre barrier and hit the concrete wall backwards at about 80mph, so I'm feeling pretty sore. It was

a massive impact – the biggest one I've had in quite a few years."

WDE boss Wayne Eason added: "I think they're the best [mechanics] in the paddock. No-one else would've done what they managed to."

Despite the difficult weekend, former points leader Rivett only dropped to second in the standings, five behind Max Coates.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Rivett suffered high-speed off at Craner Curves

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New Jag series for over 50s

SERIES ELITE

A new championship has been launched for drivers aged over 50, using the new Jaguar F-type GT4, and will run to a 12-race calendar in 2019.

Series Elite, set up by Graeme Glew of Totally Motorsports, will begin with a prologue event at Brands Hatch on October 27-28, running with the British Automobile Racing Club.

It will then visit Silverstone, Donington Park, Brands Hatch and Rockingham in 2019, and the organiser is hoping to attract up to 20 entries.

"Currently there is no series that caters specifically for older drivers who want to

compete at a high level with like-minded racers," said Glew, father of 2009 Renault UK Clio Cup champion Phil.

"We're filling this gap with Series Elite supported by Jaguar. Our competitors will own their cars, but all the other aspects of going racing — preparing the cars, transporting them, arranging travel and accommodation — will be arranged for them."

The F-type GT4 was developed by Jaguar's Special Vehicle Operations unit in Coventry, and is competing in British GT this year. It is the first Jaguar developed by the team in-house since the E-type Lightweight of the 1960s.

JACK BENYON

F3 closes rules loophole

BRDC BRITISH F3

The BRDC British Formula 3 Championship has made a change to its newly introduced reversed-grid race-two format in order to stop drivers taking advantage of a quirk of the system.

The substance of the new format remains the same: race-two starts as a reverse of the order from race one — provided a driver finishes and sets a lap time within 103 per cent of the fastest lap. Points are awarded for every position a driver gains in race two.

Ahead of the second round at Rockingham, teams agreed to a detail change: for a driver to be eligible for the

reversed grid they must start from their original grid position in race one.

This is to prevent a repeat of Tristan Charpentier's tactic from the opening round at Oulton Park. He pitted at the end of the formation lap before rejoining behind the rest of the field, then started the second race from pole position.

"The regulations now say quite clearly if you don't start from your grid position you'll start race two from the back of the grid," said MotorSport Vision's Giles Butterfield.

"This [Charpentier's action] was quite a poor show; that's why everybody wanted to change the regulation."

STEFAN MACKLEY

IN THE HEADLINES

CHANDHOK IN WILLIAMS

Ex-Formula 1 racer-turned-television pundit Karun Chandhok will demonstrate a 1983 Williams FW08C at Thruxton during the circuit's 50th anniversary celebrations over the weekend of June 2-3. Chandhok will drive the ex-Keke Rosberg Ford Cosworth DFV-powered car on some swift laps of the high-speed Hampshire track.

F4 ACES GET PENALTIES

Two British Formula 4 frontrunners were handed grid penalties for the next race at Thruxton after incidents in last Sunday's Donington Park finale. Patrik Pasma was awarded a five-place penalty for being overly aggressive while defending second place from Kiern Jewiss, and points leader Ayrton Simmons was awarded a 10-place penalty for colliding with Hampus Ericsson.

TILLEY RACES LOANED G55

Grahame Tilley was handed a lifeline to return to Ginetta GT4 Supercup action last weekend at Donington Park, racing a loaned G55. Tilley's original car was heavily damaged in an accident in the season-opening race at Brands Hatch. In its place, Tilley raced a loaned left-hand-drive Ginetta that had recently enjoyed a run at Paul Ricard, and the experienced racer had to adapt to the configuration. His best result was 13th.

GRID KIDS AT BRITISH GP

The Motor Sports Association is running a competition for kart licence holders to win a chance to feature on the grid at the British Grand Prix on July 8, as part of the 'F1 Future Stars' initiative. The competition is open to seven-to-10 year olds, and they must submit a video message of around 30 seconds explaining why they want to be a Future Star, along with a letter from their headteacher.

RGB CHAMP TO F1000

Former RGB champion Alastair Boulton will make his single-seater debut in F1000 at Cadwell Park on June 2-3. Boulton, who won the RGB title in 2010 in an STM Phoenix as well as taking front-engined class honours in '11 and '12, has been a regular in the series for a number of years.

HILLCLIMB TRIO LEVEL

Trevor Willis, Wallace Menzies and Will Hall are tied at the top of the British Hillclimb championship points after the opening round last weekend at Prescott. Willis took a pair of second places in his OMS 28-RPE, while Menzies (Gould GR59) and Hall (Force WH) each took a first and a third. Richard Spedding claimed a pair of fourths.



MGCC Tylor Ballard was fortunate to emerge unscathed from a huge crash in the opening MG Trophy Championship race at Brands Hatch last Saturday. Ballard, a class winner in the opening round at Silverstone, spun at Paddock Hill before the car dug into the gravel and was launched into a spectacular roll. The car landed the correct way up on top of the tyre barrier close to the spectator catch fencing, but nobody was injured. **Photograph by Gary Hawkins**

TVR from 1950s returns

HISTORICS

One of the earliest-surviving TVRs will be back racing next season after Kevin Kivlochan bought one of three 1955 models known as the Open Sports.

This was the first tubular-chassis design from TVR, which started producing cars in 1947. Kivlochan's car, registered 223 EMA, has been stored in a barn in Scotland for more than 30 years, but should be racing in the Woodcote Trophy next season.

The Open Sports was built by TVR founder Trevor Wilkinson and was raced, including at Brands Hatch in 1955, with a 1500cc Coventry Climax engine. Wilkinson also used 223 EMA as a road car. Of the three 500kg cars thought to have been built, one is missing and the other is in the US. The design was sold to the US where more cars were built under the Jomar brand.

"It seems to have been raced in the early 1980s in Scotland and then stored



in a barn," said Morgan racer Kivlochan. "It's all there, but it needs a complete rebuild. It's a fascinating car. My aim is that it punches above its weight."

Kivlochan has entrusted the project to Richard Walbyoff at RW Racing Services near Brackley for a complete restoration this winter.

"We're going to try to gather all the bits that we need over the summer months so that Richard and his team can push ahead with it when the racing season ends," added Kivlochan.

PAUL LAWRENCE

Silverstone CSCC entries exceed 400

CSCC

The Classic Sports Car Club will field a record entry for this weekend's second visit to the Silverstone International circuit, with more than 400 cars set to compete.

As Autosport closed for press, the club had reported 407 entries across its 10 categories for the two-day meeting.

The CSCC's previous benchmark was the 374 entries it received for a Donington Park meeting in 2015.

"The response to the Silverstone event is pretty phenomenal," said CSCC director David Smitheram.

"We did the National circuit for nine years on the trot and were offered the International last season for the first time. We had just over 350 cars for that meeting, but it's really taken off this year.

ROB LADBROOK

GIMMICK FOR FANS OR OVERTAKING TRAINING?

BRDC British Formula 3 is offering a point for every position gained in its reversed-grid race this year, a move that's drawn much criticism from purists



AGAINST
JACK BENYON

Let's motor through the exposition quickly. For 2018, BRDC F3 has moved to a new format whereby in the second race the grid is the result from race one, reversed, and a point is awarded for every place gained from your starting position.

Call me old fashioned, but I still think of the glory days when it comes to British F3. Although the current grid is a far cry from the category's golden era (and, in fairness, is positioned slightly differently in the market), as recently as 2011 the grid featured Felipe Nasr, Kevin Magnussen and Antonio Felix da Costa. I still see British F3 as a potential proving ground for young talent.

Announcing the change, MotorSport Vision owner Jonathan Palmer said: "MSV has a history of being innovative to maximise the appeal of motorsport, and with the full reverse grid system, coupled with a carefully derived points system, the BRDC British F3 championship will produce some captivating racing for drivers, teams and fans to enjoy while adding to the learning value for drivers by giving them far more opportunities to overtake and reward them when they do."

I don't buy the argument that passing slower drivers helps develop overtaking skills. There's a reason a driver has finished further back, and they shouldn't be offered up as target practice to make the racing appear more exciting than it is.

With 'gimmicky' elements such as points for positions gained, kudos is removed from young drivers. A junior single-seater series should be a proving ground for the best young talent, not wholly a show for spectators. On the contrary, pitting the best drivers against each other in the same car on the same track should be enough for any motorsport purist.

The most important point, though, is that a championship shouldn't be decided by this format. If it comes down to the end of the season and one contender wins because he's started near the back of a reversed-grid race and gained a bag full of points, the other protagonists have been robbed.

I commend British F3 for embracing change, but is this really the best thing for a championship with a reputation for finding, nurturing and training future top-drawer drivers?

"I DON'T BUY THE ARGUMENT THAT PASSING SLOWER DRIVERS HELPS DEVELOP OVERTAKING SKILLS"



FOR
STEFAN MACKLEY

It's a new and brave approach that Jonathan Palmer's MotorSport Vision has adopted for this season and so far, it's worked.

The reversed-grid format is nothing new. Other single-seater series such as Formula 2 and GP3 have used the concept for years, as have the likes of the British Touring Car Championship.

What is unusual is for points to be awarded for positions gained based on a driver's starting position.

While some may see this as something of a gimmick, perhaps even devaluing the championship, in my view it only acts as more of an incentive for drivers to dice for every position.

All too often drivers last season would back off from the car in front during race two — which featured a top-eight reversed grid — to give themselves space and try and set the fastest lap possible. The goal: to start higher up the grid in race three, which was (and still is) based on a driver's fastest lap from the first two races.

Now, though, drivers have no choice but to fight for position; and not only that, they're being encouraged to.

With the present climate in F1, it's not uncommon to see the likes of Lewis Hamilton or Sebastian Vettel starting out of position on the grid owing to the loathed engine and/or gearbox penalties.

What better time to learn how to overtake slower


drivers from the back of the grid than in the junior formulas?

There will be those critics who might suggest that it could negatively impact the championship should a would-be contender be taken out by a slower driver.

But this is motor racing and the risk of an accident with another car is always present, whether they're battling for the lead or fighting through from the back of the grid.

Perhaps coincidentally, out of all three F3 races at Rockingham last weekend the one that didn't feature a safety car was the reversed-grid contest. That strongly suggests that the racing can be clean even when the starting order is juggled.

The best drivers will always rise to the top in any series, and those competing in British F3 this year have the perfect platform to showcase their overtaking abilities.

Besides, who doesn't love watching close, entertaining racing? 

"IN MY VIEW IT ONLY ACTS AS MORE OF AN INCENTIVE FOR DRIVERS TO DICE FOR EVERY POSITION"

TOCA SUPPORTS DONINGTON PARK APRIL 28-29



Plato leads Ellinas. Both won for the first time

BATHIE

Maiden winners Ellinas and Plato make it four from four

CARRERA CUP GB

Over the previous two seasons of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB only three different drivers won races. But there's been a very different story in 2018, with four different winners in the first four contests – and three of those have been first-time victors.

The first of those at Donington was Tio Ellinas, but it was far from straightforward for the Cypriot.

First he lost out to fellow front-row starter Lewis Plato through the Craner

Curves on the opening tour. Ellinas swiftly dealt with that setback, when he got his Slidesports car back ahead at Coppice three laps later and started to build a gap.

But the next problem was points leader Dino Zamparelli. The Redline driver was closing fast, having also dispatched Plato early on. Zamparelli used all of his experience to narrow a three-second gap to just three tenths at the flag but was unable to make a move.

Ellinas still wasn't secure of victory, since he faced a final obstacle in the form of Am racer Peter Mangion. Mangion was about

to be lapped as the leaders crossed the finishing line but, in a bizarre incident, he was then spun into the Redgate gravel by Ellinas and didn't get to take the chequered flag.

"I saw the leaders were coming and moved over to let through a driver who I later found out was Tio," said Mangion. "By that point [Ellinas arriving at the corner] I had turned in and I think he might have locked up. He didn't need to be racing and that has cost me my second place [in class]."

Ellinas explained: "I didn't see the chequered flag because I was checking my mirrors so I went to overtake. He gave me room but he turned in to me on the back of my bumper."

Luckily, Ellinas was able to keep the win but was docked three championship points for the error.

"It was my maiden win in sportscar racing so I'm delighted about that," he said. "I only had three days of pre-season testing with a new team but have taken two seconds and a win. It was a bit edgy towards the end and I was checking my mirrors all the time."

In the longer race two, there was another new winner as JTR racer Lewis Plato led from lights to flag, but had Tom Wrigley and Zamparelli looming in his mirrors after a mid-race safety car.

"It means so much [to take my first win] and it takes the weight off my shoulders," said Plato, who threw away a win at Brands when he ran wide following a safety-car restart.

"Getting so close at Brands Hatch was tough and I would've kicked myself if I hadn't won [so soon after Brands]. I think it's taken about three years off my life with the pressure!"

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Junior graduate King joins Supercup elite

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Harry King was victorious in only his sixth Ginetta GT4 Supercup attempt as Donington Park produced three different race winners.

The former Ginetta Junior frontrunner saved his best until last with a lightning start in the third race, jumping from third to a lead he never surrendered.

"If I hadn't made that start, I might still be waiting," he said, having skated off on a wet track from pole position in race one the day before.

Championship leader Charlie Ladell profited from King's mistake on cold tyres for his third victory of the season,

nursing worn wet tyres to keep title rival Carl Boardley at bay. Angus Fender joined the pair on the podium in only his fourth Supercup race.

Donington was again kind to Tom Roche, who grabbed race-two spoils on the final lap.

Long-time leader Boardley slid wide on fluid at the chicane following a safety-car period and Roche dived inside decisively at Redgate. "He could have shut me out, but didn't," said Roche, who returned to his "lucky" green livery this weekend.

Ladell joined them on the podium and made it six visits from six by trailing King in race three, while Adam Shepherd finished third in a rebuilt car.

DAN MASON



JEP/LAT

Foster takes breakthrough win after Browning brace

GINETTA JUNIOR

Luke Browning hit back with a brace of Ginetta Junior victories at Donington Park to grab the championship lead, while Louis Foster scored a maiden win.

Browning's title rival Adam Smalley had a visit to forget in comparison, spinning out of the third and final race having been otherwise embroiled in a battle with the Richardson Racing driver all weekend.

Smalley grabbed a double pole position in sodden conditions but slipped back to third on the opening lap of race one.

Rookie Foster led until lap four, when the lead quartet was split by slight contact between Browning and Smalley at McLeans that sent Smalley spinning to fourth.

"I could see it was going to kick off," said

eventual third-place finisher Greg Johnson. The incident gave Browning breathing space to seal victory ahead of Foster.

Browning quickly made it a double in race two. A sluggish start cost Smalley his pole advantage, and Browning's late surge of pace on worn wet tyres proved too much as Smalley fought to catch up.

It was Foster, son of ex-British Touring Car driver Nick, who broke Browning's stranglehold by mounting a determined defence of the lead in race three.

"Knowing he's a clean driver was perfect," said Elite Motorsport competitor Foster after he had fended off Browning.

Behind them, Ruben del Sarte avoided two incidents between Fin Green and Smalley to secure third place.

DAN MASON

Dorlin doubles up in Clios

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

Both Donington Clio Cup races ended with victory for James Dorlin, but he achieved them in very different ways.

The first race was the more straightforward, and the Westbourne Motorsport driver won by seven seconds. He lost out at the start with too much wheelspin, and team-mate James Colburn grabbed the advantage, but a safety car — because of a number of stranded cars — let Dorlin back in.

Dorlin made a brilliant restart to pass Colburn into Redgate and pulled away for a comfortable win, and then a

track-limits penalty for Colburn gave Dan Rowbottom second.

"We needed a result like that to get back into the title fight," enthused Dorlin.

Jack McCarthy was the early race-two leader, but Dorlin dived ahead on lap two out of the Old Hairpin, after Colburn had spun off at Redgate. But this time Dorlin was unable to pull away, coming under pressure from Bradley Burns.

Team Pyro driver Burns pulled off a great move around the outside of McLeans to take the lead on lap 10 of 13, but Dorlin retaliated a lap later through the Craner Curves and just held on for another win.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Jewiss fightback earns win

BRITISH F4

Stuck in the gravel at McLeans after contact with title rival Ayrton Simmons in race one, Kiern Jewiss looked like he might be having a weekend to forget. But the Double R Racing driver was in no mood to give up.

He put in an incredible performance in race two to storm from 13th on the grid (which was based on race one finishing positions) to win. Yes, he was aided by on-the-road winner Dennis Hauger earning a five-second penalty for exceeding track limits, but Jewiss still had a lot of work to do, and a brilliant move on Simmons

around the outside of Redgate with two laps to go sealed the victory.

"Everyone was on brand-new tyres and we get them up to speed faster than everyone else — I knew I had to get on with it in the first laps," said a delighted Jewiss. "We've got three fewer cars to overtake in race three [to get another win]!"

He got close, but Patrik Pasma's defence was too strong, limiting him to third.

The other Donington star was Fortec's Johnathan Hoggard, who won races one and three, having missed out on his maiden win at Brands after a false start.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Race 1 (23 laps) 1 Tio Ellinas; 2 Dino Zamparelli +0.320s; 3 Daniel Harper; 4 Tom Wrigley; 5 Lewis Plato; 6 Dan Vaughan. **Fastest lap** Zamparelli 1m14.047s (96.21mph). **Pole** Ellinas.

Starters 23.

Race 2 (33 laps) 1 Plato; 2 Wrigley +0.682s; 3 Zamparelli; 4 Ellinas; 5 Will Bratt; 6 Jamie Orton. **FL** Zamparelli 1m07.203s (106.01mph). **P** Plato. **S** 23.

Points 1 Zamparelli 36; 2 Ellinas 34; 3 Plato 27; 4 Wrigley 22; 5 George Gamble 15; 6 Harper 14.

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Charles Ladell; 2 Carl Boardley +2.314s; 3 Angus Fender; 4 Tom Roche; 5 Adam Shepherd; 6 Harry King. **FL** King 1m18.309s (90.98mph). **P** King. **S** 19.

Race 2 (17 laps) 1 Roche; 2 Boardley +0.602s; 3 Ladell; 4 King; 5 Shepherd; 6 Carl Shield. **FL** Ladell 1m09.581s (102.39mph). **P** Ladell. **S** 19.

Race 3 (16 laps) 1 King; 2 Ladell +6.387s; 3 Shepherd; 4 Boardley; 5 Roche; 6 Jac Constable. **FL** Boardley 1m09.562s (102.42mph). **P** Shield. **S** 18.

Points 1 Ladell 191; 2 Boardley 179; 3 King 145; 4 Roche 116; 5 Constable 106; 6 Shield 100.

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 Luke Browning; 2 Louis Foster +2.795s; 3 Greg Johnson; 4 Adam Smalley; 5 Ruben del Sarte; 6 Fin Green. **FL** Smalley 1m33.812s (75.94mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 20.

Race 2 (12 laps) 1 Browning; 2 Smalley +3.128s; 3 Foster; 4 Matt Luff; 5 James Taylor; 6 del Sarte. **FL** Browning 1m25.791s (83.04mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 20.

Race 3 (12 laps) 1 Foster; 2 Browning +0.338s; 3 del Sarte; 4 Patrick Kibble; 5 James Hedley; 6 Green. **FL** Foster 1m25.163s (83.65mph). **P** Browning. **S** 20. **Points 1 Browning 157;** 2 Foster 136; 3 del Sarte 121; 4 Smalley 120; 5 Green 82; 6 Kibble 81.

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

Race 1 (17 laps) 1 James Dorlin; 2 Daniel Rowbottom +7.128s; 3 Jack McCarthy; 4 James Colburn; 5 Brett Lidsey; 6 Max Coates. **FL** Bradley Burns 1m16.891s (92.65mph). **P** Dorlin. **S** 19.

Race 2 (13 laps) 1 Dorlin; 2 Burns +0.366s; 3 McCarthy; 4 Paul Rivett; 5 Zak Fulk; 6 Coates. **FL** Burns 1m16.660s (92.93mph). **P** Burns. **S** 19. **Points 1 Coates 71;** 2 Rivett 66; 3 McCarthy 66; 4 Dorlin 62; 5 Burns 54; 6 Rowbottom 53.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Johnathan Hoggard; 2 Seb Priaulx +1.215s; 3 Jack Doohan; 4 Dennis Hauger; 5 Hampus Ericsson; 6 Ayrton Simmons. **FL** Kiern Jewiss 1m20.988s (87.97mph). **P** Hoggard. **S** 14.

Race 2 (18 laps) 1 Jewiss; 2 Simmons +0.826s; 3 Hauger; 4 Doohan; 5 Hoggard; 6 Priaulx. **FL** Jewiss 1m08.682s (103.73mph). **P** Ericsson. **S** 14.

Race 3 (15 laps) 1 Hoggard; 2 Patrik Pasma +11.575s; 3 Jewiss; 4 Doohan; 5 Priaulx; 6 Simmons. **FL** Hauger 1m08.781s (103.58mph). **P** Pasma. **S** 14.

Points 1 Simmons 102; 2 Jewiss 88; 3 Priaulx 85; 4 Hoggard 78; 5 Doohan 62; 6 Hauger 51.



Buurman and Mowle triumph as rivals stumble

ROCKINGHAM
BRITISH GT
APRIL 28-29

Lee Mowle had a pretty unique view for qualifying. It was a place where few others are allowed to stand. But he wasn't standing at all: he was sitting in a slough of despond, staring at a barrier. In the pouring rain.

Mowle had just lost his Mercedes-AMG GT3 on the exit of the last chicane on his out-lap and nudged into the barriers. Stranded on the wet grass, he couldn't get going again and instead had to just sit and glumly regard the vista beyond.

Come Sunday, though, he had a more joyful viewpoint — overlooking his team from the podium's top step, celebrating his first British GT victory alongside Yelmer Buurman. How did they do it?

"I have literally no idea how we won this race," Mowle said. "Honestly, I actually hate this track. And I don't think I've ever hated it more than in qualifying. So how we won it... I really don't know!"

Buurman and Mowle emerged unscathed from what was arguably one of the most incident-filled British GT races yet. Crucially, their rivals didn't.

The Mercedes should never have been a contender after Mowle's qualifying faux pas, which led to it starting last in GT3. But it was consistency rather than sheer speed, and a cool head from the ERC Sport team, which made the dream comeback a reality.

In the driving seat early on were Barwell Motorsport duo Phil Keen and Jon Minshaw, who both produced brilliant qualifying laps to pip the Optimum Motorsport Aston Martin of Jonny Adam and Flick Haigh to pole.

The Lamborghini Huracan thrives at Rockingham, a traction-dependent, stop-start track where mid-engined cars come to the fore — especially when it's slippery. Keen and Minshaw were hoping for something resembling the wet conditions of qualifying and so nearly got them.

The field lined up under steady drizzle, but it wasn't enough to convince anybody

that wets were the right call. Minshaw made early progress to craft a 5s lead, only for a safety-car appearance to erode it when Shaun Balfe hit the Turn 4 wall hard in his McLaren after clipping a GT4 runner.

Minshaw monstered the restart, helped by having a lapped GT4 car running between him and second-placed Sam de Haan in Barwell's other Lamborghini. Once in clean air, Minshaw built a comfortable 10.8s advantage and looked odds-on to overturn the 20s success penalty (for his Oulton Park win) at his pitstop.

Then out came the safety car again, this time called for David Pattison beaching his GT4 McLaren at Chapman Curve. That was a critical blow for Keen and Minshaw's hopes of the win, but a strong result seemed likely until even that was scotched.

Combating fatigue and fading tyres, Minshaw couldn't pull away from de Haan and the charging Graham Davidson in the Jetstream Aston on the second restart. Davidson snatched second and then pressured Minshaw until they both dived into the pits at the first opportunity.

When Minshaw exited the Lambo, he immediately removed his helmet in the live pitlane — an action that's strictly forbidden. Keen took over in second and set about chasing down Maxime Martin, now in the Jetstream car that had inherited the lead by dint of its quicker stop. But his charge was neutralised by a 10s stop-go penalty for Minshaw's transgression.

To compound Barwell's misery, Jonny Cocker was unable to rejoin the race after taking over from de Haan when the sister Lambo's auto-clutch failed.

Barwell's capitulation looked to have handed Jetstream the win, until that car was given a drive-through penalty for repeatedly straying beyond track limits.

Combine that with two further safety-car periods to clear away errant cars, and the lowly trouble-free Mercedes came into play by simply ticking off the laps.

Mowle was eighth by the time he handed over to Buurman, having kept things clean.



RESULTS

BRITISH GT GT3 (82 LAPS)

1 Lee Mowle/Yelmer Buurman (Mercedes-AMG); **2** Ian Loggie/Callum MacLeod (Bentley Continental) +23.752s; **3** Andrew Howard/Darren Turner (Aston Martin Vantage); **4** Flick Haigh/Jonny Adam (Aston Martin); **5** Graham Davidson/Maxime Martin (Aston Martin); **6** Jon Minshaw/Phil Keen (Lamborghini Huracan). **Fastest lap** Marco Sorensen (Aston Martin) 1m17.769s (89.80mph). **Pole** Minshaw/Keen. **Starters** 12.

Points 1 Buurman/Mowle 64.5; **2** Keen/Minshaw 49; **3** Turner/Howard 48.5; **4** Adam/Haigh & MacLeod/Loggie 43; **6** Sorensen/Derek Johnston 29.

GT4 (79 LAPS) 1 Patrik Matthiesen/Callum Pointon (Ginetta G55); **2** Stephen Johansen/Jesse Anttila (Nissan 370Z) +23.440s; **3** Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones (Aston Martin Vantage); **4** Kelvin Fletcher/Martin Plowman (Nissan); **5** Charlie Fagg/Michael O'Brien (McLaren 570S); **6** Daniel McKay/Finlay Hutchinson (McLaren). **FL** Matthiesen 1m23.642s (83.49mph). **P** Fagg/O'Brien. **S** 22.

Points 1 Matthiesen/Pointon 51.5; **2** Fagg/O'Brien 39; **3** Ben Barnicoat/Adam Balon 33; **4** Jack Mitchell/Ricky Collard 30; **5** Plowman/Fletcher 28; **6** Anttila/Johansen 27.



Minshaw led Haigh at start, with Mowle at the back



Mowle didn't expect to stand on podium after qualifying off

With the litany of issues ahead, Buurman – who was by now running third, having passed Darren Turner's Beechdean Aston – suddenly found himself leading.

"I just kept pushing, and the team radioed me to say the two cars ahead had problems, so I just kept going," said Buurman. "Having a car that's kind to its tyres is key here, but I think we had more than a little luck too."

The rest of the GT3 field also struggled. Nicki Thiim/Mark Farmer's TF Sport Aston suffered a persistent electrical issue that consigned it to eighth. The sister car of Marco Sorensen/Derek Johnston finished second on the road, despite serving an early drive-through penalty for avoidable contact. But it was then demoted a further 30s post-race for nerfing Rick Parfitt Jr's Bentley into a spin at Tarzan in the first stint. That left them seventh.

Adam/Haigh's Aston fell back when Haigh slid off on oil. She successfully rejoined, but Adam could only climb to fourth, while Bentley boys Callum MacLeod and Ian Loggie sealed second in the amended result.

ROB LADBROOK

HHC MOTORSPORT REPEATS 2017 WINNING FORMULA



Mathiesen/Pointon repeated Middleton/Tregurtha 2017 win

Repetition isn't always a bad thing. If you find a winning formula, then it's probably best practice to stick to it. That was exactly what HHC Motorsport did when it pulled off the same tactic that had brought it glory at this race in 2017.

Last year Will Tregurtha and Stuart Middleton overcame a stubborn McLaren by running an alternative pit strategy. This year Patrik Mathiesen and Callum Pointon followed in their wheeltracks to achieve exactly the same result in their Ginetta G55.

The fleet of McLarens were absolute weapons around Rockingham. Being mid-engined the car enjoys great traction, so it was little surprise that the brand locked out the front row in the soaked qualifying session, thanks to great efforts by factory junior drivers Charlie Fagg/Michael O'Brien and Lewis Proctor/Jordan Albert.

But during the drier race, the momentum shifted. The downside of great traction is tyre wear, and soon the McLarens were struggling.

Fagg led the field away, but Mathiesen put in a stunning early stint and surged from fourth to run second, rarely ever more than a car's length from Fagg's bumper.

Despite the Ginetta's strengths, Mathiesen couldn't find a way past on track. "I kept getting alongside him [Fagg] on the twisty middle sector, but every time we got to a straight he just left me behind again," said Mathiesen.

"The team were watching what they [Tolman] did with their stop and I think they have a trick around here, because they called me to say, 'Stay out and push like mad,' so I did."

Mathiesen was the last GT4 driver to pit, completing an additional three laps. When Pointon took over the Ginetta, he emerged ahead of O'Brien, who had relayed Fagg.

Running in clean air, Pointon didn't look back and scorched clear. "The car felt amazing and we're good on tyres around here, and I think that really showed in the closing stages," he said. "All credit to the team. They called this brilliantly."

O'Brien's tyre weakness showed in the closing stages as his 570S GT4 was swamped by both RJN Nissans and the Academy Aston Martin and fell to fifth.

Jesse Anttila/Stephen Johansen led the Nissan charge, driving consistently to second and the Pro-Am class win ahead of Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones's Vantage. Martin Plowman/Kelvin Fletcher were fourth in the second 370Z.

Ben Barnicoat and Adam Balon would have been in the hunt for the win in their Track-Club McLaren. They'd qualified third, but picked up a stop-go for shaving time from their pitstop and then dropped out with an engine issue.

Century BMW pairing Ben Green and Ben Tuck ran well early on, but lost time when Green overshot the run into Deene Hairpin during his stint.

Balfe Motorsport's Mike Robinson and Graham Johnson struggled with car balance for much of the weekend, and also collected a stop-go for Robinson starting the McLaren's engine before the car had been dropped off the jacks during the driver change.

ROB LADBROOK



Lundqvist's race-three victory made him the year's first double winner

JEP/LAT

Lundqvist moves ahead in tight F3 battle

**ROCKINGHAM
BRSCC
APRIL 28-29**

With five different winners (from four teams) in the first five races, the 2018 BRDC British Formula 3 Championship is proving to be one of the most hotly contested series in the UK. Swede Linus Lundqvist put himself at the top of the standings after occupying every step of the podium across the Rockingham weekend, in the process becoming the first double winner this year.

Double R Racing driver Lundqvist was pipped to pole for race one by Tom Gamble – the Fortec Motorsports racer set the fastest time with his last lap of the session on a wet but gradually improving track.

It remained wet for the race and Lundqvist was unable to overturn Gamble's

lead, in what was a clean battle. In their wake it was somewhat messier: Jamie Chadwick spun at Deene, and Clement Novalak and Kush Maini damaged their cars taking evasive action.

Nicolai Kjaergaard, the championship leader heading into Rockingham, had started 12th after struggling to generate heat in his tyres and was also caught up in the melee, damaging a wishbone and later finding the gravel at Tarzan.

Jordan Cane, still racing with an injured left hand after an accident at Oulton, came through to third for Douglas Motorsport.

The reversed-grid second race produced the only F3 contest not to feature a safety car, despite the mixed-up order. Maini made the most of Sunday's dry conditions to take the lead by the end of the opening lap after starting fifth – and dropping to seventh by Deene – before taking victory

in his Lanan Racing car.

Kjaergaard made amends for his DNF, storming through from 13th on the grid to fifth by the end of lap one and second by the end of the next tour.

Lundqvist, who had started 10th, claimed third, which is where he would start for the final race. A lightning getaway gave him a lead he would not relinquish, as polesitter Maini dropped to third and fellow front-row starter Kjaergaard finished second in his Carlin-prepared machine.

For Billy Monger it was a weekend of missed opportunities. Struggling for traction, the Carlin-run teenager spun on the formation lap in race one and started last before pitting for a new front wing in the race after minor contact. Courtesy of the full-reversed-grid format for race two, Monger should have started on pole, but a new regulation brought in for this round (see p73) meant he started from the rear of the grid before going on to finish seventh.

In race three he challenged for the podium after starting fourth, but was knocked off at Deene by Gamble, who was later disqualified for the manoeuvre.

"It was a shame to end our race like that as I think with my pace I was capable of being on the podium," Monger said.

"I should have been on pole for race two and I didn't see myself finishing lower than first. It's been a really competitive field but I felt I should have had a win by now."

The first VW Racing Cup race had to be



Gamble gave Monger
airtime at Deene

JEP/LAT

ROCKINGHAM WEEKEND WINNERS

BRDC BRITISH FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Tom Gamble (Fortec Motorsports)

Race 2 Kush Maini (Lanan Racing)

Race 3 Linus Lundqvist (Double R Racing)

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Race 1 James Kellett

Race 2 James Kellett

Race 3 Geri Nicosia

GINETTA RACING DRIVERS CLUB

Race 1 James Crawshaw

Race 2 James Crawshaw

MINI CHALLENGE - JCW

Race 1 Ant Whorton-Eales

Race 2 Ant Whorton-Eales

VOLKSWAGEN RACING CUP

Race 1 Toby Davis (Golf)

Race 2 Martin Depper (Scirocco)

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

restarted following a high-speed crash for Ruairidh Clark on the Turn 1 banking. The youngster walked away from the incident bruised and winded.

At the restart poleman Jamie Bond bogged his Golf down as former British Touring Car driver Martin Depper shot his Scirocco into the lead. Bond's opportunistic attempt to go around the outside into the Tarzan hairpin put him in the gravel and down the order.

Depper led but then ran too deep into Deene and out of contention, giving Chris Panayiotou the lead, but he too hit problems when his Scirocco's front bumper came loose. Toby Davis came through for the win in his Golf from the recovering Panayiotou.

In race two, Bond had established a healthy lead mid-way through proceedings courtesy of starting from pole in the partially reversed-grid race. But Simon Walton's Audi TT blew its engine at Gracelands, depositing the contents of its sump, and Bond was one of several drivers to find the gravel as the red flags flew.

At the restart, Depper shot through from third to take the lead and the win.

Ant Whorton-Eales dominated both Mini Challenge races, as main challenger Nathan Harrison suffered a broken gearbox pin on the opening lap of race one and was forced to retire.

The second race was chaotic. Polesitter Henry Neal, son of BTCC star Matt, suffered a drive problem leaving the grid and retired. The race was then red-flagged after a crash at Turn 1. Whorton-Eales won from the restart as Harrison charged through to third from 27th on the grid.

STEFAN MACKLEY

KELLETT ON TOP IN GT5'S CLOSE ENCOUNTERS



The three Ginetta GT5 Challenge races may not have featured a single safety car or stoppage like the majority of other races during the weekend, but to suggest they were not action-packed would be thoroughly inaccurate.

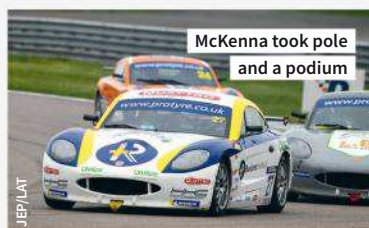
Featuring Ginetta G40s, the one-make series is proving to be one of the most popular championships of 2018 with its relatively low running costs and close, competitive racing.

Thirty-one drivers were on the grid at Rockingham, representing a blend of experience and youth. With the championship supporting British GT at five rounds, it's becoming more and more of a proving ground for prospective GT3 and GT4 teams looking for the next generation of sportscar drivers.

"It looks like it's going to be a tough year [to win]," said returning champion James Kellett. "GT5 seems to be extremely popular because it's a great championship."

He may believe this season will be difficult, but Kellett made it look easy as he claimed two wins and a second place in the final race. The 2015 champion now holds a comfortable lead at the top of the standings from last year's runner-up, Shane Stoney.

But it was 16-year-old Scott McKenna, competing in just his fourth weekend of car racing, who took pole position in the wet qualifying session. Possibly his lack of experience showed when the lights went out, since he slipped down to



fourth during the opening lap before regaining third by the flag, as Kellett took the first of his two wins.

Alex Toth Jones left Rockingham perhaps the most frustrated driver in the championship, having finished runner-up to Kellett in the first two races. While he kept Kellett honest in the first, the second race provided him with the best chance of victory. He challenged for the lead into Deene over the final few laps, but yellow flags meant he was unable to overtake.

"I was setting him [Kellett] up for the hairpin [Deene] and every time I went for it the yellows were still out," he said. "I think I could have won that race without them."

Stoney claimed third in race two to complement the two wins he took at the opening round at Oulton Park, cementing his status as a championship contender.

The final, reversed-grid race was the most entertaining. Geri Nicosia capitalised on his front-row starting position to take the lead and began to pull out a gap to the chasing pack. That was led by polesitter Morgan Quinn, who quickly became something of a roadblock with Toth Jones, Kellett, Connor O'Brien, Stoney and McKenna forming a queue behind.

On lap four of 10, Kellett moved into third and the following lap passed Quinn into the right-hander of Chapman Curve. The 20-year old then began to reduce Nicosia's lead, which by this stage was nearly five seconds. By the flag that gap was only 1.5s but Nicosia held on.

Behind, Quinn put in a robust defence of the final podium position as several drivers took turns to try to displace him. None of them could and it was Katie Milner, the 2016 Junior Saloon Car champion, who finished fourth.

The weekend, though, belonged to the deserving Kellett.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Spencer is undefeated
in BCV8 this year

HAWKINS

Mixed-up grid leads to thrilling MG battle

BRANDS HATCH
MGCC
APRIL 28-29

Rob Spencer survived a nervy off-track moment in the first BCV8 Championship race and a late charge from Ian Prior in race two to claim a double triumph at Brands Hatch to maintain his unbeaten start to the season.

With slippery conditions in qualifying contributing to a jumbled grid, hopes for two intriguing races were high. Spencer made light work of his third-row start in the opener, blasting into an immediate lead in his MGB GT V8 ahead of the similar cars of James and Jonnie Wheeler. At the end of the opening lap, though, an off at Paddock Hill for reigning champion Russell McCarthy brought out the safety car.

Spencer continued to lead once racing resumed, but Neil Fowler was the man

on the move. Having started 10th, Fowler powered his way to third by Surtees on lap six of 13. Three laps later he relieved James Wheeler of second with a daring outside move climbing Hailwood Hill.

Shortly after, Spencer narrowly avoided disaster when he was eased onto the grass along Cooper Straight, attempting to scythe through battling traffic. Undeterred, he hung on to win from Fowler and James Wheeler.

With rain beginning to fall at the start of the second race, Fowler was at the centre of the action again when he spun at Graham Hill Bend. Most of the following drivers were able to take evasive action, but Simon Cripps and Babak Farsian were not so lucky, making contact. Guy Samuels also rolled to a halt in his V8 Roadster at the same spot, contributing to a race stoppage. Neither Fowler nor Cripps took the restart.

James Wheeler briefly led the restarted event, but the on-form Spencer was in front by Paddock on lap two and went on to record his third win in three starts. Behind him, Prior almost snatched victory on the dash to the line after a heroic charge from 18th on the grid.

Triple champion Chris Bray was declared the winner of the first MG Trophy race following two stoppages. Series returnee Bray had a close tussle with Silverstone double-winner Jason Burgess before Andy Firth's shunt on the inside of Paddock caused the first red flag.

Bray led from pole after the restart, but the contest was brought to an abrupt end after youngster Tylor Ballard had a spectacular roll at Paddock.

Class B pacesetter Paul Luti built up a comfortable lead in the second contest before Bray, struggling with a suspected brake issue, tangled with Burgess at Surtees. Their collision, coupled with a late caution period, helped the ZR 190 of Graham Ross catch Luti's ZR 170 and snatch the spoils. Ben Mills inherited third when Matt Turnbull was penalised for overtaking under the safety car.

Tom Smith steered his MGB Roadster to a lights-to-flag success in both Equipe GTS Group A contests. Simon Cripps finished a close second in his similar car in the first race after Wilf Penrose spun his TVR Grantura MkIII into the Paddock gravel.

Smith's margin of victory over Cripps was more convincing in race two. Chris Ryan charged through from the back to claim third in his Triumph TR4.

MGB Roadsters filled the first five places in the first Group B race. Babak Farsian scored a dominant win while Garry Townsend held off David Keers-Trafford's race-long challenge to claim second. Both drivers had benefited from Simon Milner going off at Clark Curve. Roadster domination was broken in race two as Tom Grindall took an impressive win in his MG Midget ahead of Keers-Trafford.



Bray won on MG
Trophy return

HAWKINS

BRANDS HATCH WEEKEND WINNERS

ALLCOMERS

Jonathan Bevan/Rod Birley (Honda Integra)

BCV8 CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Rob Spencer (B GT V8)

Race 2 Rob Spencer (B GT V8)

BRITISH THOROUGHBREDS

Kevin Doyle/Patrick Doyle (Jaguar XJ12 Coupe)

EQUIPE GTS

GROUP A

Race 1 Tom Smith (MGB Roadster)

Race 2 Tom Smith (MGB Roadster)

GROUP B

Race 1 Babak Farsian (MGB Roadster)

Race 2 Tom Grindall (MG Midget)

EQUIPE PRE-63

Race 1 Bill Rawles/Jack Rawles

(Austin Healey 3000)

Race 2 Paul Kennelly (Austin Healey 100/M)

ICONIC 50s

Race 1 Mark Ellis (MGA Twin Cam)

Race 2 Mark Ellis (MGA Twin Cam)

METRO CUP

Race 1 Andrew Ashton (Rover Metro GTi)

Race 2 Jack Ashton (Rover Metro GTi)

MG CUP

Race 1 Mike Williams (Rover Metro)

Race 2 Mike Williams (Rover Metro)

MG TROPHY

Race 1 Chris Bray (ZR 190)

Race 2 Graham Ross (ZR 190)

MIDGET/SPRITE CHALLENGE

Race 1 Stephen Collier (MG Midget)

Race 2 Stephen Collier (MG Midget)

TRIPLE-M RACING CHALLENGE

Race 1 Tony Seber (Wolseley Hornet Special)

Race 2 Rod Seber (Wolseley Hornet Special)

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

Ex-MG Trophy champ Andrew Ashton took full advantage of a poor opening lap for younger brother Jack and claimed bragging rights with victory in the first Metro Cup race. Jack reversed the result in the second event. Mark Eales twice finished third.

The same Wolseley Hornet Special won both Triple-M Challenge encounters. Tony Seber defeated Harry Painter's MG PA to win race one, before Rod Seber clinched victory ahead of Mike Painter's MG Kayne Special in a second outing that was hampered by cold track temperatures.

Stephen Collier proved uncatchable in both Midget/Sprite Challenge events. The Austin Healey Sprite of Paul Campfield beat Richard Bridge's MkII version to second in race one. Bridge gained his revenge in race two, leaving Campfield to fend off Stephen Pegram's Midget in a tense battle for third.

MARK LIBBETER

NATIONAL REPORTS CLUB AUTOSPORT



AUSSIE 'BIRDCAGE' Australia was represented on the grid for the pair of Iconic 50s contests at Brands Hatch after Dave Godwin shipped his MGA Roadster from down under. Godwin became the fourth owner of the car – which started life as an Australian-assembled Monza Red 1500cc known as 'Birdcage A' – 12 years ago and hopes to compete in more UK events in the coming year. Despite being delayed at the start of race one, he recorded a 12th-place finish before coming home ninth in race two. Both races were won by Mark Ellis in his MGA Twin Cam.



TVR TURNS HEADS Robi Bernberg brought two of the best-looking cars to the meeting in a weekend that delivered mixed fortunes for him. Driving his TVR Grantura MkIII (above) in Equipe GTS, Bernberg claimed two fourth-place finishes in Group A. In the opener, he was narrowly beaten to the podium by Rob Spencer's MGB Roadster. In race two, he held off Wilf Penrose's similar car to replicate his earlier result. Bernberg also qualified a Cooper T39 Bobtail in the Iconic 50s double-header, but the car failed to fire up as left the line in race one, curtailing his hopes.



ELITE EFFORT Brian Arculus starred throughout the pair of Equipe Pre-63 contests at the wheel of his smartly presented Lotus Elite. Arculus was at the heart of much of the action in race one, battling first with Richard Woolmer's Turner MkII over fourth before charging through to challenge Paul Kennelly's Austin Healey 100/M for second. Arculus made the best start to lead the chasing pack in race two, but was baulked by backmarkers mid-race. This dropped him to second behind Kennelly, but it was still a result he greeted with satisfaction as he crossed the line.



CSX2001 (above) with its unusual hardtop; CSX2000 (below) was the prototype

A DIFFERENT WAY TO TAKE



BOOK
THE FIRST THREE SHELBY COBRAS
RRP £30

Putting an original spin on motorsport history can be tough, particularly if the subject is as well-known as the Shelby Cobra. But that is something Gordon Bruce achieves with his new book, *The First Three Shelby Cobras*.

The Porter Press Exceptional Cars and Great Cars series are now well established. They focus on the story of individual chassis, charting the lives of specific (often legendary) cars. When done well, this approach adds new stories and interest while also covering off the basics of a given famous model. In this case, Bruce achieves this by looking at three cars – the first Cobras produced in 1962.

Once you get past the early hyperbole about the Cobra and its creator, Carroll Shelby, this work has many great snippets. Shelby is clearly the hero of the piece, but Bruce isn't afraid to expose the problems or flaws in the project to put an American V8 into an ageing British chassis. He gives AC's role, often forgotten, due credit and points out that Shelby quickly reneged on the agreement to have AC badges on the cars. Bruce also charts the Cobra's early motorsport outings, which fell into the 'fast-but-fragile' category, as Ford battled

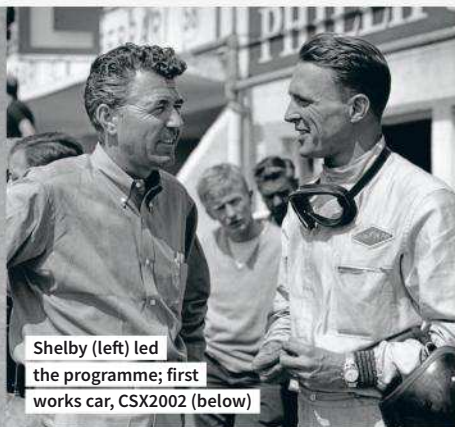
to beat Chevrolet at home and Shelby strived to defeat Ferrari in Europe.

If we were being picky, we'd say it would have been nice to have more anecdotes and insights from those involved, but it's clear that Bruce has done his research and knows his stuff. There are some myths busted and hidden gems revealed. Many of the changes often attributed to the Cobra came in the final, 2.6-litre version of the AC Ace on which it was based, for example. And not all 427 models were supplied with the same specification of engine, a fact probably not known at the time by Shelby's customers...

There are also welcome mini-segments on the key players, from Shelby himself to test driver Ken Miles, star engineer Phil Remington, and Peter Brock, designer of the Daytona Coupe. Among our favourites are Bill Krause and Dave MacDonald, fine racers who aren't familiar figures in Europe.

Where this book really comes into its own, of course, is the detail of the three chassis. CSX2000 (slightly irritatingly referred to as "the one and only Cobra prototype" throughout) was built in three

"PERHAPS THE MOST INTRIGUING IS THE STORY OF THE FIRST PRODUCTION COBRA"



ON A SNAKE

months and still has the 260-cubic inch (4.2-litre) Ford engine initially planned for the Cobra, soon replaced by the famous 289. It was one of the few cars Shelby kept for his entire life, remaining incredibly original and selling for \$13.75million in 2016.

CSX2002 was the first works racing Cobra and, having come close to extinction, has been restored to the specification in which it arrived at the 1963 Sebring 12 Hours. But perhaps the most intriguing is the story of the first production Cobra.

The first Cobra built by Ed Hugus's European Cars, CSX2001 went through the hands of several interesting owners, including Jean Marie Vincent. He admitted to spinning the Cobra on the road several times, but had some motorsport success with the car, which he developed. At one time it had an unusual hardtop and Vincent (sharing with Frank Ruata) scored a win in the multi-discipline Rallye de l'AGACI in 1964. Later, the car appeared in a magazine shoot with rock-and-roll singer Johnny Hallyday and had a hard life before being restored.

Bruce goes on to cover all the Shelby versions of the Cobra, up to and including the even more brutal seven-litre 427s, but he doesn't go into huge detail.

What he does do is leave you wanting to know even more. Which, for a book about such a famous series of cars, is surely an impressive feat.

KEVIN TURNER

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

DUKE CLASSICS - ISLE OF MAN TT

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

DOCUMENTARY

On Board: Steve Hissop 1994

On Board: Carl Fogarty 1990

Motorcycle Sport 1950

Racing Into History

TT: The Formula One Years 1987-1994

TT Classic Magic

1980'S

Isle Of Man TT - 1985

Isle Of Man TT - 1989

Isle Of Man TT - 1988

Isle Of Man TT - 1987

Isle Of Man TT - 1986

1990'S

Isle Of Man TT - 1994

Isle Of Man TT - 1993

Isle Of Man TT - 1992

Isle Of Man TT - 1991

Isle Of Man TT - 1990

DUKE CLASSICS - ISLE OF MAN TT

Delve into Duke Video's legendary archive of TT footage. There's some gloriously nostalgic stuff from the 1940s and '50s (the latter narrated by Graham Walker, father of Murray), but the more modern material is the most effective way to whiten your knuckles from the comfort of your armchair. Go to <http://bit.ly/duke-isleofmantt>

THIS WEEKEND'S EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT	UK MOTORSPORT	Silverstone International CSCC
World Endurance Championship Rd 1/8 Spa, Belgium May 5 TV Live Motorsport.tv, Saturday 1215. Eurosport 2, Saturday 1715	Donington Park MSVR May 4-6 Donington Historic Festival: Super Touring, Derek Bell Trophy, Jaguars, Formula Junior, GTSCC, Pre-63 GT, U2TC, Touring Greats, Coys Trophy, Stirling Moss Trophy, Woodcote Trophy, Pre-War Sports, Heritage Touring Cars	May 5-6 Tin Tops, Swinging Sixties, Future Classics, Magnificent 7s, Modern Classics, Special Saloons and Modsports, Classic K, New Millennium, Open Series, Turbo Tin Tops
DTM Rd 1/10 Hockenheim, Germany May 5-6	International GT Open Rd 2/7 Paul Ricard, France May 5-6	Knockhill SMRC May 6 Mini Coopers, Fiestas and Hot Hatch, FF1600, Classic Sports and Saloons, Legends, Sports and Saloons
IMSA SportsCar Rd 4/12 Mid-Ohio, USA May 6	ERC Rd 2/8 Canary Islands Rally May 3-5	Silverstone National 750MC May 5 Clio 182s, BMW 330s, BMW Car Club, M3 Cup, Bernie's V8s/ Sports Racing and GT, Armed Forces Race
Super GT Rd 2/8 Fuji, Japan May 4	V8 Stock Cars Rd 4/12 Londrina, Brazil May 6	Castle Combe CCRC May 7 Minis, Combe GT, Jaguars, Combe Saloons, Track Attack Racing Club, FF1600, Hot Hatch, Dave Allan Trophy
Australian Supercars Rd 5/16 Barbagallo, Australia May 5-6	Scandinavian Touring Cars Rd 1/6 Knutstorp, Sweden May 5	Brands Hatch MSVR May 5-6 Blancpain GT Series: Sprint Cup, GT4 European Series, Porsche Club, 7 Race Series
NASCAR Cup Rd 11/36	MotoGP Rd 4/19 Jerez, Spain May 6 TV Live BT Sport 2, Sunday 1230	Snetterton BARC May 7 Racing Fords, Max5, Hyundai Coupes, MGOC, Sports-Racing Cars, Karts



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TOP FIVE

WORLD SPORTSCAR WINNERS

The versatile Jacky Ickx tops the list of greats

KEVIN TURNER



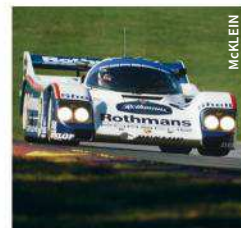
MCKLEIN

THE WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP KICKS off at Spa this weekend, so we thought it was a good time to look back at the most prolific winners of the series' previous world sportscar championship era. Earl Bamber, Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley are currently the top WEC winners on 11, so it'll be a while before anyone threatens Jacky Ickx's remarkable tally.

3

DEREK BELL, 21 WINS

The five-time Le Mans winner took his first world sportscar victory with Jo Siffert in a Porsche 917 in 1971 and added more with Gulf Mirage and Alfa Romeo. But Bell really racked up the numbers in Group C. He helped keep the Porsche flag flying in the face of Jaguar opposition, topping the drivers' standings in '85 (with Hans Stuck) and '86.



MCKLEIN

5

MAURO BALDI, 17 WINS

Baldi was one of the few drivers to win in Lancia's fast-but-fragile LC2 and added privateer Porsche victories before joining Sauber-Mercedes. In 1990 he shared the drivers' crown with Jean-Louis Schlesser, but he had to wait until the post-world championship '94 Le Mans to add a victory in the 24 Hours.



MCKLEIN

2

JOCHEN MASS, 32 WINS

Mass took many of his early endurance racing wins alongside Ickx in Porsches, especially in various versions of the Group 5 935. The 1975 Spanish Grand Prix winner went on to score 10 victories in Sauber-Mercedes C9 and C11 racers, including Le Mans in 1989, and twice narrowly missed out on the drivers' championship.



MCKLEIN

4

HENRI PESCAROLO, 21 WINS

With one Le Mans win fewer than his former Alfa Romeo team-mate Bell, Pescarolo slots into fourth. A linchpin of the Matra team, he would surely have been a world champion had there been a drivers' contest in the 1970s. Wins were harder to come by in Group C, but the Frenchman took his last success in '86, before becoming a team boss.



LAT IMAGES

1

JACKY ICKX, 37 WINS

One of the all-time sportscar greats, the versatile Belgian started winning in 1967, at his beloved Spa, when he was still an up-and-coming single-seater ace. There were victories for Ford, Ferrari and Matra before he joined Porsche. Ickx scored four of his six Le Mans wins with the German marque, and two Group C drivers' crowns, in '82 and '83.



LAT IMAGES





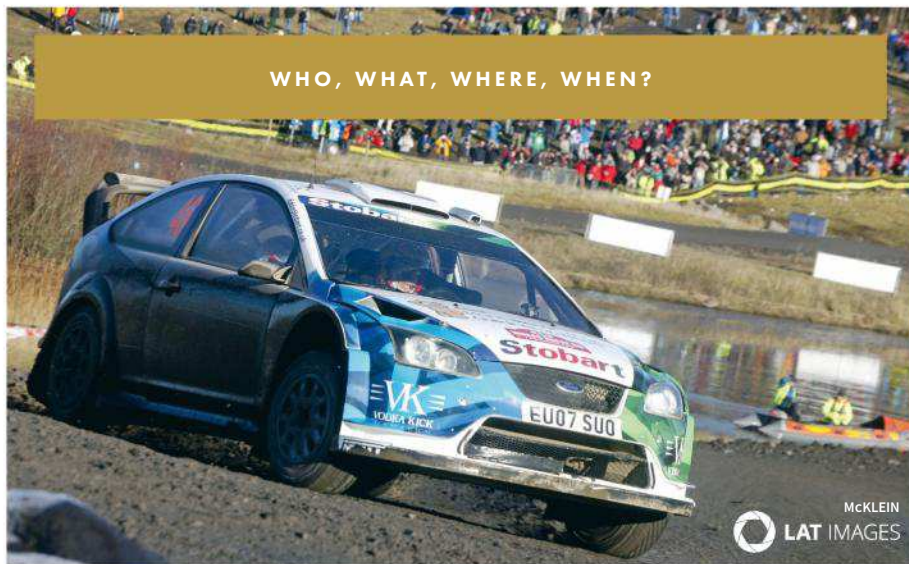
FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Ferraris of Giorgio Scarlatti/Giulio Cabianca (#23 Dino 196 S), Cliff Allison/Hermano da Silva Ramos (#15 250TR), Olivier Gendebien/Phil Hill (#14 250TR) and Jean Behra/Dan Gurney (#12 250TR) line up in the pitlane ahead of the 1959 Le Mans 24 Hours. None of the cars made the finish due to mechanical problems.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



MCKLEIN
LAT IMAGES

WHO IS THIS?

From the city of the mountains to the top of the world, this charismatic racer recovered from an enormous knock to have a wide and varied career.

He left home to make the grade at a famous finishing school, which led to grassroots success and then to a voyage on a mythological ship.

In the second tier he gained international acclaim at a Hampshire speedbowl, which led to a two-year stint at the top that ended when he lost his teddy.

He headed west for his greatest triumphs but also his hardest hit. He recovered to lead the way over the bricks but suffered a very public embarrassment.

When a schism erupted he backed the winning side before turning left into a dead end. For a while he could be heard and not seen as part of an American test of endurance.

ON THIS DAY

1 Which future Le Mans 24 Hours winner made his F1 debut on this day in 1981?

2 Ivan Capelli started from the highest grid position of his ill-starred Ferrari career on this day in the 1992 Spanish GP. In which position did he qualify?

3 Which F1 minnow scored its only points on this day in the 1987 San Marino GP?

4 Which legendary F1 team boss was born on this day in 1924?

5 Which ex-F1 star scored his only DTM win on this day in 1992?

NAME THE HELMET



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Larry Perkins, Amon-Ford AF1, Nurburgring, August 3 1974. **Who is this?** Gianni Morbidelli. **On this day** 1) Toyota. 2) 1986 Hungarian GP. 3) Robert Doornbos. 4) Kris Meeke. 5) **2. Name the helmet** Manuel Reuter.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

WHAT'S UP WITH VERSTAPPEN?



ANDRE/SUTTON IMAGES

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