

F1 Sainz takes McLaren seat as silly season rages

WEC How Alonso and Toyota lost Silverstone win

IndyCar Wickens survives horrific airborne shunt



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FAREWELL ALONSO

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ALONSO TAKES THE F1 WORLD BY SURPRISE – AGAIN

Fernando Alonso certainly took us by surprise last week. Actually, we were a bit miffed about the timing of his announcement that he was quitting Formula 1 for 2019, coming as it did just as we were about to close for press on last week's issue...

Edd Straw quickly put together a holding story in between hosting various podcasts, then set to work on providing us with a detailed cover story for this week's magazine. Alonso hasn't held back on his reasons for falling out of love with F1, and you can find the full feature on page 16.

What the news also did was to continue this silliest of silly seasons. The house of cards that was the 2019 driver line-up is being built back up again, with Carlos Sainz Jr replacing Alonso at McLaren, and Pierre Gasly swiftly promoted from Toro Rosso to Red Bull in place of Renault-bound Daniel Ricciardo. And now Lando Norris could be in line to join Sainz at McLaren if he goes well in his FP1 outings, starting at Spa tomorrow (Friday). Read the latest on what's going on with all the to-ing and fro-ing on page 4.

Alonso was also in the news at Silverstone. Ironically, he'd complained that F1 was too predictable before winning on the road in last weekend's British World Endurance Championship round alongside Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima, as Toyota completely crushed the opposition. But what happened in the scrutineering bay was far from predictable. You can read Gary Watkins's account of what happened on page 24.

Finally, we were shocked about the Robert Wickens accident in the Pocono IndyCar race. That he has survived at all is testament to the strength of modern racing cars. I'm sure you all join us in wishing Robert a rapid and full recovery.

PIT+PADDOCK

- 4 Norris could join Sainz at McLaren
- 7 Horrific IndyCar shunt for Wickens
- 9 WEC to vary its race lengths
- 11 Belgian Grand Prix preview
- 13 In the paddock: Edd Straw
- 14 In the paddock: Marcus Simmons
- 15 Feedback: your letters

INSIGHT

- 16 **COVER STORY**
Why Alonso is leaving Formula 1

RACE CENTRE

- 24 Toyota wins then loses at Silverstone
- 32 Ticktum grabs Euro F3 points lead
- 36 It's Tanak again in Rally Germany
- 42 World of Sport: IndyCar; IMSA; NASCAR; Super Formula

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 56 Rockingham track closing down
- 58 British GT champ tests new Vantage
- 60 Jackson for Revival FJunior thrash
- 61 Club column: Marcus Pye
- 62 National reports: Mondello Park; Thruxton; Brands Hatch; Snetterton
- 68 Minshaw's British GT quest

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 70 What's on this week
- 72 From the archive: 1978 Austrian GP
- 74 Pit your wits against our quiz

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NORRIS GETS FP1 SHOT TO

FORMULA 1

McLaren reserve driver Lando Norris will make his Formula 1 free practice debut at this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix as he fights Esteban Ocon to earn a race seat alongside Carlos Sainz Jr in 2019.

The 2017 Formula 3 European champion, who recently drove for McLaren in the post-Hungarian GP test, will replace Fernando Alonso in FP1 at Spa.

Alonso's exit at the end of this year, combined with McLaren's lack of confidence in Stoffel Vandoorne, left both McLaren seats up for grabs. But Sainz was quickly announced as Alonso's replacement, which means that Vandoorne, Norris and Mercedes junior Ocon are vying over one drive.

It is understood that Norris's FP1 run in Belgium is part of an ongoing evaluation regarding his potential to step up to a race seat with the team in 2019. Norris is currently competing for Carlin in Formula 2 and is second in the standings with a 12-point deficit to leader George Russell.

Should McLaren decide that Norris needs another year of preparation before being ready for F1, and that Vandoorne has not done enough to retain his seat for a third season, then Ocon could make the surprise move from Force India to McLaren.

The Frenchman had looked set to move

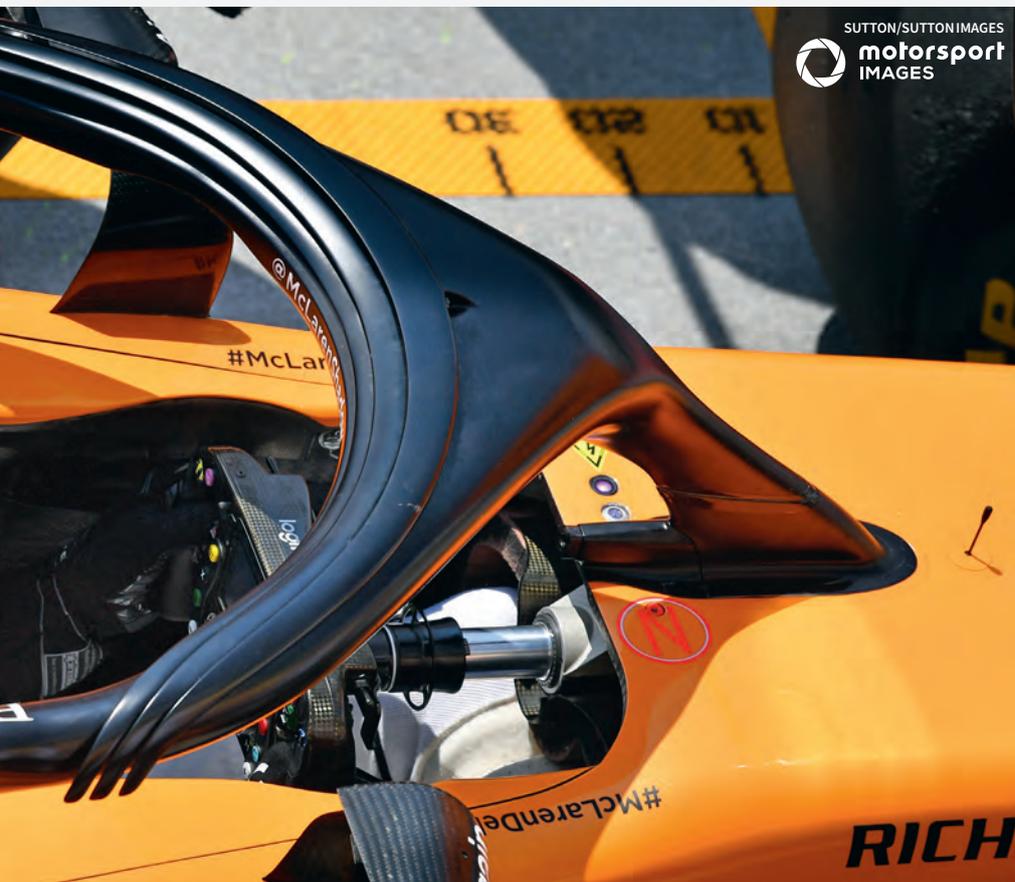
to Renault in 2019, before his hopes were dashed when the French manufacturer pulled off a shock swoop for Daniel Ricciardo. Ocon's place at Force India is under threat given Lawrence Stroll, father of current Williams driver Lance, led the consortium that rescued the Silverstone-based squad and Sergio Perez said this week that taking up the renewal option on his contract appears a formality.

Whoever McLaren chooses to partner Sainz, the team will feature one of the youngest driver line-ups on the grid. Although Sainz is approaching his fifth season in F1 he is still on 23, which is why McLaren CEO Zak Brown called him "the perfect blend of youth and experience".

Sainz has joined McLaren on a multi-year deal. He has referred to Alonso as his "idol" and was called a "fitting replacement" for his fellow Spaniard by Brown.

McLaren's news that it had signed Sainz effectively confirmed Gasly's promotion to Red Bull — Sainz was Gasly's only competition for the Red Bull seat, and

**"VANDOORNE,
NORRIS AND OCON
ARE VYING OVER
ONE DRIVE"**



JOIN SAINZ AT McLAREN

Sainz's contractual situation was such that McLaren must have secured Red Bull's permission to make the hire and announce it. Red Bull followed up that news at the beginning of this week with confirmation that Gasly will partner Max Verstappen next season.

Gasly finished fourth in the Bahrain GP, earning Honda's best result since returning to F1 in 2015, and has since banked seventh position in Monaco and sixth in Hungary to comfortably outperform team-mate Brendon Hartley. He will also bring a season of experience using the Honda engine, which Red Bull will adopt for 2019.

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner said Gasly's "stellar performances" this season had "enhanced his reputation as one of the most exciting young drivers in motorsport".

Gasly is the only Red Bull driver to win the GP2/F2 title, but he was placed in Super Formula for 2017 as Red Bull made him wait for his F1 chance. Now, less than a year after making his F1 debut with Toro Rosso, his graduation to the senior team has been confirmed.

Red Bull's call means it will need to find at least one new driver to place at Toro Rosso next season, while Hartley may yet earn a stay of execution because of the lack of alternatives.

There is no obvious option within Red

Bull's pool of junior drivers, with F3 European Championship leader Dan Ticktum favoured but at risk of not earning a superlicence. One solution would be to adopt a driver currently outside that pool, such as Vandoorne – if the Belgian is dropped from McLaren – or F2 racer and ex-Red Bull Junior Alexander Albon.

Another would be for Red Bull to repeat what it did with Hartley and bring an older driver back into the fold, such as ex-Toro Rosso men-turned-Formula E champions Sebastien Buemi and Jean-Eric Vergne.

While Albon and Vergne seem to be long shots, both recognise the fluctuating driver market as opportunities to be surprise additions to the F1 grid.

Vergne last raced in F1 for Toro Rosso in 2014, but says his 2017-18 Formula E title has led to him being approached by a team. F2 frontrunner Albon believes he can fight for the seat if he can convince Red Bull motorsport boss Helmut Marko, who he concedes is "not his biggest fan".

Albon was dropped by Red Bull in 2012 and Marko does not usually re-sign dismissed drivers, but British-Thai Albon has won races against Russell and Norris in F2 and is one of few sub-F1 options who will have the required superlicence points.

SCOTT MITCHELL

➔ P16 ALONSO'S F1 EXIT

'Class B' F1 talk polarises the drivers

FORMULA 1

There's been a lot of talk about Formula 1's unofficial 'Class B' lately in the wake of the domination of the top three teams – with Autosport even running a table – and it has caused polarising views among the drivers 'competing' in it.

Force India's Sergio Perez says it is a negative concept. "You cannot compete," he told Autosport. "The last four or five years it was simply two categories in Formula 1. I've never heard before, that people were talking about, 'Yeah, I won the race' when you are best of the rest or, 'I'm leading the championship' if you are best of the rest. That shouldn't be the way. That is damaging the sport a lot."

But Haas star Kevin Magnussen (below), who stands 22 points adrift of Renault's Nico Hulkenberg in the 'fake' table, uses it as motivation. "I'm kind of creating this big championship in my head," he said. "I know it doesn't exist, but in my head it's something to motivate myself with.

"I've let go of those top three teams, I'm not worried about that, but we are in an even fight with the two or three other teams in the midfield and that fight is something I really want to win."

Magnussen is expected to extend his time with Haas. "It's a stable team that gives you a good car, that can still fight for points and still fight for that Class B championship," he said. "I probably have the best car of the trailing teams. I couldn't ask for more."

SCOTT MITCHELL & OLEG KARPOV



UNOFFICIAL CLASS B F1 TABLE

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Nico Hulkenberg	169
2	Kevin Magnussen	147
3	Carlos Sainz Jr	133
4	Fernando Alonso	123
5	Esteban Ocon	113
6	Sergio Perez	106



DTM could lose its 'D' as series bids to go global – again

DTM

The DTM name that was first used in 1984 could become a thing of the past, with series boss Gerhard Berger telling Autosport that a change is “on the radar” as organising body the ITR attempts to broaden the category’s global appeal.

Berger, who was announced as the ITR chairman in March 2017, has repeatedly stated his desire to improve the DTM’s worldwide credentials. His plans include drawing an international “premium” manufacturer – such as the possible R-Motorsport Aston Martin tie-up – to the championship, after Mercedes exits for 2019.

But Berger reckons the full Deutsche Tourenwagen Masters name could be a limiting factor in the category’s marketability. “[DTM] has a lot of pluses and a lot of minuses,” he told Autosport. “It’s always a matter, but in Germany there’s a very strong fan crew who are behind DTM. But outside of Germany they would like to have a more international name. We have it on the radar but so far no conclusion.”

Audi motorsport boss Dieter Gass accepts that the moniker makes “life difficult for the championship”.

“It’s something that needs to be looked at properly,” he said. “On the other hand, DTM is a brand name as well and

everybody knows what DTM is. There’s two sides to the matter really. The ‘D’ in particular now for us, and for Gerhard to talk to potential new manufacturers outside Germany, it’s a problem.”

Gass added that the DTM should be open to evolving into a full world championship, along the lines of its International Touring Car Championship iteration of 1995-96. This featured a predominantly European calendar but also held Brazilian and Japanese races. It imploded due to huge costs, before the DTM was revived in its present form in 2000.

“I think a championship like [DTM as it is now] in the long term, purely German, will be quite difficult to sustain,” said Gass. “We need to be more international.”

But Berger, who has overseen the reintroduction of rounds in the UK and Italy, explained that moving DTM towards a world championship could take more than two years. “Step by step, we have to strengthen first our core DTM product, especially in countries like Britain or Italy,” he said. “We’re back again but it takes two or three years to stabilise and bring it back ahead of the fans. You’re not going to be successful with a one-off – it takes time. I would say in year three, if it’s adapted in new places, we could think about the next step.”

MATT KEW

Electric WRX deferred to 2021

WORLD RALLYCROSS

The World Rallycross Championship’s planned switch to electric cars has been postponed until 2021.

World RX had intended to make the transition to electrically powered, four-wheel-drive, twin (250kW)-motor cars from the end of next season, but the delay is “to allow optimal time for all manufacturers investigating the possibility of competing to develop their plans,” said a WRX statement.

The move to electric WRX is a concept proposed by manufacturers to showcase electric cars, with plans having been formed between a group of car makers, the FIA and WRX promoter IMG. But while the sign-up deadline for the 2020 season had been August 15, marques will now have until March 29 next year to file intention to compete in ’21.

It’s understood that nine manufacturers have been involved in the electric rallycross Technical Working Group discussions, with Peugeot, Audi, Volkswagen, Ford and BMW (through driver Timo Scheider) connected with potential participation. Of those, current works WRX team Peugeot has been most vocal, but no marque has yet officially announced intention to participate in the series.

“A huge amount has been accomplished in a relatively short time since the first formal meeting in June 2017,” said IMG boss Paul Bellamy. “A completely new type of rallycross car has been conceived and defined, and so it is worth waiting a little longer to secure the best possible field of competitors. We believe that fans new and old will love what will be a thrilling addition to their favourite events.”

As revealed by Autosport earlier this year, the electric cars will use a single-make carbon-monocoque chassis with double-wishbone suspension. Following a tender process, that chassis will be developed and supplied by ORECA, while Williams Advanced Engineering will supply the batteries. Manufacturers will develop their own powertrains and body kits. The current two-litre turbocharged Supercars will continue to run as the headline class for the next two years, while the series has revealed that the electric cars will be showcased during events in 2020.

HAL RIDGE





Wickens hurt in massive Pocono crash

INDYCAR SERIES

As Autosport went to press, Robert Wickens was undergoing surgery for the spinal injuries he incurred in a huge shunt in last Sunday's IndyCar race at Pocono. Details from both the series and his Schmidt Peterson Motorsports team have been vague in the aftermath of the accident, but what has been revealed is that he has broken both legs, his right arm and suffered bruised lungs.

But it is the damage to his back that has inevitably worried fans the most, and a statement from IndyCar and SPM on Monday afternoon from Lehigh Valley Hospital—Cedar Crest revealed only that “an MRI was instrumental in revealing the most appropriate surgical course and Wickens is undergoing surgery Monday evening for a spinal injury. Further updates will be provided when available.”

Wickens has been one of the most impressive rookies in IndyCar racing history, regularly threatening the primary title contenders, taking pole on his series debut at St Petersburg and scoring four podium finishes. Despite the Pocono shunt, Wickens still lies sixth in the standings.

Although he never raced on ovals during his impressive junior formula years in North America and Europe, before his six years in DTM, Wickens had already shown he was

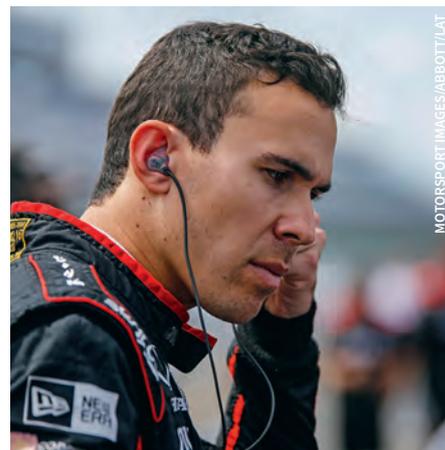
capable of adapting to left-turn-only tracks, finishing second at Phoenix and only missing out on podium finishes at Texas Motor Speedway and Iowa Speedway due to a rival's error and a tactical miscue respectively.

The crash at Pocono came on the first green-flag lap, lap six, following a startline fracas near the back of the grid. At the restart, Wickens had moved up to fourth and came off Turn 1 fast enough to move to the inside of Ryan Hunter-Reay's Andretti Autosport car as they headed to the Turn 2 kink on the tri-oval. But Hunter-Reay was in the slipstream of Will Power, allowing him to tow back ahead of Wickens, albeit not fully clear of the rookie. A slight rub between Wickens's right-front wing and the left-rear wheel of Hunter-Reay was enough to pitch the Andretti car into a broadside spin, and for Wickens to launch off its nose.

Wickens briefly rode along the SAFER barrier, and the moment it made contact with the catch fencing it started to shed large pieces of bodywork and wheels, while pitching the tub into a series of vicious gyrations that thankfully ended with the car landing right-side up on the track.

Hunter-Reay was unharmed in the wreck, while James Hinchcliff and Pietro Fittipaldi were treated for bruises, cuts and swellings having been caught up in the aftermath.

DAVID MALSHER



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/ABBOTT/LAT



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/ABBOTT/LAT

Ogier: 2019 looks set to be his last year in WRC



WRC

As far as the World Rally Championship is concerned, the end is nigh for five-time title winner Sébastien Ogier.

OK, it's near, but not quite here. If the Frenchman signs a new deal to stay in rallying next year it will, he says, be his last.

Ogier has made single-season deals with M-Sport to lead its Ford-based attack for the past two years, and the Cumbrian firm remains at the forefront of his negotiations for 2019. But Citroën's bid to bring back a driver once seen by some in Versailles as the black sheep

of the flock is gathering pace.

Some of the service park's wilder speculation in Germany last weekend even priced a potential Citroën deal at €10million, an agreement that would top anything the firm paid for Sébastien Loeb.

Predictably, nobody in red was willing to confirm numbers – or even that there had been an offer made to Ogier. All team principal Pierre Budar would say is that Citroën's in the market for a driver to help it take the title in 2019. "I cannot tell you anything," said Budar. "We are talking and the discussions are still going on [with Ogier] and that's all I will say."

Ogier, who handles his own negotiations, wouldn't be drawn on specifics either.

"It's clear that I'm coming towards the end of my career," he said, "and if there's another contract it'll be the last one. I'm lucky to have had good years with some good victories – it's not about the money for me. Like always, the first priority will be the performance and the chance to chase more wins next season."

Autosport understands that Hyundai and Toyota are putting more weight on re-signing their current stars than trying to attract the 43-time world rally winner.

DAVID EVANS

Boccolacci poised to replace Merhi in F2

FORMULA 2

GP3 Series race winner Dorian Boccolacci appeared poised to replace ex-Formula 1 driver Roberto Merhi in the MP Motorsport Formula 2 team from this weekend's round at Spa as Autosport closed for press.

Merhi lies 11th in the F2 standings with the Dutch team, with a best result this season of third at Monte Carlo, but is understood to

have parted company with the Dutch team. Boccolacci (right) is seventh in the GP3 points with MP, after taking his first win of the campaign last time out in Hungary in the reversed-grid race. It will be a first taste of F2 for the 19-year old from the South of France, who has not even tested in the category.

Boccolacci's GP3 berth with MP looks set to go to Formula Renault Eurocup

race winner Richard Verschoor in what would be a return to the team.

The 17-year-old Dutchman dominated the NEZ and Spanish Formula 4 championships with MP in 2016 before graduating to Renault Eurocup with the squad last year. He switched to Josef Kaufmann Racing for this season but has had a disappointing campaign and is 11th in the points.

MARCUS SIMMONS



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/MAUGER/LAT



WEC varies its race lengths

WEC

The World Endurance Championship is going back to its roots, with the first of its winter-series calendars in 2019-20 made up of races of a variety of different lengths.

There will be races of four, six and eight-hour durations – in addition to the Le Mans 24 Hours, of course – and the organisers aren't ruling out 10 and 12-hour events in the future. It harks back to the days when each world championship sportscar racing round had its own unique character and, often, duration.

The Silverstone and Shanghai events will be four-hour races, while the returning Bahrain fixture will be of eight hours' duration like the Sebring 1000 Miles event on the 2018-19 superseason calendar. Fuji, Spa and Interlagos – the Brazilian venue another returnee on the eight-race calendar – will retain the traditional six-hour format.

WEC boss Gerard Neveu explained that the shift followed last year's fan survey. "We will take care of the format of each race for the fans," he said. "If we have a race on Saturday it doesn't matter what time we finish, but on Sunday people have to go to work the next day, so it makes sense to have a shorter race finishing early."

He explained that it made sense for the pre-Le Mans Spa round to remain at six hours and the same for Fuji because of its heritage, even though both fall on a Sunday.

The British WEC venue, which will kick off the first winter-calendar season on

September 1 2019, has a long history with a longer event, of course, but managing director Stuart Pringle revealed that he was relaxed about the move. "We don't think it is a negative for the event," he said. "Of course, there will be some hardcore enthusiasts who will be disappointed, but for many other spectators the reduced length is positive. We are trying to build a family event with the WEC."

Neveu hinted at the inclusion of another longer event in the future. "We could include a 10-hour race somewhere," he said. "Everything is open, though we have to consider many parameters, the wishes of the local promoter, the format of the meeting, the weather, TV. We also have to be careful of adding running time to the championship, because that adds cost."

The continuation of the Sebring fixture, on the eve of the 12 Hours IMSA SportsCar Championship round, depends upon the success of the superseason event next year. There can be no decision on its future, said Neveu, until the WEC has "experience of the first race".

The Shanghai round will be on either November 10 or 17. Neveu said the WEC was working with the FIA to avoid a clash with the GT World Cup at Macau.

Dates are: September 1 Silverstone 4 Hours; October 13 Fuji 6 Hours; November 17 Shanghai 4 Hours; December 14 Bahrain 8 Hours; February 1 Interlagos 6 Hours; March TBA Sebring 1000 Miles; May 3 Spa 6 Hours; June 13-14 Le Mans 24 Hours.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

TOYOTA DROPS APPEAL

Toyota will not be appealing its exclusion from first and second positions in last weekend's Silverstone round of the World Endurance Championship, it emerged on Tuesday. The team served notice of its intent to appeal within the necessary timeframe on Sunday night, but has decided not to push ahead with the challenge.

ANDRETTI AT ANDRETTI

Marco Andretti has managed to secure a multi-year deal to stay at his dad's team in the IndyCar Series. Andretti will continue with the Bryan Herta-affiliated #98 car as part of the Andretti Autosport line-up.

FERRUCCI RETURNS

Formula 2 bad boy Santino Ferrucci will return to Dale Coyne Racing for the final two rounds of the IndyCar Series. DCR will expand to three Honda-powered cars to fit Ferrucci in alongside Sebastien Bourdais and Pietro Fittipaldi. Ferrucci, who is serving a two-round ban from F2 and was dropped by the Trident team, made his IndyCar debut at Detroit Belle Isle in June.

JUNCOS SET FOR IMSA

IndyCar team Juncos Racing is expanding into the IMSA SportsCar Championship next season. The squad will run a solo Cadillac DPi-V.R. It is due to take delivery of the car in November and begin testing in December.

KAHNE IS OUT...

Two NASCAR veterans have announced their retirement from full-time competition during the past week. Kasey Kahne will step down from the Cup at the end of this season after being dropped by Hendrick Motorsports at the end of last year and struggling with Leavine Family Racing in 2018. Regular Xfinity Series title contender Elliott Sadler is also backing off after a career that encompassed three wins in the Cup.

...AND CAINE IS OUT

Ginetta GT4 Supercar ace Carl Boardley will make his British Touring Car Championship debut at Knockhill this weekend. Boardley replaces Michael Caine in a Team Hard Volkswagen CC, with family commitments keeping Caine out of the cockpit.

MA-CON F3 HIATUS

Formula 3 European Championship minnow Ma-con skipped last weekend's Silverstone round after parting company with driver Julian Hanes. The German team is understood to be chasing a return for the Nurburgring round in September with a different pilot, while Hanes is seeking a berth with another squad.



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F1 BELGIAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

FRIDAY FP1 1000 FP2 1400	SUNDAY RACE 1410 LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1 & CHANNEL 4 BBC RADIO 5 LIVE 1400
SATURDAY FP3 1100 QUALIFYING 1400	

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP AND CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP SO FAR

1 Lewis Hamilton 213	1 Mercedes 345
2 Sebastian Vettel 189	2 Ferrari 335
3 Kimi Raikkonen 146	3 Red Bull 223
4 Valtteri Bottas 132	4 Renault 82
5 Daniel Ricciardo 118	5 Haas 66

TYRE ALLOCATION



THEMES TO WATCH

FERRARI'S POWER TRIP
Power counts at Spa, and based on the first half of the season Ferrari has the advantage on that score. Can Mercedes do anything to hit back? And if Ferrari does have the pace, can it do what it failed to in the previous two races and turn pace into victory?

FORCE INDIA ON THE UP?
Force India went into the August break in administration, with its future uncertain and a little over half a second's worth of upgrades that were designed but it couldn't manufacture. It's still early days since the Lawrence Stroll-led consortium took over, but the team can make a statement at Spa about how serious its recovery is.

TRACK STATS

LENGTH 4.352 miles
NUMBER OF LAPS 44
2017 POLE POSITION
Lewis Hamilton 1m42.553s
POLE LAP RECORD
Lewis Hamilton 1m42.553s (2017)
RACE LAP RECORD
Sebastian Vettel 1m46.577s (2017)

PREVIOUS WINNERS

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



HONDA'S BIG TEST
All eyes will be on Honda's progress at a track where it has struggled in previous years as it gears up for its move to power Red Bull next year. Last time out at the Hungaroring, Pierre Gasly won 'Class B', but Toro Rosso needs at least to be a minor points threat at Spa to convince that Honda has made big power steps.

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MUTUAL BENEFITS

Neither McLaren's nor Carlos Sainz Jr's share price is at its highest at present, and that's why both have been forced to invest in each other

EDD STRAW

There was a time when a move to McLaren was the stuff of dreams for drivers. But that time has now passed, and Carlos Sainz Jr is drinking from a poisoned chalice with his move to a team struggling to rebuild after this year's rude awakening. Sainz

is certainly no fool and heads into his McLaren adventure, as replacement for Fernando Alonso, with his eyes open and knowing he must establish himself as the focal point for a team that recently embarked on a long-haul journey to recovery.

As the past few months have shown, the driver market in Formula 1 can be volatile. When Sainz made his bold gambit to move to Renault on loan, he did so safe in the knowledge that he would either earn a recall to Red Bull for its A-team should Daniel Ricciardo leave, or secure a long-term place with an on-the-up works team. Neither came to pass, and without McLaren Sainz might have ended up either with nothing or having to take the worst-case scenario of a return to Toro Rosso.

So Sainz joins McLaren as a driver who has been rejected by Red Bull. The reasons for that are complicated and rooted in the problems that arose between him and Max Verstappen at Toro Rosso, and the off-track politics that led to Sainz switching to

"SAINZ WILL SEE THIS AS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOMEWHERE 'HIS' TEAM"

Renault. As Red Bull's Helmut Marko warned, you don't bite the hand that feeds you. But he's also been rejected by Renault, for even if Ricciardo hadn't made his apparent volte face and signed to replace Sainz, that place would have been taken by Esteban Ocon.

Sainz went to Renault expecting to assert himself over Nico Hulkenberg but has found himself unable to do so. While the gap in performance between the two is not as big as the points suggest – 52–30 in Hulkenberg's favour – it's clear that Sainz underestimated the challenge of getting on terms with the German. Even taking into account Sainz's misfortune, notably losing the MGU-K while running sixth and first in 'Class B' at Paul Ricard before slipping to eighth, his season at the factory team hasn't been as convincing as surely he'd hoped and expected it to be.

So Sainz joins McLaren following some tough lessons. He will have learned from them, too, for Sainz is an intelligent driver who has bounced back from setbacks before. Remember, he was

initially passed over for promotion to F1, first in favour of Daniil Kvyat and then by Red Bull's recruitment of Max Verstappen. But even with both of those rejections, a combination of his form in Formula Renault 3.5 plus an impressive performance in testing forced an opportunity that he made the most of.

One lesson learned will be not to overplay your hand. Sainz has established himself as a very effective grand prix driver, but not yet as one of the elite. But he's also recognised that he's done enough to warrant McLaren choosing him even after he was rejected elsewhere. No doubt, fellow countryman Alonso – who emerged as a mentor and friend to Sainz after they first met at the 2005 Spanish Grand Prix – has played a part in McLaren signing him, but the team would not have brought him in if it wasn't convinced that he was the best available option.

So Sainz is playing the long game with McLaren. There are occasions when a team that has fallen on tough times and a driver who has been passed over can link up successfully and play a part in their mutual revival. McLaren has certainly recognised and accepted the need for big changes and, while its intended recovery will be measured in years rather than months, Sainz will see this as the opportunity, at least, to make somewhere 'his' team. He'll have learned about the importance of that from Alonso.

First and foremost, he must do something at McLaren he has only briefly achieved before in F1 and that's to seize the initiative. Sainz did so at Toro Rosso for the brief spell between Verstappen's promotion to Red Bull in May 2016 and the Renault move five months later, but both before and after that he could not. Much will depend on who his team-mate is. Esteban Ocon – who is out of Force India, which is set to run Lance Stroll and Sergio Perez next year, and had the Renault door slammed in his face by Ricciardo's move – would be a formidable opponent. If it's one of the alternatives, say the very fast but inexperienced Lando Norris, Sainz will be favourite to take leadership.

Even with four years under his belt and a proven record of taking machinery that ranges from a marginal points threat to strong midfielder – Sainz has racked up 35 points finishes in 72 starts, with only 17 pointless ones – he still has something to prove. But for McLaren, he's the ideal driver. He's motivated, a proven midfield points magnet, sharp, methodical, and has the potential to grow with the team as it recovers. And, as he showed in qualifying for the Hungarian Grand Prix, he is capable of outstanding performances in wet conditions.

Sainz will hope he is able to help McLaren return to the front of F1 and stick around long enough to capitalise on that, if and when it re-establishes itself as a driver's dream destination. Provided, of course, Alonso doesn't waltz back in if progress is suitably encouraging to take the glory for himself. ✎



WE WON'T ROCK YOU

The sale of Rockingham and its closure for racing has to be seen as a sad development. It may not be a firm favourite, but it has provided some good racing memories

MARCUS SIMMONS

Rockingham Motor Speedway has had more than its fair share of detractors over the years – many of my colleagues included – but I'm particularly sad to hear that the venue's sale last week has resulted in its closure as a motorsport venue. Not just because I've seen some great racing there, but also because I have a personal connection to it.

You can read about the current situation at Rockingham on page 56. And whatever the drawbacks – Corby is not exactly the most picturesque of towns; the circuit is stuck on the edge of an industrial estate; the infield layout isn't exactly very exciting; it's difficult to work at – we should always lament the passing of a racetrack.

My link to Rockingham is that through the majority of the planning stages my father was the chief executive of the local council. Now, dad had always dreamed when I was a kid of buying a place with enough land to build a kart track for me to mess about on (that never happened – thanks to my mum and sister, the family resources were diverted into ponies. Bah!). Fifteen years later, a certain Peter Davies appeared at the Civic Centre trying to get a genuine car-racing track – then titled Deene Raceway – off

“THE VARIATION IN EXIT SPEEDS MEANT THE RACING WAS SUPERB AND INCREDIBLY DRAMATIC”

the ground. This was the early 1990s – Davies had been a part-time racer and had acquired some land to fulfil his ambition. My dad had taken his role at Corby in late 1987, at which point the town was on its knees owing to the recent closure of the steelworks. Land was cheap, new factories were being built in a bid to redevelop the town, and now dad had something much more exciting than an ersatz kart track on his hands...

Councillors are usually reluctant to encourage a noisy, polluting activity like motorsport – it's bad for their election chances – so my dad made it his mission to talk them around, persuade them that it was a good thing, and that it would provide much-needed employment in an area still reeling from the steelworks closure. He also played a part in discussions in vain with a Formula 1 team that was looking to acquire its own test track, and befriended Donington Park owner Tom Wheatcroft with a view to cross-promotion of the venues.

Christopher Tate, who would eventually become managing director at Donington, had come on board with Davies, and the plans continued. In the meantime, my dad left his position at the council in 1997, fell ill in '98, and died in late 2000. Several months later, Rockingham staged its first race meeting, and I was saddened that he couldn't be around to see it.

My first visit was in June 2001, for the British Formula 3 Championship. It's always exciting going to a new venue, and as I headed towards the track I realised I was on the same roads I'd driven in the late 1980s, when as a student I'd been one of the young adults working on the council's summer playscheme for kids. (Halcyon days of hide-and-seek in the sunshine, boozing with the other playleaders in the evening, and driving around with the Stone Roses' debut LP blaring out of my VW Beetle's stereo). I went to the inside of the circuit, wandered to the end of the pitlane, stood by the fence, and realised that the chicane off the banking was going to be *the* place to watch.

For those of you unfamiliar with the initial infield layout, this was where the cars dived off the banking at Turn 1, through an insanely fast chicane and into the end of the Indycar pitlane, before heading down to the Deene hairpin. Cars were going airborne, underfloors were getting damaged, and all the F3 teams were moaning about the costs of replacement parts and that we should never come back – while conveniently forgetting that they'd be going to Macau a few months later...

Because of that chicane, and the large variation in exit speeds directly correlating to the bravery of each driver, the racing was also superb – and incredibly dramatic. Takuma Sato won both F3 races in 2001, and I was a fan of Rockingham. Two years later, at the '03 British F3/GT event, I sat in the Turn 1 grandstand and it was absolutely rammed – the circuit was hosting a Sugababes gig later in the day, and legions of fans of what I always regarded as the thinking man's/woman's girl group were watching motor racing. How great was that?

But for much of its history Rockingham has struggled. By the time it opened, Davies and Tate had been ousted in a boardroom coup, and there would follow a big turnover of directors, although some stability finally emerged when a Northern Irish consortium (including racer Will Buller's father Alf) took over.

To my regret, I never got to see the Indycars – the whole USP for Rockingham's opening. I was committed to covering a British Touring Car Championship round at Donington Park on the same weekend as the first Indycar visit in 2001 (it rained there, just as it did at Rockingham).

It was probably something similar in '02, the second and final CART visit. But I have enough fond memories of the 'diet' infield course to regret losing the place. 🍷

YOUR SAY

Fernando Alonso loves a challenge and IndyCar will be the perfect championship for him. There he'll be challenged every step of the way

JOSHUA KERR

Alonso's perfect home

Fernando Alonso has stepped away from Formula 1. Are we really surprised? We should have known that, after his victory at Le Mans in June, he would return to Indianapolis to try and become only the second person in motorsport history to claim the triple crown, after Graham Hill.

We also must remember that Alonso loves a challenge and IndyCar will be the perfect championship for him. With its mix of ovals, road courses and street courses, Alonso will be challenged every step of the way.

I wish Alonso the best of luck with this endeavour and hope he makes up for his Honda engine failure on lap 179 of the 2017 Indianapolis 500.

Joshua Kerr
Kidderminster, Worcestershire

IMSA proves sportscar racing's fickle nature

I was dismayed, but not surprised, to learn of IMSA's decision to split DPis and LMP2s into separate classes for 2019, with DPi being the senior class.

Once again, the powers-that-be of Stateside motorsport have chosen to take their premier category down an insular and parochial alleyway, leaving teams to choose between running at the front in the US and competing on the world stage. Already United Autosport have been forced to bin their plans for Daytona 2019, as they will no longer be able to challenge for the overall win.

I know that sportscar racing is a notoriously fickle discipline, but can't the FIA, IMSA and the ACO agree on a common rulebook?

Eliot Wilson
Sunderland

Electric F1 versus Formula E

I read with interest that Ross Brawn has apparently stated that Formula 1 could become an electric series in 10 years.

Surely it already exists in Formula E, with top manufacturers and drivers already gravitating to that series?



Plus, I imagine the owners of FE and the FIA might have something to say about that happening too.

If it did happen, though, what percentage of hardcore 'petrol head' racing fans would turn their back on F1? The ones that don't, would they then become 'electric heads'?

MA Smith
By email

Stroll on to Force India

Lawrence Stroll invests in the Williams team to get an F1 seat for his son, Lance. The team underperforms, so Lawrence leads a consortium to rescue Force India to get his son a more competitive seat. What happens if and/or when it becomes clear his son is not as good as everyone thinks he is?

Andrew Andersz
Aston Clinton

When losing is good and bad

Bad news for Williams – they're losing Mr Lance Stroll. Good news for Williams – they're losing Mr Lance Stroll.

Ian Page
Haslemere, Surrey

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INSIGHT

FERNANDO ALONSO'S FORMULA 1 FAREWELL

“I will stop F1 because the action on track is so poor. There are other series that offer better action, more joy and more happiness”

Fernando Alonso's decision not to race in Formula 1 next year was driven by a lack of enjoyment – and, despite his claims to the contrary, also a paucity of results. But what does the future hold for the two-time world champion?

EDD STRAW





SHOCK was the only appropriate reaction when Fernando Alonso's absence from the Formula 1 grid in 2019 was announced last week. It wasn't that his decision blindsided anyone, as he'd dropped hints for months and was widely expected not to waste another year in a grand prix car not worthy of him. But this is the kind of shock that follows when a famous luminary dies of old age. Unsurprising, but seismic nonetheless.

At 37 and still at the top of his game, nobody seriously doubts Alonso's ability to fight for – and win – another world championship given his performances for McLaren this year. And he is on course to win the 2018-19 World Endurance Championship with Toyota. But while he's left the door open for an F1 comeback – the word 'retire' has not escaped his lips – what is most astonishing is that he walks away with only two world titles and 32 wins. Great success, certainly, but it's a measure of how brilliant a performer Alonso is that this haul seems so meagre.

The question is, why? Alonso talks about wanting to take on other challenges, and that's consistent with his pursuit of the triple crown of motorsport. The reality is, inevitably, more complicated, despite his protestations that frustration at a lack of results isn't a significant factor.

"I have other, bigger challenges than F1 can offer right now," says Alonso, answering questions about his decision for the first time ahead of last weekend's WEC round at Silverstone. "It is a series that definitely has some positive things, and I have been enjoying it for 17 to 18 years of my life. I think I achieved much more than I dreamt when I started in 2001, and right now the action on track is not the one I dreamt of when I joined F1 and when I am on the track in different series.

"Most of [the reaction to] my announcement went to sadness or frustration over the last couple of years for the lack of results. I've been racing for 18 years in F1, I've won two [titles], so arguably 16 years of my life I was frustrated, but it was not the case and it is not the case now.

"I stopped because the action on track, in my opinion, I feel is very poor. In fact, what we talk about more in F1 is off track. We talk about polemics, we talk about radio messages, we talk about all these things, and when we talk so many times about those things, it is a bad sign.

"It was because the on-track action was very poor on that weekend, and that is what I feel in F1 now. There are other series that maybe offer better action, more joy and more happiness, so that is what I try to find."

Alonso's explanation is in keeping with some of his comments over recent months about how F1 has changed for the worse. During his title-winning pomp in 2005-06, the races were divided into sprints between pitstops that were fulfilling for drivers even if the lack of overtaking led to plenty of fan criticism. While things have got better since the peak of the high-degradation tyres and fuel-management years, drivers today still have to manage the races to the nth degree.

But Alonso's claim that this is his sole reason, and that results don't come into it, is a little hollow. While he attacks the predictability of F1,

“WHAT WE TALK ABOUT MORE IN F1 IS OFF TRACK. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THIS, IT'S A BAD SIGN”

he would have less of a problem were he inevitably going to be winning or close to winning rather than scrapping for the odd eighth place here and there. To do what he's been doing during his second stint at McLaren – feed over scraps – is clearly seen as a waste of his time. Alonso acknowledges this, but only briefly before resuming his critique of F1.

"It is true," says Alonso when it's put to him that he wouldn't have turned his back on F1 for 2019 were he facing a year in a title-winning car. "But when I was in 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011 I was not winning any single race in those years [he did win races in three of those seasons, but he was only an occasional victor in each]. But it was difficult [then] to predict what would happen in Spa and Monza. Now we can write down what's going to happen. We can put the first 15 positions with maybe one or two mistakes, so how predictable everything became is tough. We go to Barcelona and we test the first day of winter testing and >>>



Alonso's still at the top of his game, even if the same cannot be said for his car



He doesn't hold back from talking about his legacy - it's played a part in his decision

Feeding off scraps is no existence for a driver who should be fighting for titles



SABBATICAL - OR RETIREMENT?

With Fernando Alonso leaving the door open to a Formula 1 return, he's best considered as 'on sabbatical' from grand prix racing. He's not the first world champion to do this - over the past quarter of a century five others have done exactly the same thing. Some came back, some didn't - and, for those who did, the results were a mixed bag.



ALAIN PROST

Having been axed by Ferrari in 1991, Prost opted to take a sabbatical in '92 after resisting the temptation to try to create a French superteam by joining Ligier following winter tests (the first disguised as Erik Comas). He returned for a last hurrah in '93 with Williams, winning a fourth world championship - although did later test for old team McLaren.



MIKA HAKKINEN

Hakkinen's departure from McLaren at the end of 2001 was initially billed as a sabbatical because he needed rest to perform at his maximum with a return on the cards for '03. But Hakkinen never returned to F1, save for a day testing for McLaren in November '06 when he was toying with the idea of a comeback. But he did race successfully in the DTM from 2005-07, winning three races.



JENSON BUTTON

When McLaren announced that Jenson Button would not race for the team in F1 in 2017, team chairman Ron Dennis stressed it was not a retirement. Button made a one-off comeback in Fernando Alonso's car at Monaco in his capacity as reserve driver, but effectively firmed up his F1 retirement by committing to racing in Super GT and WEC this year.



KIMI RAIKKONEN

Kimi Raikkonen was contracted to Ferrari for 2010, but was paid not to race in F1 by the team to accommodate the signing of Fernando Alonso. After talks with McLaren for '10 came to nothing, he competed in the WRC for two years before returning to F1 with Lotus in '12 and re-emerging as a race winner. The Ferrari driver is now in his seventh season since coming back.



NIGEL MANSELL

Angered by Williams signing Alain Prost, Mansell switched to Indycar with Newman/Haas Racing in 1993, winning the championship. He returned to F1 for four races in '94 when F1 desperately needed a star name after the death of Ayrton Senna, winning in Adelaide before forsaking F1 again after two starts for McLaren in '95. He subsequently tested for Jordan.

you know what you will do until November in Abu Dhabi, and it is tough.”

Especially, you could add, if you are in a McLaren. What’s certainly the case is that Alonso has no interest in racking up more grand prix starts just for the sake of it. If he is going to return to F1, it’s going to be in the knowledge he will be one of the drivers fighting at the front – to secure the third F1 title he still covets but will almost certainly never come his way.

But there is still a slender chance. He’s said that if McLaren returns to what it sees as its rightful place then “it could be the right moment for me to be back in the series”. The same will surely apply were Mercedes, Ferrari or Red Bull to call him and offer a place – something that’s unlikely, but you never know what can happen. Any team lacking a world-championship-calibre driver would inevitably reach for Alonso’s number. Alonso himself makes it clear that he’s not officially retired from F1, more in hope than expectation – but with a driver as good as he is, there is always going to be hope. For a few more years, at least.

“The door open is more because I think I am driving at the best level of my career now,” he says. “And why close doors if anything could happen in the future? I am still young. I’m not 45 years old. I feel strong and I am doing this year 27 races, so my thinking is to stop. And that’s why I stop. But who knows?”

Unusually among top drivers, Alonso does publicly engage with the idea of his legacy. The standard answer when his fellow superstars are asked about their place in history is to dodge the question and just say they want to win races. Alonso wants to win races, but ever since his assault on the Indianapolis 500 was announced last year he’s made clear that he wants to go down as a great driver for the versatility of his career.

“To be the best driver in the world I have to either win eight world championships and have one more than Michael Schumacher, or win in different series,” was Alonso’s mission statement. He’s been true to his word, performing brilliantly at Indy last year and being in the mix for victory when his Honda engine failed. He’s since won Le Mans, and competed in the Daytona 24 Hours – and leads the WEC standings. It’s clear what’s most important to Alonso is winning, and if that’s not in F1 then it will be in other categories. A full-time IndyCar move is likely (see page 22), and he’s set to test a car on a road course next month, while he also sees sportscar racing as part of his longer-term future.

“All series have their own appeal, and F1 has a lot of good things,” says Alonso. “It’s still the biggest series in motorsport. Every kid that comes to my karting school, the first priority and the first dream for me as a teacher and then is to arrive in F1, that is no discussion.

“But at one point of your career, 21 races, the commitment, the total dedication to the sport for so many years, it is something that you need to evaluate and think what I will do next year.

“If I win a third world championship one day, how much will it do for my career and my legacy? Or if I do something that has no precedents in motorsport, how much will that give to my career, to my legacy? You

“WHY CLOSE DOORS IF ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE? I’M NOT OLD, I FEEL STRONG”

put in the balance and you decide and everyone will decide different things. I decide one thing and I am happy.”

The use of the word ‘legacy’ is an interesting one. Alonso’s F1 legacy will always be of a prodigious talent wasted, because he’s one of those rare drivers who deserves more than two world championships. And without doubt he will always be talked of as a driver too often in the wrong place. It’s inconceivable now that 12 years ago he stood on the Brazilian Grand Prix podium as a double world champion with realistic aspirations of matching or eclipsing the retiring Schumacher’s haul of seven crowns and 91 wins. This, remember, was before either Lewis Hamilton or Sebastian Vettel had even made their F1 debuts. There was so much time.

But that McLaren move turned hideously sour, something Alonso contributed to even if the team’s management has to bear the brunt of the responsibility. After two years back at Renault, in which he was



engulfed in the Singapore Grand Prix crash scandal that allowed him to win that race in 2008, his Ferrari move promised much. But after near-misses in ’10 and ’12, he turned his back on Maranello at the end of ’14. His crucial mistake there was to underestimate Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne’s resolution to turn things around and, as Alonso headed into the disastrous embrace of McLaren-Honda, Vettel took his place at Ferrari and has won races and fought for titles since.

But the triple crown is an alluring target, one that is at least realistic, even though winning the Indy 500 is a formidably difficult challenge. Michael Andretti raced there 16 times and never won despite coming close, while father Mario started Indy 24 times after his first win in 1969 and never managed to drink the victory milk again. That’s perhaps why a full-time entry in IndyCar will appeal, giving him the best preparation as well as the chance to add an outright title.

What matters is that Alonso is not a washed-up driver chasing a final few pay days, or marking time in categories he secretly considers to be below him. He’s always been a ferocious competitor with forensic attention to detail, and he’ll bring that to any team that cares to employ him in the coming years. He will not be just enjoying himself, not that bothered about results – he wants to win and build that legacy.

So when will we know exactly what Alonso’s 2019 plans are beyond the three races at Sebring, Spa and Le Mans that conclude the WEC superseason? While it’s widely anticipated that he will be an IndyCar driver next year, it’s going to take some time.

“Probably this is bad news, but I will probably not decide or be ready to confirm anything until a couple of months [have passed],” says Alonso. “Maybe October or something like that. It is going to be a long wait and a lot of predictions, I guess.”

Whatever Alonso does, he will excel. He’s that kind of driver. He’ll be a loss to F1, but the appeal of seeing this titan of motorsport wasting his time dragging out some more heroic minor points finishes has long since lost its appeal. But a post-F1 Alonso-on-tour coda to his topline career will be a fascinating story for years to come.

Hopefully, we will see him again in a competitive grand prix car, but that’s a long shot. If not, what matters is that Alonso is able to race and win at a high level elsewhere, and for as long as he’s still willing and able to deliver at his current level. If he does that, then his legacy will be secured by what he does in the coming years. Who knows what ‘quadruple crown’ idea may be brewing in his mind? >>





Move to Ferrari promised much but failed to deliver. If only he'd stayed on...



First stint at McLaren turned sour and cast a shadow over his career



Glory days: Alonso took title #2 at Interlagos in 2006



ALONSO IN WEC

That winning feeling: Alonso celebrates 24 Hours victory

A LONG FUTURE IN SPORTSCARS?

Fernando Alonso has already ticked off his number-one priority in sportscars – winning the Le Mans 24 Hours. Now, the focus is on converting leadership of the World Endurance Championship 2018-19 superseason into what would qualify as his ‘third’ world title after his 2005 and ‘06 Formula 1 successes.

The one thing we can be certain of about Alonso’s 2019 season is that he will contest the final three rounds of the championship, culminating in an attempt to win Le Mans for the second time alongside team-mates Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima. Beyond that, his future in sportscars is unclear, but the man himself sees it as a discipline he won’t be done with in June next year.

“I think that is a big possibility, that I run sportscars for a couple of years,” he says. “I feel good. I feel competitive. I feel a good atmosphere. Toyota is a team that is very, very committed and very professional from day one. I like the way they work and the way they prepare. The same with WEC – it is a championship that opened the doors from day one for me.”

Beyond his WEC commitments, Alonso had

a lucrative outing in the Daytona 24 Hours at the start of the season for United Autosports. While the struggles of the pukka LMP2 cars to be competitive against the DPI machinery meant he was never in with a shout of victory behind the wheel of the Ligier he shared with Phil Hanson and Lando Norris, he showed well there.

While he needs Indy 500 victory to complete the triple crown of motorsport, Alonso could also go for the endurance-racing triple crown by winning Daytona and the Sebring 12 Hours.

That’s another possible objective, although it’s important to note the WEC round at Sebring is not the 12 Hours, so he’d need further IMSA outings to have any chance of this achievement.

What we cannot doubt is that Alonso intends to rack up as many victories in sportscar racing as he can. Given how well he’s taken to the discipline, that could stretch to a large number.

“TOYOTA IS VERY COMMITTED. I LIKE THE WAY THEY WORK, THE WAY THEY PREPARE”



After his success at Le Mans, Alonso’s target is now the WEC title

ALONSO IN INDYCAR

NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS

Fernando Alonso mastered the Indianapolis 500 on his rookie attempt, but the road and street courses of IndyCar could pose surprising challenges

TOM ERRINGTON

All signs are pointing to double Formula 1 world champion Fernando Alonso heading to IndyCar for 2019, with the series finally confirming one of motorsport's worst-kept secrets to Autosport last week. "McLaren is working to put all the necessary arrangements in place, and we are supporting their efforts," said Mark Miles, the CEO of IndyCar parent company Hulman & Co. "I don't expect this to be resolved until closer to the end of this year."

But despite Miles's suggested timeline, Autosport understands that McLaren's IndyCar programme may be in place by the end of this month, although the priority is its 2019 Formula 1 line-up, a process helped by Carlos Sainz joining as Alonso's replacement last week.

Not only is the movement gathering pace off-track, with an affiliation with Andretti Autosport likely, thereby reviving its 2017 Indianapolis 500 partnership, but Alonso is set to drive a 2018-spec IndyCar for the first time in the days following the Portland race in September. The test could take place at Barber Motorsports Park in an Andretti-run car.

"I know there is that possibility," said Alonso.

"I don't know that [2018] car in a normal set-up or on a normal circuit, so it can be a possibility. If I'm not racing in F1 next year, I can prepare a bit deeper – a lot more testing will always be welcome. Last year it was limited time and testing, and I was in the simulator in the morning and on the track [at Indy] in free practice in the afternoons. If I can relax that little bit, and do more testing, I can be better prepared."

And that extra time will be invaluable. This is a different IndyCar for Alonso, and the prospect of a full season only makes his Indy 500 run look all the more alien to what he can expect this time around.

Sebastien Bourdais reckoned Alonso's Indy 500 debut was "too easy", and there's an element of truth to that considering the predictability of the over-downforced manufacturer aerokits that were dropped at the end of 2017, and Andretti/Honda's recent dominance at Indianapolis. Now there's nowhere to hide. The current IndyCar puts a premium on driver talent and set-up expertise, a challenge that Alonso will relish after years bemoaning the lack of competitiveness in F1.

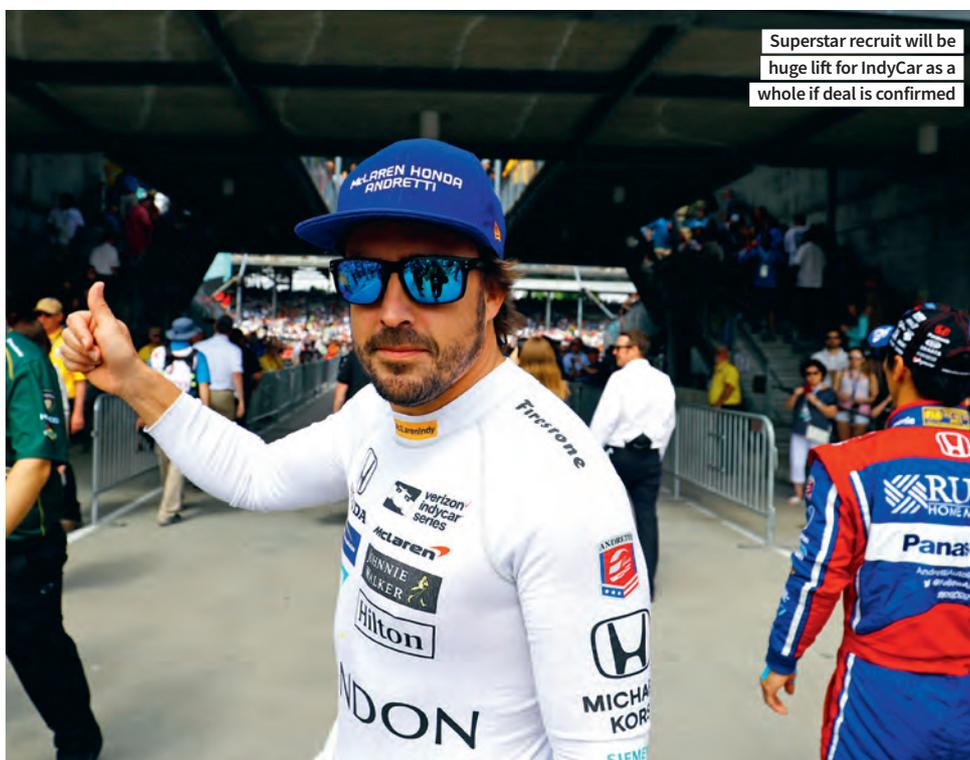
He would do well to lean on his 2017 Indy 500 team-mate Alexander Rossi, who also made the switch from a disappointing F1 season to IndyCar,

in his case back in '16, and has taken three seasons to emerge as a frontrunner. "He [Alonso] has already got a taste of it [IndyCar] in training for the 500, and there was a bit of a culture shock," says Rossi. "He won't really have a huge problem with adapting to the race cars."

But Alonso's undoubted talent is just one facet of making the programme a success, and 2018 has demonstrated the importance of two factors in IndyCar: the merits of at least two cars working in perfect harmony to hone set-up, and a strong relationship between drivers and mechanics.

Consider the remarkable consistency this year of Scott Dixon at Chip Ganassi Racing. He's finished outside the top 10 just twice on his way to a likely fifth title, and it's hard not to draw the conclusion that downscaling from the overwhelming data of four cars to two helped at the team. That's a train of thought boosted by Graham Rahal's struggles in a one-car team until Takuma Sato joined Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, and it makes McLaren's plan for two cars sensible, even if high-profile target Dixon opted to remain at Ganassi.

"How you work with your team-mate is very different [in IndyCar]; your team-mate is kind of your enemy [in F1] and you're doing everything



Superstar recruit will be huge lift for IndyCar as a whole if deal is confirmed





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Alonso led the Indy 500 on his debut at the Brickyard in 2017

to beat them,” says Rossi. “In IndyCar you’re happy to have the help on set-up, and what they’re doing on the track. Obviously, on race day you’re going to treat them like anyone else, but really leading up to that point it’s an open book.”

That relationship extends off track too, with a crew of usually 10 people integral to a team’s performance. James Hinchcliffe was comprehensively outperformed by rookie team-mate Robert Wickens before an Indy 500 bumping led to a staffing shake-up at Schmidt Peterson Motorsports.

The result? A first win of 2018 two months later.

Considering Alonso’s reputation for burning bridges and lashing out when a team underperforms – ask Honda how it felt about the infamous “GP2 engine” comment – that’s another hurdle for the ex-F1 man. While Alonso has been described as “one of the lads” in the Toyota World Endurance camp, it’s easy to be a good bloke in an untouchable LMP1 team, but something altogether different in a punishing series in which fine margins decide results.

“The human relationship aspect is much

bigger in IndyCar than it is in Formula 1,” Rossi says. “Formula 1 is very much a type of business relationship with your mechanics, the engineers, the people that are on the team, because there’s so many of them. IndyCar is smaller, a more personal environment, and the teams feed off who you are as a person and how much effort you’re putting in.”

While Alonso’s Indy 500 experience will help negate some of his inexperience on ovals, Rossi argues that it’s easy to overlook a more surprising challenge for an F1 convert – the wildly different street and road courses, with all the uneven surfaces and lack of run-off to catch out drivers.

“I think that was my biggest surprise,” says Rossi. “I expected to be the best on the road and street courses right from the beginning, just because I grew up on them, and that’s my database. That was probably a bigger learning curve than the ovals in some respects, just because they are very tricky, very different from Europe. There is no run-off on the road, which is good, the layouts are sometimes a little bit strange, the laps are short, so for that you need different skills and the car set-up definitely feels different as well. By no means is it easy to adapt.”

We can hypothesise endlessly about Alonso’s potential merits in IndyCar, but there is one aspect that is undoubted: the huge impact of a bona fide superstar heading over to IndyCar once again as it battles to return to its pre-CART/IRL-split heyday. Early evidence is already apparent, as IndyCar is delaying its international TV rights negotiations, knowing that Alonso’s superstardom could launch it into the mainstream once again. ✨



Alonso will find the latest race car a different beast from his Indy 500 steed



Relationships with team-mates are much more collaborative in IndyCar

RACE CENTRE

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WEC rule-breaking comes to the fore

The Equivalence of Technology rules breaks didn't level the playing field, leaving it to the stewards to deny Toyota at Silverstone

GARY WATKINS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP/LAT



It mattered not that the two Toyotas were disqualified after the race on Sunday. The conclusion that had to be reached after the TS050 HYBRIDS finished four laps up on the best of the LMP1 privateers following six hours of racing around Silverstone didn't change: the World Endurance Championship has a problem.

Rebellion may have ultimately taken the victory with the Gibson-engined R-13 shared by Thomas Laurent, Gustavo Menezes and Mathias Beche – at least for now – after the Toyotas were thrown out at post-event scrutineering. But the privateers once again weren't in the same race as the remaining factory P1 team left in the WEC.

That was despite rules breaks under the Equivalence of Technology designed to remove the 0.25% theoretical advantage in Toyota's favour before Silverstone. The increased rate of fuel flow – meaning more power – for all the privateers and a weight break for the normally aspirated cars, the Rebellions included, made little or no difference.

The question that the events of Silverstone on Sunday raises is whether it is time for Toyota, for the good of the championship, to accept rule changes that blunt the performance of the TS050 to allow the privateers to start playing the same game. There's only so much fuel that the independents can be given and only so much weight that can be taken out of the cars.

Gaetan Jego, technical director at ART Grand Prix on the SMP Racing LMP1 project, certainly thinks so. "If I were Toyota I wouldn't be happy with a race between my two cars," said the Frenchman. "The racing isn't very nice. They have to agree to losing performance to balance the field.

"That is the only way we can ever be >>



in a position to fight with them or put them under pressure. We can't just be given more and more fuel, because we can't exploit it. We will run into reliability issues and tyre issues."

There may have been no competition between Toyota and the privateers, but Silverstone, like Spa and the Le Mans 24 Hours before it, produced a far-from-soporific race at the sharp end of the field. The two Toyotas were allowed to fight, the balance between two evenly matched cars swinging one way and then the next over the course of the six hours.

Either Toyota might have triumphed in this race. Eventual winners Sebastien Buemi, Fernando Alonso and Kazuki Nakajima, who made it three wins from three starts in the WEC superseason, had the edge at the beginning and, crucially, the end. The sister car, shared by Kamui Kobayashi, Mike Conway and Jose Maria Lopez, was in the ascendant for a couple of hours, only to lose performance and

“The two Toyotas were allowed to fight, the balance swinging one way and then the next”

time in the pits when it mattered.

Lopez was just under three seconds behind Nakajima after they took over their cars at the start of the fourth hour following the end of the only full safety car of the race. The Argentinian quickly closed down that gap, made the pass and then pulled away. He was nearly nine seconds up by the time they pitted again and the better part of 20s up when they handed over their cars to Kobayashi and Buemi respectively.

Nakajima had been struggling with the balance of the car, which explained the change of nose when his Swiss team-mate took over. It made an improvement at a



time when Kobayashi started to struggle in the #7 Toyota.

The team changed the rear end to one with more downforce at the stop. Not only did the Japanese driver lose 10 seconds in the process, but the move didn't help the balance. Kobayashi's advantage was halved at a stroke, and Buemi continued to take time out of him before cruising past into the lead and onto a 19s victory.

It all turned out to be irrelevant in post-race scrutineering. Both Toyotas failed the deflection test on the front section of the underfloor skidblock or plank. The rules allow for a 5mm movement, but the plank on

the winning car deflected 9mm on both sides, while that on the second-placed car shifted 6mm on one side and 8mm on the other.

Toyota argued in a post-race statement that both cars had suffered damage during the race "due to impacts against the new kerbs at Silverstone". It pointed out that the design and construction of the skidblock had been unchanged since its introduction at the start of the 2017 season and that it had previously passed the same test, most recently at Spa this season. The team served notice of its intention to appeal within 60 minutes of its exclusion.

That means the first privateer victory in the history of the reborn WEC – and the first in any world championship sportscar race of the endurance variety since Dijon 1989 and Joest's victory with the ageing Porsche 962C – remains provisional.

That little bit of history, which may or may not be written in stone, went to Laurent, Menezes and Beche after the sister car raced by Neel Jani and Andre Lotterer had to stop to fix its rear lights with just minutes of the race to go. The time lost to a change of the rear body section was enough to reverse the positions of the two Rebellions.

The 'winning' car had been behind from the get-go after Beche was tagged by Stephane Sarrazin in the #17 SMP BR



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motorsport
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Rebellion of Beche,
Laurent and Menezes
inherited the victory



Celebrations for Toyota look to be premature if provisional result stays

Engineering BR1 at the start. It lost more time to its sister car during the safety car when it got sandwiched between the two Toyotas at the head of the queue.

Despite its success, it wasn't a great race for Rebellion. The new high-downforce version of the ORECA-built R-13 was racing for the first time and, after only two days of testing, it was a handful.

"The car was very difficult to drive," said Jani, whose team-mate Bruno Senna lost the car at Copse in practice on Friday and was ruled out of the race after fracturing an ankle. "I had a decent first stint, then got back in the car and couldn't attack. Then at the end I was setting my best times of the race on tyres that were three stints old. We've got a lot of work to do."

The AER-powered BRE that Sarrazin shared with Egor Orudzhev battled with the Laurent/Menezes/Beche Rebellion for the first half of the race. Orudzhev's mid-race clash with a GTE Am car, which broke a rim, also knocked something askew in the rear suspension, and the car wasn't quite such a potent force thereafter on the way to fifth on the road.

The privateer frontrunners might have been promoted to the podium, but it didn't alter the fact that this was another run-away victory for Toyota. The question is, how many of those can the WEC survive? >>

G-DRIVE TIGHTENS ELMS GRIP

G-Drive duo Andrea Pizzitola and Roman Rusinov stepped closer to the European Le Mans Series title by scoring a third consecutive win alongside Jean-Eric Vergne with relative ease at Silverstone.

Rusinov flung his TDS-run ORECA around the outside of early leader Julien Canal at Stowe after their first stops, and Canal's team-mate Timothe Buret then picked up a drivethrough penalty for a full-course-yellow infringement that sent the Panis Barthez Ligier – qualified on pole by Will Stevens – out of contention.

Even internal competition from the sister #40 G-Drive entry fell short. James Allen spent part of his stint on Rusinov's tail, but once Jose Gutierrez took over the car fell backwards quickly with technical woes. Vergne then managed to lap the entire field before taking the flag.

An FCY, caused by Victor Shaitar skating straight on at Village, let Racing Engineering get creative with strategy as the only frontrunner not to pit. Norman Nato took over from the Ford WEC-focused Olivier Pla's stand-in Matthieu Vaxiviere late on and scythed the ORECA to second, only for brake failure to send him into the Club barriers.

This gave DragonSpeed's ORECA second place, with first Ben Hanley and then Nicolas Lapierre surging from the rear to podium contention following slow stints from bronze driver Henrik Hedman.

DragonSpeed would have been third had the IDEC Sport ORECA of Paul Lafargue not required a splash-and-dash fuel stop with 10 minutes left. Lafargue, Paul-Loup Chatin and Memo Rojas therefore completed the podium.

United Autosports Ligier trio Matt Bell, Garrett Grist and Tony Wells won the LMP3 class, although United had been set for a



Rivals' penalties allowed JMW Ferrari to take GTE victory

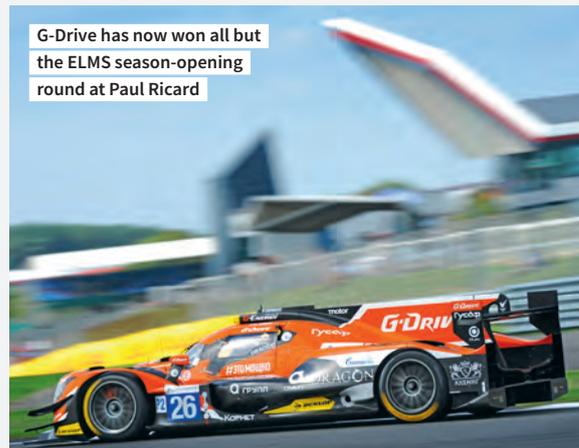
one-two. Sean Rayhall spun at Abbey on the opening lap and recovered to second before the car lost several minutes during its final stop with power issues. Ecurie Ecosse's Colin Noble, Alex Kapadia and Christian Stubbe Olsen inherited second.

GTE was decided by a grandstand finish, despite first and second place not running together. Repeated track-limit infringements earned both the JMW Motorsport and Spirit of Race Ferraris 10s penalties, as Proton Competition's lead driver Matteo Cairoli closed in on third.

Cairoli's Porsche caught up within 8s of JMW's Miguel Molina but encountered Matt Griffin in the Spirit of Race car on his final lap and finished an agonising 0.124s away from beating Molina, Liam Griffin and Alex MacDowell with the penalty applied.

Penalty-free Cairoli plus father-and-son pairing Gianluca and Giorgio Roda were second, with Griffin, Duncan Cameron and Aaron Scott still finishing third after their earlier reprimand.

ALASDAIR LINDSAY



G-Drive has now won all but the ELMS season-opening round at Paul Ricard

WEEKEND WINNERS

- ELMS SILVERSTONE
- LMP2 Roman Rusinov/ Andrea Pizzitola/ Jean-Eric Vergne
G-Drive Racing
ORECA-Gibson 07
- LMP3 Tony Wells/Garrett Grist/ Matthew Bell
United Autosports
Ligier-Nissan JSP3
- GTE Liam Griffin/Alex MacDowell/ Miguel Molina
JMW Motorsport
Ferrari 488 GTE



GTE Pro: fortune favours brave strategists

James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi weren't confident of their chances ahead of the start at Silverstone. The AF Corse Ferrari duo had only qualified ninth in GTE Pro and weren't convinced that the 488 GTE was a competitive proposition. But a creative fuel strategy paid dividends and rewarded the reigning champions with a first class victory of the season.

Calado and Pier Guidi had by their own admission messed up their set-up for qualifying, but even so they reckoned the evolution version of the 488 once again wasn't in the game despite a pre-race Balance of Performance tweak. That

explains why they went for an aggressive strategy of fuel saving in the hope that they could benefit from any yellow-flag periods.

And that's exactly how it worked out, while the pre-race favourites in GTE Pro, the Ganassi Ford team, crucially lost out at half-distance.

Pier Guidi was in the lead early in the second hour only because everyone else in the class had made their second stops. When a full-course-yellow virtual safety car was called, he was able to duck into the pits to hand over to his team-mate.

The time gain propelled the car up from seventh to second behind the Ganassi Ford

GT shared by Andy Priaulx and Harry Tincknell. When the Ford, and the sister car of Stefan Mucke and Olivier Pla, stopped just as the race was going green as the only safety car of the race ended on half-distance, the Ferrari moved into the lead.

Calado lost out to Kevin Estre in the #92 Porsche 911 RSR shared with Michael Christensen at the next round of stops but, when the Ferrari was given less fuel than the German car at its penultimate stop, Pier Guidi was able to return to the front.

He edged away from Christensen to cross the line 14s up on the second of the Manthey-run Porsches in which Gianmaria



Yellow flags allowed
AF Corse squad to rise
as the duo saved fuel

ALL PICS: JEP/LAT
motorsport
IMAGES

Bruni had flown in the closing stages after taking over from Richard Lietz.

“We knew on pace alone we were not quick enough,” said Calado. “So the plan was to save as much fuel as we could and try to get an advantage in terms of strategy by doing something different to the others.”

Calado admitted that the Ferrari was more competitive in the race. “The car was really good on tyres, which is positive moving forward,” explained the Brit, who also pointed out that the Ferrari still has a straightline speed deficit, particularly in qualifying.

This was one that Ganassi should have won. Mucke and Pla put the #66 car on pole without approaching the Ford’s best free practice times, but the race started to unravel for the team almost before it began.

Pla took to the Abbey run-off at the start to avoid the LMP1 commotion up front and dropped to the back of the class pack. Priaulx was able to take the lead in the second hour, but the post-safety-car stop cost him and Tincknell dear.

Yet such was the pace of the Ford that they were able to get back to third on the road, Tincknell pulling off a brave around-the-outside manoeuvre at Stowe on Christensen. Third became second when the Bruni/Lietz car was excluded for a ride-height infringement.

Mucke and Pla ended up seventh after losing time when the door needed replacing after a pin in the catch mechanism failed. ❄

LMP2: JACKIE CHAN’S ONE-TWO



The #38 Jackie Chan DC ORECA sealed LMP2 win

Jackie Chan DC Racing notched up what, on the face of it, was a dominant one-two in LMP2 at Silverstone. The two Jota-run ORECA-Gibson 07s were ahead for the majority of the race, right through to a thrilling finish as they crossed the line a couple of seconds apart.

Both cars had their setbacks over the course of the six hours, but it was the #38 car of Ho-Pin Tung, Stephane Richelmi and Gabriel Aubry that claimed the team’s first class win of the superseason ahead of the all-Malaysian crew of Jazeman Jaafar, Nabil Jeffri and Weiron Tan. It might have been very different, however, had the TDS Racing ORECA (below) not sustained a broken front upright — not a new failure on the French car — in the fourth hour.

TDS was pretty convinced that it would have won this race but for the issue, which cost it 18 minutes in the pits. Loic Duval was sitting pretty at the front of the field when he had to come in.

Just as significantly, the team had already cycled amateur driver Francois Perrodo through his two stints and made up the time he’d lost by playing the safety car correctly. It was going to be Duval and



Matthieu Vaxiviere, who set fastest lap in class during his first stint, all the way to the end of the race for the French team.

The disappearance of the TDS car from contention left the Chan/DC cars to squabble over victory. The winning car, which had claimed the pole, was initially penalised for a jumped start and then lost out when it had to make an emergency stop for fuel when the pits were closed during the safety car. A front-left puncture for the Malaysian crew evened things up, although they were ahead before the winners gained time during the final full-course yellow of the race in the fifth hour.

Jaafar came back at Tung through the final hour, closing down an 11s deficit. He was never quite close enough to mount a challenge to his team-mate.

“The start didn’t go as we planned but we played catch-up and recovered very well because our pace was very good,” said Tung. “And I really enjoyed the fight with Jazeman in the final hour.”

Third place went to the Signatech Alpine squad, which finished two laps down with its ORECA. Points leaders Nicolas Lapierre, Andre Negrao and Pierre Thiriet weren’t in the fight even before a 75-second stop-go for pitting during the safety car before the pitlane had officially opened.

The fourth-place DragonSpeed ORECA, in which Anthony Davidson joined Pastor Maldonado and Roberto Gonzalez for his P2 debut, was a further two laps down after an eventful race. Gonzalez sustained rear-end damage during the opening-lap melee and the car was given the same penalty as the Signatech team, as well as a further drive-through for a second safety-car violation.

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RESULTS ROUND 3/8, SILVERSTONE (GB), AUGUST 19 (193 LAPS – 707.675 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Mathias Beche (CH) Thomas Laurent (F) Gustavo Menezes (USA)	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13	LMP1	6h02m10.579s
2	Neel Jani (CH) Andre Lotterer (D) Bruno Senna (BR)*	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13	LMP1	-1 lap
3	Stephane Sarrazin (F) Egor Orudzhev (RUS)	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AERBR1	LMP1	-1 lap
4	Ho-Pin Tung (NL) Gabriel Aubry (F) Stephane Richelmi (MC)	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-8 laps
5	Jazeman Jaafar (MAL) Weiron Tan (MAL) Nabil Jeffri (MAL)	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-8 laps
6	Pierre Thiriet (F) Nicolas Lapierre (F) Andre Negrao (BR)	Signatech Alpine Matmut	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-10 laps
7	Roberto Gonzalez (MEX) Pastor Maldonado (YV) Anthony Davidson (GB)	DragonSpeed	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-12 laps
8	Giedo van der Garde (NL) Frits van Eerd (NL) Nyck de Vries (NL)	Racing Team Nederland	Dallara-Gibson P217	LMP2	-12 laps
9	Erwin Creed (F) Romano Ricci (F) Yoshiharu Mori (J)	Larbre Competition	Ligier-Gibson JSP217	LMP2	-17 laps
10	Francois Perrodo (F) Matthieu Vaxiviere (F) Loic Duval (F)	TDS Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-20 laps
11	Alessandro Pier Guidi (I) James Calado (GB)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'	GTE Pro	-21 laps
12	Andy Priaulx (GB) Harry Tincknell (GB)	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT	GTE Pro	-21 laps
13	Kevin Estre (F) Michael Christensen (DK)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	-21 laps
14	Alex Lynn (GB) Maxime Martin (B)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	-22 laps
15	Martin Tomczyk (D) Nicky Catsburg (NL)	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE	GTE Pro	-22 laps
16	Olivier Pla (F) Stefan Mucke (D)	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT	GTE Pro	-23 laps
17	Christian Ried (D) Julien Andlauer (F) Matt Campbell (AUS)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-25 laps
18	Salih Yoluc (TR) Jonny Adam (GB) Charlie Eastwood (GB)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-25 laps
19	Egidio Perfetti (N) Jorg Bergmeister (D) Patrick Lindsey (USA)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-25 laps
20	Paul Dalla Lana (CDN) Pedro Lamy (P) Mathias Lauda (A)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-25 laps
21	Keita Sawa (J) Mok Weng Sun (MAL) Matt Griffin (IRL)	Clearwater Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Am	-26 laps
22	Mike Wainwright (GB) Ben Barker (GB) Alex Davison (AUS)	Gulf Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-26 laps
23	Motoaki Ishikawa (J) Olivier Beretta (MC) Eddie Cheever (I)	MR Racing (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Am	-26 laps
24	Gianluca Roda (I) Giorgio Roda (I) Matteo Cairolì (I)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-26 laps
25	Ben Hanley (GB) Henrik Hedman (S) Renger van der Zande (NL)	DragonSpeed	BRE-Gibson BR1	LMP1	-28 laps
26	Francesco Castellacci (I) Thomas Flohr (CH) Giancarlo Fisichella (I)	Spirit of Race	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Am	-35 laps
27	Sam Bird (GB) Davide Rigon (I)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'	GTE Pro	-36 laps
28	Marco Sorensen (DK) Nicki Thiim (DK)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	-38 laps
EX	Sebastien Buemi (CH) Kazuki Nakajima (J) Fernando Alonso (E)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	197 laps
EX	Kamui Kobayashi (J) Mike Conway (GB) Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	197 laps
EX	Gianmaria Bruni (I) Richard Lietz (A)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	172 laps
R	Augusto Farfus (BR) Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE	GTE Pro	116 laps-suspension
R	Oliver Webb (GB) Rene Binder (A)	ByKOLLES Racing Team	ENSO CLM-Nissan P1/01	LMP1	59 laps-accident
R	Mikhail Aleshin (RUS) Vitaly Petrov (RUS) Jenson Button (GB)	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AERBR1	LMP1	23 laps-engine ancillary

WINNERS' AVERAGE SPEED 117.237mph. **FASTEST LAP** Menezes 1m41.579s, 129.949mph.

LMP2 Vaxiviere 1m47.381s, 122.928mph. **GTE PRO** Tincknell 1m57.789s, 112.066mph. **GTEAM** Campbell 1m59.651s, 110.322mph. * = did not drive in race.

QUALIFYING

1 **Conway/Lopez** 1m36.895s; 2 **Alonso/Nakajima** 1m37.306s; 3 **Button/Petrov** 1m38.932s; 4 **Sarrazin/Orudzhev** 1m39.070s; 5 **Menezes/Beche** 1m39.247s; 6 **Lotterer/Jani** 1m39.613s; 7 **Hanley/van der Zande** 1m41.412s; 8 **Webb/Binder** 1m41.839s; 9 **Jaafar/Jeffri** 1m44.896s; 10 **Richelmi/Aubry** 1m45.083s; 11 **Lapierre/Thiriet** 1m46.370s; 12 **Vaxiviere/Perrodo** 1m47.048s; 13 **van der Garde/van Eerd** 1m47.107s; 14 **Maldonado/Gonzalez** 1m47.270s; 15 **Creed/Mori** 1m49.489s; 16 **Mucke/Pla** 1m55.727s; 17 **Martin/Lynn** 1m55.805s; 18 **Sorensen/Thiim** 1m56.103s; 19 **Tincknell/Priaulx** 1m56.204s; 20 **Christensen/Estre**

1m56.446s; 21 **Bird/Rigon** 1m56.510s; 22 **Farfus/da Costa** 1m56.731s; 23 **Catsburg/Tomczyk** 1m56.992s; 24 **Calado/Pier Guidi** 1m57.105s; 25 **Bruni/Lietz** 1m57.151s; 26 **Bergmeister/Perfetti** 1m59.001s; 27 **Campbell/Ried** 1m59.203s; 28 **Adam/Yoluc** 1m59.275s; 29 **Lamy/Dalla Lana** 1m59.338s; 30 **Cairolì/Gianluca Roda** 1m59.757s; 31 **Fisichella/Flohr** 1m59.809s; 32 **Cheever/Ishikawa** 2m00.003s; 33 **Griffin/Mok** 2m00.118s; 34 **Barker/Wainwright** 2m00.221s.

FASTEST IN EACH CLASS

LMP1 Conway 1m36.769s; **LMP2** Jaafar 1m44.372s; **GTE PRO** Mucke 1m55.658s; **GTEAM** Campbell 1m57.952s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP DRIVERS

1 **Alonso/Nakajima/Buemi** 65; 2 **Menezes/Beche/Laurent** 63; 3 **Lopez/Kobayashi/Conway** 46; 4 **Lotterer/Jani** 36; 5 **Negrao/Lapierre/Thiriet** 29; 6 **Aubry/Tung/Richelmi** 26.

LMP1 MANUFACTURERS

1 **Toyota Gazoo Racing** 66; 2 **Rebellion Racing** 63; 3 **SMP Racing** 25; 4 **ByKOLLES Racing Team** 12; 5 **CEFC TRSM Racing** 1; 6 **DragonSpeed** 0.5.

LMP2 DRIVERS

1 **Negrao/Lapierre/Thiriet** 72; 2 **Aubry/Tung/Richelmi** 68; 3 **Jaafar/Jeffri/Tan** 61; 4 **Maldonado/Gonzalez** 46.

GTE DRIVERS

1 **Estre/Christensen** 71; 2 **Pla/Mucke** 57; 3 **Billy Johnson** 48; 4 **Pier Guidi/Calado** 43.5; 5 **Bruni/Lietz** 40; 6 **Laurens Vanthoor** 38.

GTE MANUFACTURERS

1 **Porsche** 117; 2 **Ford** 77; 3 **Ferrari** 71; 4 **Aston Martin** 46; 5 **BMW** 27.

GTEAM DRIVERS

1 **Ried/Andlauer/Campbell** 76; 2 **Sawa/Griffin/Mok** 43; 3 **Perfetti/Bergmeister/Lindsey** 41; 4 **Lauda/Dalla Lana/Lamy** 37.



Ticktum back to the top with mega win at home

Three years ago at Silverstone Dan Ticktum became the bad boy of British motorsport. Now he's the F3 European Championship leader

MARCUS SIMMONS

Dan Ticktum is down in third or fourth place in the Formula 3 European Championship in any other year, and in some seasons he's over 100 points off the top. OK, OK, he's leading *this* year, but his points tally after 18 races would put him way off the pace at an identical stage of the 2013-17 campaigns. Such is F3 2018-style. Ticktum won at Silverstone last weekend but, as we now expect, this was a rollercoaster weekend for most of the title protagonists.

Ticktum's win came in a thrilling opening race, one where the Red Bull Junior hunted down his Renault counterpart Sacha Fenestraz and pulled off a superb manoeuvre at Stowe Corner with four laps remaining. And it came on a weekend where Ticktum's Motopark team had stolen a march on the opposition. It also gave the Briton the

championship lead over Marcus Armstrong, an advantage he'd extended by the time the trucks were packed away and sent *en route* to Misano for next weekend's action.

But as usual it wasn't plain sailing for Ticktum. In fact, this was an entirely typical weekend in his F3 career to date: there was super-fast driving, overtaking brilliance, moments of fury, stewards decisions that went against him, and collisions. No wonder Red Bull boss Helmut Marko loves him.

Free practice was a *tour de force*. Silverstone has been resurfaced since last season, and the relatively warm conditions of August – compared to F3's usual ice-cold April World Endurance support slot – combined with the high-speed corners meant there was massive tyre degradation. But Motopark had everything just right. Ticktum was more than 0.4s clear of Fenestraz in FP1, and almost

0.4s clear of the Frenchman in FP2. Come first qualifying, that advantage was nullified.

Carlin went for a bold strategy – bearing in mind this session decided the grid for just the opening race, whereas the later qualifying determined the starting order for races two and three – of using two brand-new sets of Hankook tyres for all five drivers from the weekend allocation of three new sets. Fenestraz, his season dismal since his win at the Pau opening round, made the most of that and grabbed pole from Prema Powerteam's Guan Yu Zhou, with Ticktum third.

In Q2, Motopark emulated Carlin's earlier tactic and it was the team's Fabio Scherer and Juri Vips who earned the two poles. Prema had kept its powder dry, saving four new tyres for each of its drivers for use across the races, but that frugality would fall flat (see panel, far right)...

Ticktum had to battle
past Zhou and then
Fenestraz for victory



ALL PICS: FIA F3 / SUER

Ticktum felt that “I didn’t really put it together” in the first session. “The car wasn’t in the sweet spot and I didn’t really push enough. If I put the sectors together it would be pole by two tenths.” After Q2, meanwhile, he was furious. Relations between Motopark and Prema have nosedived this summer, and Ticktum found himself circulating with the Italian team’s Armstrong and Zhou. On one push lap, he said he got caught in Armstrong’s dirty air at Stowe; on the other, he claimed Zhou stopped in front of him at Club. The stewards investigated both incidents, and found no wrongdoing, but again, that was two poles Ticktum reckoned he should have had. Instead, he and Armstrong would start race two alongside each other on the fourth row.

Fortunately, after sleeping on it he was on fire on Saturday morning. His move to take Zhou around the outside of Luffield and grab second place on lap one of the opening race was breathtaking. Then he set to work on Fenestraz. This was a measured drive, one that illustrated a new dimension to a driver you’d often expect to just go for a lunge – and deal with the consequences later. When the pass came it was exquisite, and credit to Fenestraz for giving him enough room.

“I struggled a lot with the tyres,” explained Fenestraz, “and Dan managed them a little bit better at the beginning of the race. I had to push but I pushed too much, and towards the end the rears were getting worse.”

At the start of race two, Ticktum reckoned he was “edged wide by two Prema cars >>

PREMA PUNCTURES SET TOP TEAM BACK

Not the first time
a Schumacher has
won at Silverstone



Prema Powerteam did a great job to get Guan Yu Zhou and Mick Schumacher onto front-row starting slots while using four tyres fewer for each of its drivers across the two qualifying sessions, but the team’s first race turned to disaster and effectively cancelled out that strategic advantage.

Schumacher only got to the seventh lap in race one when his left-rear tyre blew while he was running fourth, and it was the 15th lap when an identical failure struck Zhou as he ran third. For Zhou, a title contender for most of the season, this was another disaster, after punctures ruined all three of his races last time out at Spa. In Belgium these had all been caused by contact, none of which were predominantly the Shanghai racer’s fault. One lap after Zhou’s retirement, Ralf Aron had his left-rear blow as he arrived at Stowe, spinning into the gravel.

With race one followed very quickly by its sequel, Prema needed a rapid rethink before race two, when Schumacher converted his front-row start to race victory. “I would be lying if I said I wasn’t worried,” he said after his second F3 win. “We weren’t the only team that had issues so everybody made changes to make them last longer. I also adapted my driving style towards it and it worked pretty well.”

Pre-weekend points leader Marcus Armstrong, meanwhile, had backed away from the third-place battle in front to conserve his rubber in race one and claim sixth place, and was also nursing his tyres in the second race, in which he was fifth. “In the first race my left-rear tyre was destroyed,” said the Ferrari-backed New Zealander. “I could feel it was about to

explode and I backed right off. I did the same in race two because I’d rather finish the race, although I probably overreacted.”

Prema felt the problems were due to set-up. The new safety modifications to the F3 Dallara for 2017 made the cars heavier, but conditions were cold when F3 visited last year in April, so there wasn’t as much strain on the tyres. Furthermore, the new track surface increased tyre degradation. “I think it was set-up related,” said team boss Rene Rosin. “A combination of set-up, tyres, temperature and everything. It’s a high-degradation circuit, new Tarmac, and the car’s weight is quite important – all the fast corners put a lot of load onto the tyres.”

While Armstrong did his customary Prost-like performance to look after his equipment in the first two races, the Sunday finale turned sour when first-corner contact with Schumacher broke a trackrod and sent him flying off the track and into retirement. Luckily for him, Dan Ticktum was down in sixth, so he didn’t concede too many points to his main rival. Meanwhile Aron, third in the points pre-weekend, had a disaster. He felt he was lacking car pace and, apart from his first-race blowout, had another DNF in race three following two first-lap collisions. He scored just one point, for 10th in race two.

Also, Schumacher’s claim that all teams had tyre issues was contradicted by Jonathan Aberdein. When asked whether Motopark had suffered in this way, he responded simply: “No.” It looks as though, on this occasion, Prema simply got it wrong – and that’s something you can’t say very often in F3.

SACHA DISTILLED



When Sacha Fenestraz took pole position for race one, it ended a run that since the opening round at Pau had featured a top qualifying position of 10th. For a reigning Formula Renault Eurocup champion, lining up with the ex-Lando Norris car at Carlin, that was hugely disappointing.

“The first half of the season wasn’t good enough, and now finally we are on top,” said Fenestraz, who went on to take two second places in the races. “We have worked really hard these last two weeks since Spa [the previous round], just trying to find why I’m slow in qualifying. I was always fast in free practice, and the team was doing a great job, but it was me just not finding the lap time.”

The suspicion in some quarters was that Fenestraz’s driving style has been too aggressive. That’s fine for free practice, which usually takes place in the cool early morning, but for afternoon qualifying sessions on a hotter track temperature it doesn’t work as effectively.

Fenestraz’s Carlin engineer Matt Ogle, who ran Norris in 2017 and Antonio Giovinazzi to runner-up in ’15, played that down, saying: “It’s a combination of little things. If the car was perfect it would be fine; if the driver was perfect it would be fine.

“That’s why this championship is so good and so hard – you’ve got to get everything right. F3 is the best championship there is. It’s always been good and now it’s even better.”

You just need to take Fenestraz’s team-mate Jehan Daruvala as an illustration. A star of Spa, and a winner there, the team felt he should have been top-three in Q1. Instead he was ninth, and nowhere in Q2. After leaping from eighth to fifth in the standings in Belgium, he scored just two points at Silverstone and is back to eighth.

[which would have been Armstrong and Zhou] – nothing malicious though” and his eighth on the grid was converted to an early 12th. While Mick Schumacher led throughout, the focus was on Ticktum’s progress as he passed first Alex Palou, then Ralf Aron, then Robert Shwartzman and finally Fenestraz as he recovered to seventh. But the penultimate-lap move on Fenestraz came under investigation, Ticktum having gone around the outside at Stowe before diving down the inside at Club. Finally, the stewards gave him a 1.5s penalty because he was off-track, but then again, so was Fenestraz! Interestingly, in Sunday’s final race, Shwartzman passed Scherer at Stowe with both cars off track, and there was no stewards’ investigation. Sometimes you get the impression that the officials would look into Ticktum buttering his toast in an unsafe fashion in the hotel breakfast room.

He wasn’t finished yet. In the finale, Ticktum got briefly up to fourth on the opening lap by somehow passing Enaam Ahmed in the Becketts complex, but he lost momentum onto the Hangar Straight and Ahmed got back past. Ticktum went down the inside at Club, but was forced onto the sausage kerb and launched onto two wheels. Schumacher went through too and, with two contacts on the opening lap and damage to his car, Ticktum finished sixth.

Instead, his team-mates starred. Scherer had been ecstatic to take pole for race two – the first-ever pole in car racing for this amiable Swiss, a graduate of German Formula 4. Furthermore, he hadn’t even seen Silverstone until free practice began on Friday. He lost the start to Schumacher, and then there was minor contact with Vips at Abbey as the Estonian tried to zap his team-mate too.

Scherer clung on to second from Vips, without ever letting Schumacher get beyond a 2s advantage, but it was clear that Vips was quicker. Scherer, a totally reactive driver who is brilliant to watch but takes a lot out of his tyres, explained: “My speed in the race is always limited because it’s a difficult track for my driving style – it works really well for one lap, but for the race the tyres were limited.” Vips finally got through at Stowe, but it was too late to catch Schumacher, who



shrugged off pre-race worries over tyres after Prema’s spate of punctures in race one.

Scherer lost his third place when a wiring loom on the gearshift broke, and this promoted another Motopark driver, Jonathan Aberdein, to his maiden podium – a couple of hours after he should have scored his first. The South African had been running third in the opener when he lost out at the restart following a late full-course yellow, allowing Ahmed into third and Vips – who had clawed his way from 10th on the grid – up to fourth. “It was the timing of the buttons,” explained Aberdein. “I think it was just driver error to be honest – I engaged it a little bit late.”

Aberdein would double up with another podium on Sunday, but this race was all about Vips after a nervous first lap. Vips, the reigning German F4 champion, had a superb weekend at Silverstone and is now up to third in the points behind Ticktum and Armstrong. If Scherer is the F3 driver you’d put money on making it to the end of an unreccecd rally stage quicker than anyone else (unless he shunted), Vips is the one you’d gamble on if they had pacenotes: he’s massively spectacular with great car control, but he can also manage a race.

First he had a scare at Abbey when



Scherer took a shock pole, but his challenge petered out in the race



Vips (left) was the weekend's top scorer; Aberdein took two podiums

ALL PICS: FIA F3 / SJUER

front-row partner Aberdein came down the inside – but Aberdein backed off to avoid a collision, and dropped to third. Then Vips found Fenestraz inching slightly ahead down the Wellington Straight, before braking late on the inside of Brooklands to cling on in front. “I braked really late and he braked later,” acknowledged Fenestraz admiringly. “We were lucky to make the corner.”

Vips did find his rear tyres going off, particularly towards the end of the race, but Fenestraz was never able to get close enough to move into a position to overtake. Now Vips is just 33 points behind Ticktum, and you have to say he’s a dark horse for the title...

Ahmed was the other to have a superb weekend. The reigning BRDC British F3 champion continues to see off highly rated Hitech GP team-mate Alex Palou, and came away from Silverstone with a third and two fourths, even though he didn’t quite have the pace of the top runners. “Prema, Motopark and Carlin had made a step forward, and we’d been lacking pace, so I’ve been spending a lot of time down here at Silverstone with the team [which is based opposite the circuit entrance],” he said after the first race. “I expected just to survive this race [from eighth on the grid] but the opportunities came up.”

But few had any answer to the forest of cars from Oschersleben. “They’re all rookies in this team except Marino [Sato],” said Motopark technical director Andy Kohler. “From their level of experience, it’s step by step and putting it together. We just had good preparation for the drivers. Our starts are solid now – we’ve done work on that since the start of the season – and that brings everything up. Juri did a f*cking good job, Jonathan did a really good job, Fabio was unlucky. But Dan was unluckiest of all – without being impeding in Q2, he’d have been on pole easily by one and a half tenths.”

But such things are what make F3 2018-style so fascinating. #

RESULTS ROUND 6/10, SILVERSTONE (GB), AUGUST 18-19 RACE 1 (19 LAPS – 69.668 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Dan Ticktum (GB)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F318	36m13.442s
2	Sacha Fenestraz (F)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F317	+1.458s
3	Enaam Ahmed (GB)	Hitech GP / Dallara-Mercedes F315	+11.498s
4	Juri Vips (EST)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+12.659s
5	Jonathan Aberdein (ZA)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+14.252s
6	Marcus Armstrong (NZ)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F317	+15.530s
7	Alex Palou (E)	Hitech GP / Dallara-Mercedes F316	+16.170s
8	Robert Schwartzman (RUS)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F314	+16.829s
9	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+17.457s
10	Fabio Scherer (CH)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F316	+20.522s
11	Ben Hingeley (GB)	Hitech GP / Dallara-Mercedes F316	+22.520s
12	Marino Sato (J)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F314	+22.922s
13	Ferdinand Habsburg (A)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F317	+28.715s
14	Nikita Troitskiy (RUS)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+31.592s
15	Sebastian Fernandez (VV)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F314	+33.739s
16	Keyvan Andres (D)	Van Amersfoort Racing / Dallara-Mercedes F317	+34.608s
17	Ameya Vaidyanathan (IND)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F312	+45.138s
18	Sophia Florsch (D)	Van Amersfoort Racing / Dallara-Mercedes F316	+46.270s
19	Charles Leong (PRC)	Hitech GP / Dallara-Mercedes F317	+47.583s
20	Petru Florescu (RO)	Fortec Motorsports / Dallara-Mercedes F318	+49.205s
R	Ralf Aron (EST)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F317	16 laps-puncture
R	Guan Yu Zhou (PRC)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F315	15 laps-puncture
R	Mick Schumacher (D)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F318	7 laps-puncture
R	Artem Petrov (RUS)	Van Amersfoort Racing / Dallara-Mercedes F316	6 laps-exhaust bolt

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 115.394mph. **FASTEST LAP** Ticktum 1m51.812s, 118.056mph.

QUALIFYING 1

1 Fenestraz 1m50.571s; 2 Zhou 1m50.611s; 3 Ticktum 1m50.683s; 4 Aberdein 1m50.683s; 5 Armstrong 1m50.695s; 6 Schumacher 1m50.744s; 7 Palou 1m50.748s; 8 Ahmed 1m50.868s; 9 Daruvala 1m50.965s; 10 Vips 1m51.021s; 11 Scherer 1m51.046s; 12 Schwartzman 1m51.074s; 13 Sato 1m51.230s; 14 Hingeley 1m51.269s; 15 Troitskiy 1m51.270s; 16 Habsburg 1m51.279s; 17 Aron 1m51.435s; 18 Fernandez 1m51.476s; 19 Andres 1m51.926s; 20 Vaidyanathan 1m51.984s; 21 Petrov 1m52.208s; 22 Florsch 1m52.327s; 23 Leong 1m52.416s; 24 Florescu 1m52.493s.

RACE 2 (19 LAPS – 69.668 MILES)

1 Schumacher 35m38.068s; 2 Vips +1.060s; 3 Aberdein +8.260s; 4 Ahmed +8.956s; 5 Armstrong +13.452s; 6 Zhou +14.400s; 7 Fenestraz +16.241s; 8 Ticktum +16.690s; 9 Schwartzman +16.976s; 10 Aron +18.260s; 11 Palou +21.288s; 12 Hingeley +25.568s; 13 Habsburg +25.596s; 14 Fernandez +27.413s; 15 Daruvala +29.239s; 16 Petrov +30.819s; 17 Sato +32.078s; 18 Andres +37.519s; 19 Florsch +39.727s; 20 Florescu +49.877s; 21 Vaidyanathan +53.198s; 22 Leong +1m30.287s; R Troitskiy 17 laps-puncture; R Scherer 15 laps-gearbox wiring loom.

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 117.303mph.

FASTEST LAP Schumacher 1m51.962s, 117.898mph.

QUALIFYING 2

1 Scherer 1m50.460s; 2 Schumacher 1m50.509s; 3 Vips 1m50.510s; 4 Ahmed 1m50.537s; 5 Aberdein 1m50.568s; 6 Fenestraz 1m50.623s; 7 Armstrong 1m50.663s; 8 Ticktum 1m50.684s; 9 Zhou 1m50.708s; 10 Schwartzman 1m50.752s; 11 Palou 1m50.798s; 12 Hingeley 1m50.820s;

13 Aron 1m50.830s; 14 Fernandez 1m50.971s; 15 Sato 1m51.009s; 16 Habsburg 1m51.124s; 17 Troitskiy 1m51.136s; 18 Daruvala 1m51.159s; 19 Petrov 1m51.224s; 20 Leong 1m51.402s; 21 Florsch 1m51.665s; 22 Andres 1m51.719s; 23 Vaidyanathan 1m51.804s; 24 Florescu 1m52.650s.

RACE 3 (18 LAPS – 66.001 MILES)

1 Vips 36m02.838s; 2 Fenestraz +1.177s; 3 Aberdein +3.632s; 4 Ahmed +4.857s; 5 Schumacher +5.506s; 6 Ticktum +6.050s; 7 Palou +8.244s; 8 Zhou +12.072s; 9 Habsburg +12.637s; 10 Schwartzman +13.063s; 11 Scherer +14.152s; 12 Daruvala +16.809s; 13 Petrov +18.530s; 14 Sato +21.919s; 15 Troitskiy +23.606s; 16 Andres +27.762s; 17 Florsch +31.569s; 18 Vaidyanathan +32.064s; 19 Hingeley +32.707s; 20 Leong +35.153s; 21 Florescu +36.031s; R Aron 1 lap-accident damage; R Armstrong 0 laps-suspension; R Fernandez 0 laps-accident.

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 109.857mph.

FASTEST LAP Vips 1m52.091s, 117.762mph.

GRID FOR RACE 3

1 Vips; 2 Aberdein; 3 Fenestraz; 4 Schumacher; 5 Armstrong; 6 Ahmed; 7 Ticktum; 8 Zhou; 9 Schwartzman; 10 Palou; 11 Hingeley; 12 Aron; 13 Scherer; 14 Sato; 15 Daruvala; 16 Fernandez; 17 Habsburg; 18 Troitskiy; 19 Petrov; 20 Florsch; 21 Vaidyanathan; 22 Andres; 23 Leong; 24 Florescu.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ticktum 190; 2 Armstrong 172; 3 Vips 157; 4 Ahmed 145; 5 Aron 142.5; 6 Zhou 142; 7 Schumacher 136; 8 Daruvala 113.5; 9 Schwartzman 106; 10 Palou 104.

Tanak dominates for back-to-back wins

Toyota's Ott Tanak not only showed his true greatness with a Rally Germany win, but now has his sights set on eclipsing a national record

DAVID EVANS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JAANUS REE/RED BULL CONTENT POOL



Having toyed with the proverbial tiger through Friday's opening leg of Rally Germany, Ott Tanak took a big stick and smacked the bigger cat on the nose. Why not? If you want to rev things up then you're better off doing the job properly.

Such is Tanak's supreme confidence right now that he was happy to wind a five-time world champion up in the middle of another fascinating battle. At Friday evening's end-of-day press conference, held ahead of a packed crowd in the service park, the Estonian put his hand on Sebastien Ogier's shoulder and told him his time had come. The new generation was here now.

You had to feel for Ogier. Flanked by man

of the moment Tanak on one side and Thierry Neuville – the one intent on halting his march towards a sixth successive world title – on the other, the champion took it in good humour. He smiled, shrugged and asked what more he could do.

First thing Saturday morning and it looked like Tanak might be made to pay for his impudence. Ogier took 1.7s off him in the first six miles of the weekend. The Rally Finland winner's feeling with his Toyota Yaris WRC had disappeared. What now? He fought. He faced down the tiger.

Late last month Tanak was flying higher, faster and further than ever before at Rally Finland. Everything worked and he won the Jyväskylä event at a canter. Taking five of Friday's six stages to carve out a 12.3-second

lead, outwardly it looked as though Rally Germany was going very much the same way as Finland. But not according to Tanak.

"Yes, I won some stages," said Tanak. "But look at the differences: it's tenths of seconds. Nothing really."

Struggling with a car too hard for the Saturday morning stages, Tanak got down and dealt with it. It's in such moments where comfort cannot be found that greatness shines brighter than ever.

"I wasn't comfortable with the car," he said. "The balance wasn't so nice. We had more long corners [on Saturday morning] and the car was understeering and too neutral – we needed some oversteer to make it faster. I know that Seb could see this and I knew I had to find something.



I had to pull myself together.”

He may not have won any stages on the weekend’s first loop of four, but he still managed to build his lead over Ogier to more than 14 seconds.

Back in service, it was time to put the Yaris right as the Toyota was softened to drive more from the rear, just how Tanak likes it. His position was strengthened immeasurably when Ogier stopped to change a front-left puncture early in the Panzerplatte stage.

Barely had there been a moment for the disappointment at Ogier’s loss of second place to register before his thoughts turned to the championship: the bigger picture in need of some colour come Saturday afternoon. >>



Tanak (right) celebrates German victory with co-driver Jarveoja

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Tanak heads to Turkey
as the form driver – two
wins from two rallies

ESPORTS SHOWDOWN

Twelve months ago, Jon Armstrong was driving an M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5 as his prize for winning a section of the Junior World Rally Championship. This time around, the likeable Northern Irishman was back in the service park as a bona fide world champion.

A world champion in his socks, for Saturday night was the Esports WRC grand final. The 13-round season started in Monte Carlo, but without the logistical nightmare of having to freight cars and folk around the world, the virtual season could be completed much more quickly. The 13th and final round was in Finland.

Last week, the top 12 of the hundreds of thousands of folk who competed gathered to be whittled down to a final four. I'll admit, I was a touch sceptical about the whole thing, especially when the four gamers took their shoes off, pulled their Nomex gloves on and sat themselves down behind the telly.

"It's about the feel," Armstrong said.

I nodded, feeling as though I was the only one who didn't think it was actually real...

Don't get me wrong, I spent far too long doing a gross injustice to Colin McRae's name on my PlayStation a good while ago, but I'd got nothing on these boys. To get to the level he'd reached, Armstrong reckoned he'd had 250 hours at the wheel.

From the moment the three-stage final started, I was completely hooked. The speed, precision and commitment of these drivers was staggering. Armstrong rolled on the second stage, but recovered to take a narrow win.

And he delivered a sublime line at interview when asked what he'd be doing with the £20,000 Hyundai road car his win brought him.

"I don't know... I'll probably sell it."

And why not? He's got a real rally career to restart as well as a world title to defend. Virtually.



Clipping a rock on a left-hander, Ogier looked to have been the architect of his own downfall. But there was more to the story.

"I'm so frustrated that everybody has seen this video and said we did a mistake," Ogier told Autosport. "I didn't do a mistake. There was a junction 500 metres before this place where there were some small rocks and the road was broken. This is where we got the puncture and we have the data to show the loss of pressure in the tyre. I was on the normal line.

"Julien [Ingrassia, co-driver] told me: 'Puncture front-left.' When I saw it was only 800 metres [into the stage] I realised we have to stop. It's over. Then at the next junction I clip this rock – I was distracted knowing I had to pull over. I guess thinking about it I am having some good luck in the middle of this bad luck – I could have taken a wheel off and stopped completely."

The M-Sport Ford star's analysis of the championship position was considerably more succinct: "It's not ideal."

The Tanak threat's real

Ogier's team principal Malcolm Wilson sought a more in-depth perspective. His thinking was twofold: he was still backing his man, and it was now a three-way race with Tanak coming up on the outside.

"He's in it now," said Wilson of his former driver. "He'll be in there right to the end. He's done another very, very good job here. The form he's in right now, he'll be strong."

And Ogier?

"He's still the best," grinned Wilson.

"Just look at what he did after the puncture. He got back in the car and went fastest. Immediately, he was back on it and fighting like hell. For me, that's the mark of a true champion and I have no doubt he'll be back. Don't forget we've still got almost a third of the championship still remaining."

Ogier can see the potential with Tanak. And the Toyota.

"I would take that car for this weekend," said Ogier, staring at the Yaris after a near Estonian whitewash of Friday.

Tanak was having none of that. "I guess

"I'm so frustrated that everybody has seen this video and said we did a mistake. I didn't"

he doesn't like to remember the years he was dominating in the Volkswagen," he said. "It's nice that we are doing well now."

There's needle, but huge respect between the former M-Sport team-mates and, when Tanak emerged from Panzerplatte behind Ogier on Saturday afternoon, he drew up alongside Ogier's Fiesta and offered him a handshake.

"It was a big fight," he said. "It was mega. It always is with Seb. He's so strong, you can never forget about him. This is a shame for the end [of the fight] to come like this."

How seriously do we take this talk of Toyota dominance and the speed coming from the Yaris? Very. It would be stupid not to. But Tanak's pace must be countered with the performance of his team-mates Jari-Matti Latvala and Esapekka Lappi. And that's to take nothing away from the Finns; they were both at the races and both set fastest times, but they remain on the periphery of a purple patch – the seconds Tanak is finding to win rallies are coming courtesy of being bang in the middle of his.

Neuville's German jinx

Neuville has always been quick on this rally. He set a flurry of fastest times and finished second on only his third attempt in 2013. Literally and metaphorically, the German asphalt isn't a million miles away from the Belgian stuff he was brought up on.

In 2014, he rolled his Hyundai into the vines on Thursday and won on Sunday. Since then, he hasn't really come close. And that didn't change this time around. Yes, he was second, but his threat to >>

Tanak was nothing like that of Ogier's.

Neuville's not missing the speed. Remember Sardinia and that last-stage thriller, or the majesty of his big wins in Portugal and Sweden?

Three seconds off Ogier and 10 down on Tanak at Friday lunchtime and he was in the ballpark. But that was as close as he would get. An oil leak from the gearbox in the afternoon forced an overnight transmission change, but the differential in the replacement wasn't ideal for the dirtier roads. Because of parts-pairing regulations, the unit was the same used for the cleaner and grippy Corsica stages. The transmission wasn't locking quickly enough, causing the i20 Coupe WRC to snatch and lock a wheel under heavy braking. Thierry was keen to get the old 'box back in and, once the team had been through all the data and discovered there was no damage after the oil issue, the switch was made for Saturday afternoon. There was no dramatic upsurge in time, but it was more comfortable.

"It was not easy on Saturday morning," said Neuville. "We could see from Dani [team-mate Sordo] that the time was there, but I could not do it. It was better in the afternoon, but then we discovered the spring on the car was too stiff as well."

Going into the final day, he was fourth and eight seconds behind third-placed Latvala. Sordo's second would be sacrificed in the blink of an eye, but the key was to get past the Toyota.

Neuville quickly set his stall out on Sunday's Graftschaf opener. Immediately he was 5.4s up. Second was his target. Unbeknown to him, it was in the bag already. Latvala's Yaris succumbed to an electrical fault and Sordo would also retire after damaging the front of his i20.

Neuville admitted that it was hard to be downhearted having taken second from an indifferent weekend.

"I knew this would be a tough one," Neuville said. "It will be the same for all four of them left now. You know we were at the finish of all the races so far this season and we have to focus on doing that. We have a good margin in the championship now and finishes are key to staying at the front."



"The gearbox thing made it more complicated, but I have to be happy with this result. We were never at the same speed as the other two guys, but we took the sensible approach. If I'm frustrated, it's a little bit with the powerstage [where Neuville only collected one bonus point]. For all of the rally I was sensible and did not take too much risk, but then I make the mistake when the points were on offer in the last stage. OK, I have been strong so far on the powerstage and you can't do this for the whole season – maybe this was one where we were supposed to make this mistake!"

Undoubtedly, there was frustration from Hyundai that Sordo dropped the ball late in the day, costing Neuville and the team points in the championship races, but there was a real feeling of calm in the paler of the

two blue corners of the service park.

Hyundai team manager Alain Penasse said: "For Thierry, the focus is on the fact that his lead has grown in the championship and his rivals have one less race to close that gap. That's a good thing."

In seasons past, this is the point where Neuville fluffs his lines and falls apart. Penasse is convinced those days are done.

"He's not so nervous like he was," he said. "Last year, it was a stress for him to be leading the world championship. It was very difficult for him to cope. That's changed. Look at this rally – he calculated his strategy on what Ogier was doing. Of course, he would prefer to be ahead of him but he didn't want to take the risks. It was looking like a good operation and then Seb got the puncture and it became even better."





Neuville stretched his points lead despite lack of German pace

“Thierry analyses things so much better now than he used to. This is one of his big strengths. Ogier in the last years, he didn’t have so much pressure – he is less trained to deal with it. Thierry had some difficult years in the early time with us and he learned how to deal with it.”

That new-found ability is going to be tested more thoroughly than ever in the next three months and four rallies. Neuville and Hyundai have come through two events that have proved tricky and they’re still out front in both championships.

But it’s Tanak who goes to Turkey on a hat-trick, and the chance to edge Markko Martin and become the most successful Estonian in the history of world rallying.

Anybody who thinks Martin is the slightest bit fussed by that doesn’t know Tanak’s fellow five-time winner. Ott smiled at the prospect of his countryman’s nose being put out of joint.

“He’s only ever telling me to get stronger and to win more,” said Tanak. “No, I don’t think this will bother him.”

What bothered Tanak was the tenth of a second he missed out on in repeating the perfect 30-pointer he managed in Finland. Ogier edged him by the smallest of margins on powerstage and Tanak will use that as motivation for next month’s trip to Turkey.

Tanak paused briefly as he sought the words to express his feelings about the powerstage. Then came up with a one-liner Martin would be proud of: “This time Seb was a lucky bastard.” ❄

RESULTS ROUND 9/13, RALLY GERMANY, AUGUST 16-19

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Ott Tanak (EST) Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	3h03m36.9s
2	Thierry Neuville (B) Nicolas Gilsoul (B)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+39.2s
3	Esapekka Lappi (FIN) Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m00.9s
4	Sebastien Ogier (F) Julien Ingrassia (F)	M-Sport WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m34.5s
5	Teemu Suninen (FIN) Mikko Markkula (FIN)	M-Sport WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m02.9s
6	Andreas Mikkelsen (N) Anders Jager (N)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2m13.8s
7	Craig Breen (IRL) Scott Martin (GB)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	+2m39.1s
8	Marijan Griebel (D) Alexander Rath (D)	Marijan Griebel / Citroen DS 3 WRC	+10m41.2s
9	Jan Kopecky (CZ) Pavel Dresler (CZ)	Skoda Motorsport II / Skoda Fabia R5	+13m12.8s
10	Kalle Rovanner (FIN) Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Skoda Motorsport II / Skoda Fabia R5	+13m16.6s

OTHERS

18	Jourdan Serderidis (GR) Frederic Miclotte (B)	M-Sport WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+18m18.6s
25	Elfyn Evans (GB) Daniel Barritt (GB)	M-Sport WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+36m27.1s
R	Dani Sordo (E) Carlos del Barrio (E)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	SS16-accident
R	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN) Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	SS16-electrical
R	Mads Ostberg (N) Torstein Eriksen (N)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	SS16-electrical

DRIVERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Neuville 172; 2 Ogier 149; 3 Tanak 138; 4 Lappi 88; 5 Mikkelsen 65; 6 Sordo 60; 7 Latvala 55; 8 Evans 52; 9 Ostberg 48; 10 Breen 47.

MANUFACTURERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP

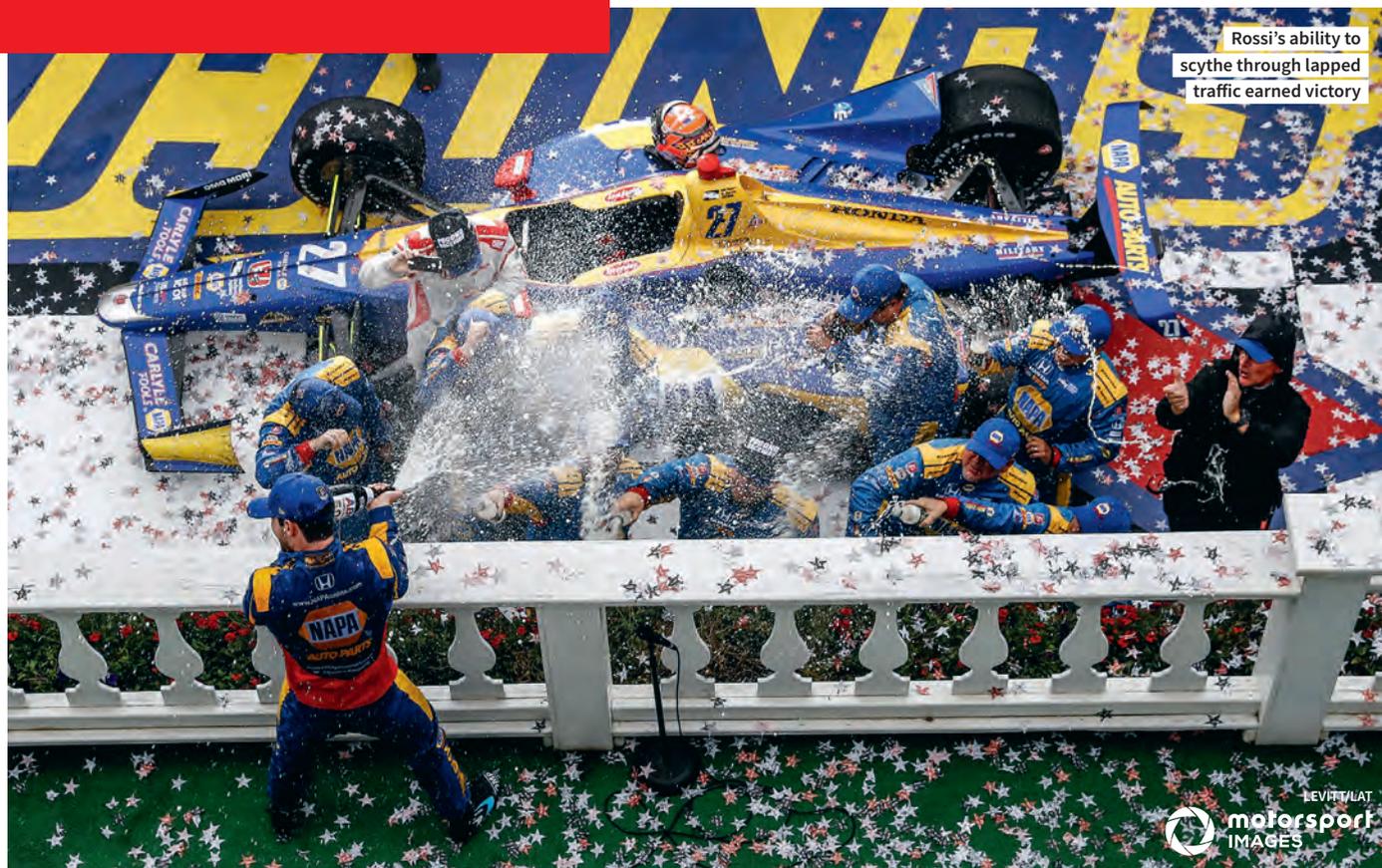
1 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 254; 2 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 241; 3 M-Sport Ford WRT 202; 4 Citroen Total 159; 5 M-Sport WRT 22.



Electrical gremlins forced Ostberg’s Citroen to retire

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 St Wendel (1.27 miles)	Tanak 2m11.2s	Tanak	Rovanpera +0.1s
SS2 Stein und Wein I (12.08 miles)	Ogier 10m50.2s	Ogier	Tanak +0.8s
SS3 Mittelmosel I (13.67 miles)	Tanak 12m25.2s	Tanak	Ogier +4.2s
SS4 Wadern-Weiskirchen I (5.76 miles)	Tanak 5m06.7s	Tanak	Ogier +7.2s
SS5 Stein und Wein II (12.08 miles)	Tanak 11m03.2s	Tanak	Ogier +7.5s
SS6 Mittelmosel II (13.67 miles)	Tanak 12m36.9s	Tanak	Ogier +9.1s
SS7 Wadern-Weiskirchen II (5.76 miles)	Tanak 5m07.5s	Tanak	Ogier +12.3s
SS8 Arena Panzerplatte I (5.86 miles)	Latvala 5m26.4s	Tanak	Ogier +10.6s
SS9 Panzerplatte I (23.97 miles)	Sordo 21m55.7s	Tanak	Ogier +13.2s
SS10 Freisen I (9.18 miles)	Lappi 8m28.4s	Tanak	Ogier +12.5s
SS11 Romerstrasse I (7.63 miles)	Breen 6m03.3s	Tanak	Ogier +14.1s
SS12 Arena Panzerplatte II (5.86 miles)	Sordo 5m23.9s	Tanak	Ogier +13.6s
SS13 Panzerplatte II (23.97 miles)	Sordo 21m55.4s	Tanak	Sordo +42.8s
SS14 Freisen II (9.18 miles)	Ogier 8m31.8s	Tanak	Sordo +42.2s
SS15 Romerstrasse II (7.63 miles)	Latvala 6m05.6s	Tanak	Sordo +43.7s
SS16 Grafenschaft I (18.06 miles)	Neuville 16m17.7s	Tanak	Neuville +43.9s
SS17 Grafenschaft II (18.06 miles)	Ogier 16m15.0s	Tanak	Neuville +32.6s
SS18 Bosenberg (Power Stage) (8.72 miles)	Ogier 7m15.0s	Tanak	Neuville +39.2s



Rossi dominates but Pocono race is marred by huge Wickens shunt

INDYCAR SERIES
POCONO (USA)
AUGUST 19
ROUND 13/16

The most dominant performance of his IndyCar career put Alexander Rossi within striking distance of Scott Dixon in the 2018 championship battle with just three rounds to go, the last of which offers double points.

The Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda driver, who qualified third, passed Josef Newgarden at the start of the race. He then jumped Will Power at the first restart and left him behind on the second — two hours later — going on to lead 180 of 200 laps.

The reason for that yawning gap between first and second restart, despite coming just six laps apart, was a red flag caused by a vicious shunt for Robert Wickens — he kept his nose alongside Ryan Hunter-Reay's Andretti Autosport car for just a tad too long going through the kink that is Turn 2 on the famous tri-oval. The Schmidt Peterson Motorsports driver's right-front wing made light contact with the left-rear of Hunter-Reay but, on cold tyres and in low-downforce trim, it was enough to tip the yellow car up and into the wall.

Wickens's car then launched off the rear of the stricken Hunter-Reay, rode (mercifully belly-first) along the catch fencing and the top of the SAFER barrier. It shed wheels and large parts of bodywork as the car viciously gyrated through several 360-degree spins.

Wickens was reported to be suffering from broken legs, a broken arm, a bruised lung and a spine injury (see Pit & Paddock).

James Hinchcliffe spun to try and avoid the accident ahead but an unsighted Takuma Sato, his car and helmet covered in oil from the torn-open Honda engine of Wickens's car, found himself striking the wall while trying to avoid Hinchcliffe, who'd had falling debris cut and bruise his hands in the cockpit. Pietro Fittipaldi's Dale Coyne Racing machine thumped the gold SPM car hard enough to hurt his own ankles, yet thankfully without adding to the injuries incurred while qualifying for May's World Endurance Championship race at Spa.

The repairs necessary to replace 90 feet of damaged catch fencing brought the race to a halt for almost two hours. But when it restarted, Rossi rocketed away from the Team Penske entry of Will Power, who on Saturday had joined AJ Foyt in second place in IndyCar's all-time pole-winners' list with

his 53rd. Power, who won the previous two Pocono races, gave valiant chase throughout, clearly the only driver with the wherewithal to apply pressure to the leader — although he didn't have the front-end grip to keep up with his rival through traffic.

This point was brought home soon after his lap 137 pitstop, when the super-swift #12 crew was able to get Power out in front of Rossi, who'd stopped a lap earlier and been mildly baulked by traffic on his out-lap. Like almost all drivers, Power had long since discovered that the wing-flaps and wickers that IndyCar had introduced to the superspeedway version of the 2018-spec Dallara aerokit were not enough to prevent front-end washout. Two momentum-sapping moments of understeer at Turn 1 in consecutive laps while running in the wake of backmarkers were enough to drop Power within slipstreaming reach of Rossi, who duly drafted past the Penske car to take the lead into Turn 2 on lap 141.

While Rossi then swiftly picked off the backmarkers, Power took far longer to do so. The gap between the lead pair went out to six seconds. Yet as the final stops approached, Rossi was hitting more traffic and Power had a clear track, allowing him



Latest win plus double-points race opens up title fight



Will Power lost out at the race's second restart

to whittle the lead down to under two seconds. He then stayed out two laps longer than Rossi, but that was to prove Power's undoing. He encountered Max Chilton's Carlin machine, which was on an out-lap and occupying the line Power needed for a swift in-lap. The silver Chevrolet-powered Penske car bobbed off-throttle through Turn 3 and skated up the track before its driver could wrestle it back down to pit entry. By the time he emerged from the pitlane, Power was over seven seconds back and the race was effectively over. Despite setting a couple of 216mph laps, Power could only reduce his deficit to 4.5s by the chequered flag.

Dixon's Chip Ganassi Racing car, meanwhile, was a further 36s adrift but still claimed third place, just ahead of the Dale Coyne Racing version of Sebastien Bourdais. As an exercise in damage limitation, it was a fine performance from the points leader, given that not only did he start 13th, but he also made a precautionary stop to change the right-side tyres having run over some of the debris from Wickens's shunt. Swift laps in clean air and strong pitstops meant Dixon moved up the order, but he couldn't pass Marco Andretti even when the native Pennsylvanian throttled back to save fuel. By the time Andretti's momentum was checked by impressive rookie team-mate Zach Veach and the struggling Newgarden, Dixon was over half a minute adrift of the two leaders, and the absence of further caution periods meant he simply never had a chance to catch up.

DAVID MALSHER

RESULTS ROUND 13/16, POCONO (USA), AUGUST 19 (200 LAPS - 500.000 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Autosport/ Dallara-Honda	2h36m49.1128s
2	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske/ Dallara-Chevrolet	+4.4982s
3	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing/ Dallara-Honda	+41.3557s
4	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser-Sullivan/ Dallara-Honda	+42.0120s
5	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske/ Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
6	Zach Veach (USA)	Andretti Autosport/ Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
7	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport/ Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
8	Simon Pagenaud (F)	Team Penske/ Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
9	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Carlin/ Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
10	Ed Carpenter (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing/ Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
11	Matheus Leist (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/ Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
12	Ed Jones (UAE)	Chip Ganassi Racing/ Dallara-Honda	-3 laps
13	Max Chilton (GB)	Carlin/ Dallara-Chevrolet	-4 laps
14	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/ Dallara-Honda	-4 laps
15	Conor Daly (USA)	Harding Racing/ Dallara-Chevrolet	162 laps-accident
16	Spencer Pigot (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing/ Dallara-Chevrolet	17 laps-accident
17	Tony Kanaan (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/ Dallara-Chevrolet	16 laps-throttle sensor
18	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport/ Dallara-Honda	6 laps-accident
19	Robert Wickens (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports/ Dallara-Honda	6 laps-accident
20	James Hinchcliffe (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports/ Dallara-Honda	6 laps-accident
21	Takuma Sato (J)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/ Dallara-Honda	6 laps-accident
22	Pietro Fittipaldi (BR)	Dale Coyne Racing/ Dallara-Honda	6 laps-accident

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 191.304mph. **FASTEST LAP** Bourdais 41.6072s, 216.309mph

QUALIFYING

1 Power 219.511mph; 2 Newgarden 218.802mph; 3 Rossi 218.758mph; 4 Hunter-Reay 217.806mph; 5 Pagenaud 217.769mph; 6 Wickens 217.612mph; 7 Veach 217.587mph; 8 Bourdais 217.296mph; 9 Hinchcliffe 217.009mph; 10 Sato 216.863mph;

11 Andretti 216.658mph; 12 Jones 216.547mph; 13 Dixon 216.410mph; 14 Kanaan 216.328mph; 15 Carpenter 216.025mph; 16 Pigot 215.177mph; 17 Fittipaldi 214.336mph; 18 Rahal 214.225mph; 19 Kimball 211.919mph; 20 Leist 211.696mph; 21 Chilton 209.599mph; 22 Daly 208.951mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Dixon 530; 2 Rossi 501; 3 Newgarden 464; 4 Power 449; 5 Hunter-Reay 411; 6 Wickens 391; 7 Pagenaud 368; 8 Rahal 351; 9 Hinchcliffe 338; 10 Bourdais 325.



Rossi led the way for a massive 180 of the race's 200 laps



Two hours were needed to clear the aftermath of Wickens's scary crash



Metronomic pace from Sims kept the M8 in control at Virginia

Sims and De Phillippi score M8's first win

**IMSA SPORTSCAR
VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL
RACEWAY (USA), AUGUST 19
ROUND 10/12**

The second GT-only race of the IMSA season, at the scenic Virginia International Raceway, provided another thrilling contest as Alexander Sims and Connor De Phillippi combined to score a well-earned first victory for the 2018 BMW M8 GTE.

Antonio Garcia and Jan Magnussen ultimately came up just short of a third successive victory at the undulating 3.27-mile road course, but the Corvette pair's sixth successive podium finish was enough to move them into the points lead with just two races remaining.

There were three distinct phases of the race, each with a different manufacturer holding the upper hand. Chip Ganassi's Ford GTs were the first to shine. After securing pole with an opportunistic late effort in wet-but-drying conditions, Richard Westbrook controlled the early stages but

was unable to shake a hotly pursuing pack that consisted of Bobby Rahal's BMW Team RLL M8s, plus Garcia, Patrick Pilet's Porsche 911 RSR and the second Ford of Joey Hand.

Only the Corvette of Tommy Milner and Earl Bamber's 911 were missing from the battle after tangling on the opening lap. Milner continued with a hobbled car, while Bamber served a drive-through penalty after being adjudged to be at fault.

The top six ran virtually in a train until Westbrook drove behind the wall with a drive-line problem after 29 laps. The remaining contenders all took on service shortly thereafter. Pilet was the last to stop, allowing Nick Tandy to vault from fifth to first ahead of Jesse Krohn, who had taken over from John Edwards in the #24 BMW. Dirk Muller resumed in third after relieving Hand in the sole remaining Ford, albeit suddenly six seconds in arrears.

Tandy maintained his new-found advantage for the next seven laps, only to suffer a sudden engine failure that triggered the race's only full-course caution.

Krohn's BMW was the only GTLM car to eschew a pitstop under caution. The Finn duly took over the lead and remained in front until triggering the final stops with 55 minutes remaining. Everyone else followed suit within the next two laps, aside from team-mate Sims, who continued to set the pace. Magnussen emerged from the stops in second, chased by Muller, the Porsche of Laurens Vanthoor and a charging Krohn, who quickly progressed from fifth to third.

All alone out front, Sims kept the hammer down. His advantage increased incrementally over the next 10 laps, but it then ballooned by an additional seven seconds over the next four laps as Magnussen worked his way through a pack of GTD cars. That proved to be crucial, and Sims led by almost a minute before heading to the pits. He resumed with a comfortable margin of more than nine seconds. Sims then managed his pace to perfection before taking the flag just over a second clear of Magnussen, who was being monstered by Krohn in the closing stages.

The battle for GTD honours was perhaps even more intense as Austrian Dominik Baumann (GT Racing Lexus RC F GT3) had a six-second margin over Katherine Legge (Acura) dwindle to nothing with four laps remaining. Luckily for him, Patrick Long (Porsche) also was closing fast in third. The final lap was a nailbiter as Legge's attempt to wrest the lead was barely rebuffed, whereupon Long took advantage by robbing the Acura of second just two corners from the finish. A relieved Baumann held on for his second win of the year alongside Canadian Kyle Marcelli.

JEREMY SHAW



Westbrook took pole and led for Ford until problems put him out

IMSA SPORTSCAR

VIRGINIA INT'L RACEWAY

GTLM Alexander Sims/Connor De Phillippi
BMW Team RLL BMW M8 GTE

GTD Dominik Baumann/Kyle Marcelli
3GT Racing Lexus RCF GT3

SUPER FORMULA

MOTEGI

Hiroaki Ishiura
Cerumo Inging Dallara-Toyota

NASCAR CUP

BRISTOL

Kurt Busch
Stewart-Haas Racing Ford Fusion

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

BRISTOL

Kyle Larson
Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet Camaro

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES

BRISTOL

Johnny Sauter
GMS Racing Chevrolet Silverado

JAPANESE FORMULA 3

MOTEGI

Race 1 Sho Tsuboi
TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F317

Race 2 Sho Tsuboi
TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F317

Race 3 Sho Tsuboi
TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F317

ADAC GT MASTERS

ZANDVOORT

Race 1 Ezequiel Perez Companc/
Marco Mapelli
GRT Grasser Racing Team
Lamborghini Huracan GT3

Race 2 Robert Renauer/Mathieu Jaminet
Herberth Motorsport
Porsche 911 GT3-R

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS

CAMPO GRANDE

Race 1 Felipe Fraga
Cimed Racing Chevrolet Cruze

Race 2 Ricardo Zonta
Shell Racing Chevrolet Cruze

SCANDINAVIAN TOURING CARS

KARLSKOGA

Race 1 Johan Kristoffersson
Kristoffersson Motorsport
Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR

Race 2 Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky
PWR Racing Team
SEAT Cupra Leon TCR

For full results visit:
motorsportstats.com



Champ Ishiura back on form

SUPER FORMULA

MOTEGI (J)

AUGUST 19

ROUND 5 / 8

Reigning Super Formula champion Hiroaki Ishiura finally got off the mark in 2018 with victory at Motegi.

The Cerumo Inging driver collected his sixth series pole, his Toyota-powered car beating top Honda runner Tomoki Nojiri by just 0.05 seconds. But, more impressively, this is now the fourth time Ishiura has converted his pole into the win.

Nojiri's Dandelion Racing team-mate Nobuharu Matsushita started in third spot, and he made a good start to jump down the inside of Ishiura on the first lap to lead. Matsushita was able to hold first until he dived in for his pitstop. Ishiura responded to the threat, dropping his lap times consistently through to his stop 13 laps later. He resumed first, pursued by Team Impul driver Ryo Hirakawa (Toyota).

Nick Cassidy, winner of the previous

round, lined up fifth on the grid but his Kondo Racing Dallara-Toyota was shod on medium-compound tyres. That meant that when he finally switched over to the softs late on, he was faced with having to do some overtaking. Now able to push, he made up the lost time, passing Matsushita for third.

Those points mean that Cassidy leads the championship ahead of Team Mugen's Naoki Yamamoto, who started seventh and maintained his position come the flag. Kazuya Oshima was fifth for Team Le Mans, ahead of Cassidy's Kondo team-mate Kenta Yamashita.

James Rossiter had a bad qualifying, unable to climb beyond 17th. But a stunning first lap allowed the TOM'S man to rise to eighth. He continued to climb as others pitted, but the order eventually sorted itself out with Rossiter finishing in ninth place.

Ex-Formula 1 driver Narain Karthikeyan started fourth but struggled on the medium tyres late on. He finished 11th ahead of LMP1 driver Tom Dillmann.

JIRO TAKAHASHI



Ishiura is now tied for second, just three points off Cassidy

Brothers steal the show

NASCAR CUP

BRISTOL (USA)

AUGUST 18

ROUND 24 / 36

Kurt Busch (left) ended a 58-race winless streak when he took victory in the NASCAR Cup Bristol night race with his Stewart-Haas Racing Ford Fusion, but an incident-packed outing for his brother Kyle stole the headlines.

After sliding into Penske's Ryan Blaney and triggering a 12-car pile-up on only the second lap of the 500-tour event, pre-race favourite Kyle Busch's Toyota was battle-scarred and two laps down.

The seven-time Bristol winner fought back through the field and,

with 70 laps remaining, his Joe Gibbs Racing car had caught Martin Truex Jr for second. The battle ended prematurely when he tagged the rear of the reigning champion, pitching Truex into the infield wall and out of the race.

Furniture Row Racing star Truex had previously threatened to take the lead away from Clint Bowyer, conceding afterwards that he had "been too nice" in trying to make a contact-free move in a notoriously physical short-track race.

With Truex out and Busch's race over after contact with Chris Buescher, Kurt Busch rose from the periphery of the top 10 to take the lead from Bowyer with two "perfect" late-race restarts and so guaranteed his place in the playoffs.

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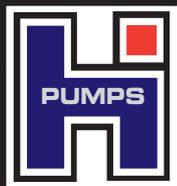
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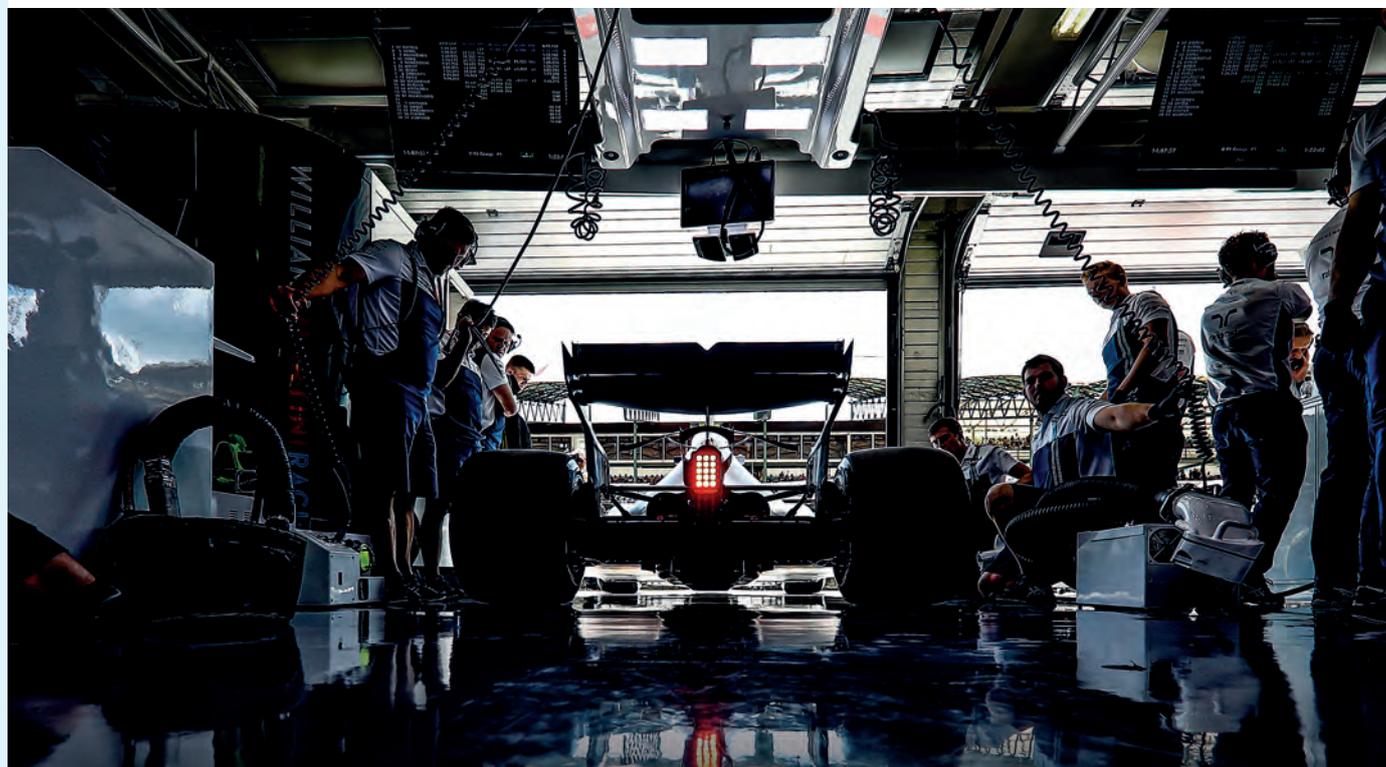
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RACING TO CEASE AT ROCKINGHAM AFTER CIRCUIT SALE

ROCKINGHAM

Motorsport at Rockingham Motor Speedway will “cease” at the end of 2018, according to current CEO Peter Hardman, after the circuit was sold last week.

The Northamptonshire track – the first oval of its size to be built in the UK since the famous Brooklands venue near Weybridge in Surrey in the early 1900s – had already been dropped from the British Touring Car Championship and British GT calendars for 2019 amid growing speculation over its future.

While Rockingham has confirmed that its remaining 2018 events will go ahead, Hardman told the *Northamptonshire Telegraph*: “All events to the end of 2018 will be run with the professionalism and enthusiasm that are the hallmark of Rockingham, but circuit activities will cease from the beginning of 2019.”

Autosport understands that the land

will be used as a large automotive premises, likely to hold auctions and operate a car-storage facility. It is expected to create new jobs for the area, and the businesses that currently operate the land – over 50 in total and not all motorsport-linked – believe they have a future at the venue.

A statement from the circuit after the sale read: “A sale of Rockingham Motor Speedway Ltd has now completed and, as a result, there will be changes in business operations at the venue. We would reassure all customers that these changes will not impact any aspect of events scheduled to run during 2018, nor the opportunity to stage further events this year.

“Until the end of the year, the Rockingham team will remain 100% committed to delivering the venue and associated services as professionally and proudly as ever before. We thank you for your continued support and a further statement will follow shortly.”

The circuit opened in 2001, with the US-based CART IndyCar series visiting in its first two seasons for races won by Gil de Ferran and Dario Franchitti.

It was also the primary venue for the NASCAR-inspired ASCAR series of the early 2000s.

In recent years, racing on its oval has largely been limited to the Pickup Truck Racing Championship, while most of the major racing clubs use its infield track.

JACK BENYON



WILLIS: PICKUPS CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT OVAL



The Pickup Truck Racing Championship could receive a boost from moving away from Rockingham in the future, according to one of its competitors.

The circuit announced it had been sold last week (see story left) and it won't host motorsport events beyond the end of this year.

The Pickup Trucks are the only championship that visits the Corby track regularly to compete on the oval, and although long-time frontrunner Mark Willis is sad to see the venue disappear, he believes it could encourage new competitors to join.

"I think there's mixed emotions," said Willis. "It's upsetting that it is going – the racing there is great. But people don't come and watch it.

"Maybe we can have some different venues now. We might get an Oulton Park date, and Anglesey."

The championship started in 1997, with the Rockingham oval not open for competition until 2001.

"The championship survived all right before the oval came along," added Willis. "Racing at Rockingham is very competitive and the damage you can sustain from the wall, it might have put some drivers off joining in the past. If the oval's not there [on the calendar] it might gain more attention if it's going back to a 'normal' series, if you like."

● Willis is likely to miss the next Pickup round at Snetterton on September 8-9 due to bruising after a Rockingham crash earlier this month. He hopes to return for the final at Rockingham on September 22-23.

JACK BENYON



Top three Clios impounded

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

The cars of the top three drivers in the Renault UK Clio Cup standings have been impounded by Renault Sport to be stripped down ahead of the next round of the series at Silverstone.

The Clios of Max Coates (Team Pyro), Paul Rivett (WDE Motorsport) and James Dorlin (Westbourne Motorsport) were all taken away from Rockingham by series officials after the recent races. They will be thoroughly checked to make sure they are completely legal ahead of the final two weekends of the season.

Autosport understands it is the first time for a number of years that the championship has taken this action.

Points leader Coates and three-time Clio champion Rivett both support the move.

"It's good, I have no problem with that," said Coates. "I think it's good that the championship takes the eligibility of the cars seriously. It means no-one has

any questions about the car.

"I think the parity of the cars is good really, I don't have any concerns about the cars – mine to everyone else's or everyone else's to mine."

Rivett added: "I'm really pleased Renault have impounded the cars of the top three in the championship for investigating. It's really good for the championship to do that, it's something very positive."

Championship manager Will Fewkes said the checks are just "general" with scrutineers not looking at any specific area.

"Renault Sport UK has always been committed to technical excellence with the championship," said Fewkes. "We've done that over the years with Formula Renault and every other single-make category we've been involved with, and continue to do so with the Clio Cup. We are just pushing the boundaries to stand out and it's written in the regulations that we can do this."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

BTCC champs to Revival

GOODWOOD REVIVAL

Six British Touring Car Championship title winners, with 11 crowns between them, will race at the Goodwood Revival next month.

Current champion Ash Sutton will make his Revival debut in a Lotus Cortina, going head to head with 2013 champion and Goodwood regular Andrew Jordan. Previous Goodwood winner Jordan will again race the Jordan Racing Team-prepared Cortina of Take That singer Howard Donald.

Three-time BTCC champion Matt Neal will join former BTCC competitor Nick Whale in the Whale's Studebaker Lark Daytona in the St Mary's Trophy, while three-time champion Gordon Shedden will race on British soil for the first time since graduating to the WTCR series for this season.

Jason Plato (in a Corvette Stingray in the RAC TT Celebration) and 1994 BTCC champion Gabriele Tarquini complete the gang of six.

PAUL LAWRENCE



BRITISH GT The new Aston Martin Vantage GT3 had a first run out in customer hands at Donington Park last week, as 2016 British GT champion Derek Johnston (above) got behind the wheel. Johnston was impressed by the new challenger, which is set to make its competitive debut next year. The Vantage, which has yet to be homologated, made its public debut at the Aston Martin Festival at Le Mans in June with factory ace Ross Gunn driving.

TCR Europe for UK winner Taylor

TCR UK

TCR UK frontrunner Ollie Taylor will compete in the final two rounds of TCR Europe at Monza and Barcelona, with a view to switching to the series next year.

Taylor, currently second in the UK championship behind runaway leader Dan Lloyd, will race his regular Team Pyro Honda Civic Type R FK8.

"It was always the plan to

do TCR with the intention of taking the car elsewhere in the world," Taylor said.

Taylor was present at last weekend's TCR Germany round at Zandvoort and has not ruled out a partial season in this championship either. "I'm doing the last two rounds of Europe to get an idea of what it's all about," he added. "Germany is also an option for us.

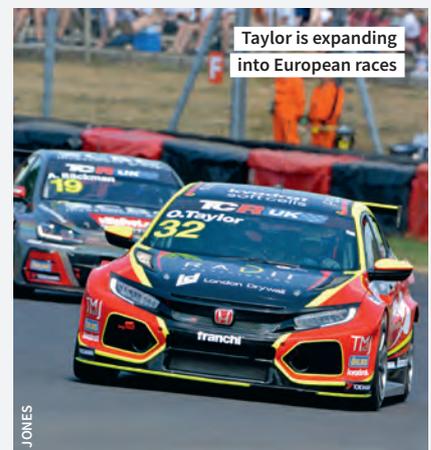
"We don't want to do it to be in the middle of the

pack, so these races will be to see where we're at and that'll help us decide where to go next year."

No date clashes mean Taylor will continue with his TCR UK campaign, with the final round taking place a week before the European season concludes at Barcelona.

He is 78 points behind Lloyd with 182 still available from Croft and Donington Park.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



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MICKE FRANSSON

BRDC British F3 leader enjoyed Porsche switch

IN THE HEADLINES

MORRIS'S COMEBACK

Formula Ford veteran Rick Morris made a successful comeback to the Classic Formula Ford Championship at Snetterton last weekend after a car-destroying accident at Silverstone in May. Morris, 71, raced his fresh Royale RP29 on Saturday and was immediately on the pace, taking two second places. "We couldn't find another RP26 so we found a 29, which Don Hardman managed to put together in record time," said Morris.

HOLLYWOOD RETURNS

The 2015 British GT champion Andrew Howard and *Great British Bake Off* presenter Paul Hollywood will both tackle the next round of the GT Cup at Donington Park next month. Howard will drive a GT3 Aston Martin Vantage, while Hollywood, who has made sporadic race outings in recent seasons, will compete in a Beechdean-entered GT4 car.

MG LEGEND SET TO FLY

MG Car Club race committee chairman Ron Gammons will retire from the position at the end of this season. Gammons has been involved with the club in a number of different roles since the 1960s. "I am leaving the leadership of the race sub-committee so I can finally devote some more time to my other passion of flying," he said.

ZELOS IN MINI ONE-OFF

Renault UK Clio Cup racer Dan Zelos will make a one-off appearance in the Mini Challenge at Brands Hatch this weekend. The 20-year-old – who is 10th in the Clio standings having taken a best finish of fourth this year – will compete in the series' Dunlop-backed guest car in the Mini Festival.

LINSCOTT TESTS F4 CAR

Ginetta Junior newcomer Emily Linscott (below) tested a British Formula 4 car with her Ginetta team Richardson Racing at Anglesey last week as she evaluates options for next season. She is yet to decide whether to stay in Ginetta Junior or switch to F4, and is also set to test a GT4 car later in the year. Linscott was recently revealed as the beneficiary of a scholarship in the US that will mean she earns one-to-one tuition with IndyCar racer Pippa Mann early next year.



Lundqvist in Porsche debut

CARRERA CUP SCANDINAVIA

Current BRDC British Formula 3 Championship leader Linus Lundqvist got his first taste of GT racing as he made a guest appearance in Porsche Carrera Cup Scandinavia last weekend.

Lundqvist, who races with Double R in British F3 and has won six races so far this year, competed in Mtech Competition's Porsche 911 GT3 car at the Karlskoga Motorstadion circuit in Sweden.

The 19-year-old Swede, who also leads the Sunoco Whelen Challenge and could earn the chance to race at the 2019 Daytona 24 Hours, finished seventh in both races.

"It's definitely a new experience – in the end it's a racing car, it has a steering wheel and four wheels and you want to drive it as quick as you can," said the Swede. "But compared to my F3 car it weighs more than twice and there is zero to no aerodynamics.

"It's a big change, not just sitting in the left-hand side and the car has a roof, but in the Porsche it's all about the weight.

"It's my first time back here [racing in Sweden] in two years so it's good to be here and it's a great experience for me as a driver [to be in the Porsche].

"I think in general every car you can drive is a good benefit – you can always learn something."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Gamble: drink-drive ban

CARRERA CUP GB

Porsche Carrera Cup GB driver George Gamble has been banned for driving on the road for up to 20 months after crashing into a house.

The 22-year old, who was Ginetta



MOTORSPORTIMAGES/EBREVILAT

GT5 Challenge champion in 2014 and has also raced in the GT4 Supercup, crashed while driving a pickup truck in the village of Woodborough in Nottinghamshire in February this year.

Gamble was over the drink-drive limit at the time of the crash.

Gamble was fined and banned from driving for 20 months following a hearing at Nottingham Magistrates Court last week.

He is fifth in the Carrera Cup GB standings, having taken two wins so far this year, and sits 34 points behind series leader Dino Zamparelli. The ban will not affect his racing licence, and he is expected to continue in the series.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Formula Junior for Jackson at Goodwood

GOODWOOD REVIVAL

Historic Sports Car Club Formula Ford 1600 title hopeful Cameron Jackson will race a Brabham Formula Junior at the Goodwood Revival next month.

Jackson, who has mostly raced a Lola T200 this year in Historic Formula Ford, will take part in the Chichester Trophy for Formula Junior cars, driving a 1962 Brabham BT2 in which he has competed over the past few years.

“It’s literally the reason I bought the car,” said Jackson. “Events like the Silverstone Classic and Goodwood – that’s what it’s all about for me.”

“[The Chichester Cup] is on a three-year rotation for all the classes to be covered. It doesn’t come round every year, so it’s quite special.”

One potential distraction concerns Jackson – his wife Emily is due to give birth 10 days after the Revival weekend.

“I’ve got my brother [Dominik, who has shared cars with Cameron and competed regularly before] lined up in the background to take over if I have to skidaddle from the circuit very rapidly because Em’s gone into labour,” he said.

Jackson is just five points off the



Jackson (left) raced BT2 at Silverstone Classic

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD POINTS

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	PTS	TOTAL*
1	Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20)	245	185
2	Cameron Jackson (Lola T200)	242	180
3	Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20)	154	120
4	Ed Thurston (Elden Mk8)	130	101
5	Richard Tarling (Jamun T2)	128	128

*With four dropped scores taken into account

Historic Formula Ford title lead with three events to go (see points table left). Jackson is challenging current leader and Merlyn Mk20 driver Ben Mitchell for the honours, while reigning champion Richard Tarling is still in contention, but has taken his four dropped scores with non-entries already.

The series is still to visit Oulton Park this weekend, Brands Hatch Indy in October and the HSCC finals at Silverstone in October.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDENER

Fordsters hopeful of prize replacement

ROAD TO INDY

Formula Ford team bosses and drivers are hopeful that the Road to Indy scholarship will continue in a new guise, after Mazda announced it would be pulling out at the end of this year.

The British Racing & Sports Car Club’s National FF1600 Championship has been a part of the scheme since 2016, with the winner of the series gaining a ticket to the Mazda Road to Indy Shootout.

FF1600 driver Keith Donegan won the Shootout last year – after gaining a ticket with a runner-up spot in the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch – and has been competing in USF2000 this term.

Jamie Thorburn also claimed a spot last year after winning James Beckett’s Super Series Shootout.

“I think it’s vital – a lot of people who race Formula Ford are trying to make a career but most of us lack the budget,”



Thorburn won a ticket last year

he said. “For us it’s important to have that opportunity to go to America and progress up through the ranks over there.”

Team owner Cliff Dempsey said: “It’s very disappointing that they have to pull their funding but it was never going to go on forever. I believe that things are in hand for someone to take up their mantle. Formula Ford was strong before we got it so I don’t

think it will affect it [grid size] that much.”

While no replacement for Mazda has come forward, there is speculation that Cooper Tires – the tyre supplier for the Road to Indy championships – could step in, albeit with less financial backing than Mazda had provided. It could be joined by other backers to supplement the prize.

STEFAN MACKLEY



HUNTING FOR GOLD

The Oulton Park Gold Cup is one of the biggest historic events on the calendar, but its origins were as a Formula 1 race that was usually won by Stirling Moss

MARCUS PYE

Established in 1954 as a non-championship Formula 1 race, Oulton Park's International Gold Cup event brought top-class motor racing to enthusiasts in the North West.

Aintree, 35 miles distant in Liverpool's suburbs, would not host its first British Grand Prix until the following season, when the victor was the same man, rising star Stirling Moss in a factory Mercedes-Benz W196 as opposed to his Oulton-winning Maserati 250F '2506'.

Moss's mastery was such that he won the first five F1-based Gold Cups [the 1956-58 events featured a non-F1 theme], each time in a different car, all in entrant Rob Walker's colours.

Jack Brabham, Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart, John Surtees and Denny Hulme – with 10 F1 world titles between them – all won the Gold Cup, as did sportscar superstar Jacky Ickx in 1969. Surtees scored his first Gold Cup win in an F2 Lola in '65, but after F1 victories in eponymous TS7 and TS8 models, his fourth, in a Maserati 250F in '81, revisited the event's origins as a 'one-off' Historic showcase.

It was during the Gold Cup's F5000 era that Mancunian Derek Bennett's Chevron marque was first inscribed on its roll of

“MOSS'S MASTERY WAS SUCH THAT HE WON THE FIRST FIVE F1-BASED GOLD CUPS”

honour. Having put the F1 hierarchy's noses out of joint by beating the three-litre cars in Brands Hatch's 1973 Race of Champions at Brands Hatch, Peter Gethin drove a sister B24-Chevrolet to victory at Oulton. David Purley also triumphed with the one-off Ford GAA V6-engined B30 in '75.

Oulton was a spiritual home to Bennett's boys, a place where the intuitive designer, taken too soon at 44 following a hang-gliding accident in 1978, could hop into any of his creations on a test day and lap as quickly as works aces Brian Redman or Gethin – an extraordinary skill set that furthered Derek's reputation for developing cars that flattered amateurs and rewarded professionals equally.

The first Chevrons were B1s, built for the new Clubmans class in 1965, but within a year beautiful little GT cars started rolling out of the factory. Oulton was always a happy hunting ground, indeed the Lotus-Ford twin-cam powered B3 prototype won

there on its debut with Digby Martland, on July 23 '66. Redman mirrored the feat in the one-off BRM V8-engined B5 in '67.

Countless successes saw seven production B6 models manufactured in 1967 and 44 B8s emerge from the former cotton mill in Bolton – Chevron's home – a year later. Generic 'Chevron GT' production thus passed 50 examples, earning FIA Group 4 homologation. Fifty years on, the universally revered B8's golden jubilee will be celebrated with a special race at this weekend's Gold Cup, original drivers including Martland, John Burton, Brian Classic, Dr Tony Goodwin, Roger Heavens, Peter Lawson, Ian 'Mo' Skailes and Pete 'Rhubarb' Smith among them.

Apart from a deep-rooted love of Chevron cars since childhood, I have many happy memories of the Gold Cup, from long before international motorsport's landscape changed and the meeting became a hugely popular cornerstone of the Historic Sports Car Club's calendar. The HSCC's CEO Grahame White is equally passionate about the marque, having been sales director in the 1970s during a break from event organising.

In the spring of 1977, in my pre-Autosport days, old pal Robert Syngue persuaded Derek Bell to give us a lift to Oulton Park, where he was testing Paul Michaels's Penske PC3. Derek won Good Friday's Gold Cup race and later recalled how he was stopped by Hampshire police *en route* home. They were surprised to find a large trophy in his Jaguar XJS's boot, more so that he'd won it in the north of England earlier that day!

In the British F1 Championship era I reported the 1979 and '80 Gold Cup races, and later, in its Thundersports phase, I lucked into finishing second to the Group C2 Tiga-DFL of Tim Lee-Davey/Neil Crang in the '85 edition, driving Chester Wedgwood's two-litre Chevron B36. It was without fourth gear and on mismatched rear tyres following an early puncture.

In the event's Historic epoch, the Hart 420R engine drive belt in the ex-Keke Rosberg 1977 Enna F2-winning B40 I co-owned with Simon Hadfield caused heartache in 2003. But a superb run in Vin Malkie's B1 and third in the unique ex-Gethin F5000 B37 – after a battle with hero Redman in a B42 – more than atoned. From a Formula Junior Lotus 18 to F5000 McLaren M10B, I enjoyed plenty of Gold Cup track action before taking up the Knickerbrook commentator's position, working with lifelong Oulton devotee Ian Titchmarsh, as I will this weekend.

A very special Chevron memory, however, comes from an HSCC Snetterton enduro in 1982. Sharing the ex-Knight brothers Targa Florio class-winning B8 with preparer Roger Andreason – and WDK Motorsport's MD Ian Cox on spanners – we finished second to its owner Tony Gordon and Stirling Moss in a B19. Almost 30 years after his maiden Gold Cup victory, the great man was still winning in style... ✨

Michael Lyons took
two hard-fought Derek
Bell Trophy wins



Byrne stars but Lyons wins at Mondello

**MONDELLO PARK
CCC
AUGUST 18-19**

Tommy Byrne, returning to Ireland to race James Hagan's ex-James Hunt Hesketh, was surely responsible for a fair portion of the massive crowd who attended the Historic Racing Festival, which celebrated both Mondello Park's 50th anniversary and the life of Martin Birrane. With classic car drivers gaining free access to the event, and many drivers from the history of the circuit invited to attend, both the grandstand and paddock were packed and the atmosphere was wonderful.

Byrne sensationally snatched pole for the Derek Bell Trophy opener in qualifying's

dying minutes. The former Theodore F1 driver led away in the race but, after a hectic scrap, Michael Lyons in a Lola F5000 wrestled first from him. Byrne put up a fight but contact damaged his front wing and he dropped back. Despite Byrne's efforts, Lyons controlled the gap beautifully to win. Byrne took second with Mondello stalwart Dan Daly completing the podium. Next up was Alain Girardet's McLaren from Neil Glover and Kevin McGarrity, who was piloting the Birrane/Mondello Museum Lola T300.

In race two, Lyons just fended off Byrne into Turn 1, but the local hero was on the attack immediately. A run out of Turn 3 brought him close enough for a stab down the inside into Bridgestone. As Lyons closed the door, the pair made contact,

slowing the Hesketh momentarily. At the end of the opening lap, Lyons, who was obviously pushing, was already over a second clear. Byrne fought hard but was unable to close down the flying Lola. In their wake, Daly was once again on a giant-killing mission as he grabbed third. He immediately had to fend off Girardet, though, whose F5000 McLaren was clearly quicker in a straight line but unable to find a way by circuit specialist Daly. At the flag Lyons made it a double win with Byrne second again and, adding to the delight of the crowd, Daly once again an impressive third.

Paddins Dowling was a hugely successful historic race competitor at Mondello some 30 years ago, and he was a very welcome visitor to the 50th Anniversary event in his ERA. Having qualified on pole for the HRCA Pre-55 contest, an incredible 23 seconds ahead of the car's nearest challenger, he handed his car over to David Morris for the opening race. Morris took the race on scratch, but John Keatley in the Healey Silverstone kept in touch all the way. Once the handicapper had done his work, Keatley deservedly took the honours, from Mark Brennan's Alvis and Edmund Cassidy's famous MG Magnette-based Iona Special.

In race two, with Dowling back aboard, the ERA predictably decimated the opposition, lapping every other competitor as the US-domiciled Irishman got into his stride. On handicap, however, historic racing stalwart Ken McAvoy took the honours in his beautiful Riley, from Cassidy's MG and



Jackie Cochrane won
both HRCA races

CHESTER

MONDELLO PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

DEREK BELL TROPHY

Race 1 Michael Lyons (Lola T400)
Race 2 Michael Lyons (Lola T400)

HRCA PRE-1955 HISTORICS

Race 1 David Morris (ERA R10B)
Race 2 Paddins Dowling (ERA R10B)

HRCA HISTORIC

Race 1 Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)
Race 2 Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)

For full results visit:
www.timing.ie



DOWLING'S CAR SHARE Paddins Dowling was a successful Irish Historic racer over 30 years ago. He campaigned an MG N Type, an MG TC and subsequently a Lotus XI, and was no stranger to Mondello Park, even if it had been a while since his last visit. Having dominated qualifying, he handed his ERA to David Morris for race one, before adding to his Mondello Park win tally in race two.



DUNLOP GETS A GRIP Lewis Dunlop was entered in David Kelly's Lotus Elan. When the BDA-powered machine gave trouble, the 21-year-old was offered Kelly's Crossle 9S. Having found his feet in the mid-engined machine in the first HRCA race, he starred in race two, climbing to second and crossing the line right on the rear bumper of the generally dominant Jackie Cochrane.



FEEL THE BYRNE At the wheel of James Hagan's Hesketh, Tommy Byrne starred at the Mondello Historic Festival, snatching pole in the dying minutes of qualifying and chasing down Michael Lyons in both races, to the delight of the capacity crowd at the hugely popular event.

Formula Sheane pacesetter Kevin Sheane, who provided great entertainment as he hustled the Frank Nuttal Ford Special around, to the delight of the crowd.

After an aborted HRCA start, Bernard Foley got the jump on Jackie Cochrane's Sunbeam Tiger on the second time of asking, but didn't get to enjoy the lead for too long. Normal service was resumed as Cochrane blasted by to assume his usual position. Recent upgrades to Foley's now 4.6-litre-engined car had obviously worked, however, as he kept the usually dominant Tiger in view until retiring on the last lap.

In race two, with Foley not making the grid, Stephen Griffin, who raced at the circuit's first meeting back in 1968, grabbed the lead on the run to Turn 1. It didn't last long, though, as Tommy Doherty had launched the 3-litre Capri to perfection from row two to blast by the pair for the lead. Griffin immediately went back at him and for the opening number of laps there was a great battle, as Griffin's Modsport Midget could not penetrate the defence of the former FF1600 racer, with Paul Gray and Cochrane following closely.

As expected, Cochrane fought his way to the front, but hadn't counted on the pace of young Lewis Dunlop, who was on a charge in the David Kelly-owned Crossle 9S. Having despatched all of the other opposition, the relative novice set fastest lap as he closed the gap to the Tiger to under a second by the chequered flag.

LEO NULTY



Evans was able to keep Challis's Porsche at bay to take the victory

JONES

Evans above the rest in New Millennium

**THRUXTON
CSCC
AUGUST 18-19**

A surprise first win for bold BMW E46 M3 driver Matty Evans over the vastly experienced Peter Challis (Porsche 997 Cup), having traded places in Saturday's 40-minute New Millennium finale, was among many highlights of the Classic Sports Car Club's third Thruxton Thriller.

Race sponsor Evans shot his car into the lead from P4 at the start. An "eleven-quid" plywood splitter bolted to its nose to counteract understeer after the original was damaged in qualifying was almost his undoing, though, with the car's handling becoming ever lairier as its left corner was ground away. Challis locked up into the Complex, but

was homing in on the BMW again when another E46 driver inadvertently let Evans off the hook. Bal Sidhu's erratic adventure ended in a crash at Noble, thus the chequer flew five minutes early, as Challis prepared to pounce. As Evans stopped, the last piece of splitter fell off and was presented to pitlane commentator Andy McEwan. Alistair Scott (E46) robbed James Moulton-Smith (E36 M3) of third on the final lap.

Freshly rebuilt by Mike Johnston in Northern Ireland following a prang, Andy Southcott planted his 2.3-litre Vauxhall-powered 'silhouette' MG Midget on pole for the Special Saloon and Modsports feature with a staggering 1m18.062s (108.65mph) shot and won all three bouts, from 10-place winners' grid drops on Sunday. Tom Carey (Honda CRX-BDG) almost caught him napping on Saturday, though.

Fifty years after his Thruxton debut, Ian Hall – double winner in 2016 and '17 in his six-litre Darrian Wildcat – had Southcott on the ropes on Sunday morning when the profusely apologetic Craig Percy failed to see him while being lapped at Allard. The clash with Percy's Morris Minor-Chevrolet broke the Darrian's left-rear suspension, sending it spinning into the barrier. Following an overnight gearbox rebuild Ricky Parker-Morris (Peugeot 309-Cosworth YB turbo)

repaid his crew with second.

Carey's early exit gifted Southcott an easy finale victory over Danny Morris in the Peugeot and Special Saloons veteran Steve Minton in the immaculate Escort Mk2 he built in 1981, after a spirited all-BDG-powered battle with Tony Paxman's Escort Mk1 and Neil Duke's Anglia 105E.

Paul Tooms arrived from Texas overnight and won the Classic K showcase in his Lotus Elan. Following a gripping scrap for silver, the Marcos-Volvos of Peter Thompson and Allen Tice/Chris Conoley were split by David Garrett's ex-Karl Foitek Elan 26R at the chequered flag. Tice/Conoley were promoted to second when Thompson had 30 seconds added to his time for failing to serve his Silverstone win penalty at the stop, and speeding in the pitlane cost Garrett 60s.

Renault Meganes finished one-two in Turbo Tin Tops, Nigel Tongue's F1 R26 five seconds clear of Charles Hyde-Andrews-Bird's earlier version. Carl Chambers (Peugeot 208) was the other unlapped runner. Jon Attard aced the Puma Cup split with Luke Johnson and Harry Hardy in tow.

David Marcussen (BMW E36 M3 Evo) won Modern Classics from Alan Thompson, who charged his iridescent-green 328i from the back after an oil line detached in qualifying. Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan) and Tim Bates



Southcott was unstoppable in Special Saloons/Modsports

JONES

THRUXTON WEEKEND WINNERS

NEW MILLENNIUM

Matty Evans (BMW E46 M3)

SPECIAL SALOONS & MODSPORTS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Andy Southcott (MG Midget-Vauxhall)

CLASSIC K

Paul Tooms (Lotus Elan GTS)

TURBO TIN TOPS

Nigel Tongue (Renault Megane F1 R26)

MODERN CLASSICS

David Marcussen (BMW E36 M3 Evo)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan Challenge)

OPEN SERIES

Peter Ratcliff (Caterham C400)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Jonathan Mitchell (Caterham CSR)

JEC JAGUAR SALOONS & T

Race 1 Colin Philpott (XJS)

Race 2 James Ramm (XJS)

TIN TOPS

Colin & Steven Simpson (Peugeot 206 RC)

For full results visit:
tsl-timing.com

(Porsche 911SC) chased them in. Daburn repeated last year's Future Classics victory, although Aston Blake (911 RSR clone, carrying a 30s winner's penalty) kept him honest initially. After the stops, Aston's father Tony drove the race of his life to win a mighty and photogenic tussle with Bates for second. Tom Brenton's rare Ford Sierra XR8 headed the saloons in fourth.

Peter Ratcliff won a breathless Open Series race in his Caterham C400 by 0.422s from polesitter Jonathan Mitchell (CSR), pursued by the CSRs of Christian Pittard and Mike Aikens with Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon Eurocup) a gallant fifth. 'Ratters' was out within seconds of the Magnificent Sevens start, however, his car jammed in first gear.

Mitchell, Tim Davis and Pittard slugged it out until Davis's front suspension collapsed and Pittard's throttle cable snapped. Mitchell thus finished clear of Jonathan Pittard's Rover K Series-powered Superlite R. "I've been trying to retire this car but it won't go gracefully," he said. Richard Carter bagged third after Aikens, with whom he'd been grappling all race, crashed approaching Church.

XJS dicers Colin Philpott and James Ramm won the entertaining Jaguar races, the latter having locked horns with Patrick Doyle after squeezing into the lead from row two at Sunday's start. Tom Robinson (XJR) separated them in second on Saturday, but champion Rodney Frost filled Philpott's mirrors in the sequel.

MARCUS PYE

SIMPSON GRABS VICTORY ON THE LINE



Simpson was able to profit from Hird/Field's collision for the lead

Fifty-nine thousandths of a second was Peugeot 206 racer Steve Simpson's margin of victory as he mugged Richard Jason Field's crippled Proton Persona GTi Coupe on the line at the climax of an action-packed 40-minute Tin Top race, which justified the CSCC's Thruxton Thriller event title.

The popular brand of "run-what-ya-brung" racing, embroiling cars of all ages, 'rewards' most of its enduro competitors with a 30-second penalty per win (served at the mandatory pitstop), which mixes up the racing and spices up the challenge.

Father and son Colin and Steve Simpson effectively started from pole after engine dramas sidelined the Honda Integra C5 of Nigel Ainge and Danny Cassar, whose superb 1m26.621s (97.91mph) lap topped the qualifying table by half a second. The Simpsons were penalised for their Oulton Park success, but like Tom Mensley (Renault Clio 172) set about negating it with relish on Britain's fastest circuit.

Ryan Colvey (Clio) led initially, either side of a short safety-car interlude after Peter Parkin (Peugeot 306) thwacked the Village marshals' post. Simpson Sr, Russell Hird (Honda Integra Type R) and Richard Field Sr were among the early stoppers when the pit window opened, and these three teams slugged it out with Andrew Windmill (Honda Civic) once the stagger unwound.

Wringing every ounce of speed from his

Malaysian steed, the younger Field reeled in Hird while Simpson Jr and Mensley strove to catch up. Climbing Woodham Hill for the 22nd time, Field tore past Hird to lead, only for the Honda driver to attempt to repass him on the inside under braking for Club. Carrying a tad too much speed, Hird grazed the Proton's right-front wing, was destabilised and walloped the tyre wall.

Field started the penultimate lap with smoke issuing from a snagged tyre and Simpson four seconds behind, gaining fast. Simpson negated the deficit, his blue Pug arriving at the final chicane on the red Proton's tail. As they dashed towards the chequered flag, Field did not have the acceleration to ease right and block his rival, losing out only in the last couple of metres. Mensley completed the podium on the road, but was later disqualified for overtaking behind the safety car, therefore promoting David and Tom Hutchins's Civic.

"We always hoped it was possible [to make up the 30 seconds] but I left Steve to do the hard work. He sneaked it on the line," said the elated Colin Simpson. His jubilant son added: "The car was good, but its tyres had started to go off. I could see the yellow flags coming up the hill [covering marshals clearing Hird's car], but wasn't sure when I caught Richard that it was the last lap. I just went for it." A 60s success penalty awaits next time out.

The Fields had to be content with a class win and stout 1m28.413s fastest lap, set as RfJ hounded down Hird. Andrew Wheatley flung his Peugeot 106 to fourth, topping Class E, while former Kit Car racer Mark Alexander-Williams (Citroen Saxo) won his split. Jonathan Dee (Clio 182) contested the Taster division for newcomers and finished a strong ninth in the 30-car field.

MARCUS PYE



Hird ended up in the barriers after contact

Champion Stoten gives best to Gibbins

**BRANDS HATCH
MSVR
AUGUST 18-19**

Reigning Sports 2000 champion Tom Stoten came to Brands Hatch on the back of five straight victories in his Gunn TS11, and remains on course for another title despite being beaten by Michael Gibbins's MCR.

A poor start left Stoten trying to catch the runaway Gibbins, who eased his pace and finished narrowly ahead after 19 laps of the long circuit. Dominic Lesniewski lost a distant third place when he stopped with a broken clutch after coming under pressure from David Houghton and Joshua Law.

Jeremy Timms looked a likely double Monoposto winner after qualifying, but almost gave the first race to Ben Cater when he slowed to avoid lapping backmarkers on the final corner. Second time out, a terrible start left Timms playing catch-up and his car then stuck in fourth gear and finished

third. Cater won, with Alex Fores second after taking third in race one. Richard Gittings won both Mono 1000/1800/1600 races. He was chased by Tom Rawlings and Mark Reade in race one and by Dean Warren and Craig Hurran in race two. Reade was fourth in this one from a pitroad start.

After 45 minutes of racing and compulsory pitstops, the top four Bernie's V8s finished in the same order as their grid positions. They were also the only cars on the lead lap. Steve Ough's Crossle 9S won by more than a minute from Gavin Buckley's similar car. Russell McCarthy brought his MGB V8 home third, wary of driving too hard to stay in front of Paul Cook's BMW with MG championship points at stake in this race.

Incidents at an oily Clark Curve brought an early chequered flag to the Swinging Sixties race. Winner Ray Barrow, also celebrating his birthday, won't complain about that, his Camaro finishing ahead

of Geoff Taylor's TVR and Owen and Nigel Reubens' TVR. After leading, the Reuben car suffered from a 60-second pitstop success penalty for previous wins.

Eight races on Saturday opened a mixed bag programme which switched to the Indy loop on Sunday for the third running of the popular Festival Italia.

Excessive wheelspin dropped Nigel Jenkins from the front row to fifth in the first Ferrari Classic race. He fought back to challenge for the lead, which he took when Tristan Simpson strayed wide at Graham Hill Bend. The duelling Tim Mogridge and Gary Culver dumped Simpson back two more places in traffic. Jenkins nailed the start at the second attempt but had to work hard to fend off Lee Moulden for many laps. Both cars sounded off-colour by the end, but stayed ahead of Simpson and Culver while the smoking Mogridge car retired.

The 2018 Ferrari Club series races were dominated by the 458s of Gary Culver and Witt Gamski, who took a victory each. Gamski, in his first race for a year, lost the lead in race one when boxed in while lapping backmarkers.

The best feature of two Alfa Romeo races was a seven-car Twin Spark class battle in race two which had championship leader Tom Hill in the thick of things after retiring from race one with a failed crankshaft sensor. Chris Snowdon won both races outright and Andrew Fulcher was a double Twin Spark winner.

BRIAN PHILLIPS



Belgian team prevails in attritional 2CV 24 Hours

**SNETTERTON
BARC
AUGUST 17-19**

If there is one word to describe the 28th running of the 2CV 24 Hours at Snetterton it is 'attritional'. Although every single one of the 33 cars entered finished the race, it was by no means an easy run. Few cars, most notably the Minis and 2CVs, made it to the end without at least one engine change and significant fine-tuning of their carburettors.

These problems did not affect the Belgium-dominated Euro 2CV/Dyane Hybrides class to the same extent. The three cars entered with their aerodynamic bodywork and 850cc BMW motorbike engines led for the entire race. The Bnll 1/Gt Racing, Bnll 2-Bmr and Wingrove

Racing cars swapped first position several times throughout the opening hours. This was until the Wingrove car suffered ignition failure at midnight while the Bnll2-Bmr machine required a replacement clutch six hours from the finish, spending an hour in the pits. This left Team Bnll 1 and its drivers Thierry de Bonhome, Laurent Jossiaux, Rudy Coppieters and Philippe Courtois to take victory by 24 laps.

Of the six Mini Coopers entered, only two finished in the top 10. Team Misfits (Steve Rideout, Dave Rees, Connor O'Brien and Paul Ogborn) was ironically the team that had the smoothest running, finishing 45 laps clear of second in class Team Toyshed, which had come back from losing a wheel minutes into the race. Behind them, Lyford Racing had been running close to the top two until a clutch failure in the fifth hour



and a damper and water pump failure in the sixth eradicated their chances of a class win. The team still got third in class.

The 2CV class was dominated by Beacon Downe's drivers Peter Rundle, Louis Tyson, Richard Gardiner and Kris Tovey. From the start the team was among the top five and it had a seven-hour tooth-and-nail duel with Team Gadget Racing – the latter scuppered by an engine problem later. Team Twin Snails became Beacon Downe's primary competitor, just ahead of Dan William Coaches Team Ecas. This became a fierce tussle for second until the front-right wheel



Nigel Jenkins won both Ferrari Classic races at the popular Festival Italia

HAWKINS



STYLES

Benn Tilley claimed both Classic Formula Ford 1600 wins

of the Team Twin Snails machine sheared off going into Wilson Hairpin in hour 19.

Last year's winners and favourites for race victory Team Lion was unable to repeat its 2017 performance. Both its cars had eventful races including contact between #97 and the leading Team Bnll 1 car that resulted in a stop-and-go penalty for the latter for causing an avoidable collision. A comeback drive netted a well-deserved top-five class finish for the #97 machine while #79 got 12th.

Classic Formula Ford 1600 driver Benn Tilley had a stunning weekend at Snetterton, the Merlyn Mk20 driver taking

both poles and wins at the overcast Norfolk venue. Despite this dominance, it wasn't completely effortless. In both rounds he was chased home by Royale RP26 pilot Rick Morris, most notably in the final race in which they finished less than half a tenth apart.

Thomas Ward was the star performer in the Junior Saloon Car Championship. In only his second race meeting he bagged a third and fourth place despite starting from the back in race two. Lewis Saunders and Joel Wren took the wins.

CHRISTOPHER SHARP

WEEKEND WINNERS

BRANDS HATCH

SPORTS 2000
Michael Gibbins (MCR)

MONOPOSTO 1800, 1600, MOTO 1

Race 1 Richard Gittings (Jedi Mk6)
Race 2 Richard Gittings (Jedi Mk6)

BERNIE'S V8s

Steve Ough (Crossle 9S)

MONOPOSTO F3, FR2000, CLASSIC, MOTO 1400

Race 1 Jeremy Timms (Dallara F301)
Race 2 Ben Cater (Dallara F306)

SWINGING SIXTIES

Ray Barrow (Chevrolet Camaro)

TRACKDAY TROPHY

Ben Simonds (Caterham Supersport)

FERRARI FORMULA CLASSIC

Race 1 Nigel Jenkins (F355 Challenge)
Race 2 Nigel Jenkins (F355 Challenge)

FERRARI CLUB RACING

Race 1 Gary Culver (458 Challenge)
Race 2 Witt Gamski (458 Challenge GTE)

ALFA ROMEO CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Chris Snowdon (GTV6)
Race 2 Chris Snowdon (GTV6)

ITALIANO V INGLESE ALLCOMERS

Race 1 Nick Starkey (Caterham)
Race 2 Nick Starkey (Caterham)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

SNETTERTON

2CV 24 HOURS

Euro 2CV/Dyane Hybrides Thierry de Bonhome, Laurent Jossiaux, Rudy Coppieters, Philippe Courtois (Bnll 1/Gt Racing)
Mini Grand Steve Rideout, Dave Rees, Connor O'Brien, Paul Ogborn (Team Misfits)
Citroen 2CV Peter Rundle, Louis Tyson, Richard Gardiner, Kris Tovey (Beacon Downe)

CLASSIC FORMULA FORD 1600

Race 1 Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20)
Race 2 Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20)

JUNIOR SALOONS

Race 1 Lewis Saunders
Race 2 Joel Wren

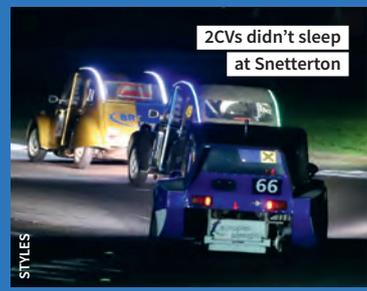
BARC SALOONS AND V-TECH CHALLENGE

Race 1 Steve Sawley (Honda Civic EK9)
Race 2 Robert Burkinshaw (Honda Integra)

CLASSIC VW CUP

Race 1 Kenneth Lark (Corrado)
Race 2 Kenneth Lark (Corrado)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



2CVs didn't sleep at Snetterton

STYLES

STAT
12

Minshaw's win tally exceeds 2016 and '17 champs combined



MOTORSPORTIMAGES/EBREVI/LAT

MINSHAW'S HISTORIC PASSION

Minshaw's limitations mean driving historic machinery with a clutch pedal is that bit more challenging than modern-day semi-automatic-transmission-equipped GT3s with ABS and traction control, but it's one he relishes. He has spurned opportunities to race in Europe specifically to free up time for

his historic racing activities.

When it comes to choosing his favourite period machine to race, there's only one contender.

"The Jaguar E-type," he says without hesitation. "My father introduced me to E-types around 1997 and I felt I could do a reasonable job racing it. I've owned and raced

E-types now every year since then, so I'm very fond of them."

It's no coincidence that his favourite historic memory also comes in an E-type, winning the all-E-type Fordwater Trophy at the Goodwood Revival in 2011.

"That was the pinnacle of my historic racing," Minshaw recalls. "Tens of thousands of people there watching, a great circuit. I shared

that car with Martin Stretton, and we beat Adrian Newey and Gerhard Berger – it was a great achievement."

The classic Jag is far removed from the car in which he started racing – a humble Ford Fiesta that he built himself – but Minshaw retains the enthusiasm for careful preparation that he's had since the beginning.

"A great appeal for me is building and prepping the car,

BRITISH GT'S NEARLY MAN

Jon Minshaw has come close to the title in the past two years, but chasing trophies isn't his main motivation

JAMES NEWBOLD

Twelve GT3 victories, no titles. The stats don't make pleasant reading for British GT's nearly man Jon Minshaw, whose tally exceeds that of defending champion Rick Parfitt and 2016 champion Derek Johnston combined.

The son of 1980s touring car regular Alan, who won the '83 British Saloon Car Class C crown with a Volkswagen Golf GTI, Minshaw joined British GT after achieving success in historic racing with the aim of testing himself in contemporary machinery.

Given the heart-breaking near misses he and Barwell Motorsport co-driver Phil Keen have endured in recent years – falling short in both 2016 and '17 after costly mistakes at Donington Park – Minshaw could be forgiven for railing against his luck, but his passion for motorsport is undiminished.

"I never look at it as chasing a championship, I just want to go racing," says the Demon Tweaks boss. "I take every race as it comes and it just so happens that over the last three seasons we've done very well and been there or thereabouts at the end. But I don't do it to chase a championship, I do it because I really enjoy racing and if it happens, it happens."

He'll need that pragmatic attitude again this year, particularly after overheating issues for his Lamborghini Huracan GT3 at Brands Hatch cost him the championship lead and handed Jonny Adam/Flick Haigh a 17.5-point advantage with one round to go.

Minshaw will have to hope for a repeat of his 2014 Donington victory – and the 37.5 points that go with it – with Adam/Haigh finishing fourth or lower to secure the title. But if his championship credentials this year are looking a little shaky, his relationship with Keen is rock-solid.

The pair have driven together since 2013 in a Trackspeed Porsche – after Minshaw spent his debut year alongside 1992 British Touring Car champion Tim Harvey – and have gone from strength to strength, with Minshaw establishing himself as one of the championship's benchmark amateurs under Keen's tutelage.

The Huracan isn't the easiest of cars for a gentleman driver to master, relying on aerodynamic performance to achieve its lap times rather than outright grunt in the manner of the ever-popular Aston Martin Vantage. But Keen believes the mid-engine machine is ideally suited to Minshaw's driving style.

"You need good car control, which Jon has," says Keen. "You do have to grab it by the scruff of the neck – or grab the bull by the horns, as they say. It does reward you if you're attacking the car, especially in the braking zones."

not just hopping in but actually understanding how it works and trying to build a car that's better than anybody else's," he says.

"If it means delaying the project by a month because we're going to acid-dip the car and seam-weld it, then that's what we need to do. I get as much enjoyment from knowing that we've built the best car we can as I do racing them."



MOTORSPORTIMAGES/EBREY/LAT

This really shows in wet conditions; the pair won a weather-interrupted Silverstone 500 in 2016, while Minshaw stormed into the distance from pole to win a similarly soggy season opener at Oulton Park last year.

"He has come on massively as a driver," Keen continues. "He's always had pretty good raw pace and always had very good car control, but the problem with these cars is they have ABS and traction control, so it's very easy to overdrive them. With Jon, it was really a question of calming him down more than anything. He's constantly improving and every year he gets better and better."

Now 55, Minshaw admits that age will become a barrier to further improvement at some stage and paints himself as "somebody who has to work very hard at it". But that's hardly surprising given that he lost his right leg below the knee in an incident with a forklift in his youth and races using a prosthesis.

Compared to historic cars, which invariably require a clutch pedal and right-foot braking, GT3 cars are a much simpler prospect. But there can be no doubting that applying the throttle through his hip and knee has an impact.

"My leg has always held me back, so the semi-automatic gearbox and the paddleshift was a great help because I could left-foot brake," he explains. "I can modulate the brake as well as anyone else, the problem I've got is I probably lose half a tenth to a tenth on most corners because I don't have the throttle modulation that somebody with an ankle and a foot has. All the feel comes through my backside."

"You've only got to look at the data and you can see that I'm a little bit more cautious on every corner exit than Phil or my team-mate, and that adds up. We try to make it up elsewhere, but I can't use it as an excuse because I've been an amputee now for so long that I don't even remember what it's like having a leg!"

Regardless of the outcome at Donington, whether he wins the title or not, Minshaw says that it won't affect his future participation in the championship, dovetailed with periodic historic outings.

"It would be very nice to be able to say that I've won British GT – it's a fantastic championship. But I'm not doing it just to win a championship, I'm doing it because I enjoy racing. I think maybe I'm a bit different to some people." ❦

● *Keep up with the Sunoco 240 Challenge – for which British GT Am drivers are eligible – on Motorsport.tv's Motorsport Show*



F1 2018'S BRAINS, BRAWN



VIDEOGAME
F1 2018
RRP £44.99

Fernando Alonso has pulled his customary stunt and got his McLaren further up the order than it

deserves to be in the British Grand Prix. But we're catching him in our Sauber, which has improved well enough over the course of the season to have both cars running in the points at Silverstone.

Passing Alonso, with the help of DRS, is quite straightforward, but hanging onto seventh until the finish is not. Alonso catches us napping on the brakes into Club with a lunge, and he's back ahead. We make another pass, and a lap later he sweeps around the outside of us into Abbey, with a bold chop. We waste no time in trying to get back ahead on the brakes at Village, and Alonso just turns in! The side-to-side contact is heavy, but we both keep going, with Kevin Magnussen now hot on our heels, and Alonso stays close enough to launch one final attack at Club again. We force him to the outside, and just about hold on, taking a breathless seventh place.

In a post-race interview the Alonso collision comes up, and our decision to

blame him (having watched replays first) has gone down badly with McLaren. Oh well. The rest of the chat with the media is spent talking up Sauber, in the hope that the resulting morale boost speeds up developments back at the factory. It goes against everything we as Autosport journalists want from F1 drivers in the real world, but there are bigger motives than being entertaining in the press at play when you're on the other side of the fence.

The above, in a nutshell, captures what makes the *F1 2018* game great. The 2017 version certainly wasn't broken, so Codemasters doesn't need to try to fix anything specific this year – it just needed to build on what it already had, and it's achieved that. Alonso's feisty behaviour at Silverstone was a great example of the overhauled AI, meaning your computerised opponents are smarter, and much more aggressive, in both attack and defence. The *F1 2017* AI was good already, but this year's game is the first version to feature rivals that will make realistic lunges – down the inside or outside – when the opportunity presents itself. You'll have to learn to race them differently, and look out for drivers near the back taking huge risks at the start. In Canada we spotted Lance Stroll lunging from the back row to 13th at Turn 1!



The AI drivers are fierce
and not afraid to lunge
for a pass from far back



AND BEAUTY

The career mode at the heart of the game's offline experience has been given a polish too. Interviews are back for the first time in a while, and they are much more in-depth than before. The questions you get asked are specific to what is going on in your career and incidents from your races, and your answers have an effect on how your team performs, and how you are viewed in the paddock. Sometimes the multiple-choice answers leave you boxed into a corner and having to give a negative answer, which is frustrating, but overall the experience of dealing with the media feels more relevant, and less repetitive, than it has in the past.

The handling tweaks to the cars are subtle, as you would expect during a stable phase of regulations in the real world, with the cars slightly easier to drive, but also easier to upset over an aggressive kerb or on worn tyres. One of the most notable changes on track is in the audio, where it's clear a lot of work has gone into improving the sounds of the engines, on and off the throttle. It's examples like that – and the addition of a manual ERS mode (although auto does a good job as well) – that show how deep Codemasters is digging under the surface of F1, beyond simply making the racing much more exciting.

GLENN FREEMAN




motorsport.tv
HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

motorsport
SHOW

BTCC
60th Anniversary
Episode 19

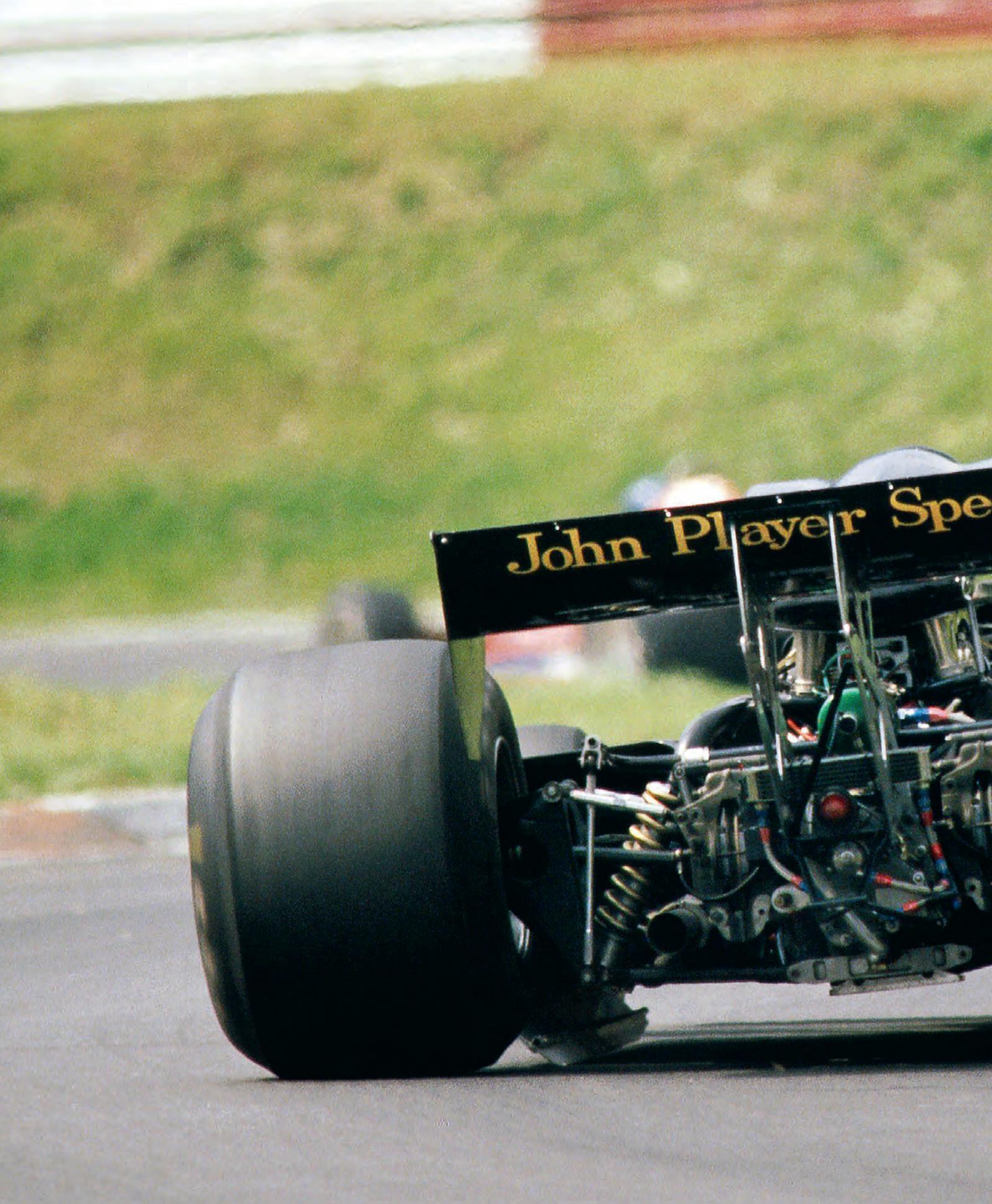


MOTORSPORT SHOW – BTCC 60TH ANNIVERSARY

This week, we're sitting down to watch a special edition of the Motorsport Show. Filmed at Brands Hatch and in association with Autosport, British Touring Car champions reflect on the tin-tops series' diamond jubilee – while the star cars are put through their paces on the Indy circuit. Go to <http://bit.ly/motorsportshow>

THIS WEEKEND'S EVENTS

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 10px;">INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT</div> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red; margin-top: 10px;">Belgian GP</p> <p>Formula 1 World Championship
Rd 13/21
Spa, Belgium
August 26
TV Live Sky Sports</p> <p>Formula 2
Rd 9/12
Spa, Belgium
August 25-26
TV Live Sky Sports</p> <p>GP3 Series
Rd 6/9
Spa, Belgium
August 25-26
TV Live Sky Sports</p> <p>Porsche Supercup
Rd 7/9
Spa, Belgium
August 26
TV Live Sky Sports</p> | <p>F1, Sunday 1115.
Eurosport 1, 1130</p> <p>IndyCar Series
Rd 14/16
Gateway, Illinois, USA
August 25
TV Live BT Sport</p> <p>Indy Lights
Rd 9/10
Gateway, Illinois, USA
August 25</p> <p>DTM
Rd 7/10
Misano, Italy
August 25-26</p> <p>European Formula 3
Rd 7/10
Misano, Italy
August 25-26
TV BT Sport 3</p> <p>Australian Supercars
Rd 11/16
The Bend, South Australia, Australia
August 25-26</p> | <p>TV Live Motorsport.tv, Saturday 0730.
Sunday 0445</p> <p>European Rally Championship
Rd 6/8
Rally Zlin, Czech Republic
August 24-26</p> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 10px; text-align: center;">UK MOTORSPORT</div> <p>Kirkistown 500MRCI
August 25
FF1600, Ford Fiesta Zetecs, BOSS Ireland, Formula Vee, Ginetta Juniors, Legends, Formula Sheane</p> <p>Knockhill BARC
July 25-26
British Touring Car Championship, British F4, Carrera Cup, Ginetta Juniors, Ginetta GT5
TV Live ITV4, Sunday 1100.</p> <p>Croft DDMC
August 25-26
Battle of Britain Race Meeting: Motorbikes, Northern</p> | <p>Sports/Saloons</p> <p>Brands Hatch MSVR
August 25-26
Mini Festival: FF1600, Mini Challenge, Mini Miglia, Mini Se7en, Mighty Minis, Fastest Mini race, Allcomers</p> <p>Oulton Park HSCC
August 25-27
Gold Cup: Chevron B6/B8s, Pre-1980 Endurance, Super Touring, Historic Formula 3, Historic FF2000, Historic FF1600, Historic Touring Cars, Guards Trophy, Historic Road Sports, '70s Road Sports, Jaguar Classic Challenge, Classic FF2000, Formula Junior, Historic Touring Car Challenge</p> <p>Castle Combe CCRC
August 27
FF1600, GTs, Saloons, Hot Hatches, Midgets/Sprites, MGOC</p> |
|---|---|---|--|



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Mario Andretti's Lotus 78 rides the kerb of the Österreichring's new Hella-Licht chicane at the 1977 Austrian Grand Prix. Andretti qualified

third on the grid and leaped into the lead at the start, pulling out a sizeable advantage before his Cosworth engine blew up on lap 12. The race was won by Alan Jones (Shadow-Ford

DN8A) ahead of Niki Lauda (Ferrari 312T2) and Hans-Joachim Stuck (Brabham-Alfa Romeo BT45B). It was Jones's maiden grand prix victory and the sole win for the Shadow team.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



WHO IS THIS?

The shooting star from another era still shines brightly as a byword for greatness.

Hailing from the same home as Virgil, he was a poet on two wheels and four – open or guarded. In an era of creeping nationalism he represented his home teams with distinction, although he was implicated in perhaps the sport's biggest scandal of the time.

Il Duce persuaded the Old Man to give him a second chance, which resulted in the Impossible Victory and a place in immortality.

He was a part of a grand union before the gathering storm blew across to cut his career off at his prime and, when competition resumed, age and injury had taken their toll.

He missed out on taking a place on the world stage and at a vicious stroke he was gone, but never forgotten.

ON THIS DAY

1 Didier Pironi died on this day in 1987. Where and when did he take his first F1 win?

2 Romain Grosjean made his F1 debut on this day in 2009. How many podiums has he taken without yet winning a race?

3 Today is NASCAR racer Steve Park's birthday. He scored two Cup race wins, but for which team?

4 Which ex-Ferrari protege scored his only GP2 win on this day in 2014?

5 Guy Ligier died on this day in 2015. He scored one point as an F1 racer. Where and when was that?

NAME THE HELMET



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Mike Costin, Cosworth 4WD F1 car, Silverstone, 1969. **Who is this?** Jean-Pierre Jarier. **On this day** 1) Osterreichring, 1971. 2) 0.792s. 3) 17th. 4) 35. 5) 4. **Name the helmet** Jo Siffert.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

PUT THE SILLY SEASON ON HOLD! F1 IS BACK AT SPA



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



CIRCULATION TRADE ENQUIRIES

Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000. Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 28 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV13 3XT. ISSN 0269-946X. Autosport is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG.

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