

Charlie Whiting F1 tributes to unsung hero

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Not the start that Formula 1 – or Ferrari – expected in Australia

With all the discussion surrounding Ferrari's testing form, Lewis Hamilton's quest for a sixth Formula 1 world title and the potential of the new Red Bull-Honda combination, Valtteri Bottas wasn't in the front of many people's minds before the season began.

Given the Finn's poor finish to 2018, perhaps that wasn't too surprising. But it was a mistake. Bottas narrowly missed out on pole in Australia last weekend and dominated the race in a way rarely seen in modern-day F1.

Yes, there are some caveats. Hamilton's floor damage meant the reigning world champion was not as strong as he should have been in the race, and it's clear that Ferrari didn't find the sweet spot for its SF90 around the Albert Park circuit. But Bottas's firmer attitude and the way he went about controlling the GP – including taking the new point for fastest lap – suggests he *could* be more of a factor in the championship fight than anyone expected.

But arguably even more surprising was Ferrari's lack of speed. Everyone, including Mercedes, expected Sebastian Vettel to continue the form seen in pre-season testing and set the pace. But Vettel never looked like securing his third consecutive Australian GP victory for Ferrari and the team was quick to point out that it simply hadn't got the car working as well as it had done in Spain.

That's unlikely to be the case throughout 2019, but Ferrari will need to get on top of things quickly if it is to stop the Mercedes steamroller building too much momentum. And Max Verstappen's podium finish for Red Bull – a remarkable result when you remember where Honda was 18 months ago – shows that the 'big two' aren't guaranteed to get third place on their off days.



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NEXT WEEK
28 MARCH

We take a look at what went wrong for Ferrari in Oz and ask how long it will take to fix



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CHARLIE WHITING 1952-2019

OBITUARY

Formula 1's race director and a constant presence in the paddock for over 40 years, Charlie Whiting passed away in Melbourne last Thursday on the eve of the Australian Grand Prix. He was 66.

Hugely respected by several generations of drivers and team personnel, Whiting grew from humble beginnings as a club racing mechanic to play a significant role in the development of modern F1 through the multiple functions he fulfilled with the FIA. As well as writing the regulations, he was responsible for policing them, and inevitably his interpretation of technical developments or on-track incidents was often challenged, leading to many stressful situations over the decades.

And yet Whiting, who had a calm and analytical approach to any situation, always maintained his cool, and dealt even-handedly with everyone. He was the perfect man for the difficult role of referee.

He remained at heart a fan of the sport who loved to see a good and fair race, even maintaining a huge collection of F1 programmes. A self-confessed workaholic, he was rarely in one place for long.

When he wasn't at grands prix he was usually to be found in FIA meetings in Paris or Geneva, carrying out safety inspections at current circuits worldwide, or travelling to assess plans for potential future venues. He always had a punishing schedule, one that must have taken a toll on family life.

Whiting grew up near Brands Hatch, and attended the 1964 British GP at the circuit after sneaking under a fence. His initial direct involvement in motorsport came through older brother Nick, who competed in autocross before becoming a big name on the British Special Saloons scene.

His first brush with F1 came when he worked on the Surtees TS16 that his brother entered for Divina Galica in the 1976 ShellSport series, and which the former skier failed to qualify for that year's British GP. He landed his first fulltime job in F1 when he joined the works Hesketh team, which was in decline after the golden James Hunt era. Here, Whiting worked with the likes of Eddie Cheever and Derek Daly until the struggling team folded after the 1978 Belgian GP.

Out of a job, Whiting soon found a new home at Bernie Ecclestone's Brabham team, where designer





Whiting (left), with
Ecclestone, Murray and
Piquet: Long Beach 1983

Gordon Murray was always pushing the envelope. He quickly graduated from the test team, becoming chief mechanic by 1981. In that role Whiting would oversee Nelson Piquet's world championship victories in 1981 and 1983. It was a fabulous era for the sport, and Brabham was very much the maverick team, pulling off tricks like fitting heavier bodywork for post-session weight checks, and introducing refuelling and planned tyre changes in 1982.

In 1986 the team suffered the loss of Elio de Angelis in a testing crash at Paul Ricard. The tragedy hit Whiting hard, and influenced his later focus on safety matters.

Ecclestone, distracted by running the F1 business, sold Brabham in 1987, and the following year the team didn't take part in the world championship.

Rather than move to another team, Whiting – who latterly held the title of chief engineer – took the unusual step of joining the FIA in a technical role, at Ecclestone's suggestion. By 1990 he had become technical delegate.

In 1994 he was deeply involved in the aftermath of the Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger fatalities at Imola, as well as the other accidents that blighted that season. It was a difficult time for all involved in the FIA, but it led to a further focus on safety.

In subsequent years Whiting's duties expanded. In 1996 the race starter role became what would remain his highest-profile job, and it was quickly followed by promotion to both race director and safety delegate, with responsibility for circuits. Whiting would run race control for over two decades, and for most of that time he worked closely with his long-time friend Herbie Blash, the former Brabham team manager who held the title of deputy race director.

Whiting's roles extended far beyond overseeing race weekends. He wrote the sporting and technical regulations, and along with Sid Watkins he played a key role in the FIA's push for safety that began after the Imola tragedies, and that has continued ever since. He faced many difficult moments, notably the deaths of track officials Paolo Ghislimberti

at Monza in 2000 and Graham Beveridge in Melbourne in 2001. Jules Bianchi's Suzuka accident in 2014 – which led to the Frenchman's death the following year – was another tough test for the man who was ultimately responsible for safety.

Every grand prix weekend Whiting would chair the FIA drivers' briefing, and that – along with individual meetings with them after on-track transgressions – gave him a unique insight into the characters of the men he dealt with. Another part of his job was to try to keep the FIA a step ahead of the engineers whose job was to find loopholes in the regulations he'd written. It helped

that Whiting had a meticulous and organised approach to everything he did.

Under Jean Todt's presidency there were many changes at the

FIA. Blash left his job at the end of 2016, and it says a lot for the respect in which Whiting was held – and the sheer breadth of his responsibilities – that he continued in his senior role. He was almost impossible to replace, and it was clear that no one person could fill his shoes. Attempts to plan a succession faltered when Marcin Budkowski and Laurent Mekies – who had both had spells working with Whiting, in effect training to eventually take over some of his responsibilities – moved to high-profile jobs with Renault and Ferrari respectively.

While latterly some of his workload on the technical side was taken by Nikolas Tombazis, Whiting showed no signs of slowing down, and was as busy as ever. After recharging his batteries with a rare holiday in Hawaii over Christmas, he had been flat-out not just on preparing for this season, but also contributing to plans for the new regulations in 2021. On Wednesday in Melbourne he was conducting his usual pre-weekend procedures, ensuring that the Albert Park track was ready for action to get under way.

Autosport extends its sympathies to Whiting's wife Juliette, their young children Justin and Charlotte, and to his older daughter Laura, mother of his two grandchildren.

ADAM COOPER



COATES



ANDRE



SUTTON



SUTTON



WHITING'S SHOES WILL BE THE HARDEST TO FILL

The late Charlie Whiting became indispensable to the extent that he is irreplaceable by one person. This is the legacy of a man who wrote — and applied — the rules

SCOTT MITCHELL

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES

The tributes that flowed for Charlie Whiting and the sadness that circled the opening weekend of the new Formula 1 season in Melbourne following his shock death from a pulmonary embolism were a measure of the respect and admiration the long-serving race director had earned among drivers, teams and various personnel.

Whiting's death will have a massive impact on F1, and beyond, because the scope of his dedication and expertise went further than his F1 weekend responsibilities. Yes, as race director, safety delegate and permanent starter, he was the go-to man for teams and drivers during a grand prix meeting. He chaired the drivers' briefing and team managers' meeting, inspected the circuit, ran race control, controlled the start, and did just about everything you could

imagine in terms of managing practice, qualifying and the race.

But he was so much more to F1, and the wider motorsport world. Whiting was an active member of the FIA's single-seater, circuit and safety commissions; he moulded, scrutinised and implemented the F1 rulebook, and his commitment to junior single-seater categories encouraged a trickle-down effect to ensure the latest breakthroughs in technology and safety were not simply the luxury of 20 grand prix drivers. "There is an enormous void in that respect," says ex-F1 driver Karun Chandhok, who worked with Whiting on the FIA Single Seater Commission. "Everyone deferred to Charlie, especially in terms of the circuit safety and circuit homologation stuff. His word was gospel."

Most believe Whiting cannot be replaced by one person because rarely — if ever — has one individual influenced F1 and motorsport



as a whole in the varied way Whiting has. Nikolas Tombazis, the ex-Ferrari head of aerodynamics who became the FIA's head of single-seater matters in 2018, admits: "What I saw when I was working for a team was the tip of the iceberg. You saw something and thought, 'That's quite a lot of work!' Then when you go in there, you see it's much more wide-ranging."

It's not that Whiting's importance to F1 has been overstated. He was vital to the mechanisms by which F1 operates. It's more that the nature by which this understated, smiling gentleman went about his business — and the work he undertook — meant a lot of what he did flew under the radar. Motorsport benefited from him, even if it never knew it.

Whiting has often been heralded for his work ethic and the

commitment he showed to safety is a significant example of that. F1 travel is a brutal business and it's hard enough flying from race to race with a small break at home in between, or a trip back to the factory for team personnel. Whiting's usual pre-weekend examinations of the circuit as safety delegate on a grand prix weekend were only part of what he would commit to. He would use 'breaks' between races to fly to different circuits to complete safety checks of existing venues or carry out inspections of possible new ones.

"He was constantly on an aeroplane," says Whiting's former deputy Laurent Mekies, now Ferrari's sporting director. "We are travelling back on a Sunday evening to Europe [after the Australian GP], and he was saying, 'I'm going to use being in Australia to do my Suzuka inspections for the end of the year, and after Suzuka maybe I'll stop to go to Vietnam to see the progress of the work there. And from there I will fly to Bahrain...'"

Whiting was a key cog in the FIA's relentless drive for constant improvement of circuit safety, using his visits to report back to the Circuit Commission. He would not be content with doing this just to improve standards for F1, but also to benefit junior single-seater categories. "One thing I didn't know before joining the FIA is how interested Charlie was in lower categories such as F2 or F3," says Tombazis. "He would participate in various commission meetings for those categories because I think largely on the safety side he just had it in his heart that safety isn't just for the 20 guys in F1; it's for younger people, sometimes kids, that race in those categories."

The FIA's desire for a single-seater pyramid led to the creation of the Formula 4 category, and the rebranding of GP2 and GP3 to Formula 2 and (this year) Formula 3. Mekies credits Whiting as the one trying to make that happen on FIA president Jean Todt's behalf. "He participated in the technical definition of the F4 cars, the F3 cars, the F2 cars, and also the sporting framework the FIA wanted for the championships," he says. "So effectively, anything that had four uncovered wheels and was doing some races on a >>

Sunday, he was involved with in some way.”

Whiting’s time-management was impeccable, and it had to be given his dedication to matters well beyond the remit of your average race director. He led race director training seminars, and steward training seminars, to try to pass on the experience he gained from decades of work at the top of motorsport. Given his own affection for motorsport and the good grace that made him somehow impervious to the politics of F1, it’s no surprise that he offered such warmth to those who also gave their time and effort to the cause.

“When we were running the Indian Grand Prix, we had to do this training programme for the 1200 marshals,” remembers Chandhok. “Charlie showed up for 10 minutes at the end of the day to chat with them. The end of every long day, just before he went to the hotel, he stuck his head in the marshals’ catering tent, these 1200 people, and thanked everybody for their work.”

Personal touches like these helped him excel in each of the professional circles he operated in. He is universally described as a man who treated everyone with respect, from young FIA newcomers to the multiple world championship-winning F1 drivers he had to send to the naughty step or explain a decision to.

It’s not that Whiting was completely flawless, even if it may seem as if he has been deified by those remembering him. He made errors, miscalculations and misjudgments. He was not always right. “But the most important characteristic is it was always clear to everybody that Charlie’s ulterior motives were transparency, honesty and doing the best thing for the sport,” says Tombazis. “People might have disagreed sometimes with his decisions, but I don’t think anyone ever doubted his motivation. That was very important for his integrity in the sport and why people trusted him. Frankly, the proportion of decisions to errors was very small. He complemented that with humility and knowledge. He had opinions about certain matters, but when I would discuss certain things with him I knew once his opinions had been put on the table, there was no ego in defending them.”

Chandhok gives a good example of exactly this attitude. The FIA Drivers’ Commission works to give a voice to those behind the wheel and works in tandem with other groups to try to better inform major decisions. Chandhok says that the feedback from five-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Emanuele Pirro, who works on both the drivers’ and circuit commissions, was that Whiting was beginning to show “a shift in his thought process” and reconsidering his position on items such as bigger kerbs and natural deterrents including gravel and grass, instead of sending incidents to the stewards to discuss.

“He was sitting in these commissions – everyone would look at him ready to take whatever he would say as the new rules,” says Mekies. “He would be so open about it. I don’t remember him having to impose his view on anybody. He was very conscious the reality of F1 might not be applicable to the reality of lower formulas. And the same thing for the tracks: what he would be asking for a track like Melbourne wouldn’t be what he’d ask to a Grade 2 or



Grade 3 track. He would never say, ‘We do it like that because I said it’. He was extremely open and wanting to hear people’s view and people’s practical experience before making a decision.”

Whiting’s primary recognition comes via his F1 role for a reason. But even in an F1 context it is vital to look beyond his grand prix weekend responsibilities. One of his roles was as the F1 safety delegate, which he took up in 1996. Tombazis describes the deaths of Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna as “the wake-up call” for F1 and credits Whiting for being “very involved” in the continuous improvement in safety since that awful San Marino Grand Prix weekend in 1994. “Clearly the sport is not completely safe – it’s still a dangerous sport, but it’s night and day safer than it was then,” says Tombazis. “A lot can be attributed to Charlie’s involvement. It’s a team effort but he was very active in that, whether it’s headrests or halos or crash-test requirements, anti-penetration panels or wheel tethers. All of those, Charlie has been very actively involved with.”

Whiting’s experience, intelligence and knowledge made him vital to F1’s technical side too. He laid the foundation for the current technical package, and remained very much on the ball when it came to policing the regulations. “He was second to no one in using the teams to understand what was going on with their legalities,” says Mekies. “The FIA couldn’t have the same firepower in terms of technical capabilities to analyse this or that aspect of the car. But because he had the feedback of all the teams, and because he organised that feedback, he could actually be at the front end of that.”

That meant Whiting was not just a figure on the F1 Technical Working Group, or Strategy Group, or F1 Commission, or FIA World Motor Sport Council. He was at the centre of all these most influential of commissions and meetings defining the present and future of F1. But he was not interested in being a powerful figure for the sake of it. He loved motorsport, and wanted to make it a better place. That helped him to become a leader of so many of F1’s core groups in more than just name only.

His experience, intelligence, practicality, openness, integrity and sheer kindness marked him out as a true one of a kind. Precious few people have those qualities, and more, in abundance, let alone people in positions of power. That is why he deserves to be thought of as a legend of motorsport, not just F1, and why he leaves such a tremendous vacuum.

What happens next is a difficult subject to broach. ‘How to replace Charlie Whiting?’ feels almost as wrong a thing to ask as it will be impossible to answer, and perhaps that is best left for the FIA to get on with in private. The rest can spend the time reflecting on a man who never looked like a motorsport colossus, or got the attention of one, but was exactly that.

“People understandably focused on his F1 role this weekend and the gap in F1 that’s opened,” says Chandhok. “But there’s a much wider sport that’s going to miss him.” ❧



“PEOPLE DIDN’T KNOW HOW MUCH HE DID”



ROSS BRAWN F1 managing director, motorsport

“I have known Charlie for all of my racing life. We worked as mechanics together,

became friends and spent so much time together at race tracks across the world. I was filled with immense sadness when I heard the tragic news. I’m devastated. It’s a great loss not only for me personally but also the entire Formula 1 family, the FIA and motorsport as a whole. All our thoughts go out to his family.”



JEAN TODT FIA president

“It is with immense sadness that I learned of Charlie’s sudden passing. I have known Charlie Whiting for

many years and he has been a great race director, a central and inimitable figure in Formula 1 who embodied the ethics and spirit of this fantastic sport. Formula 1 has lost a faithful friend and a charismatic ambassador in Charlie. All my thoughts, those of the FIA and entire motorsport community go out to his family, friends, and all Formula 1 lovers.”



BERNIE ECCLESTONE Ex-F1 boss

“If Charlie said to me, ‘Good morning’, I would know it was before 12 o’clock. You didn’t have

to question him. Which is good, when you’re working with people like that – you feel comfortable and they feel comfortable. He’s going to be really, really missed, because in the end people didn’t know how much he did. It wasn’t just being the race director, but also the safety and so on. He used to write a lot of the regulations, and he was meticulous in all the things he did like that.”



Whiting and Brawn were peers as mechanics and latterly as F1 chiefs



HERBIE BLASH Whiting’s former FIA deputy

“Charlie really is irreplaceable by one person. He’s going to be greatly, greatly missed

for a long time to come. He did so many things; the circuit inspections, the technical rules – Charlie was the one guy all the teams could go to, to talk about the regulations. The nice thing is that his legacy will continue when you look at things like the halo and all the other work that Charlie did in the way of safety.”



MATTIA BINOTTO Ferrari team principal

“Charlie was a true professional and extremely knowledgeable, but more than that he was a

wonderful person, who always treated everyone with respect. A tireless and enlightened motorsport expert, he helped make F1 safer and better. He was a pillar of Formula 1. Our sport is diminished by his passing and we have lost a friend. He will be greatly missed.”



TOTO WOLFF Mercedes motorsport boss

“He was a pillar of our Formula 1 family – balanced in his approach, subtle in his

understanding and always with the interests of Formula 1 as his main focus. Charlie was a fantastic ambassador for our sport and a true guardian of its best interests; all of us who were lucky enough to know him will miss his ready smile and gentle humour.”



CHRISTIAN HORNER Red Bull team principal

“Charlie has played a key role in this sport and has been the referee and voice of reason

as race director for many years. He was a man with great integrity who performed a difficult role in a balanced way.”

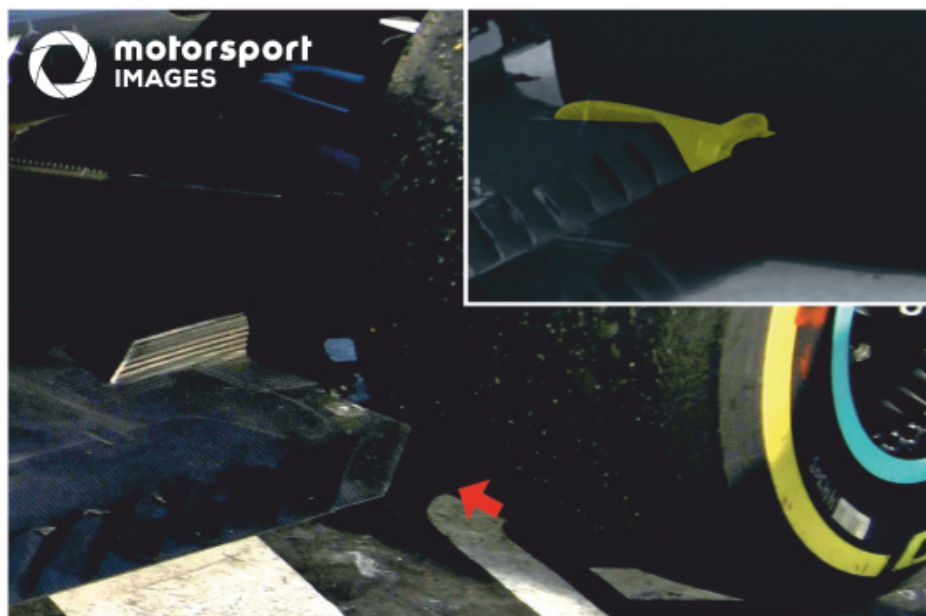


EDD STRAW & SCOTT MITCHELL Autosport F1 reporters

“Charlie Whiting’s honesty and integrity made him a popular figure with the Formula 1 media, including Autosport. We are grateful to have had the privilege of working with Charlie, who was always gracious with his time and willing to help. Everyone at Autosport extends their heartfelt sympathies to Charlie’s family and friends in this difficult moment.”



Fitting tribute from Haas team



How Hamilton floor damage set him back in Australia

FORMULA 1

A damaged floor on his Mercedes stifled Lewis Hamilton's Australian Grand Prix last Sunday, but how did that affect his performance so significantly in a race in which team-mate Valtteri Bottas danced into an unassailable lead?

The reigning champion was down on his team-mate's pace throughout the grand prix and, after the race, the extent of the damage on the left-hand side of the car was visible in parc ferme. The corner of the floor had broken off at the point of one of the tyre-squirt slots, causing a significant upset to the rear-end aerodynamic balance of the car.

Here, these slots assist with sealing the floor to limit the possibility of any turbulence folding its way under the car. The rear-most slot also does the same job for the diffuser, safeguarding it against what's known as tyre squirt. This is where any vortices running underneath the wheel are, in essence, popped, squirting a mass of turbulent air into the diffuser. This reduces the effectiveness of the diffuser, which relies on a suction effect to accelerate airflow underneath, the main mechanism to develop downforce from the underbody.

So, without that safeguard from the tyre-squirt slot, the left side of Hamilton's diffuser will have been periodically

stuffed with difficult-to-manage airflow, limiting the expansion that the diffuser needs to work.

The net result of that is a reduced level of downforce, specifically affecting the left-rear tyre. Around a circuit like Albert Park, where the majority of braking zones are into right-handed corners, the car may tend to oversteer – the stopping power of the left-rear wheel is reduced, especially relative to the right-hand side.

Hamilton confirmed that "I was really struggling with the rear from lap four – that's when the damage occurred".

The cause of the breakage is unknown, but spy shots have emerged on social media of Mercedes repairs on that corner of the floor prior to the race.

In parc ferme conditions, the team is unable to replace a part without forfeiting the driver's grid position, a decision not to be taken lightly – especially at Albert Park, where overtaking is at a premium.

Despite the breakage, Hamilton suggested that the loss of performance showed that Mercedes was moving in the right direction with its package. "It's been quite a sensitive part of the floor, and actually that's quite encouraging to me because we work very hard to get the balance right," he said.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

➔ P22 AUSTRALIAN GP

Alonso invests in Motorsport Games Esports

MOTORSPORT GAMES

Two-time Formula 1 world champion Fernando Alonso has become an investor in Motorsport Games, the Esports platform of Motorsport Network.

World Endurance Championship leader Alonso's involvement follows his early adoption of Esports and extends his interest in Motorsport Network's negotiation with other global series looking to join the Motorsport Games platform, which include the eNASCAR Heat Pro League, Le Mans Esport Series, and a recently announced tie-up with Codemasters.

"Esport is no longer a fantasy – it's a reality and something I have been passionate about for some time," said Alonso, who has also joined the board of Motorsport Games. "Investing in and helping to lead Motorsport Games allows me to make a real contribution to this exciting aspect of motorsport's future. Esports is not better or worse, but it is different, and one of the important differences is that it provides a way to genuinely open up motor racing to all fans."

Motorsport Network chairman Zak Brown, Alonso's team boss at McLaren, said: "Having Fernando add his investment, reputation and leadership to Motorsport Games is hugely exciting. In a short space of time, Motorsport Network has taken a lead in the Esports and games space. I'm sure that adding Fernando's contribution will catapult Motorsport Games to a leadership position in Esports."

Indy 500 effort kicks on with Texas test

Alonso will gear up for his second attack on the Indianapolis 500 by testing at the Texas Motor Speedway oval on 9 April. McLaren's effort on the 500 is this season being run in conjunction with British team Carlin, which joined the IndyCar Series in 2018. "Everything is going well," said Alonso. "Preparation-wise, we are on time with everything. We have been on the simulator in Charlotte and yeah, I'm quite happy with the McLaren preparations. We will test in Texas at the beginning of April and Indianapolis at the end of April [in the open test]."





AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS He may not have had a very good Australian GP, but before the event Daniel Ricciardo popped in to Calder Park, 20 miles north of the F1 venue, to sample Rick Kelly's Nissan Altima Supercar. Kelly, the 2006 champion who runs the Kelly Racing team with brother Todd, said he'd love Ricciardo to co-drive him in the Bathurst 1000. "It'd be pretty special to have that name on the car for October but it wouldn't be Dan co-driving with me, it'd be me co-driving with Dan," he said. Kelly went on to an equally unsatisfactory weekend at Albert Park, with a best of 16th in the four Supercar support races.

Farcical qualifying shames NASCAR

NASCAR

NASCAR plans to adjust Cup Series qualifying following farcical scenes at Fontana last weekend when none of the cars in the pole shootout set a flying lap in time.

The 2019 aerodynamic rule changes have encouraged drivers to try to draft with each other in qualifying to get the best lap times on longer tracks. But this has led to them waiting until the last moment in the five-minute final round before attempting runs.

At Fontana, none of the 12 cars in the final session crossed the line in time, so the grid had to be set on round two results and handed pole to Austin Dillon (right, top).

NASCAR senior vice-president of competition Scott Miller admitted the fans had been let down. "Having the last 12 cars wait until they couldn't get a time posted on the board and making a mockery out of the qualifying is not what we expect for our fans," said Miller. "It's a little bit on us in that we hoped things would go better than that. We certainly want to provide our fans with what they deserve. We didn't do a very good job of that. We're really disappointed."

The issue is not expected to occur this weekend at Martinsville, where drafting is less important on the shorter track. But Miller expects changes by the Texas Motor Speedway event next week.

"I think we will definitely make some tweaks to it — not quite sure what," he said. "We really don't want to go back to single-car qualifying. There may not be another way but we want to try to exhaust every possibility before we do that."

Championship leader Kyle Busch (right, bottom) said he could understand fans' frustration, but insisted the format gave drivers no choice. "It has nothing to do with the competitors," he said. "Don't hate the players, hate the game. It's going to be all about who can figure out the timing from leaving pit road to coming back around to being able to take the flag with the time running out for everybody else behind them."

Stewart-Haas Racing driver Clint Bowyer argued that changes should have been made before Fontana. "We just got booed and it's disappointing," he said. "I saw this coming three weeks ago. I think we all did."

MATT BEER AND JIM UTTER





Hartley joins Porsche Formula E test programme

FORMULA E

Brendon Hartley is being drafted into Porsche's test and development programme as it gears up for its Formula E entry for 2019-20. The Kiwi, who has remained under contract to the German marque since the end of its World Endurance Championship campaign in 2017, has already been at work in the simulator and should drive the car soon.

The former Toro Rosso Formula 1 driver and two-time WEC title winner will share

development duties with Neel Jani, who was confirmed as Porsche's first FE race driver last December. A Porsche spokesman said it "made sense to bring in Hartley", but stressed that no decisions were imminent about who would fill the second race seat alongside Jani in 2019-20.

Testing of the Porsche FE contender began in earnest last week after a rollout the week before. Jani tested the car at the Weissach proving ground, which counted as the first of the 15 private test days that the

marque will be allowed through the summer.

"There were a lot of systems to test, but it was a good test and showed that everything is going in the right direction," said Porsche Motorsport boss Fritz Enzinger.

The test programme will move to the Circuit Mallorca later this month, when only Jani is scheduled to drive over the course of two days. The Calafat circuit on the Spanish mainland will also be used by Porsche during development of the FE car.

GARY WATKINS

It's Chile indoors as Rubilar takes GT win

GRAN TURISMO

Chilean Nicolas Rubilar won the Nations Cup at the first round of this year's FIA-certified Gran Turismo Championships World Tour in Paris to book the first spot in the 2019 finals.

Rubilar (right) has gained a reputation for his rapid laps in qualifying at GT Sport events, so it wasn't a surprise that he was the fastest out of the 24

competitors in qualifying. He then moved straight on from his semi-final heat to the final, a 16-lap race around Autopolis circuit, where he started third behind Mikhail Hizal and Kai Hin 'Jonathan' Wong.

It didn't take long for Rubilar to move up to second behind Hizal. While they both were on the same tyre strategy – during the race competitors had to run all three tyre compounds

– Rubilar was able to make his second stint last one more lap than Hizal's, and he was able to take over the lead after the final pitstop before taking race victory.

The Manufacturer Series, in which Rubilar also competed with BMW, was won after four races by the Aston Martin team of Christopher Marcell, Thomas Compton-Mepher and Yoshiharu Imai.

TIM LUMB





WTCR grid filled for 2019

WORLD TOURING CAR CUP

The final part of the World Touring Car Cup's 2019 entry jigsaw is in place, after Swedish squad PWR Racing announced a line-up including Cupra's highly rated TCR Europe champion Mikel Azcona.

The 22-year-old from Navarra, whose record includes Audi TT Cup and SEAT Eurocup runner-up finishes, comfortably beat a host of more established drivers including Audi WTCR ace Jean-Karl Vernay to win TCR's flagship regional series in 2018 (above).

He has been rewarded with a seat at the PWR Cupra team that will step up to WTCR with the support of Comtoyou, which will field two Audis and two Cupras of its own in 2019.

Azcona and team-mate Daniel Haglof – PWR's CEO – are among five World

Touring Car rookies on the 26-car grid as Audi, Volkswagen and Honda have all complemented experienced line-ups with promising prospects.

Audi and Volkswagen have each promoted drivers from the ultra-competitive TCR Germany series: Niels Langeveld was third in the ADAC contest last year and has joined Frederic Vervisch in Comtoyou's two-car Audi set-up, while Benjamin Leuchter will race alongside Johan Kristoffersson, Rob Huff and Mehdi Bennani in a Sebastien Loeb Racing VW Golf GTI.

Ma Qing Hua, fourth in the WTCC with the dominant Citroen team in 2015, lines up alongside ex-single-seater ace and 2018 WTCR race winner Kevin Ceccon in Team Mulsanne's squad of Alfa Romeo Giuliettas.

JACK COZENS

WTCR GRID FOR 2019

MANUFACTURER	TEAM	DRIVERS
Hyundai	BCR Racing	Gabriele Tarquini, Norbert Michelisz, Augusto Farfus, Nicky Catsburg
	Munnich Motorsport	Esteban Guerrieri, Nestor Girolami
Honda	KCMG	Tiago Monteiro, Attila Tassi
	Sebastien Loeb Racing	Rob Huff, Johan Kristoffersson, Mehdi Bennani, Benjamin Leuchter
Audi	WRT	Gordon Shedden, Jean-Karl Vernay
	Comtoyou	Frederic Vervisch, Niels Langeveld
Cupra	Comtoyou	Aurelien Panis, Tom Coronel
	PWR Racing	Mikel Azcona, Daniel Haglof
Alfa Romeo	Team Mulsanne	Kevin Ceccon, Ma Qing Hua
Lynk & Co	Cyan Racing	Thed Bjork, Yvan Muller, Andy Priaulx, Yann Ehrlacher

Russian on top as new Renaults prove pace

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

While the middle rung of European single-seater racing seems to be in a state of uncertainty, the Formula Renault Eurocup appears to be bearing up. A field of 21 drivers assembled for last weekend's two-day test at Paul Ricard, following the previous week's rain-marred Magny-Cours running.

This was an early test of the performance of the new FRenault racer. It's the Tatuus Regional F3 chassis, powered by a 1.8-litre turbocharged Megane RS engine pushing out 270bhp. Hankook has replaced Michelin as the series' tyre supplier.

Russian talent Alexander Smolyar set the fastest time with a lap three seconds quicker than the pole position lap record at Paul Ricard. As you'd expect in light of its European F3 tyre, the Hankooks are less peaky than the Michelins but drop off less.

The 17-year-old SMP Racing-backed Smolyar – who hails from the far east of Russia, just north of Japan – is entering his second season in FRenault and has switched to top French equipe R-ace GP. His Saturday morning time was attacked by MP Motorsport's Renault F1 junior Victor Martins in the afternoon, and the Frenchman fell just 0.018 seconds short. Smolyar also set the pace on the Friday.

"The new Formula Renault seems much faster," said Smolyar (below). "The Hankooks give more time to prepare for a fast lap. Even though the peak of performance seems to be a little less high than before, the degradation is a lot more controlled."

Lorenzo Colombo (MP) was third from Oscar Piastri (R-ace) and the top rookie, French F4 graduate Ugo de Wilde (JD Motorsport).

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Hypercar future brightens

WEC

At least one manufacturer is ready to commit to the World Endurance Championship hypercar category for 2020-21 now that roadgoing machinery is to be allowed to race alongside the lookalike prototypes originally envisaged for the class. That's the message from the WEC and its promoter, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, after the change in direction earlier this month.

Asked if the ACO expected real hypercars to be on the grid at the start of the 2020-21 season, sporting director Vincent Beaumesnil said: "Of course, otherwise we would not do it. If we are sticking to September 2020 [for the start of the new category] it is because we know some people will be ready to join us."

The ACO and WEC opened up about the shift in emphasis in the hypercar concept rules ahead of last week's Sebring 1000 Miles. Beaumesnil explained that the scope of the rules had been widened to incorporate machinery such as the Aston Martin Valkyrie in order to attract more manufacturers.

"We have expanded the regulations, because they were too restrictive," explained Beaumesnil. "Some car companies said, 'We want to race road cars'. We could not say we did not want to hear that."

WEC boss Gerard Neveu (right) claimed that the move, confirmed by the FIA World Motor Sport Council at the beginning of March, had reignited interest in the top division. "Earlier this month at Geneva around the motor show there were a lot of meetings with

top representatives of car companies," he said. "The fact that we have opened this new possibility has brought new manufacturers around the table."

The ACO confirmed that the manufacturers that came to it early this year looking to reopen the debate on the regulations were Aston Martin, McLaren and Ferrari. What it was not saying is which of those are ready to commit to join the party some time in 2020-21.

Aston has played down speculation that it is ready to commit to developing a real hypercar for racing. Aston Martin Racing president David King said the British marque was supportive of the regulation changes and would be "a constructive partner" as the rulemakers work out how to incorporate road-based machinery with real racers.

Toyota, meanwhile, has admitted that it could race a real hypercar in the WEC rather than a prototype lookalike, should it firm up its intent to remain in the series beyond next season. The basis of its contender could be the GR Super Sport Concept unveiled last year (above).

GARY WATKINS



IN THE HEADLINES

MASI REPLACES WHITING

Australian Michael Masi took on the most unenviable job in motorsport last weekend: he replaced the late Charlie Whiting at the last minute as race director for the Australian Grand Prix. Masi recently joined the FIA as race director for the Formula 2 and F3 support series, after working as deputy race director on the domestic Supercars scene.

HONDA TOPS BLANCPAIN FIELD...

A massive field of 47 cars took part in last week's two-day Blancpain GT test at Paul Ricard. Fastest was the Honda NSX GT3 of Marco Bonanomi as the Japanese marque gears up for its first serious European campaign. The Italian edged out the ASP Mercedes of Raffaele Marciello and Black Falcon Mercedes pilot Maro Engel, both of whom were Blancpain champions in 2018.

...AND GETS SET FOR LAGUNA SECA

Honda has also entered its NSX for the remainder of the Intercontinental GT Challenge. JAS Motorsport, which played a key role in its development, is running an Evo version from next weekend's California 8 Hours at Laguna Seca, where the driver line-up will be Renger van der Zande, Bertrand Baguette and Mario Farnbacher.

NISSAN SETS SUPER GT PACE

Meanwhile, the much faster machines of Japan's Super GT series were in testing action at Okayama. Daiki Sasaki set a blistering pace in the Team Impul Nissan he is sharing with marque newcomer James Rossiter to outpace the Team Le Mans Lexus, in which Kazuya Oshima set the best time. The best Honda was down in eighth, with reigning champions Jenson Button and Naoki Yamamoto taking 13th in their NSX.

DOOHAN ADDS ASIAN F3

Red Bull Junior Jack Doohan has added an Asian Formula 3 attack to his Euroformula Open campaign for 2019. The Australian, son of bike legend Mick Doohan, has joined Hitech GP for the Asian contest, which he sampled in the recent Winter Series finale.

ELECTRIC BIKES DESTROYED BY FIRE

The entire fleet of 18 electric motorcycles built for this season's inaugural MotoE series were destroyed by fire at their Jerez base last week. A short circuit started the fire, which then enveloped a flammable high-density battery that is part of the charger to be used for MotoE events. The bikes were disconnected at the time. The projected opening round on home ground at Jerez on 5 May has been cancelled, with action now scheduled to begin on the Le Mans Bugatti circuit two weeks later.

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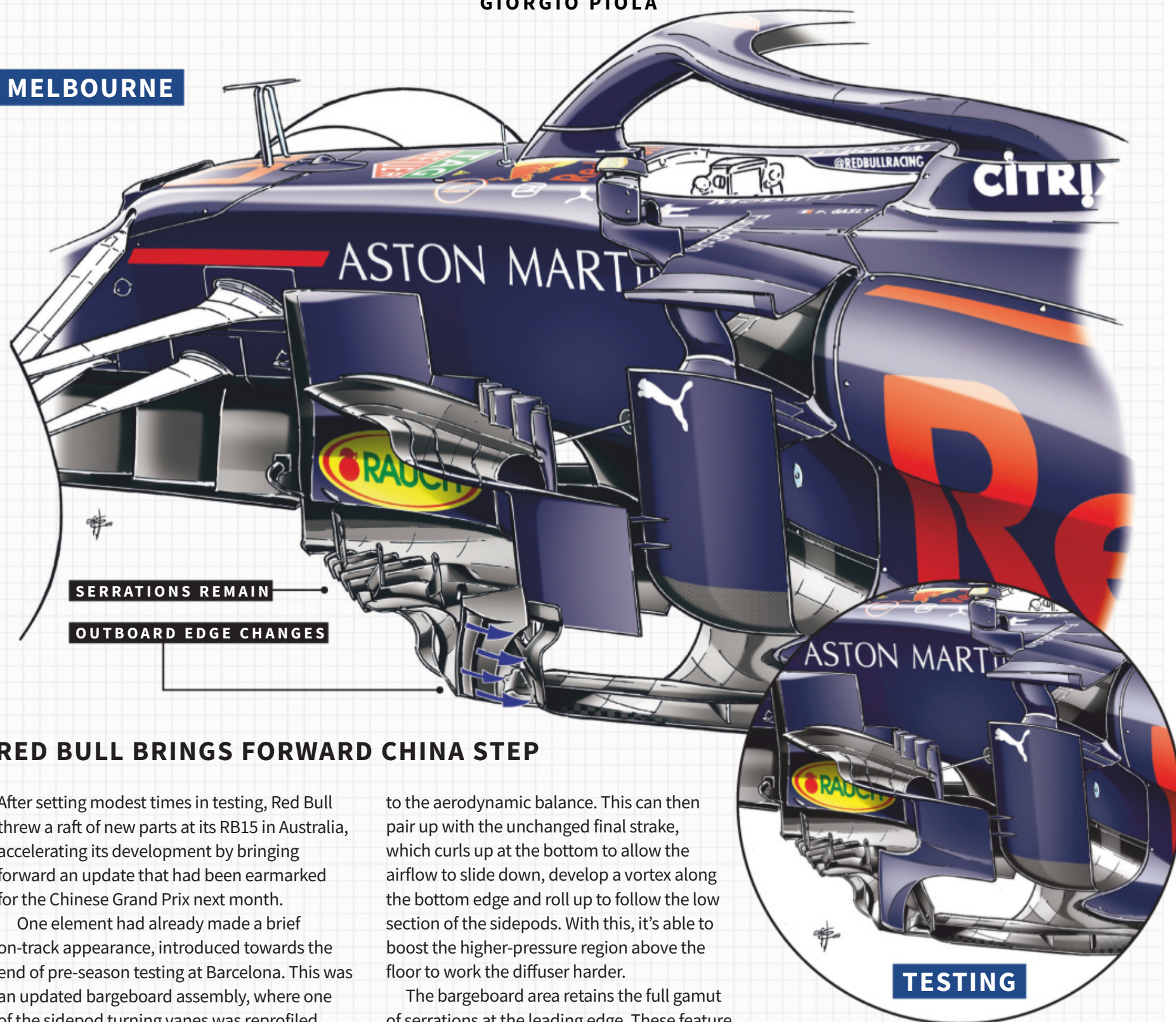
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RED BULL BRINGS FORWARD CHINA STEP

After setting modest times in testing, Red Bull threw a raft of new parts at its RB15 in Australia, accelerating its development by bringing forward an update that had been earmarked for the Chinese Grand Prix next month.

One element had already made a brief on-track appearance, introduced towards the end of pre-season testing at Barcelona. This was an updated bargeboard assembly, where one of the sidepod turning vanes was reprofiled to provide a little more control over the wake shed by the front wheels.

Although Pierre Gasly's shunt in testing truncated the amount of running the team had got with the new part, it returned to Melbourne with the same design, which breaks the front vane into two distinct pieces.

The piece furthest forward is almost pentagonal in shape, featuring a point at the top that induces a tip vortex. This is carried around the undercut of the sidepods, while the slots underneath take the turbulent airflow kicked up from the rotation of the wheel and attempt to condition it, before sending it to the components behind to be shaped into a more useable format.

Attached to the horizontal 'manta ray' winglet, the second vane has been extended downwards to direct the tip vortex from the bottom element around the sidepods, as well as provide further chances to take the tyre wake from the front and stitch it together into something less detrimental

to the aerodynamic balance. This can then pair up with the unchanged final strake, which curls up at the bottom to allow the airflow to slide down, develop a vortex along the bottom edge and roll up to follow the low section of the sidepods. With this, it's able to boost the higher-pressure region above the floor to work the diffuser harder.

The bargeboard area retains the full gamut of serrations at the leading edge. These feature short chord lengths to gather up plenty of airflow from the front end, direct it around using the further elements downstream, and create a zone that pens in the tyre wake, minimising the turbulence passing underneath the car.

Red Bull also emerged with a reworked front-wing endplate, looking to draw a little more performance out of its current philosophy.

In contrast to the design used by sister team Toro Rosso, Red Bull employs as much of the new bounding box set by the new regulations as possible to create a wing more heavily cambered compared with the majority of the grid. In doing so, the team has elected to use the outboard area of the front wing to build up a greater amount of downforce, compromising a little on the amount of outwashed air it develops.

Ahead of Australia, Red Bull added a small cutout in the trailing edge of the endplate, allowing for a stronger passage of airflow to be pushed outside the front wheels. The vortex

shed off the top develops sooner, and the air flowing over from the cutout helps to coax it around the tyre with a little more energy.

Although it's still early on in the new aerodynamic formula, there seemed to be an improvement in the cars' ability to race more closely, despite the limitations of the Albert Park circuit. Both Red Bulls were in the thick of the action; Max Verstappen caught and passed Sebastian Vettel to clinch third place, while Gasly was nailed to Daniil Kvyat's gearbox following the pitstop phase, although he was unable to execute a passing manoeuvre.

Starting the season with a podium finish appeared to vindicate Red Bull's decision to bring its updates forward. And although Honda will be encouraged by its first podium finish since 2008, there's plenty more performance for the partners to uncover.

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The debut that was better than it looked

Lando Norris seemed downbeat after dropping from eighth on the grid to finish 12th for McLaren in Australia, but it was a very creditable performance

EDD STRAW

The best in motorsport, in any sport for that matter, put enormous demands upon themselves. ‘Good enough’ is never good enough, expectations are sky-high, and no matter what pressure the outside world can put on them, it’s nowhere near as intense as what comes from within an athlete’s own head. It’s why managing that expectation is central to sustained performance.

So it was no surprise to see Lando Norris, after what was a very accomplished debut grand prix weekend, a little downbeat after the race. Norris finished 12th, perfectly creditable for a McLaren, but what he was frustrated by was the fact that he could easily have finished ninth. In fact, he was on course to do so during the pitstop phase even after he dropped from eighth to 10th at the start through spinning up his tyres in the second phase of the launch.

Given he was just over 40 seconds down on ninth-placed Lance Stroll that might seem unlikely, but the phase stuck behind Antonio Giovinazzi, who was struggling not only on older soft tyres but also had some damage from a brush with Norris at the first corner, was devastating not just in terms of track position but also tyre life.

Norris ended his out-lap after stopping on lap 15 just 4.3s behind Kimi Raikkonen’s Alfa Romeo and 19.3s behind Stroll. This put

“That ability to be self-critical and open-minded is something that’s going to serve him well”

him inside Stroll’s pit window with a few seconds to spare. When Giovinazzi let Raikkonen past on lap 19, Norris was close behind. But it wasn’t until lap 26 that Norris finally got ahead into Turn 3. At the end of that lap, he was 29.2s behind Stroll. Daniil Kvyat, Stroll and Pierre Gasly all jumped him as a result, so the key question is: could he have nailed Giovinazzi sooner?

“Yeah, I could have done,” was Norris’s verdict. “I haven’t done much overtaking or following so far this season. I tried to do a bit in FP1, FP2, FP3 but still you don’t want to risk anything or do anything stupid.

“You obviously risk a little bit more in the race and I just didn’t have the confidence in race one to dive up the inside and do anything too crazy. I didn’t want to risk putting myself out of the race; I wanted to get it out the way. But I had the confidence

later to push the braking more, to know how much I can brake and turn and basically do a later move.

“It’s just something that comes with the experience of doing the race, and something maybe I could have prepared a little bit better. So for next time I’ll be more confident with trying to get past.”

Could he have passed Giovinazzi sooner? Certainly. Should he have done? Ideally, but he’d have looked foolish clattering into the Alfa Romeo. Ask McLaren sporting director Gil de Ferran the same question and he’s firmly in the ‘cut him some slack’ camp.

“Listen, it’s his first grand prix,” said de Ferran when asked if Norris should have got past Giovinazzi quicker. “I’m sure if he plays it back, one would hope that he would think he could do this better and that better. That’s one of Lando’s great attributes, his ability to think through his own performance and analyse very carefully what he’s doing inside the car, his decision-making and so on. That ability to be self-critical and open-minded is something that’s going to serve him well.”

Qualifying eighth in a car for which par was probably a mid-Q2 slot was hugely impressive. Given the rapid track evolution during Q1, McLaren justifiably decided to allow Norris three runs on softs to ensure he made it through. That meant he only had one set of softs for each of Q2 and Q3 and no further margin for error.

On top of that, what was encouraging was Norris’s attitude after the race. While he did ultimately admit that he had to be satisfied with himself and what he’d done, the fact that he could instantly identify areas he could improve, and had the desire to have another crack, is laudable. Others might just have blamed Giovinazzi and not looked at their own contribution.

“Coming into this race I definitely didn’t expect a Q3, that’s a very big positive,” he said. “But still, P12 in the race, considering and now knowing we could have done better, I am pretty pleased by. It’s not like I was P16. There are still a lot of things I’ve got to work on, but for the first race I was not so confident just with the whole experience of going into the race. But coming out I have a better understanding, much more confidence.

“It doesn’t mean I’m not going to make any mistakes in [the next race in] Bahrain, but overall I have a better idea, a better mindset during the race of what to do, what not to do, how much to push, how not to push, how to save the tyres. And obviously how much to push when stuck behind someone and how to size them up for an overtake, because that was my biggest letdown.”

One thing we can be sure of. Next time Norris finds himself behind a struggling rival, especially if it’s Giovinazzi, he will find his way past a lot quicker. 🏆



Williams on the ropes

The start of the season could barely have gone any worse for the once-great Formula 1 team. Merely making up the numbers is not good enough

SCOTT MITCHELL

Things go wrong in Formula 1. A car can be late to pre-season testing. It can be slow. It can be illegal. A team suffering all three blows in one go is bafflingly bad, though, and this is Williams's horrific start to 2019 in a nutshell.

It could have got away with one, maybe two, of the setbacks it had faced before even turning a wheel in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix. The departure of chief technical officer Paddy Lowe, on a "leave of absence" for "personal reasons" one week before the team headed to Australia, shows that the team's plight is not without its consequences.

Lowe's first crack at a Williams F1 car as CTO resulted in the slow and unpredictable FW41 of 2018 that sent the team to the bottom of the constructors' championship table for the first time in its history. Even though he was not there to see it, Melbourne proved that his second attempt has turned out even worse.

Nobody expected Williams to surge back up the order as quickly as it had fallen. But to find the team so uncompetitive, to hear its drivers speak of no chance of racing the opposition, and to witness the third most successful team in F1 history merely making up the numbers was a shocking experience.

A lot has gone wrong at Williams. The encouragement of pre-season testing, once the car finally made it to the track, was that it was much more stable than last year's. That

But it will not write off the 2019 season because, as it prepares for a post-Lowe world, there will be a major analysis into processes and personnel to try to prevent this from ever happening again. If it sounds like this has been said before, that's because it has — Lowe was meant to have overseen this very change for 2019.

At least this presents an opportunity to redefine its technical structure, leaning on the likes of head of aero Doug McKiernan and encouraging young, hungry members of the design team to take on more responsibility — like Mattia Binotto encouraged at Ferrari in 2016, and worked so well for Williams in building its 2014 car.

There are talented people at Williams but they need direction. It's wrong to point fingers, but it is impossible to ignore the fact that under Lowe, Williams never replaced its head of design Ed Wood or performance chief Rob Smedley. So, whoever you blame, Williams has been left in a mess, and right now there would be little reason to have confidence that it could hit the fast-approaching 2021 regulation overhaul right.

A logical solution would be for Williams to combine the work it does to improve this year's car with its 2020 design, using the current season as an extended testing period and treating it as one project. It can then set a trajectory to make sure it nails its 2021 car and can use the major rules change as a chance to rebound emphatically.

Williams has not been helped by F1's shift towards regulations that support close alliances with bigger teams. It is no surprise to see Haas and Toro Rosso benefiting from their relationships with Ferrari and Red Bull. Williams, like Renault and McLaren, has not been shy in voicing its displeasure at such arrangements. To traditional constructors, this is simply not in the DNA of F1. Evidently, Williams has not made the most of its resources, but would it have built the slowest car of 2019 if Haas and Toro Rosso were not using non-listed parts from bigger teams?

The 2021 rules package is imminent, and what teams must build themselves will be crucial, setting F1's tone for years to come and playing a key role in whether Williams can bring itself back from the brink.

This is a truly hard time for the team, probably the bleakest in its history in terms of performance and prospects. But Williams does have an opportunity to make sure this is rock bottom. If it is not, and the team remains a poor fit for F1's effective two-tier model, who knows what future Williams has in F1?

Rising through adversity is a sign of strength and character, which Williams is always said to have in abundance. It must show that now more than ever. 🍀

“Russell talked about a ‘fundamental’ problem that could take months to fix”

was a primary target for Williams. It may lack overall downforce but at least there is a foundation to work with. Unfortunately, that's about where the FW42's positive traits stop.

George Russell talked about a "fundamental" problem in Melbourne, one the team is aware of but that could take months to fix. This is about more than just aerodynamic performance. Comments about how it impacts the car's inherent performance on low fuel suggest it's weight-related.

Williams's new car being overweight would not be a surprise. It would be a continuation of a problem that was engineered into the 2018 car under Lowe. The FW41 was chubby because the eventual cooling package was bulky.

Whether the problem is simply about weight or something else, Williams will need to log a lot of hours to recover this situation.

STAT

1.276

Number of seconds the quickest Williams was off the back of the field in Australian GP qualifying

YOUR SAY

Formula 1 needs to take a good look at the two best racing categories in the world, MotoGP and Formula E. The racing in both is superb

NICK KEYNEAS

F1 needs a dictatorship, not a committee

I am compelled to write following a very disappointing start to the Formula 1 season. The racing was boring, the cars look awful and the Class A/Class B formula of 2018 seems to be just as apparent as last season.

F1 needs to take a good look at the two best racing categories in the world, MotoGP and Formula E (right). The racing in both is superb – there was more overtaking on the first lap of the Hong Kong FE race than the whole of the Australian Grand Prix, by miles; and MotoGP is close, exciting and super-competitive.

F1 needs more of a dictatorship approach – none of this regulation by committee rubbish, which is a disaster in my opinion. If I were running the show I would introduce a new standard FIA rear wing and ban front wings altogether – with immediate effect. Let's see how teams cope with that – might shake things up a bit.

And from 2020 I'd simplify the engines, allow up to 1500bhp, unlimited fuel, much louder and try to lose 200kg of weight from the cars. I would introduce underbody aero and find a way to make the cars look a lot cooler. They are currently neither cool looking, nor attractive.

Oh, and I'd distribute the money better too so that the teams actually made money instead of running at a loss. So, anyone interested in joining my new series?

Nick Keyneas

By email

Front wings and the edge of reason

We now comprehend that the fugly halo has another purpose – to prevent drivers being hit by errant monstrous flying front wings. Lost in translation: "The front wings are supposed to align with the front wheel edge – *the inside*, not *the outside edge*, you dummy, what were you thinking?"

I just hope that these idiotic front wings are consigned to the dustbin in the 2021 regulations – where they belong.

Guy Dormehl

Garden Route, South Africa



Championship is for drivers, not engineers

I can understand the appeal to an engineer of adding more 'toys' (driver aids) to a Formula 1 car (Mark Williams, Autosport Engineering, 14 March). However, it is my view (and that of leading drivers in years gone by) that the best drivers need to be given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills. The more driver aids that are incorporated, then the smaller the window in which the top drivers have to show their worth. We are talking about a F1 world drivers' championship, not an engineers' championship.

So I remain in favour of standardised ECUs. I note that this is the way MotoGP operates too.

Andrew Bodman

Bugbrooke, Northampton

Motorsport in advancing civilisation shock

It's not often you can say motorsport is helping civilisation to progress, but the news that Saudi Arabia's first female racing driver Reema Juffali will compete in this year's British Formula 4 championship is absolutely brilliant. I wish her every success.


Chris Hockley

Wareham, Dorset

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WHERE DID *THAT* COME FROM?

*Not only did Mercedes thrash testing pacesetter Ferrari,
but Valtteri Bottas emerged from a dismal 2018 to
soundly beat team-mate Lewis Hamilton*

EDD STRAW

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
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ANDRE



DUNBAR

The Valtteri Bottas who defiantly told persons unknown where to go after his dominant victory in the Australian Grand Prix was very different from the meeker character who admitted last November in Abu Dhabi that he simply wanted a chastening 2018 season over.

Only he will really know what he did in the intervening months to rebuild, regroup and regenerate himself, but its effectiveness was undeniable. Bottas's Albert Park performance was not one of a dead man walking at Mercedes, but one who had to send a message that he wasn't going to relinquish a place with the best team in grand prix racing without a fight.

His performance was a statement of intent for a driver who recently admitted he didn't feel he had "achieved anything" in F1. Its style and execution had echoes of the previous incumbent of his Mercedes seat, Nico Rosberg, whose resilience ensured he kept picking himself up to go again when lesser mortals would have folded.

Yes, his 21-second margin of victory over team-mate Lewis Hamilton was distorted by the damage at the rear of the floor sustained by the other Mercedes on lap four of the race, plus strategic variation. But while Bottas had qualified 0.112s behind Hamilton, what was missed by many amid the excitement of Mercedes' true pace advantage being revealed was that Bottas was every bit as fast as the world champion.

The key to Bottas's win was the start. The advantage Hamilton earned by breaking the Melbourne qualifying lap record, 0.678s

faster than he managed last year, was squandered in an instant. His initial move was decisive, but he lost out in the second phase of the launch and later suggested this was down to a touch of wheelspin thanks to being "too much engaged with the clutch". Bottas was ahead even before he had reached the point where the pit exit road meets the track, and knew the race was his to lose.

Hamilton held second, assisted by Sebastian Vettel being fractionally slow away. While the lead Ferrari driver, seven tenths down in qualifying, did get a slight run on the Mercedes, he was more concerned with covering the fast-starting Max Verstappen on the run to Turn 1. With Vettel taking a tighter line into the opening right/left thanks to positioning his car defensively, new team-mate Charles Leclerc attempted to barrel around the outside. The Ferraris came frighteningly close to touching when Leclerc had his left-side wheels skimming the grass. With Leclerc all over the kerbs, Verstappen was able to sweep around the outside to reclaim the fourth place in which he had started his Red Bull.

Bottas had a lead of 1.074s by the end of the first lap. With Hamilton picking up floor damage on lap four just ahead of the rear-left tyre in an area crucial for aerodynamically sealing the underfloor, not through any obvious misadventure, Bottas was able to establish a handy cushion at the front. By the time Hamilton was forced to peel into the pitlane relatively early at the end of lap 15 in response to Vettel's attacking stop of a lap earlier, Bottas was 4.3s to the good.



Bottas nailed the start, seizing control of the race from Hamilton

“HOW HE RECOVERED FROM BEING WRITTEN OFF AS NOT BEING UP TO THE JOB TO ONE OF THE MOST DOMINANT VICTORIES IN RECENT YEARS JUST SHOWS US HUMAN POTENTIAL”

That margin was key, because it ensured he was clear of any fear of an undercut. So Mercedes could confidently cover Vettel with Hamilton and leave Bottas out. Bottas could then extend his stint on his starting set of soft tyres eight laps longer than his team-mate. As Bottas was firmly lapping in the 1m27s bracket in this phase of the race, any risk of Verstappen being sat in his virtual safety car window were Bottas to pit was quickly eliminated, and he was able to pit at his leisure on lap 23 and emerge just 6.1s behind Verstappen and still in second place.

With Hamilton now 11 seconds behind, Bottas had a vice-like grip on this race. The only outstanding question was whether he would have a tilt at fastest lap and the extra point that now comes with it. The team ruled out a pitstop for fresh rubber. Although he had a big enough gap to do so, Mercedes rightly felt this was an unnecessary risk for a single point. But, despite instructions not to go for it, Bottas was among the drivers able to prep for a push lap. On the penultimate lap, he banged in a 1m25.580s on tyres that already

had 33 laps on them, which was 1.540s quicker than his second best and, crucially, almost half a second faster than Hamilton's attempt.

Bottas crossed the line 20.886s ahead of Hamilton to take his first victory since the final race of 2017 and get his season off to the perfect start. His spontaneous exclamation over the radio showed how much this meant to him, and his comments after the race proved he'd used the criticism that's part and parcel of elite sport if you aren't performing to the maximum as a way to motivate himself to new heights. This was Bottas with a cutting edge we haven't publicly seen before, one that – if sustained – could give him the streak of ruthlessness you need at this level.

“Since I started to work with drivers 15 years ago, I tried to comprehend what's going on in their brains – and I don't,” said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff, who was once part of Bottas's management team. “How he recovered from being written off as not being up to the job in the second half of last year to one of the most dominant victories that we've seen in recent years just shows us human potential and how much it is a mind thing. It's a bit of a fairytale – don't let others break you, believe in yourself. He's just showed us the whole weekend. There was not one single session where he wasn't good enough.”

Elite sport is a mental game. There's not a massive difference between most of the drivers in the field in terms of pace on a given lap, but the best – such as Hamilton – can do it lap after lap, race >>



“NOT ONLY DID VERSTAPPEN PASS VETTEL, BUT HE THEN PROCEEDED TO LAP AN AVERAGE OF 1.3s FASTER THAN VETTEL TO THE END OF THE RACE”

KLYNSMITH

after race, season after season. Bottas had not managed that up to now, and it will take more than one race to prove this change is permanent, but if the driver who excelled at Albert Park turns up consistently, he's going to be formidable in 2019.

Bottas himself rated this as his best performance and so he should, not only because of what he did behind the wheel, but in circumstances that would have broken a lesser man. Perhaps the most encouraging thing is that this is not traditionally a strong circuit for Bottas, who is usually at his best on smooth surfaces such as Sochi. Another hint that he may now be a top gun for all conditions.

“It just felt amazing today, I can't say for which reason in particular,” said Bottas. “I know if you look at the statistics from the past, it's never been my best race. I think race pace has always been OK, but qualifying a little bit tricky, and I've never had a clean race here.

“When you approach a weekend, you know that OK I'm a bit better here, or normally it's a bit more difficult. Every race you try to zero that and try to be mentally empty for the weekend and not think about it. That's something that I managed to do this weekend with a decent qualifying and then a very good race. Coming back here next year will be a lot easier.”

While Bottas's dominant performance allowed him to exorcise the ghosts of the second half of 2018 and emerge a driver reborn, the battle behind was a little less straightforward. Hamilton ultimately held on to second place, but had to keep an eye on Verstappen. The

Red Bull driver, newly powered by Honda, had pitted on lap 25 and rejoined back in the fourth place in which he'd started. But Ferrari's weekend was turning from bad to worse and Verstappen quickly reeled in Vettel's 3.2s advantage. On lap 31, he forced Vettel to defend the inside line into Turn 1, which allowed Verstappen a run up to the Turn 3 right-hander. He was able to get far enough ahead by the time they turned in that Vettel had no choice but to cede.

Not only did Verstappen pass Vettel, but he then proceeded to lap an average of 1.3s faster than Vettel to the end of the race. The result was a podium on the Red Bull-Honda alliance's debut, the first time one of the Japanese automotive giant's F1 engines has finished in the top three since the 2008 British Grand Prix.

Vettel was struggling so much that he was caught by Leclerc, who had suffered an off-track moment at Turn 1 in the first stint but showed good pace in the second on a more orthodox strategy. Leclerc was asked to hold station when he enquired about passing his team-mate for fourth while on medium tyres 14 laps fresher. With a big advantage over Haas driver Kevin Magnussen, who was best of the midfield runners throughout the grand prix after jumping team-mate Romain Grosjean at the start, Ferrari didn't have to worry about pressure from behind so opted not to allow its drivers to race.

So what went wrong for Ferrari? It headed to Australia as clear favourite, but Vettel was 0.704s off in qualifying and 57s down in the race. Ferrari was not beaten in Australia; it was obliterated.

“WE WOULDN’T SAY THAT WE’VE PARTICULARLY OVERDELIVERED; WE DID OUR NORMAL JOB. I DON’T KNOW WHAT FERRARI’S PROBLEM WAS BUT I’M SURE THEY WILL COME BACK STRONG IN THE NEXT RACES”



Hamilton had to keep Verstappen’s Honda-powered Red Bull at bay

DUNBAR



Leclerc had an off-track moment in the first stint

It’s important to note that there was no hint of this in pre-season testing. Ferrari was fastest, and that’s what the internal analysis of every single grand prix team – Mercedes included – had concluded.

“What I was shown and led to believe from the analysis we were given was that they were ahead,” confirmed Hamilton. “Obviously, it wasn’t the case this weekend and I’m not sure why their performance was how it was. We wouldn’t say that we’ve particularly overdelivered – we did our normal job. I don’t know what their problem was but I’m sure they will come back strong in the next races.”

It’s clear that Mercedes has made gains since testing, but the idea that it was deliberately sandbagging disregards the defining factor of pre-season for the Silver Arrows. After running in the first test with one spec of car, it brought a wide-ranging upgrade to the second test that impacted most, if not all, of the aerodynamic surfaces of the car. After starting from close to scratch, it made good progress. Had it started with that car it’s likely the picture would have been different after two tests. With progress made in understanding how to get the best out of the car in the intervening two weeks, Mercedes was simply better in Australia than it was in testing in Spain.

But Ferrari also had a problematic weekend. During Friday practice it struggled for rear grip in particular, but the hope was it would make one of its trademark transformations overnight into Saturday. But the pace disadvantage remained all weekend. While an improved Mercedes was operating well, Ferrari was all over the place. >>

QUALIFYING



TEE

THE SIZE OF THE ADVANTAGE MERCEDES HAD OVER FERRARI was the talk of the paddock after qualifying, so much so that a major subplot was glossed over. For at the start of what could be a career-defining season, Valtteri Bottas was close to springing a surprise and beating illustrious team-mate Lewis Hamilton to pole position.

After the first Q3 runs, Bottas was comfortably on provisional pole, having banged in a lap of 1m20.598s. This was 0.457 seconds faster than Hamilton, who had hit the Turn 1 kerb too hard and lost a heap of time.

While Hamilton was still comfortably in second place, and as it turned out had already done enough to guarantee a front-row spot given the massive Mercedes advantage, Bottas had a genuine shot at pole. With tyre preparation critical, he was behind from the early corners of the final lap and lost out by just 0.112s. His ideal lap, a combination of his fastest three sectors, was just 0.006s off Hamilton’s.

“I knew there was still something to improve in the second run, but for some reason I just lost some time in the first few corners – Turns 1, 3 and 4,” said Bottas. “I did a little bit slower out-lap due to traffic, so maybe the tyres weren’t quite ready. But Lewis did a great lap in the end.”

Sebastian Vettel led the rest, a massive 0.704s off pole position and 0.130s ahead of Max Verstappen. Vettel’s Ferrari team-mate, Charles Leclerc, was disappointed to be down in fifth, a quarter of a second off Vettel, and was characteristically hard on himself. A lock-up into Turn 1 put him behind, and further errors while trying to nail the rest of the lap left him on the third row ahead of the lead Haas of Romain Grosjean.

McLaren and Racing Point didn’t have the cars to be in Q3, so the fact that Lando Norris and Sergio Perez were eighth and 10th respectively spoke well of how they and their teams nailed the session. That their team-mates fell in Q1 confirmed that.

Less so Renault, with Nico Hulkenberg just missing Q3 after an electrical problem led to a boost cut and forced him to abandon his second run, and Daniel Ricciardo not delivering after struggling with tyre warm-up.

EDD STRAW

“I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING TO IMPROVE IN THE SECOND RUN, BUT I JUST LOST SOME TIME”



TRACKSIDE VIEW

THE TURNS 1/2 RIGHT/LEFT FLICK that opens the Albert Park lap is deceptively fast. The profile of the entry suggests something slower, but the open exit means drivers can carry huge speed through the corner and, on a quick lap, only shift down from eighth gear to fifth.

From behind the tyre barrier on the inside of the circuit, just beyond the apex of Turn 2 itself, it's a spectacular exhibition of the grip of the modern grand prix car. Watching Lewis Hamilton hurtle into the corner during FP1, it's almost impossible to believe the front end will grip and allow him to make the corner. The Mercedes is stiff, the front end porpoising a little, but it grips and turns in. It looks alive, on the limit.

Things seem easier for the Ferrari drivers, but perhaps a little too sedate. With rear-end grip problems being battled by Sebastian Vettel in particular, that means they are a little conservative on the entry and it gives the illusion of balance.

The Toro Rossos catch the eye. Daniil Kvyat is able to carry tremendous speed into the corner, but the car looks like one of the least planted through it – even less so than the slower Racing Point. Team-mate Alex Albon perhaps

struggles a little more, and three or four times the rear end comes round in the middle of the corner and has to be corrected.

So it's no surprise to see him, just beyond the one-hour mark, lose the rear in that spot and back into the wall. The car rotates on impact and the front also hits, removing the entire front wing. The damage to the wing itself is minimal, save for the fact that it is separated from the nose, but

it's a blow to a rookie driver on his first experience of a tricky circuit.

"The track's just so bumpy, when you come from Barcelona that's almost like an ice rink in comparison to Melbourne," says Albon later. "It's not forgiving at all. That FP1 spin, I was actually feeling good before that happened. I was in some ways overdriving but not realising it. I was having these moments but thinking, 'OK', but when it

did go round I thought, 'Oh, that went quickly.' It took a bit of time to build up again."

Albon subsequently rebuilt his confidence and came close to a place in Q3. That's an encouraging sign, because it's not easy being a rookie in F1. There's much to learn, mistakes are inevitable. But Albon demonstrates he has what it takes to get back on the horse – or should that be bull? – and rebuild.

EDD STRAW



T2 is a spectacular vantage point; drivers can carry huge speed through the corner

“IN THIS SPORT THE CONFIDENCE YOU GET FROM THE RESULTS IS A MASSIVE HELP, AND IT CAN BOOST YOU A LOT. IT’S A PERFECT START TO THE YEAR”



“Way less grip,” was Vettel’s explanation for the difference between the car in Australia and in testing. “In Barcelona we were very happy with the car right from day one. The balance was right, the car was responding to what I was asking it to do. I had a lot of confidence.

“All weekend, I didn’t get that confidence that I had in Barcelona so I didn’t have the car underneath to play around. It wasn’t doing what I was asking. There were glimpses here and there that were really strong, and I think our performance in some corners was really good. But the majority of corners it wasn’t. That’s why we were slower than other people and lost out yesterday as well as today.”

Ferrari’s race performance was made to look even worse by the fact that Vettel opted for the early stop to try to attack Hamilton. This weekend was nothing short of a disaster for a team that, while puzzled, is not panicking about its situation. Albert Park is an unusual circuit, and the next race in Bahrain should show whether Ferrari really is in trouble or not.

“Since Friday FP1 we never found the right balance on the car and we struggled with the tyres,” said Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto. “We tried different set-up approaches during the weekend but I have to say we never concluded with the right balance.

“[We were] unhappy in qualifying yesterday and when you’re in parc ferme that’s what you’ve got. Generally speaking we didn’t find the right balance. We were lacking grip. Did we understand that yet? Probably not. It’s something we need to go back to, analyse all the data and try to assess what happened.”

While it seems strange to regard a Mercedes victory in the opening grand prix as a surprise, given what happened in pre-season it was a shock. But what was really unexpected was the performance of Bottas, whose victory in Australia was a triumph of mind over matter.

“In sport and especially in this sport the confidence you get from the results is a massive help, and it can boost you a lot,” said Bottas. “Even though there will be difficult times during every season, you always remember the good ones and you get strength from knowing that you’ve been able to do something, like today.

“Obviously having a year without a win, without getting the absolute result you wanted, it’s going to be a big boost for this year. It’s a perfect start to the year, very different to last year, so we just need to really keep it up and build from what we’ve learned as a team this weekend, and again from myself.”

Last year, Bottas became trapped in a downward spiral that would have destroyed most. His Australian victory has given him a fresh start, new hope and – if he keeps it up – may just have added a new title contender to the mix. 🏆

NEXT F1 REPORT

BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX 4 APRIL ISSUE

Will Ferrari rediscover its pre-season testing form, and will Lewis Hamilton be able re-establish the Mercedes team pecking order?



Norris stars with Q3 on F1 debut

McLaren new boy Lando Norris was best placed of the three debutants in the Australian Grand Prix, finishing 12th. But it was his remarkable qualifying feat that left a big impression.

Norris not only reached Q3, but also secured eighth place ahead of Kimi Raikkonen and Sergio Perez after ensuring he nailed his laps in rapidly evolving track conditions.

"You can tell by doing three runs in Q1 it shows we were a bit unsure if I could make it into Q2, so we put a lot of effort into trying to achieve that," he said. "We had only one set of new tyres for Q2 so we weren't in as strong a position as some of the other drivers, but still got into Q3. Definitely not what we were expecting."

Norris slipped to 10th at the start, and his race was compromised by getting stuck behind the struggling Alfa Romeo of Antonio Giovinazzi. But he was able to finish 12th.

That put him two places ahead of London-born Thai Alex Albon, who recovered from a crash and several off-track moments on Friday to outqualify Toro Rosso team-mate Daniil Kvyat and start 13th. He also got stuck behind Giovinazzi, and was passed by Sergio Perez in that phase of the race, eventually finishing 14th.

George Russell was 16th for Williams and, given a desperately slow car, was satisfied with his personal performance.

Ricciardo's short-lived Renault debut



The results suggest Daniel Ricciardo's debut for Renault lasted 28 laps, but the local hero's race was effectively over the moment he decided to take to the grass on the run to the first corner.

Fast-starting Ricciardo saw Sergio Perez start to move to the right as he pulled alongside. Unsure whether the Racing Point driver would keep coming, Ricciardo opted to swerve onto the grass separating the pit exit from the track. But his front wing struck uneven ground and was torn off, forcing him to limp back to the pits for a replacement. He later retired the car as a precautionary measure.

"Sergio's start wasn't great, I had a bit of a run," said Ricciardo. "He made a little flinch, but when it happens that quick you see him move, so I moved, then he straightened up and the next thing I'm on the grass. But you never know how much he's going to move. Because he was still in front, you just follow his initial reaction."

"When I hit the grass, I wasn't actually too concerned. I thought I'd just drive through it and had enough momentum to stay alongside him. But obviously that ditch was there, and that was it."

Ricciardo had qualified 12th after failing to nail the first part of his second Q2 lap thanks to hitting

BIG NUMBER

1959

Valtteri Bottas's point for fastest lap was the first to be awarded since the 1959 United States Grand Prix, where Maurice Trintignant was fastest in a Rob Walker-run Cooper T51.





HONE

traffic on his out-lap. That put him one place behind team-mate Nico Hulkenberg, who had lost his second run to an electrical problem that cost him boost pressure.

Hulkenberg made a great start to jump to eighth behind the two Haas drivers. He pitted on lap 13 in response to Kimi Raikkonen making a stop (not through choice but because the Alfa Romeo was overheating owing to one of his own discarded visor tear-offs blocking a radiator), and was able to attack Kevin Magnussen for what was effectively sixth place once Romain Grosjean had suffered a slow stop. But he could not quite pull off a pass.

Q & A

ROBERT KUBICA WILLIAMS DRIVER

Eight years and four months since his last grand prix start, Robert Kubica finished 17th after qualifying last on his return to Formula 1 action driving a desperately uncompetitive Williams.



You worked for many years to come back. Does it feel normal now?

It doesn't feel normal. It feels like a lot of new stuff. There are many aspects on which we have to work and I have to improve, but I think it's normal when you're away eight and a half years and F1 has changed a lot.

How was it?

As expected it was not the easiest one. Unfortunately with hard tyres I had a good launch but then a lot of wheelspin. Running into Turn 1 I took it very safe, I moved to the inside over the kerb, went through the corner and [Pierre] Gasly moved quite a lot to the right and he damaged my front wing.

It was not feeling great, then on lap three I lost one mirror, which makes it even more difficult with blue flags. So it was difficult. Once I was in clear air I was told the pace was not bad, actually it was good for the car with the state I was having. I nearly started laughing because from the inside it felt very bad. I did a reasonably good job.

You didn't come back to be at the back, so are there any regrets?

No, because I took the decision after thinking for more than six weeks last year. I knew it would be an extremely difficult challenge for me to be back.

I knew it might be difficult for Williams but I didn't expect to come to Australia so unprepared, not from a physical point of view but from lack of driving. Even if I struggled today, I still enjoyed it, which is a big difference compared with a long time ago. I'm not an emotional guy but in the end after the race, for me, it felt like a great achievement.

➔ P34 DRIVER RATINGS



DUNBAR



ANDRE

Haas has wheel deja vu

The retirement of both Haas drivers from last year's Australian Grand Prix thanks to botched pitstops is one of the focal points in the first episode of the Netflix F1 documentary series, and Romain Grosjean suffered a similar fate this year.

Grosjean ran seventh in the first stint behind Kevin Magnussen, but dropped out of the points when his pitstop was hampered by a slow front-left wheel

change. He retired when that wheel became loose as a consequence of damage done during the stop.

"They got the wheel back on, so we didn't lose the wheel like last year, but after 15 laps it mechanically broke because we'd forced it on," said team principal Gunther Steiner.

Magnussen at least ensured Haas did win the midfield battle with a strong race to sixth.

20 Kubica #88
1m26.067s

18 Sainz #55
1m23.084s

16 Stroll #18
1m23.017s

14 Giovinazzi #99
1m22.714s

12 Ricciardo #3
1m22.570s

19 Russell #63
1m24.360s

17 Gasly #10
1m23.020s

15 Kvyat #26
1m22.774s

13 Albon #23
1m22.636s

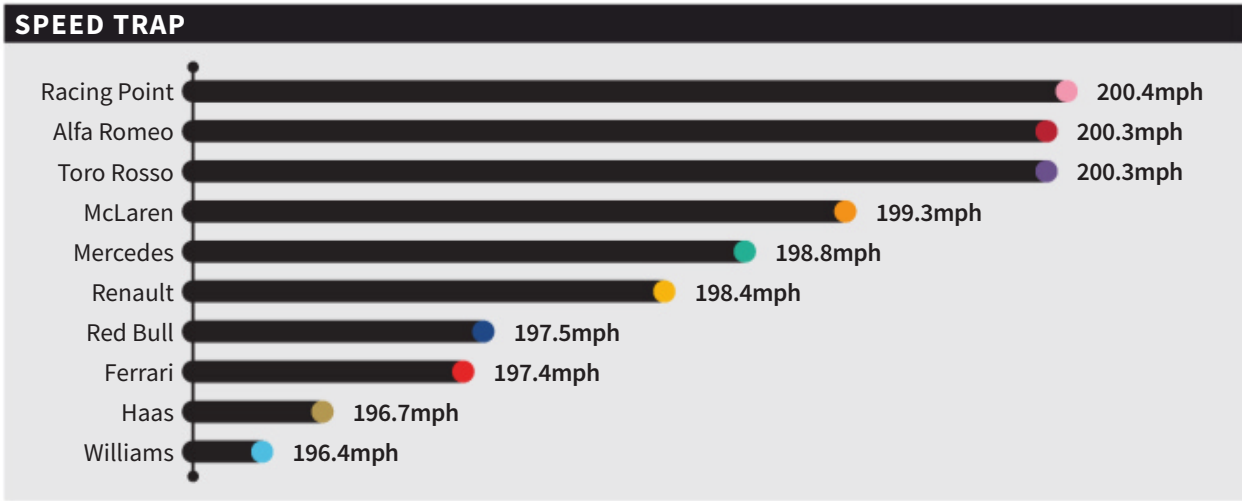
11 Hulkenberg #27
1m22.562s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m23.599s	1	Hamilton	1m22.600s	1	Hamilton	1m22.292s
2	Vettel	1m23.637s	2	Bottas	1m22.648s	2	Vettel	1m22.556s
3	Leclerc	1m23.673s	3	Verstappen	1m23.400s	3	Leclerc	1m22.749s
4	Verstappen	1m23.792s	4	Gasly	1m23.442s	4	Grosjean	1m23.112s
5	Bottas	1m23.866s	5	Vettel	1m23.473s	5	Magnussen	1m23.334s
6	Raikkonen	1m24.816s	6	Raikkonen	1m23.572s	6	Gasly	1m23.367s
7	Kvyat	1m24.832s	7	Hulkenberg	1m23.574s	7	Bottas	1m23.422s
8	Gasly	1m24.932s	8	Ricciardo	1m23.644s	8	Kvyat	1m23.442s
9	Magnussen	1m24.934s	9	Leclerc	1m23.754s	9	Verstappen	1m23.481s
10	Hulkenberg	1m25.015s	10	Grosjean	1m23.814s	10	Ricciardo	1m23.695s
11	Giovinazzi	1m25.166s	11	Kvyat	1m23.933s	11	Hulkenberg	1m23.737s
12	Grosjean	1m25.224s	12	Magnussen	1m23.988s	12	Giovinazzi	1m23.831s
13	Albon	1m25.230s	13	Stroll	1m24.011s	13	Sainz	1m24.049s
14	Sainz	1m25.285s	14	Sainz	1m24.133s	14	Perez	1m24.082s
15	Stroll	1m25.288s	15	Giovinazzi	1m24.293s	15	Albon	1m24.328s
16	Perez	1m25.498s	16	Perez	1m24.401s	16	Stroll	1m24.345s
17	Ricciardo	1m25.634s	17	Albon	1m24.675s	17	Raikkonen	1m24.402s
18	Norris	1m25.966s	18	Norris	1m24.733s	18	Norris	1m24.568s
19	Kubica	1m27.914s	19	Russell	1m26.453s	19	Russell	1m25.944s
20	Russell	1m28.740s	20	Kubica	1m26.655s	20	Kubica	1m26.589s

WEATHER 24C, sunny

WEATHER 25C, sunny

WEATHER 23C, hazy



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m22.017s	1	Hamilton	1m21.014s	1	Hamilton	1m20.486s
2	Hamilton	1m22.043s	2	Bottas	1m21.193s	2	Bottas	1m20.598s
3	Bottas	1m22.367s	3	Verstappen	1m21.678s	3	Vettel	1m21.190s
4	Giovinazzi	1m22.431s	4	Leclerc	1m21.739s	4	Verstappen	1m21.320s
5	Kvyat	1m22.511s	5	Grosjean	1m21.870s	5	Leclerc	1m21.442s
6	Magnussen	1m22.519s	6	Vettel	1m21.912s	6	Grosjean	1m21.826s
7	Hulkenberg	1m22.540s	7	Magnussen	1m22.221s	7	Magnussen	1m22.099s
8	Norris	1m22.702s	8	Raikkonen	1m22.349s	8	Norris	1m22.304s
9	Albon	1m22.757s	9	Norris	1m22.423s	9	Raikkonen	1m22.314s
10	Verstappen	1m22.876s	10	Perez	1m22.532s	10	Perez	1m22.781s
11	Vettel	1m22.885s	11	Hulkenberg	1m22.562s			
12	Perez	1m22.908s	12	Ricciardo	1m22.570s			
13	Ricciardo	1m22.921s	13	Albon	1m22.636s			
14	Grosjean	1m22.959s	14	Giovinazzi	1m22.714s			
15	Raikkonen	1m22.966s	15	Kvyat	1m22.774s			
16	Stroll	1m23.017s						
17	Gasly	1m23.020s						
18	Sainz	1m23.084s						
19	Russell	1m24.360s						
20	Kubica	1m26.067s						

WEATHER 23C, hazy

NEXT RACE

31 MARCH

BAHRAIN GP

Sakhir

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Bottas	26	1	2
2 Hamilton	18	2	1
3 Verstappen	15	3	4
4 Vettel	12	4	3
5 Leclerc	10	5	5
6 Magnussen	8	6	7
7 Hulkenberg	6	7	11
8 Raikkonen	4	8	9
9 Stroll	2	9	16
10 Kvyat	1	10	15
11 Gasly	0	11	17
12 Norris	0	12	8
13 Perez	0	13	10
14 Albon	0	14	13
15 Giovinazzi	0	15	14
16 Russell	0	16	19
17 Kubica	0	17	20
Grosjean	0	-	6
Ricciardo	0	-	12
Sainz	0	-	18

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Mercedes	44
2 Ferrari	22
3 Red Bull	15
4 Haas	8
5 Renault	6
6 Alfa Romeo	4
7 Racing Point	2
8 Toro Rosso	1
9 McLaren	0
10 Williams	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	1	0	Bottas
Vettel	1	0	Leclerc
Gasly	0	1	Verstappen
Ricciardo	0	1	Hulkenberg
Grosjean	1	0	Magnussen
Norris	1	0	Sainz
Perez	1	0	Stroll
Raikkonen	1	0	Giovinazzi
Albon	1	0	Kvyat
Russell	1	0	Kubica

Scores ignore sessions if a driver didn't participate in qualifying

WINS

Bottas	1
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POLE POSITIONS

Hamilton	1
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FASTEST LAPS

Bottas	1
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MOTORSPORT IMAGES/DUNBAR

STARTING GRID

10 Perez #11 1m22.781s	8 Norris #4 1m22.304s	6 Grosjean #8 1m21.826s	4 Verstappen #33 1m21.320s	2 Bottas #77 1m20.598s
9 Raikkonen #7 1m22.314s	7 Magnussen #20 1m22.099s	5 Leclerc #16 1m21.442s	3 Vettel #5 1m21.190s	1 Hamilton #44 1m20.486s

RACE RESULTS ROUND 1/21, 58 LAPS – 191.13 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	1h25m27.325s	56	Su, Mn
2	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+20.886s		Su, Mn
3	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	+22.520s	2	Su, Mn
4	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Ferrari	+57.109s		Su, Mn
5	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+58.230s		Su, Hn
6	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m27.156s		Su, Mn
7	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Renault	-1 lap		Sn, Hn
8	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Su, Mn
9	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
10	Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap		Mn, Hu
11	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Red Bull-Honda	-1 lap		Mn, Sn
12	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		Su, Hn
13	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap		Su, Hn
14	Alexander Albon (THA)	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap		Sn, Mn
15	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Sn
16	George Russell (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps		Mn, Sn, Hn
17	Robert Kubica (POL)	Williams-Mercedes	-3 laps		Hn, Mn, Sn, Su
R	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Haas-Ferrari	29 laps-hub		Su, Mn
R	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Renault	28 laps-precautionary		Sn, Hn
R	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	McLaren-Renault	9 laps-power unit		Sn

FASTEST LAPS

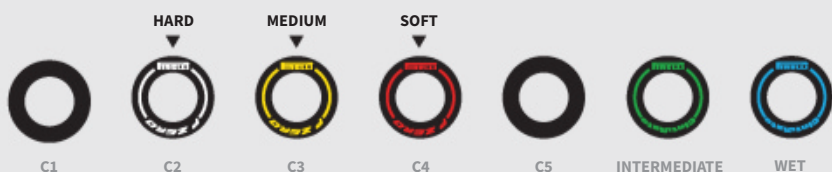
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Bottas	1m25.580s	-	57
2	Hamilton	1m26.057s	+0.477s	57
3	Verstappen	1m26.256s	+0.676s	57
4	Leclerc	1m26.926s	+1.346s	58
5	Gasly	1m27.229s	+1.649s	39
6	Kvyat	1m27.448s	+1.868s	39
7	Stroll	1m27.568s	+1.988s	29
8	Vettel	1m27.954s	+2.374s	16
9	Magnussen	1m28.182s	+2.602s	56
10	Albon	1m28.188s	+2.608s	43
11	Raikkonen	1m28.270s	+2.690s	52
12	Hulkenberg	1m28.444s	+2.864s	52
13	Grosjean	1m28.462s	+2.882s	17
14	Giovinazzi	1m28.479s	+2.899s	29
15	Perez	1m28.485s	+2.905s	41
16	Norris	1m28.555s	+2.975s	17
17	Russell	1m28.713s	+3.133s	55
18	Kubica	1m29.284s	+3.704s	30
19	Ricciardo	1m29.848s	+4.268s	18
20	Sainz	1m30.899s	+5.319s	9

WEATHER 23C, hazy

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 134.19mph. FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 138.62mph.

TYRES

KEY: H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft I - Intermediate W - Wet n - New set u - Used set



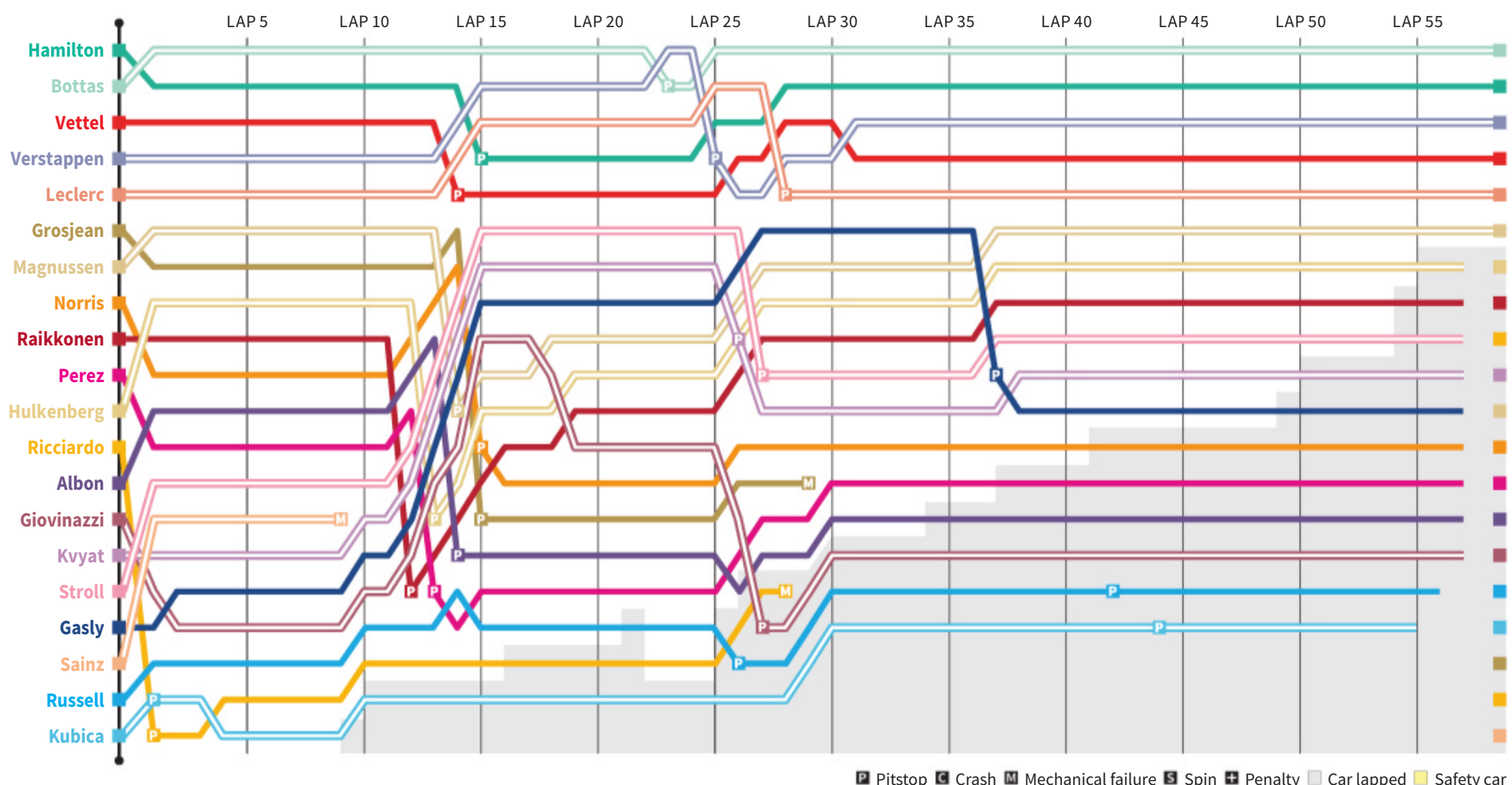
RACE BRIEFING

FP3
McLAREN fined €5000 for unsafe release of Norris.

QUALIFYING
HAAS fined €5000 for unsafe release of Magnussen.



LAP CHART What happened, when



P Pitstop C Crash M Mechanical failure S Spin H Penalty Car lapped Safety car

REBORN BOTTAS IS ONE OF THE BEST DOWN UNDER

Valtteri Bottas and Max Verstappen were the most impressive drivers of the weekend as the new Formula 1 season roared into life in Melbourne

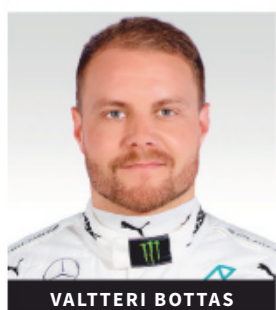
EDD STRAW

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

8 The pressure was on for his final Q3 run after an error on the first, but he didn't make the same mistake twice and denied his team-mate pole position. He did not make the most of the start but, given he had a piece of the rear floor missing, he did a good job to keep second.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

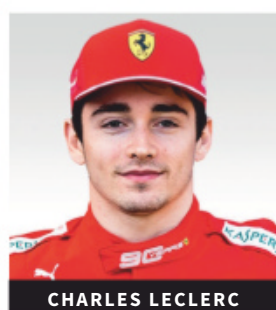
9 To go to Australia after ending the 2018 season so badly, with his Mercedes future on the line, and do what he did at Albert Park was remarkable. Only six thousandths off Hamilton's pace on ideal qualifying times, he then made a perfect start and controlled the race beautifully.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

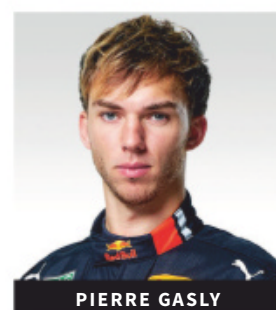
7 The pre-season favourite was as surprised as anyone to end qualifying 0.704s off pole position and finish a distant fourth. There wasn't much he could do to keep Verstappen behind, though he might have made a bigger fight. Relied on Leclerc obeying team orders late on to hold fourth.



CHARLES LECLERC

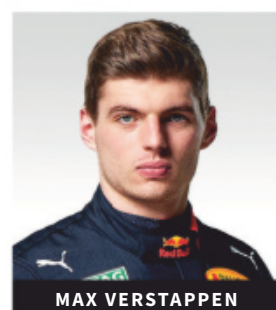
7 On his first weekend in the big time with Ferrari, Leclerc couldn't match Vettel in qualifying but only after failing to nail his key Q3 lap, which allowed Verstappen ahead. A punchy start was undermined by an off in the first stint. Late on, he was asked not to attempt to pass the struggling Vettel.

RED BULL



PIERRE GASLY

5 Communication problem that led to him doing two recharge laps after his Q1 attempt cost him time and made a second run impossible. He was duly bumped out by late improvers. Lack of instant progress at the start of the race meant he was up against it because passing is very tricky here.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

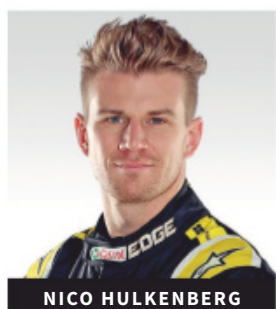
9 Verstappen split the Ferraris in quali, getting closer to his theoretical ideal lap (based on three sectors) than anyone else in Q3 apart from Hamilton. After briefly falling behind Leclerc at the start, he got back ahead through Turn 2, then pulled a clever pass on Vettel for third later on.

RENAULT



DANIEL RICCIARDO

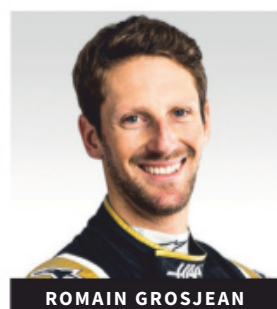
5 The darling of the local crowd went into the race with great expectations to fulfil. Sadly, it didn't quite work out. Warm-up lap traffic and a scruffy start to the lap left him 12th on the grid, and his decision to move onto the grass in case Perez moved over cost him his front wing, and any chance of a result.



NICO HULKENBERG

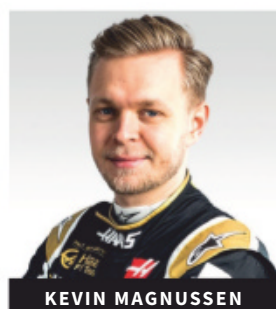
8 While he only outqualified Ricciardo by 0.008s, he was robbed of his second run by an electrical problem. A great start was the making of his race, putting him on the tail of the Haas drivers. Once Grosjean was out of the way he came so close to passing Magnussen for 'Class B' victory.

HAAS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

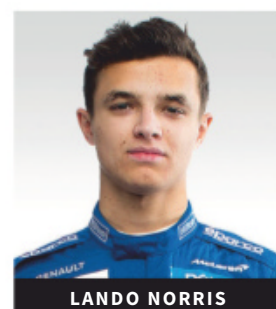
8 Grosjean looks at one with the rapid Haas, so it was no surprise to see him comfortably qualifying as the best of the midfielders ahead of Magnussen. His pitstop to cover those behind stopping early would not have hurt his result but for the problem with the left-front, which led to his retirement.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

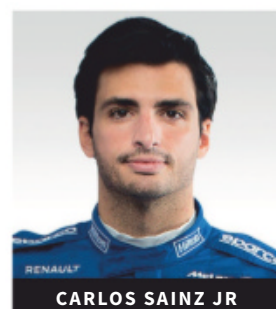
8 After saying he couldn't believe the Haas wasn't quickest given how good it felt in qualifying, Magnussen was even happier in the race. He jumped team-mate Grosjean at the start, and kept a tight grip on the 'Class B' lead throughout despite serious pressure from Hulkenberg.

MCLAREN



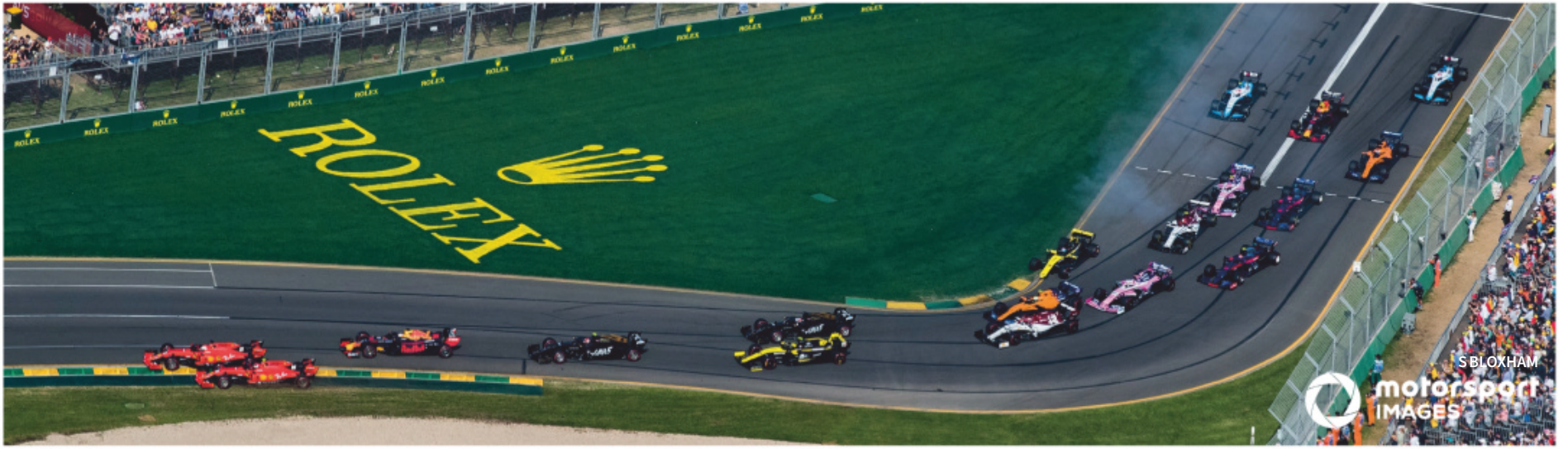
LANDO NORRIS

8 Storming laps in Q2 and Q3, chasing the evolving track conditions well, earned him eighth on the grid. It says a lot about his outlook that he wasn't delighted with his race, slipping to 10th at the start, then having his strategy ruined by the Giovinazzi rolling roadblock.

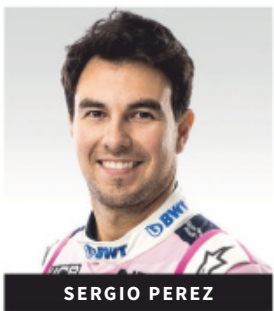


CARLOS SAINZ JR

7 Things just never came together for Sainz. His Q1 exit was caused by encountering a touring Kubica, who had a puncture, at the end of his key lap. The race was looking promising after he climbed to 14th at the start, only for his Renault MGU-K to lunch itself and set fire to the car.



RACING POINT



SERGIO PEREZ

8 Perez aced the first two segments of qualifying, and although he was slower than he should have been in Q3 it probably made no difference to his grid position. After losing places on the first lap, following the early stoppers proved costly and left him adrift of the points.



LANCE STROLL

7 Traffic in an ultra-tight Q1 meant he was eliminated despite lapping just 0.109s behind Perez. But one of his signature strong first laps got him up to 13th. By running on while others ahead of him pitted he jumped ahead of the delayed Grosjean, Norris, Perez and Albon.

ALFA ROMEO



KIMI RAIKKONEN

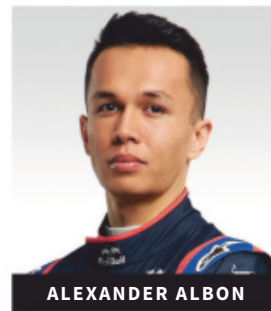
8 It was a familiar story after Q3: he admitted he had a scruffy run that put him behind Norris. After running ninth in the first stint he triggered a flurry of stops when he headed to the pits early because of cooling concerns, which proved to be caused by his own discarded visor tear-off.



ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

6 This ended up being a nothing weekend for Giovinazzi, whose scruffy Q2 meant he was only 14th on the grid. We'll never really know what he could have done in the race as, after a decent start, he clashed with Norris and was battling car damage for the rest of the race.

TORO ROSSO



ALEXANDER ALBON

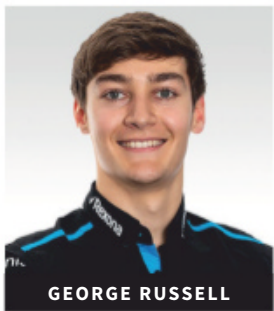
7 Looked like an accident waiting to happen in FP1, until the accident happened. But after a difficult day he rebuilt confidence and outqualified Kvyat. The race was challenging, not least because he was having to manage brake temperatures, and after passing Perez he lost out later on.



DANIIL KVYAT

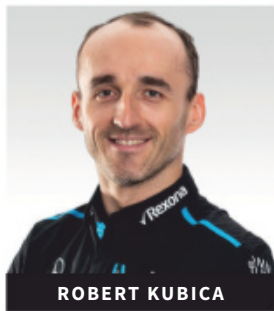
7 The Toro Rosso showed a handy turn of midfield speed, although it wasn't the easiest to drive, but Kvyat had the measure of it. Up to Q2 things went well, but a scruffy session meant he didn't advance – not helped by Vettel having his off-track moment in front of him. Did a good job for a point.

WILLIAMS



GEORGE RUSSELL

8 Russell was the quicker of the two Williams drivers and was confident he'd got the best out of the equipment in quali. He followed that up with an accomplished race performance with no obvious significant errors, although it was probably a learning experience in terms of tyre management.



ROBERT KUBICA

6 Struggled with the feeling of the car before it came alive on his second set of Q1 tyres. But he misjudged the space exiting Turn 10 and kissed the wall, leading to a right-rear puncture. Gasly clipped his front wing at the start, but thereafter his pace in a car with damaged aero appeared decent.






Bruni takes his chance for first Porsche GT success

Sizzling pace and a splash of rain helped Gianmaria Bruni and Richard Lietz to a memorable Sebring victory

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES



Gianmaria Bruni finally notched up a first victory aboard a Porsche since his move from Ferrari at the end of 2017, and it required something special from the Italian to snatch the win right at the end of the Sebring 1000 Miles. And something special from the crew of the factory Porsche 911 RSR he shares with Richard Lietz in the World Endurance Championship.

The Porsche was running second to the MTEK BMW M8 GTE with Nicky Catsburg at the wheel when light rain suddenly intensified with a shade over 20 minutes left on the clock of the eight-hour race. Bruni was 16 seconds behind, but gained six of those back as they gingerly headed for the pits. The Manthey crew did the rest.

The Porsche came out of the pits ahead, and the race was won. Bruni pulled a small gap on Catsburg before the safety car came out. The positions were frozen because the race would remain under yellow-flag conditions to the end.

It was breathtaking climax to the race, but it would have been almost as dramatic had it not rained. Catsburg, who shared his BMW with Martin Tomczyk and Alexander Sims, would have needed a splash of fuel had the race stayed green to the end. They would have finished no better than third, and probably fourth.

“When the rain came, I knew I had to push,” said Bruni. “It was all or nothing. But the team was amazing in the pits. They won us the race today.”

The BMW, a car that isn’t always the lightest on its tyres, had become progressively more competitive as the temperatures dropped away in the nighttime portion of a race that finished at midnight. The marque’s best showing in the WEC so far this season – the sister car driven by Augusto Farfus, Bruno Spengler and Antonio Felix da Costa also led the race – can at least partially be explained by a more generous than normal tyre allocation at Sebring: each GTE Pro car had 28 tyres at its disposal for qualifying and the race, rather than the normal 18 for a conventional six-hour WEC contest. Catsburg reckoned



BMW leads the colourful GTE Pro field, but would be jumped in the pits

the two-day official test ahead of race week helped too.

The problem for Catsburg and his team-mates was that the M8’s appetite for Michelins had forced Sims to cut short the one required double-stint to eke out the allocation. The knock-on would be a splash-and-dash near the end.

That would have dropped the car behind the Ganassi Ford GT shared by Andy Priaulx, Harry Tincknell and Jonathan Bomarito, and most likely James Calado, Alessandro Pier Guidi and Daniel Serra in the best of the factory AF Corse Ferraris.

The Ford dominated the early stages of the race. Tincknell battled with Kevin Estre in the other Porsche through the first stint and briefly dropped to third behind the BMW of Farfus, before the Multimatic-run Ganassi WEC team got Priaulx out in the lead at the first round of pitstops.

Priaulx then took off. He had built a lead in excess of 20s when a full-course-yellow virtual safety car morphed into the real thing on the two-hour mark. The trio maintained their position at the front into the second half of the race, but their bid for victory gradually unravelled.

The car was handed a five-second penalty when Tincknell didn’t yield to another car as he left his pit stall. The drivers of the #67 car had also opted for an aggressive strategy to use the best of its tyres early to try to gain an advantage.

“Track position is key at Sebring because it’s difficult to overtake, so we tried to build an advantage early on,” explained Tincknell. “It would have worked but for the safety car. We lost all the time we’d gained and it played into the hands of those who had been saving tyres for the latter stages.”

Bruni and Lietz weren’t the quickest Porsche drivers in the race, or at least not in the early stages. GTE Pro championship leaders Estre and Michael Christensen held that honour and had been ahead of their team-mates, and by some margin, for the first half of the race despite losing time at their second pitstop when their 911’s tail lights needed attention.

Their bid for victory was derailed when Estre made contact with Darren Turner’s Aston Martin out of the Turn 7 hairpin. The stewards ruled it was avoidable contact and the Porsche was awarded a drivethrough penalty, which ultimately left them fifth in class at the finish.

Aston Martin, like BMW, posted its most competitive showing yet with its new WEC contender. The second-generation Vantage GTE may have won in the rain last time out at Shanghai, but this time it was competitive in the dry for the first time.

Alex Lynn (who set the second quickest single lap in qualifying) and Maxime Martin were in the fight early on until losing time in the pits when the leader lights needed attention. An intermittent refuelling problem that cost them more seconds in the pits further hampered the car and left them down in ninth at the finish.

“It’s a stretch to say that we could have won it,” said Aston Martin Racing technical



Dempsey-Proton Porsche took GTE Am honours



director Dan Sayers, “but a podium was definitely realistic.”

Ferrari was never going to win this race, but a podium could have been possible. Calado, Pier Guidi and Serra were fourth, but would most likely have been elevated to the podium had Catsburg made his splash. “That was as good as we could have hoped for,” reckoned Calado after the race. “We weren’t really competitive, but we had a clean race and made no mistakes.”

The Dempsey-Proton Porsche squad claimed GTE Am honours with team boss Christian Ried, Julien Andlauer and Matt Campbell. Andlauer had been closing on Patrick Lindsey in the Project 1 Porsche in the run-up to the final stops and then leapfrogged him during the pit cycle.

The Project 1 squad looked for much of the race as though it might claim an amazing comeback victory. The German team’s regular 911 RSR had been seriously damaged by fire in official testing before race week, which required a new chassis — actually the car it intends to race in the European Le Mans Series this year — to be flown in from Porsche HQ at Weissach.

The team took delivery of the car in the paddock a few hours before first free practice. It didn’t make it out in the opening session, but Jorg Bergmeister and Egidio Perfetti qualified an impressive second to the Dempsey car.

Perfetti led at the start, and Bergmeister was still in front when Giancarlo Fisichella in the AF Corse-run Spirit of Race Ferrari 488 GTE tapped him into a spin at Turn 1. The impact as he backed into the tyre barriers damaged the diffuser, which took the edge off the car’s performance in the closing stages.

The Ferrari Fisichella that shared with Francesco Castellacci and Thomas Flohr also jumped the Project 1 car in the pits with an hour to go to take second. >>

HIGHS AND LOWS FOR JACKIE CHAN IN LMP2



THE SEBRING 1000 MILES PROVIDED mixed results for Jackie Chan DC Racing. The team’s championship-leading trio of Ho-Pin Tung, Stephane Richelmi and Gabriel Aubry were in trouble after just a handful of laps and trailed home a delayed sixth in their ORECA-Gibson 07, but the new line-up of Will Stevens, Jordan King and David Heinemeier Hansson dominated on the way to the team’s fifth win of the season.

Richelmi and Aubry had claimed the class pole by three tenths from the sister car, before Tung lost out to Stevens at the start and then Nicolas Lapierre in the Signatech Alpine ORECA on lap three. Ten laps later he was in the pits with gearshift problems.

The Jota Sport-run team attempted a series of fixes before changing the gearbox wiring loom. It turned out that a connector pin had fallen out of the loom and the better part of 30 laps were lost by the #38 Chan/DC entry.

The crew that replaced the all-Malaysian line-up that had won at Fuji in October upheld the team’s honour, however. Stevens had half a dozen seconds on Lapierre when the first round of pitstops began, before Heinemeier

Hansson pulled a big gap in the decisive battle of the silver drivers.

The WEC returnee, who was back in an LMP2 car for the first time since a 2015 run with Extreme Speed Motorsports, easily had the measure of Pierre Thiriet in the Signatech car, which lost out to a charging Nyck de Vries in the Racing Team Nederland Dallara-Gibson P217.

The DC/Chan car was more than a minute up the road before the first safety car. Stevens resumed with 15 or so seconds in hand over Andre Negrao in the Signatech ORECA, though he quickly doubled that lead.

Signatech maintained its sequence of podiums through the 2018-19 WEC superseason, though it never looked like winning. The team had swapped from Dunlop to Michelin tyres for this race in a move designed to help silver-rated Thiriet. The team believes the Michelins offer the driver more feel, but it was his inability to match Heinemeier Hansson that lost Signatech any chance of victory.

The DragonSpeed ORECA claimed third in the hands of Pastor Maldonado, Anthony Davidson and Roberto Gonzalez. The car was delayed when it needed attention to the rear bodywork early on as a result of tyre pick up, and again when Maldonado took off the rear wing at the end of his first flying lap on the exit of Turn 17.

“We had race-winning pace today,” reckoned DragonSpeed boss Elton Julian. “But you don’t win races when you spend two and a half minutes in the pits repairing bodywork.”

The TDS Racing ORECA was on course to take fourth when Loic Duval went off in the rain at the end, triggering the safety car.



Team Alonso back on top in LMP1

Another round of the WEC, and another Toyota 1-2. It was business as usual in LMP1 as the only manufacturer left in the top class dominated at Sebring. The difference this time was that one of the TS050 HYBRIDS encountered a problem for the first time since the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Sebastien Buemi, Fernando Alonso and Kazuki Nakajima claimed a third victory of the season after leading every inch of the way, though it wouldn't be quite right to say that they dominated. The sister car driven by Jose Maria Lopez, Kamui Kobayashi and Mike Conway was never much more than 15 seconds behind and was still very much in the mix when it suffered its delay.

Lopez was edging towards Buemi halfway through hour five when he made contact with Jonny Adam in the GTE Am-class TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage GTE in Turn 13. He had to take to the kerbs as he made the pass and then tagged the slower car, damaging the floor in the process.

Hurried repairs cost the car two laps and any chance of a hat-trick of WEC victories after its Fuji and Shanghai wins at the back end of last year.

"It was a misjudgement in traffic," admitted Lopez. "I'd been a bit cautious in my first stint and knew I had to be more aggressive. The Aston closed the door quicker than I thought. These things happen."

Buemi had converted pole position into the lead of the race and built an advantage that stood at as much 10s before handing over to Alonso. The Spaniard maintained that lead over Kobayashi and then had to build it all over again after the safety car.



Delay to sister car made it easier for Alonso, Buemi and Kobayashi

Conway came back at Nakajima after the next driver rotation and closed to within a couple of seconds. It looked like the #7 TS050 was now the faster car, and it was moving into a position where Toyota would, according to its pre-defined strategies, swap the positions.

Toyota Motorsport GmbH boss Pascal Vasselton explained that this was not in fact the case: "What we saw was that Mike closing on Kazuki was mainly down to traffic."

Vasselton revealed a sense of satisfaction at Toyota after the victory, describing it as a "tricky box to tick". The truth was that the LMP1 privateers were not in a position to prevent that, nor close enough to benefit from the #7 car's delay.

Rebellion Racing looked on course for the final podium spot with the #3 Gibson-powered R-13 shared by Thomas Laurent, Gustavo Menezes and Nathanael Berthon until encountering gearshift problems in the penultimate hour. It was an identical issue

to the one that had delayed the sister car of Neel Jani, Bruno Senna and Mathias Beche in the opening hour, the gearshift actuator failing on both cars.

The delay for #3 allowed the SMP Racing BRE Engineering BR1 shared by Vitaly Petrov, Mikhail Aleshin and Brendon Hartley to take the final podium spot. It had been delayed early in the race by a puncture, which also damaged the rear diffuser. That explained a change of nose later on as the ART Grand Prix squad tried to restore the aero balance on the AER-powered car.

The sister BR1 had got ahead of the #3 Rebellion at the first round of pitstops when Stephane Sarrazin handed over to Egor Orudzhev. The Russian drove away from Berthon, who was double-stinting his tyres, only to crash at Turn 1 when he lost downforce in the slipstream of DragonSpeed's Gibson-engined BRE. He tagged a tyre stack, which dragged him into the barriers and put the car out of the race before Sergey Sirotkin could drive.



#8 Toyota qualified on pole and led every step of the way

RESULTS ROUND 6/8, SEBRING (USA), 15 MARCH (253 LAPS – 946.228 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Kazuki Nakajima (JPN) Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	8h00m38.186s
2	Jose Maria Lopez (ARG) Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	-1 lap
3	Vitaly Petrov (RUS) Mikhail Aleshin (RUS) Brendon Hartley (NZL)	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AER BR1	LMP1	-11 laps
4	Will Stevens (GBR) David Heinemeier Hansson (DNK) Jordan King (GBR)	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-14 laps
5	Nicolas Lapierre (FRA) Andre Negrao (BRA) Pierre Thiriet (FRA)	Signatech Alpine Matmut	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-14 laps
6	Anthony Davidson (GBR) Roberto Gonzalez (MEX) Pastor Maldonado (VEN)	DragonSpeed	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-16 laps
7	Thomas Laurent (FRA) Nathanael Berthon (FRA) Gustavo Menezes (USA)	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13	LMP1	-16 laps
8	Erwin Creed (FRA) Romano Ricci (FRA) Gunnar Jeannette (USA)	Larbre Competition	Ligier-Gibson JSP217	LMP2	-19 laps
9	Nyck de Vries (NLD) Frits van Eerd (NLD) Giedo van der Garde (NLD)	Racing Team Nederland	Dallara-Gibson P217	LMP2	-23 laps
10	Richard Lietz (AUT) Gianmaria Bruni (ITA)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	-27 laps
11	Martin Tomczyk (DEU) Nicky Catsburg (NLD) Alexander Sims (GBR)	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE	GTE Pro	-27 laps
12	Harry Tincknell (GBR) Andy Priaulx (GBR) Jonathan Bomarito (USA)	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT	GTE Pro	-28 laps
13	James Calado (GBR) Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) Daniel Serra (BRA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE ‘evo’	GTE Pro	-28 laps
14	Kevin Estre (FRA) Michael Christensen (DNK)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	-28 laps
15	Davide Rigon (ITA) Sam Bird (GBR) Miguel Molina (ESP)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE ‘evo’	GTE Pro	-28 laps
16	Augusto Farfus (BRA) Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT) Bruno Spengler (CAN)	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE	GTE Pro	-28 laps
17	Antonio Garcia (ESP) Jan Magnussen (DNK) Mike Rockenfeller (DEU)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTE Pro	-28 laps
18	Alex Lynn (GBR) Maxime Martin (BEL)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	-29 laps
19	Nicki Thiim (DNK) Marco Sorensen (DNK) Darren Turner (GBR)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	-29 laps
20	Christian Ried (DEU) Julien Andlauer (FRA) Matt Campbell (AUS)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-32 laps
21	Thomas Flohr (CHE) Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Giancarlo Fisichella (ITA)	Spirit of Race	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Am	-32 laps
22	Egidio Perfetti (NOR) Jorg Bergmeister (DEU) Patrick Lindsey (USA)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-32 laps
23	Michael Wainwright (GBR) Ben Barker (GBR) Thomas Preining (AUT)	Gulf Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-32 laps
24	Motoaki Ishikawa (JPN) Olivier Beretta (MCO) Eddie Cheever (ITA)	MR Racing (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Am	-33 laps
25	Salih Yoluc (TUR) Jonny Adam (GBR) Charlie Eastwood (GBR)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-33 laps
26	Gianluca Roda (ITA) Giorgio Roda (ITA) Matteo Cairolì (ITA)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-34 laps
27	Mathias Lauda (AUT) Paul Dalla Lana (CAN) Pedro Lamy (PRT)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-34 laps
28	Stefan Mucke (DEU) Olivier Pla (FRA) Billy Johnson (USA)	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT	GTE Pro	-37 laps
29	Ho-Pin Tung (NLD) Gabriel Aubry (FRA) Stephane Richelmi (MCO)	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-44 laps
R	Loic Duval (FRA) Francois Perrodo (FRA) Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA)	TDS Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	232 laps-accident
R	Ben Hanley (GBR) Henrik Hedman (SWE) Renger van der Zande (NLD)	DragonSpeed	BRE-Gibson BR1	LMP1	143 laps-gearbox/electronics
R	Bruno Senna (BRA) Neel Jani (CHE) Mathias Beche (CHE)	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13	LMP1	138 laps-accident damage
R	Stephane Sarrazin (FRA) Egor Orudzhev (RUS) Sergey Sirotkin (RUS)	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AER BR1	LMP1	62 laps-accident
NS	Luis Perez Companc (ARG) Matteo Cressoni (ITA) Matt Griffin (IRL)	Clearwater Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Am	accident

Winners’ average speed 118.121mph. Fastest lap Kobayashi 1m41.800s, 132.260mph.
LMP2 de Vries 1m48.990s, 123.535mph. GTE Pro Rigon 1m58.701s, 113.428mph. GTE Am Preining 1m59.989s, 112.211mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Alonso/Nakajima 1m40.318s;	1m58.113s; 22 Pier Guidi/Calado
2 Lopez/Conway 1m40.803s; 3 Laurent/	1m58.232s; 23 Sorensen/Thiim
Menezes 1m42.863s; 4 Orudzhev/	1m58.366s; 24 Campbell/Ried 1m59.790s;
Sarrazin 1m42.942s; 5 Hartley/Aleshin	25 Bergmeister/Perfetti 1m59.935s;
1m43.005s; 6 Beche/Jani 1m43.015s;	26 Lamy/Dalla Lana 2m00.076s;
7 Hanley/van der Zande 1m44.288s;	27 Cairolì/Gia Roda 2m00.417s;
8 Richelmi/Aubry 1m47.558s; 9 Stevens/	28 Adam/Yoluc 2m00.543s; 29 Fisichella/
Heinemeier Hansson 1m48.208s;	Flohr 2m00.759s; 30 Beretta/Ishikawa
10 Lapierre/Thiriet 1m48.524s;	2m01.679s; 31 Lynn/Martin 2m04.748s;
11 Davidson/Gonzalez 1m49.681s;	32 Barker/Wainwright no time;
12 Jeannette/Creed 1m50.705s; 13 Duval/	33 de Vries/van Eerd no time;
Perrodo 1m51.218s; 14 Christensen/	NS Griffin/Perez Companc 1m59.396s.
Estre 1m57.500s; 15 Priaulx/Tincknell	
1m57.615s; 16 Mucke/Pla 1m57.714s;	Fastest in each class:
17 Farfus/Felix da Costa 1m57.841s;	LMP1 Alonso 1m40.124s;
18 Garcia/Magnussen 1m57.844s;	LMP2 Richelmi 1m46.923s;
19 Rigon/Bird 1m57.938s; 20 Catsburg/	GTE Pro Garcia 1m57.257s;
Sims 1m58.000s; 21 Lietz/Bruni	GTE Am Campbell 1m58.411s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP drivers
1 Alonso/Nakajima/Buemi 135; 2 Lopez/
Kobayashi/Conway 120; 3 Menezes/
Laurent 81; 4 Beche 73; 5 Andre Lotterer/
Jani 63; 6 Aleshin/Petrov 56.
LMP1 manufacturers
1 Toyota Gazoo Racing 151; 2 Rebellion
Racing 98; 3 SMP Racing 71; 4 ByKolles
Racing Team 22; 5 DragonSpeed 18.5;
6 CEFC TRSM Racing 1.
LMP2 drivers
1 Negrao/Lapierre/Thiriet 125;
2 Aubry/Tung/Richelmi 123; 3 Jazeman
Jaafar/Nabil Jeffri/Weiron Tan 98;
4 Maldonado/Gonzalez 92.
GT drivers
1 Este/Christensen 125; 2 Bruni/Lietz
100; 3 Pier Guidi/Calado 80.5; 4 Pla/

Mucke 69; 5 Sorensen/Thiim 58.5;
6 Priaulx/Tincknell 56.
GTE manufacturers
1 Porsche 227; 2 Ferrari 127; 3 Ford 125;
4 Aston Martin 102; 5 BMW 87.
GTE Am drivers
1 Perfetti/Bergmeister/Lindsey 103;
2 Castellacci/Fisichella/Flohr 78;
3 Lauda/Dalla Lana/Lamy 69;
4 Eastwood/Yoluc 68.

NEXT EVENT
SPA 6 HOURS
9 MAY ISSUE

advent H



Nasr leads Action Express revenge

After missing out on victory at Daytona, the #31 Cadillac took the chance to stretch its legs at Sebring

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Felipe Nasr reckoned his Action Express Racing Cadillac had been fast enough to win the Daytona 24 Hours back in January.

The Wayne Taylor Racing squad that did win the IMSA SportsCar Championship opener would dispute that, but at last weekend's Sebring 12 Hours there was no doubt that Nasr and team-mates Pipo Derani and Eric Curran were worthy winners of another fraught battle between the two Caddy Daytona Prototype international teams.

Nasr bemoaned the early stoppage at Daytona that prevented him from trying to come back at Fernando Alonso in the WTR machine. This time, he could well have ended up lamenting a couple of late-race safety cars that threatened to undo the good work he and his team-mates had put in over the first 10 hours of the race. But when push came to shove Nasr and then Derani were equal to the challenge of the WTR Cadillac DPi-V.R with Jordan Taylor at the wheel.

The WTR Caddy, co-driven by Renger van der Zande and team newcomer Matthieu Vaxiviere, had slowly dropped away from Nasr's Action Express entry in the latter hours of the race, but a safety car with just under two of the 12 to go brought the field together and put the frontrunners on the same pitstop strategy.

Taylor was able to get around Brendon Hartley in the second of the Action Express cars at the restart, but what he couldn't do was quite get on terms with Derani. He was four seconds back when Nasr took over the leading Caddy for the run to the flag, and a second or two more than that in arrears at the final round of stops with just over half an hour left on the clock. >>



Curran (left) and Nasr lift team-mate Derani in jubilation



Taylor gained a couple of seconds during the pitstop sequence and continued to edge towards the leader. He was just over a second back when the yellows flew one more time with 15 minutes to go. That turned the 67th running of the Sebring 12 Hours into a seven-minute sprint to the flag.

Taylor never got close enough to mount a bid for the lead, but nor did he give up — he posted WTR's fastest lap of the race the final time around the 3.74-mile Sebring International Raceway. The gap at the end was a shade over a second in what was the closest finish in the history of the Florida enduro.

"This is super-satisfying after Daytona where we came so close after having the race under control for so long," said Nasr, reigning IMSA champion with Curran. "The car was impressive from the moment we hit the track in free practice and every time I climbed in during the race, I thought, 'Wow'.

"All we had to do was hit the marks and we did have the perfect race today, but the WTR car did come back at us. They can really switch on the tyres in the cooler temperatures in the night. I'm glad I was at the front at that point."

Taylor conceded that the winning Caddy

had the edge over the 12 hours, and reckoned the sister Action Express car of Joao Barbosa, Felipe Albuquerque and Hartley was going to be tough to beat as well.

"We really thought we were racing for third behind the two Action cars today, but I was able to get past Hartley at the restart with two hours to go," he said. "We played a long game and set up the car to be quick at the end, but no complaints because the winners had the fastest car all day."

This was the first rain-affected Sebring 12 Hours since 2016 and only the second in more than 25 years. Remarkably it was the first to kick off on a wet track, though the start of the 1952 edition was delayed by an hour to ensure a dry start.

This one commenced behind the safety car courtesy of the rain, and eight laps after the race went green fifth-place qualifier Derani moved the Whelen Engineering-sponsored Action Express car through into the lead ahead of Albuquerque. He maintained a narrow advantage over his team-mate until it was time to switch to slicks, when he started to edge into something approaching a clear lead.

The two Action Express cars quickly got out of sequence in a race interrupted

by four safety cars, not including the one under which it started, and swapped the lead back and forth on pitstops for much of its duration.

The challenge of the Caddy shared by Albuquerque, Barbosa and Hartley faded in the closing stages. The Mustang Sampling Action Express car didn't quite have the speed of its sister entry, nor the WTR car.

"The other car deserved to win," said Hartley, who only climbed aboard the Caddy for the first time in free practice. "We faded a bit at the end and over the final two hours we didn't really have the pace to win it."

Cadillac's rivals were already long since out of the equation at the business end of the race. The Penske Racing Acura squad had claimed pole with Dane Cameron, but its bid for a first victory in one of the IMSA enduros to go with its 2018 Mid-Ohio win rapidly dissipated. The challenge of the Acura ARX-05 DPis wilted at Daytona when the rain came, so this time it barely got off the ground.

The Acuras were nowhere on the wet track and had fallen off the lead lap by the time the field started to move onto slicks just before the two-hour mark.

The car Cameron shared with Juan Pablo



Once again, the Acuras struggled in the wet conditions



#5 Caddy's promise faded, leaving it under threat from DPi rivals

Montoya and Simon Pagenaud was afflicted by an electrical issue, which left it nine laps down in ninth place at the finish. The sister car driven by Helio Castroneves, Ricky Taylor and Alex Rossi was also delayed when Taylor spun in the wet and somehow unbuckled his belts in the process. The car finally came back onto the same lap as the Caddys with two hours to go, but wasn't able to get on terms with them. Rossi took the chequered flag 11s down in fourth position.

Mazda again underachieved as it missed out on a first outright IMSA prototype victory. The team run by Joest Racing and Multimatic Motorsport was confident it was on top of the engine problems that had blighted its Daytona campaign – blaming them on assembly issues – but this time an electrical glitch and an off as the rain briefly returned did for its chances.

Timo Bernhard pulled off the track on the back straight early in the second hour with smoke issuing from the cockpit as a result of an electrical short circuit. The car he co-drove with Tristan Nunez and Oliver Jarvis did eventually return to the track in hour seven on the way to 37th place.

The second Mazda was still in the mix in the sixth hour when Jonathan Bomarito put a couple of wheels off the damp track and hit the barriers. Three laps were lost while the car was recovered and then the bodywork repaired, and it only managed to recover one of them. But its pace in the hands of Harry Tincknell and then Olivier Pla at the end showed what might have been. Tincknell was able to pass the winning Caddy at the penultimate restart and set fastest lap to boot.

"We got fastest lap and were up there in the averages: we had the pace all the way through to win," said Tincknell. "We were unfortunate because Jonathan made a tiny error that had big consequences."

BORTOLOTTI HOLDS ON IN LAMBO GTD 1-2

THE GRASSER LAMBORGHINI SQUAD IS making something of a habit of claiming dramatic GT Daytona class victories. In the January series opener at the track that gives the category its name, the Austrian team came from behind to take a last-gasp win when the two rivals ahead of it went off in the awful conditions, while this time at Sebring it had to fight a sustained rear-guard action to claim the narrowest of victories.

Factory driver Mirko Bortolotti spent the final laps with another Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo all but nailed to the gearbox of his own. The only breathing space enjoyed by the Italian, who was teamed with Rolf Ineichen and Rik Breukers, over the final hour of the race came during the late safety car. But that only added to the pressure as he strived to keep the Magnus Racing Lambo with Andy Lally at the wheel behind him.

Lally, who shared the Magnus car with Spencer Pumpelly and John Potter, even made it past at one point, breaking the timing beam a couple of hundredths ahead.

"We were strong through Turn 17 and I got alongside on start/finish and thought I was clear, but he just drove straight back past me," he said. "If he hadn't been in another Lambo, I think I might have been a bit more forceful in my efforts to get by."

The winning Lamborghini had run at the sharp end of the class when Bortolotti was one of the first GTD drivers to switch to slicks, and then started to move back into contention at the end of the seventh hour when the Italian climbed back aboard. He would drive all but 58 minutes of the final five hours of the race, taking the lead from the #57 Shank Acura in hour 10.



L-r: Breukers, Bortolotti, Ineichen

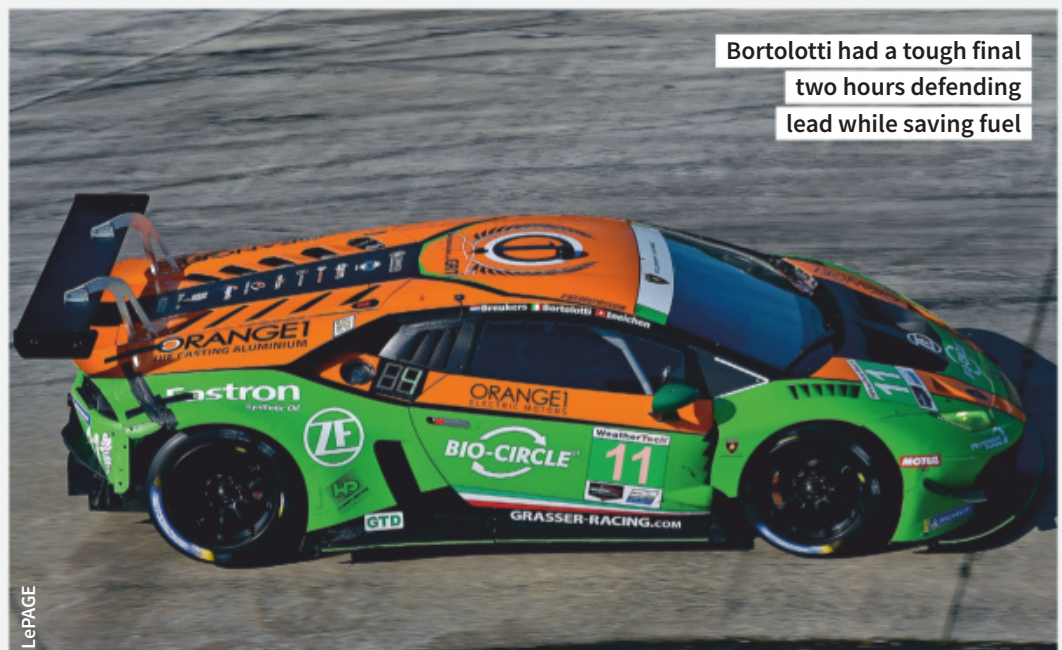
"It was really tough trying to keep Andy behind me while saving fuel," he said. "Those last two hours in the car were probably the toughest of my career."

Bortolotti crossed the line with just under three seconds in hand in the first IMSA one-two Lambo finish. He admitted afterwards that he was tight on fuel and might have needed a late splash but for the final safety car.

The Scuderia Corsa Ferrari 488 GT3 shared by Toni Vilander, Cooper MacNeil and Jeff Westphal came out on top in the battle for third with the Land Motorsport Audi over the final seven minutes. Vilander briefly fell behind Christopher Mies, but battled back ahead of the R8 LMS co-driven by Daniel Morad and Ricky Feller.

The pole-winning Shank Acura NSX GT3 Evo took seventh in the hands of Mario Farnbacher, Trent Hindman and Justin Marks. Two spins for Marks and a penalty when the car ran over an air line ultimately blunted its challenge.

The surprise package at Sebring was the Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3-R driven by Scott Hargrove, Zacharie Robichon and Lars Kern. They led for much of the way, before an ABS problem struck with a couple of hours to go. The two laps lost left them an unrepresentative 10th at the finish.



Bortolotti had a tough final two hours defending lead while saving fuel



Tandy and Pilet
celebrate surprise
repeat win

Porsche pips Ford to unlikely GTLM win

Porsche may have taken the class pole, but the chances of repeating its 2018 Sebring GT Le Mans victory didn't look good in the run-up to the race. The mid-engined 911 RSR doesn't like the latest-spec Michelin control wet tyre, and there was a sense of foreboding within the CORE Autosport squad. Yet Patrick Pilet, Nick Tandy and Frederic Makowiecki came back to reprise last year's victory.

Their pessimism about the rain was borne out in the early stages. Pilet quickly dropped to the rear of the GTLM field and then into the GT Daytona hordes to join team-mate Laurens Vanthoor, who started there after a procedural error in qualifying meant he had to start from last in class.

The winning car didn't make it back onto the lead lap until the third safety car in the middle of the race and then finally got on terms with the leaders with two hours to go. Tandy jumped from fifth to second in quick order after the penultimate restart and was

then able to take the lead from Ryan Briscoe's Chip Ganassi Racing Ford GT after the final round of stops.

Tandy stopped one lap before the Ford, gained a couple of seconds in the pits and then made a successful move at Turn 7 as Briscoe brought his tyres up to temperature. The Porsche now had the edge, and Tandy was able to eke out some breathing space in what became the lead when Antonio Garcia pitted his Chevrolet Corvette C7.R.

Briscoe was coming back at the Porsche when the safety car came out for the final time, but a clash with Andy Lally's Magnus Lamborghini straight after ended one Ford's chances and allowed the other into second place, though Joey Hand was never close enough to have a pop at the leader.

"The car really isn't very good on these tyres in the wet, and it doesn't seem to matter what we do," said Tandy. "But we had good pace in the dry. I wouldn't say that we got quicker late in the race,

but it seemed that some of the other cars lost a bit of pace."

Tandy was adamant that the Porsche would have been able to complete the race without making a splash-and-dash had it stayed green to the end, though he was happy to concede that it would have been tight. Some of his rivals were less convinced.

"They put in four seconds' less fuel than us, so there was no way they were going to make the finish," said Richard Westbrook, who shared the #67 Ford with Briscoe and Scott Dixon. "It is what it is: they rolled the dice and won."

It was a frustrating event for Ford given that Westbrook and his team-mates pretty much dominated. The Briton moved into the lead when the race went green during a marathon opening stint lasting three hours and 20 minutes. Only during the pitstop sequences did the car lose the lead until the closing stages.

The second Ganassi entry, in which Hand was joined by Dirk Muller and Sebastien Bourdais, shadowed the sister car for much of the way, before losing out to Tandy with just under a couple of hours to go. Hand ended up just under two seconds down on the Porsche and just over two seconds up on the third-placed Corvette that Garcia shared with Jan Magnussen and Mike Rockenfeller.

The Corvette Racing crew opted for a different strategy from Porsche and Ford, making two short fuel stops in the final 80 minutes to gain track position. Garcia dropped to fifth after his final stop, but was able to fight back past the best of the Rahal BMW M8 GTEs driven by Jesse Krohn, John Edwards and Philipp Eng, and then inherited the final podium spot when Briscoe spun.



Pitstop sequence cost
Ford a shot at victory

LEVITT

RESULTS SEBRING 12 HOURS (USA), 16 MARCH, IMSA SPORTSCAR ROUND 2/12 (348 LAPS – 1301.52 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME	GRID
1	Pipo Derani /Felipe Nasr /Eric Curran	Action Express Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPi	12h00m15.925s	5
2	Jordan Taylor /Renger van der Zande /Matthieu Vaxiviere	Wayne Taylor Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPi	+1.030s	6
3	Filipe Albuquerque /Joao Barbosa /Brendon Hartley	Action Express Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPi	+4.023s	4
4	Helio Castroneves /Ricky Taylor /Alexander Rossi	Acura Team Penske	Acura ARX-05	DPi	+11.331s	3
5	Jon Bennett /Colin Braun /Romain Dumas	CORE Autosport	Nissan Onroak DPi	DPi	-1 lap	11
6	Jonathan Bomarito /Harry Tincknell /Olivier Pla	Mazda Team Joest	Mazda RT24-P	DPi	-2 laps	7
7	Tristan Vautier /Misha Goikhberg /Juan Piedrahita	JDC-Miller Motorsports	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPi	-2 laps	9
8	Simon Trummer /Stephen Simpson /Chris Miller	JDC-Miller Motorsports	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPi	-3 laps	8
9	Dane Cameron /Juan Pablo Montoya /Simon Pagenaud	Acura Team Penske	Acura ARX-05	DPi	-9 laps	1
10	Patrick Pilet /Nick Tandy /Frederic Makowiecki	Porsche GT Team (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-18 laps	14
11	Dirk Muller /Joey Hand /Sebastien Bourdais	Ford Chip Ganassi Racing	Ford GT	GTLM	-18 laps	20
12	Antonio Garcia /Jan Magnussen /Mike Rockenfeller	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-18 laps	15
13	Jesse Krohn /John Edwards /Philipp Eng	BMW Team RLL	BMW M8 GTE	GTLM	-18 laps	18
14	Laurens Vanthoor /Earl Bamber /Mathieu Jaminet	Porsche GT Team (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-18 laps	21
15	Richard Westbrook /Ryan Briscoe /Scott Dixon	Ford Chip Ganassi Racing	Ford GT	GTLM	-18 laps	16
16	Tom Blomqvist /Connor De Phillippi /Colton Herta	BMW Team RLL	BMW M8 GTE	GTLM	-19 laps	19
17	Kyle Masson /Cameron Cassels /Andrew Evans	Performance Tech Motorsports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-26 laps	13
18	Tommy Milner /Oliver Gavin /Marcel Fassler	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-27 laps	17
19	Rolf Ineichen /Mirko Bortolotti /Rik Breukers	GRT Grasser Racing Team	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-28 laps	25
20	John Potter /Andy Lally /Spencer Pumpelly	Magnus Racing	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-28 laps	38
21	Cooper MacNeil /Toni Vilander /Jeff Westphal	Scuderia Corsa	Ferrari 488 GT3	GTD	-28 laps	28
22	Daniel Morad /Christopher Mies /Ricardo Feller	Land-Motorsport	Audi R8 LMS GT3	GTD	-28 laps	31
23	Ben Keating /Jeroen Bleekemolen /Felipe Fraga	Riley Motorsports	Mercedes-AMG GT3	GTD	-28 laps	30
24	Nick Boulle /Patrick Lindsey /Patrick Long	Park Place Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-28 laps	35
25	Trent Hindman /Mario Farnbacher /Justin Marks	Michael Shank Racing	Acura NSX GT3	GTD	-28 laps	22
26	Christina Nielsen /Katherine Legge /Ana Beatriz	Heinricher Racing with Meyer Shank Racing	Acura NSX GT3	GTD	-28 laps	27
27	Frankie Montecalvo /Townsend Bell /Aaron Telitz	AIM Vasser Sullivan	Lexus RCF GT3	GTD	-30 laps	29
28	Zacharie Robichon /Scott Hargrove /Lars Kern	Pfaff Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-30 laps	24
29	Juan Perez /Maximilian Buhk /Fabian Schiller	P1 Motorsports	Mercedes-AMG GT3	GTD	-33 laps	34
30	Brandon Gdovic /Don Yount /Lawson Aschenbach	Precision Performance Motorsports	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-37 laps	26
31	Robby Foley /Bill Auberlen /Dillon Machavern	Turner Motorsport	BMW M6 GT3	GTD	309 laps-suspension	23
32	Matt McMurry /Gabriel Aubry /Anders Fjordbach	PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-39 laps	12
33	Will Owen /Rene Binder /Agustin Canapino	Juncos Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPi	-43 laps	10
34	Ezequiel Perez Companc /Parker Chase /Ryan Dalziel	Starworks Motorsport	Audi R8 LMS GT3	GTD	-56 laps	32
35	Richard Heistand /Jack Hawksworth /Philipp Frommenwiler	AIM Vasser Sullivan	Lexus RCF GT3	GTD	262 laps-acc damage	37
36	Ryan Hardwick /Bryan Sellers /Corey Lewis	Paul Miller Racing	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-99 laps	33
37	Tristan Nunez /Oliver Jarvis /Timo Bernhard	Mazda Team Joest	Mazda RT24-P	DPi	-115 laps	2
38	Will Hardeman /Andrew Davis /Alex Riberas	MooreSpeed	Audi R8 LMS GT3	GTD	174 laps-drivetrain	36

In each car, first-named driver started race and set qualifying time. **Winners' average speed** 108.420mph. **Fastest lap** Tincknell 1m47.472s (125.278mph). **LMP2** Aubry 1m51.303s (120.966mph). **GTLM** Bourdais 1m57.478s (114.608mph). **GTD** Pumpelly 2m01.171s (111.115mph).

CHAMPIONSHIP

POINTS

DPi drivers

1 J Taylor/van der Zande 67; 2 Curran/Nasr/Derani 67; 3 Rossi/Castroneves/R Taylor 58; 4 Albuquerque/Barbosa 54; 5 Braun/Bennett/Dumas 54; 6 Goikhberg/Vautier 50.

LMP2 drivers

1 Cassels/K Masson 67; 2 Aubry/McMurry 60; 3 Pastor Maldonado/Roberto Gonzalez/Ryan Cullen/Sebastian Saavedra 35; 4 Evans 35; 5 Kris Wright/Robert Masson 32; 6 Fjordbach 32.

GTLM drivers

1 Eng 63; 2 Makowiecki/Tandy/Pilet 61; 3 Herta/De Phillippi 59; 4 Muller/Hand/Bourdais 56; 5 Bamber/Vanthoor/Jaminet 56; 6 Garcia/Magnussen/Rockenfeller 55.

GTD drivers

1 Bortolotti/Breukers/Ineichen 70; 2 Telitz/Montecalvo/Bell 54; 3 Lally/Potter/Pumpelly 53; 4 Marks/Farnbacher/Hindman 52; 5 Keating/Fraga/Bleekemolen 51; 6 Boulle/Lindsey/Long 49.



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McLaughlin unbeaten – despite not winning all

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
MELBOURNE (AUS)
15-17 MARCH
ROUND 2/15

Scott McLaughlin has won every race he's started in 2019, though he only triumphed in three of the four at Albert Park.

McLaughlin and his Ford Mustang set the tone in qualifying, grabbing three poles from four and obliterating the unofficial Supercars lap record along the way. Friday evening's opening feature was a DJR Team Penske demolition job, in which McLaughlin comfortably led his team-mate Fabian Coulthard home.

Saturday's race was another walkover for McLaughlin, who triumphed in the 1000th Supercars race by 2.5s over Tickford Ford pair Chaz Mostert and Cam Waters.

Given the Mustang's dominance on the fast, flowing Albert Park circuit, it was always going to take something unusual to break McLaughlin's winning streak. A

bizarre warm-up lap shunt with Waters as the pair were set to start from the front row for the Saturday evening race did the trick. The pair made contact as Waters tried to pass a weaving McLaughlin, who he thought had seen him approaching. Neither could make the start of the race.

The mishap helped Mostert take the first non-McLaughlin win of the season, leading home the Holdens of Jamie Whincup and Tim Slade.

McLaughlin was back to his old ways on Sunday, making it five wins from six with a simple victory over Mostert and Whincup.

It was a shocker of a weekend for Shane van Gisbergen, who retired with a rare engine failure for his Holden on Friday evening, lost a rear wheel and finished 21st on Saturday evening, and crashed into Coulthard and finished 22nd on Sunday.

McLaughlin leads the series by 31 points over Whincup, while van Gisbergen has slipped from second to 11th.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

WEEKEND WINNERS

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
MELBOURNE

- Race 1 Scott McLaughlin
DJR Team Penske
Ford Mustang
- Race 2 Scott McLaughlin
DJR Team Penske
Ford Mustang
- Race 3 Chaz Mostert
Tickford Racing
Ford Mustang
- Race 4 Scott McLaughlin
DJR Team Penske
Ford Mustang

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
FONTANA

- Cole Custer
Stewart-Haas Racing Ford Mustang

NASCAR CUP
FONTANA

- Kyle Busch
Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry (below)



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/WHITTON

Busch lands historic double century of NASCAR wins

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

Thanks to success in the Cup, Xfinity and Trucks series, Kyle Busch claimed a historic 200th NASCAR win at Fontana with a commanding performance. The Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota driver led 134 out of 200 laps and won all three stages on his way to a 53rd Cup victory.

It wasn't an easy triumph, however. Before the final stage Busch was hit with a pitlane speeding penalty. But he rallied back, making use of a late-race caution to take what was effectively a free pitstop later than his rivals. With 26 laps to go

Busch returned to the fore and never looked back, beating Team Penske Ford pair Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski to win. The Penske drivers made their way to the front of the field while Busch was recovering from his penalty, and had been the class of the field in the final stage.

Behind the top three was Kevin Harvick, while Ryan Blaney completed the top five in the third Penske entry. He was the only leading driver not to pit during the final caution, a decision that cost him a chance of claiming the spoils.


Kurt Busch was the top Chevrolet man in sixth, while Denny Hamlin, Martin Truex Jr, Aric Almirola and polesitter Austin Dillon completed the top 10.

DOMINIK WILDE



TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
POS	TEAM	PTS
1	Envision Virgin	97
2	Audi Sport Abt	86
3	Mahindra Racing	83
4	Venturi	66
5	BMW	65
6	DS Techeetah	57
7	Jaguar	35
8	Nissan e.dams	21
9	HWA	7
10	NIO	6
11	Dragon Racing	2

SBLOXHAM



WINNERS AND LOSERS

OF FORMULA E'S NEW GENERATION

The Gen2 car has mixed things up this season, so who's looking good and who has work to do?

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

More than one third of the 2018/19 ABB FIA Formula E season is already in the history books. The electric championship's fifth season – its first with the faster, more powerful and more efficient Gen2 car – may have started in soggy conditions in Saudi Arabia, but the races (including that opener in Ad Diriyah) have been mesmerising.

In five races so far this season, there have been five different polesitters and race winners from five different teams. And, thanks to the effectiveness of FE's new group qualifying rules – where the championship leaders always run first on the road – no team or driver has been able to get away from the pack.

So, who have been the winners and losers so far in FE's new era? >>



WINNERS

BMW ANDRETTI DRAWS FIRST BLOOD

It's easy to forget that in the 2017-18 championship, the Andretti squad finished last with just 24 points. This time around, with BMW fully in position as a works manufacturer, it followed a testing clean sweep with pole and race victory in round one and is firmly in the championship hunt. Antonio Felix da Costa won in Saudi Arabia – helped somewhat by penalties going to the leading DS Techeetah drivers – and Alexander Sims has been regularly in podium contention.

Were it not for the team's Marrakech implosion, where its drivers collided while leading and lost a likely one-two (or at the very least an almost certain win for one of them), things would be looking even better. BMW is usually a factor in qualifying and has the speed to lead from the front.



MAHINDRA MAKES HAY AND SHINES

Heading to the most recent round of the 2018-19 championship in Hong Kong, Mahindra Racing led both the drivers' and teams' championships. This shouldn't come as a surprise given the team's FE success in recent years – particularly with former driver Felix Rosenqvist – but it's still notable given that Mahindra probably isn't the grid's best overall package.

That's why team principal Dilbagh Gill didn't want to over-celebrate Jerome d'Ambrosio's win in Marrakech, as it required Jean-Eric Vergne to spin at Turn 1 and the BMWs to crash. But d'Ambrosio took advantage of the chaos to back up his race-one podium with a win, and then rose dramatically from the back to finish fourth in Mexico City and retake the standings lead.

In the other car, Pascal Wehrlein has established himself as a new FE star, with breathtaking performances in Santiago and Mexico City, where he was so unlucky not to win.



VIRGIN CONTINUES TO THRIVE AS A CUSTOMER

Last year, Sam Bird and the Envision Virgin Racing squad kept an undeveloped DS package in the title hunt until the final round of the season. After splitting with the French manufacturer and entering into a partnership – and it is a close one – with Audi, it showed that defeat to Vergne and Techeetah could not dim its momentum.

With Audi power – still right up there with the best, albeit no longer in a league of its own – Virgin has carried on doing what it does best: succeeding in FE. New recruit Robin Frijns led home Bird in a two-three in Marrakech, before Bird went one better to win in Santiago.

There have been low notes – qualifying penalties in Riyadh and then mechanical dramas and another penalty for Frijns in Mexico stand out – but Sylvain Filippi's squad carries on being an efficiently excellent race team.

NISSAN PUSHES PAST RENAULT'S EXIT

Make no mistake, Nissan e.dams has not yet reached the impressive heights that its Renault iteration did in FE's early years. It is still without a podium finish – let alone a race win – and has just 21 points. But Sebastien Buemi starred in qualifying throughout the opening portion of the season and the team was in victory contention in both Santiago and Mexico City.

Buemi's Santiago drive stood out. From a fortuitous pole, he led much of the race ahead of eventual winner Sam Bird before crashing out. A massive case of what might have been.

The same could certainly be said of Mexico, with Oliver Rowland this time in on the act. The rookie made one of the passes of the season so far with his



dive at Turn 1 and was in the fight for the lead throughout the race until an agonising (listen to Buemi's team radio rant from the event) software miscalculation meant both Nissans ran out of energy.

The team's win drought continued in Hong Kong – Rowland led the early stages before an unfortunate full-course-yellow-button activation dropped him down the order – but it's improving at every race.

VENTURI RETURNS TO THE PODIUM

After three rounds of the season, it would have seemed bizarre to include Venturi in this half of the list. Braking problems and penalties stymied Edoardo Mortara and Felipe Massa in Riyadh, while powertrain problems and a lack of pace blighted the team's visit to Marrakech.

Both drivers were in the wars in Santiago, but Mortara did finish fourth, which was a taste of what was to come in Mexico City, where he climbed the order thanks to an efficiency advantage to take the team's first podium in over a year. Massa broke his FE points duck in Mexico and starred in qualifying.

This is a team moving in the right direction, which was emphasised by Mortara's win in Hong Kong. The victory ultimately needed Sam Bird and Andre Lotterer to collide and the former to get penalised, but Mortara had to be running third to benefit and he was doing that on merit.



LOSERS



TECHEETAH RUES MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Putting the reigning teams' champion in this half of the list seems harsh, especially given the speed with which it started the season. Regen software infringement penalties for Jean-Eric Vergne and team-mate Andre Lotterer cost the team a one-two in the first round, and Vergne's uncharacteristically clumsy spin at Turn 1 in Marrakech cost him a race he had the speed to win.

It should be said that events outside its control have played a part in the team's underachievement. Both drivers were caught up in incidents in Santiago, and Vergne had Nelson Piquet Jr's Jaguar fly over his car in Mexico. And Lotterer would likely have won in Hong Kong without the late drama there.

Techeetah's speed is clear, and it seems to have a very efficient package from DS, but so fine are the margins in FE that those early lost results could come back to haunt it.



AUDI MISSES ITS OLD ADVANTAGE

This time a year ago, Audi was rueing a disastrous start to the season despite having a powertrain that was the class of the field. This time, things have started a little brighter, but the team's advantage over the pack is gone.

Lucas di Grassi acknowledged this even as he left testing at Valencia, but it was still something of a surprise not to see Audi dominate from the off in Saudi Arabia. The team can rightly point to things not going in its favour in the early races – a power overspike penalty meaning di Grassi started 18th in Riyadh, and the BMW collision meaning his attack mode advantage was wasted in Marrakech – but simply the fact that Audi was so good last season and has looked so ordinary at times in this one is why it's in this category.

Di Grassi's last-gasp win in Mexico is a reminder of just how good this team can be. And, with the field so close in pace and points, you'd be very foolish to write Audi off just yet.



NIO'S GONE NOWHERE SO FAR

Going on the limited long-run data from testing, it seemed that NIO might have been in with a shout of success this season. But those times completely flattered to deceive – as this writer is constantly reminded after gathering that data – as it's been nowhere so far.

First it got its understanding of the qualifying rules completely wrong in Riyadh, with Tom Dillmann doing lap after lap and ending up last on the grid. Since then, apart from Dillmann's pitlane shunt into both Virgin cars in Marrakech, it has barely registered.

The team has shown flashes of pace on occasion, but this has not translated into major points. What little it has scored comes from the ever-cool Oliver Turvey, but this has so far not been what he would have hoped for coming into season five.

JAGUAR STILL SEEKING PROGRESS

After two whole seasons and over a third of this one gone, it seems remarkable that Jaguar is still searching for its first FE race win. It looked to be making good progress last season, with Mitch Evans taking its first podium and pole. But it simply hasn't kicked on in 2018-19.

Evans quietly rocketed to fourth place in Riyadh, but that's been the high point of the season so far. He continues to lead the line impressively for Jaguar, with consistent points finishes helping him keep the leading pack in sight in the standings. Inaugural FE champion Nelson Piquet Jr, with one point in five races, has continued his slump, which he needs to address quickly.



DRAGON FAILS TO SET THE WORLD ON FIRE

It may end up being overlooked that Jose Maria Lopez started the season from second on the grid and was in contention for a major result in Riyadh. He came unstuck there by clipping a wall entering the attack mode zone and had to retire, and hasn't been at the front since.

In the other car, Maximilian Gunther started the first three races of the season before he was replaced by Felipe Nasr. The team said this was due to Gunther's "three-race programme" ending, but it seemed a shame to stop just as he was making progress. Nasr has had a tough start to life in FE with a 19th and DNF to show for his trips to Mexico and Hong Kong.



LITTLE EARLY JOY FOR HWA

Ulrich Fritz and his team always maintained that HWA's sole season as an FE entrant – before Mercedes takes its slot in 2019-20 – would be about learning. But some of the lessons it's had to endure have been painful. Stoffel Vandoorne and Gary Paffett collided at the first corner in Marrakech, and Vandoorne crashed out while running high in the points in Santiago. Technical problems and penalties played a part in the team failing to score in the first four races.

Surely, given HWA's motorsport prowess, things will come good, and Vandoorne's Hong Kong pole and Paffett's eighth place there mean it will finally start to build some momentum.



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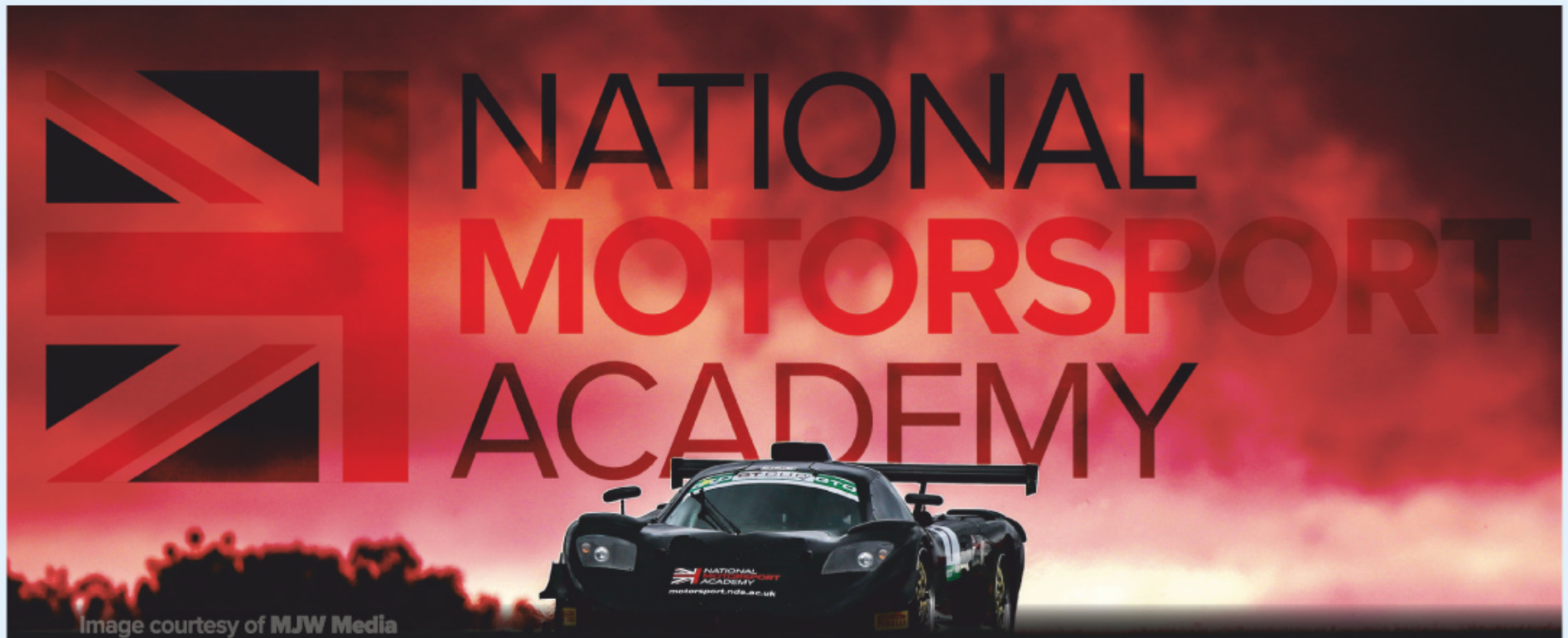


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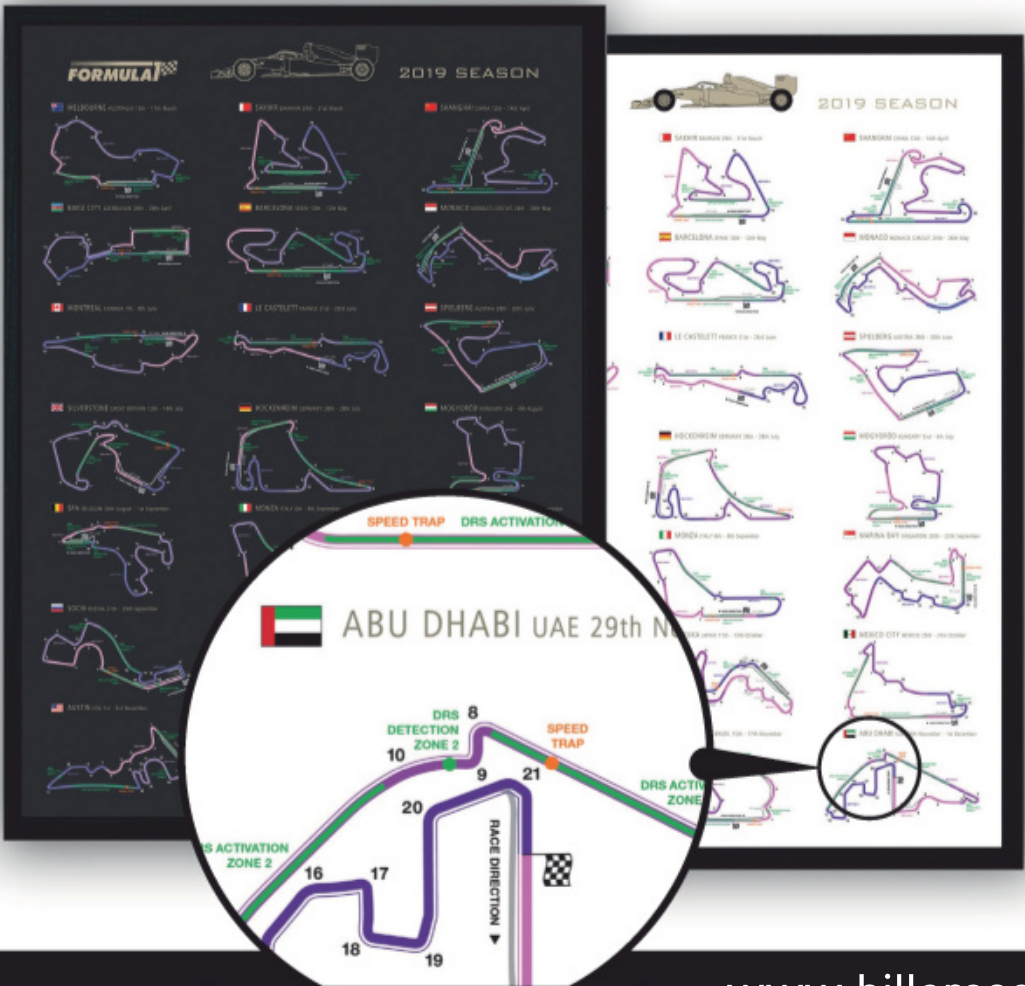
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PORSCHE CARRERA CUP

British Touring Car squad Motorbase Performance will return to the top class of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this season with an expanded two-car line-up after signing race winner Lewis Plato to partner Dan Vaughan.

Motorbase made its Carrera Cup comeback last year, running one car for much of the season, with rookie Vaughan finishing runner-up in the Pro-Am standings and earning the 'driver of the year' accolade.

The team last raced in the top class of the Carrera Cup back in 2011 when Tim Harvey, Nick Tandy and Michael Caine were among its driver line-up.

Vaughan will step up to the Pro class alongside former Radical team-mate Plato, who made his series debut in 2016 and finished fourth in the standings last year with JTR.

"Dan did a stonking job last year on his own in a one-car team," said Motorbase boss David Bartrum. "In order to take Dan forward

he needs a strong team-mate. Lewis is ideal because they've raced together before as team-mates in Radicals.

"On his own Dan managed to get driver of the year, which is phenomenal. I think we want to go for the title now. It's a great line-up and good to have two like-minded drivers."

Plato, who had considered a return to endurance racing this year, added: "I'm looking forward to hopefully having a successful year and showing everyone just how good the team really is.

"This year the aim is to win. Of course, there are always variables that get in the way of that, but I'm really looking forward to getting started and targeting the top step."

- Also racing in the Carrera Cup this year will be reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion Charlie Ladell. The 22-year-old will compete with Rob Boston Racing alongside fellow Ginetta graduate Tom Roche.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Plato finished fourth in standings last year



Vaughan claimed runner-up spot in Pro-Am last year

Huff joins forces with Teamwork for TCR UK push

TCR UK

Former World Touring Car champion Rob Huff has partnered with Hong Kong-based tin-top squad Teamwork Motorsport to run two Volkswagen Golfs in TCR UK this year.

Huff, who will be driving a Golf in the World Touring Car Cup this season, said: “I’ve been working with the Teamwork guys for years, and now with Teamwork Huff Motorsport it’s great to be trying my hand at something else.”

“I’ve spent a lot of time in China with the guys, guiding their progress, and now it’ll be something different to work with them in the UK, and not only work with them on how to get the best out of the car, but do that at some of the circuits where I grew up racing.

“It’ll be a great experience, and also to have my name on a race team, working with some top drivers as we try our best to do well in the TCR UK championship,



will be an exciting and fun new challenge.”

Teamwork Huff Motorsport will work closely with British Touring Car outfit Ciceley Motorsport. Its first signing for TCR UK is TCR China champion Sunny Wong.

Huff is one of a number of UK drivers to have raced for Teamwork in the Chinese Touring Car Championship, including Ciceley’s Adam Morgan and triple BTCC champion Colin Turkington.

Lundqvist stays with Double R

EUROFORMULA OPEN

Reigning BRDC British Formula 3 champion Linus Lundqvist will remain with the Double R squad as he steps up to Euroformula Open this season.

The 19-year-old Swede dominated last year’s British F3 campaign with the Surrey-based outfit, winning seven times and clinching the title with two races to spare. He also raced for Double R in British F4 in 2017.

Lundqvist (below) took a win in the Euroformula Open Winter Series at Paul Ricard earlier this month with Campos Racing, and also tested a GP3 car with the team at the end of last year, but has picked Double R for his Euroformula campaign.

“Both me and the team expect to be in the mix for wins and the championship,” said Lundqvist, who also competed in January’s Daytona 24 Hours after winning the Sunoco Whelen Challenge last year. “My target is to walk away with another championship by the end of the season.

“I know it’s going to be tough – it’s a new series for me and the team. I’ve not been to the tracks before so it’s going to be a challenge. The guys doing it are going to be tough competition.”

Lundqvist’s main title rival in British F3, Nicolai Kjaergaard, will also move into Euroformula this year with his Carlin squad, and it is believed that Billy Monger will also compete.

Double R has already signed former British F4 driver and Red Bull rookie Jack Doohan.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Third time lucky for Harrison?

MINI CHALLENGE

Mini Challenge runner-up Nathan Harrison will switch to the Mini UK VIP team for a third attempt at the title.

Harrison, 22, took two wins last year, finishing second in the standings – and was also runner-up in 2016, a year after winning the Cooper class crown.

“I was planning to take a year out and concentrate on the family business,” said Harrison. “But then the chance to

join the Mini UK team came up. The squad has a great track record, so now it’s game on for this year.

“I’d like to think that nobody on the grid knows the JCW as well as I do. Coming in with two years of experience under my belt obviously puts me in a great position, but, as I know from Mini Challenge racing, nothing is ever easy.

“There are some quick new drivers coming in and you rarely ever get a free run at anything in this championship.”



Heathcote switches from rallycross to racing

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Nathan Heathcote, the 2017 British Rallycross champion, has switched to circuit racing for 2019 to compete in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup with Century Motorsport.

Heathcote says that his move is related to rallycross's transition to electric cars, which he claims makes it harder to get a competitive drive. He therefore considers getting racing experience as a "cushion" for his career.

"With rallycross they're trying to make it electric – it hasn't quite got it yet at the minute," said Heathcote. "So the potential at the top is quite slim trying to get a drive.

"I'm at the stage of my career now where it's either push on and try and make something of it or just end up stopping, so it's a fine line. So I'm trying to make a cushion in circuit racing and see how I get on this year; hopefully it goes well."

Heathcote competed in the two BRSCC Saloon Car Trophy races at Silverstone last weekend in a Ford Puma to get licence signatures in advance of his Ginetta move. He finished 11th in both races. "It's really good to come up here and get a bit of track time on the circuit because I'm a bit fresh," he said. "I haven't done any circuit racing at all so it's good to get some laps under my

belt, so when I do come here for Ginettas I'll have half an idea what the craic is with it."

Heathcote is hoping his rallycross skills will stand him in good stead for car racing. "It was wet in the morning [at Silverstone] and the car was twitching a lot," he said. "I'm used to that in rallycross, so there's a lot of different skills I can bring."

Another driver on the GT4 Supercup grid this year will be Harry King. The former Ginetta Junior racer finished third in the standings in his first season in a G55 last year and will continue with the Elite Motorsport squad for 2019.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

Open class for new series

SPORTS PROTOTYPE CUP

Organisers of the new Sports Prototype Cup have created an Open class to run at selected rounds of the series.

The new class is open to a wide range of machinery, including Sports 2000, Clubmans, Caterhams and Radical SR1s. But the cars must not exceed the pace of a Radical SR3 and balance of performance measures will be applied to ensure this.

The main Sports Prototype Cup features classes for the new Revolution sportscar and the Radical SR3.

"We expect over 15 cars to compete in the first year of the main Cup, but on the longer circuits we have the ability to accommodate additional cars," said championship promoter James Bailey.

"The Sports Prototype Open provides racers with the chance to experience an endurance race format on four great circuits in addition to competing in their main championship."

Revolution principal Phil Abbott says testing and sales of the Ford V6-powered car are progressing well, but doesn't expect a huge number to be on the grid for the opening round



at Silverstone on 27 April.

"We've built a second car, run towards 10,000 miles, the monocoque has passed [FIA] crash tests," said Abbott. "KS Composites [maker of the first Radical Clubsport panels] has redone the body, subtly restyling and rationalising it to 23 mouldings.

"The tub is now all carbon, saving around 30kg, and the first batch of eight is arriving this month, with another two in Germany. Apart from the UK market, cars have been sold to Italy, Switzerland and the USA."

STEPHEN LICKORISH & MARCUS PYE

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RYAN
MOTORSPORT INSURANCE

Hill given chance to drive Aston Martin AMR1 Group C car

HISTORICS

British Touring Car Championship racer Jake Hill got the chance to drive a 1989 Aston Martin AMR1 Group C car during a recent test session at Guadix in Spain.

The 25-year-old was in Spain to undertake some pre-season mileage with regular historic racing partner Rob Fenn, with whom he will share a Lotus Elan 26R and a Ford Mustang in Masters series events.

Paul Whight, who owns the Aston Martin among a collection of other old cars, was also present with the AMR1 and offered Hill the chance to sample the six-litre 900kg car.

“What an amazing experience,” said Hill. “I will admit, I was screaming as I was going around. I can’t thank Paul enough.”

Hill completed eight laps in the machine, and was impressed with its brute force. “I was being careful with it, obviously, and the gearbox was the hardest thing to get used to,” he added. “It’s a dog-leg H-pattern box, and it was quite floaty between cogs, so I was just making sure I didn’t do anything to damage it. Once I got the hang of it I could push on and the car was way beyond my expectations. Such a beast. Group C always has been one of my favourite eras of racing, and it didn’t disappoint.

Hill will race in the BTCC this season in a Trade Price Cars Racing Audi S3 alongside ex-Group C racer Mark Blundell. “I immediately sent a text message to Mark and told him that he must have been mental to have raced one in period,” said Hill. “It’s such a car.”

MATT JAMES



IN THE HEADLINES

PRAGA TO RACE IN THE UK

VR Motorsport will run a Praga RT1 in Britcar this season after modifications were made to the car to allow it to compete in the UK. The car was created in 2012 by the Czech manufacturer, but was unable to race in the UK before now owing to its full carbon monocoque chassis. UK rules state that steel rollover protection systems are used.

GREEN CHANGES HIS MIND

Fin Green will race in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup this year with Total Control Racing, having previously been confirmed as a Carlin driver in British Formula 4. Green, 16, was ninth in Ginetta Junior last year and has decided to continue down the sportscar route. “The Ginetta G55 GT4 feels a great car to drive and the competition has always been at a very high level,” he said.

LIDSEY AND THOMPSON BACK

Renault UK Clio Cup driver Brett Lidsey will remain with the MRM team for the final season of the category. Lidsey contested his first full season of the series last year, taking a best result of fifth and finishing 13th in the standings. Also remaining in the series for another term is Aaron Thompson, who will switch to the Westbourne squad after taking 18th in 2018 with Matrix.

CLIO CUP CASH INCENTIVES

The Renault UK Clio Cup (below) is offering extra incentives for its final season. As well as previously announced cash prizes for the champion and Graduate Cup winner, the series will also award a £500 ‘race bonus’ to each competitor for every round they contest. This will be supplied in the form of credits that can be used to purchase components from the category’s official parts supplier R.Sport.



REVAMP FOR GOVERNING BODY

MOTORSPORT UK

Motorsport UK has made significant changes to the way British motorsport is governed after it has adopted new articles of association.

The changes mean the Motorsport UK board has become the ultimate decision-making body in the governance of UK motorsport.

In the past this role has been carried out by the Motorsport Council. This will now become an advisory body for the board.

A new rules committee, drawn from across the disciplines, will also be established to review regulation changes proposed by the various specialist committees.

“This is a very significant moment in the history of motorsport in the UK, as we commit to becoming a modern governing body that is truly representative of our members and motorsport in general,” said Motorsport UK chairman David Richards.

“The changes approved have come about after lengthy debate and meet the objective of ensuring that we will now provide the highest standards of sports governance.”

Tom Purves has been appointed as the new chairman of the Motorsport Council, taking over from Tony Scott Andrews, whose nine-year tenure is at an end. Purves was previously a director of Motorsport UK and is also a former chairman of the Royal Automobile Club.



Equipe GTS races at MG Live have attracted large entries

WALKER

Equipe GTS fills MG Live void with Spa date

EQUIPE GTS

The popular Equipe GTS series will visit Spa this year following the cancellation of the Silverstone MG Live meeting.

The Silverstone event has been the centrepiece of the Equipe GTS calendar for the past few years, and in 2018 series organiser Equipe Classic Racing had more than 90 entries at the event.

But with MG Live on 15-16 June cancelled due to resurfacing work at Silverstone, a new date as part of the Spa Summer Classic on 29-30 June has been added to the calendar.

“We hit the phones and talked to everyone we know [after MG Live’s

cancellation],” said series co-organiser John Pearson. “MG Live has been a highlight of our season. It’s our biggest race of the year and we normally run six races and 100 cars and a big party – it’s a good social weekend. That was our jewel-in-the-crown race.”

The MG Car Club is working on alternative arrangements to ensure that MG Live still goes ahead. But Equipe Classic Racing decided to make its own plans after it was left with an eight-week gap in its calendar.

“Spa is a fantastic circuit and we’ve not been there since we’ve been running the series,” added Pearson. “A huge number of our drivers have never been to Spa. But it doesn’t make up for [the loss of MG Live].

“We’ve got a half-hour qualifying and two 40-minute pitstop races, so a good deal of track time.”

• MG Car Club general manager Adam Sloman wishes to clarify the comments he made in the 14 March issue of Autosport concerning the cancellation of MG Live: “We understand Silverstone’s position, however, the first notification we had of this matter was on 6 March 2019, not August as is stated in the article. [MG Live] is an international club event held at Silverstone for over 50 years [and] Silverstone has been making every effort to try to find a workable solution as per their statement.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

HISTORICS

Lister is set to build a reimagined version of its iconic Knobbly sportscar.

Company owner Lawrence Whittaker tweeted this render, adding: “And yes, we will build it!”

Although the car appears to retain the Knobbly’s iconic high rear haunches and prominent grille, no technical details have been announced. It is expected to retain the 1958 car’s layout of front engine and rear-wheel drive.

The new car follows the 2014 continuation run of ‘period’ Knobblys, which were offered with either 4.2 or 3.8-litre six-cylinder Jaguar engines.



LISTER
LISTER KNOBBLY 2019 CONCEPT CAR
Designed & Illustrated by Tony Tassie & Michael Wills





Historic FF1600 champ
will switch from Lola
to Winkelmann

LAWRENCE

Jackson picks rare Winkelmann car for FF1600 title defence

HISTORIC FF1600

Reigning Historic Sports Car Club Formula Ford 1600 champion Cameron Jackson will switch to a rare Winkelmann for his title defence in 2019.

Jackson topped one of Britain's closest and highly rated club championships last year driving a Lola T200, despite missing a round for the birth of his child. He and car preparer Neil Fowler wanted a new challenge for this season and took on the Winkelmann WDF-2 (known as Palliser in period in the UK), with which Fowler won at Pau in 2016.

"I love how close the racing is in that championship and I wanted to return, but I want to drive as many different cars as I can and testing and developing is part of the challenge and enjoyment for me," said Jackson, who has driven the

car at Silverstone and Donington Park.

"The car was on the pace straight out of the box. I did the quickest time I've done in a Formula Ford at Silverstone without a tow, on my own, and not in the best conditions. It's a great starting point as there's still a few things we want to tweak.

"There's no reason why it won't be able to run at the front. It's just going to be more of the same – close battles at the front. I'm looking forward to it. Neil and I are feeling very positive."

Jackson will also return to Goodwood, where he will compete in the Revival's Whitsun Trophy aboard a Crossle 5S. The car is owned by a surgeon in the US, but Jackson has offered to test and set up the car before racing it in September.

JACK BENYON

Tilley renews de la Roche rivalry

GUARDS TROPHY

Reigning Classic Formula Ford champion Benn Tilley will renew his rivalry with 2017 and '18 UK Formula Junior title winner Peter de la Roche when they go head to head this season in Lotus 23Bs in the Guards Trophy sportscar championship.

Tilley aced the most competitive FJunior class in Paul Smeeth's Lotus 22 in 2017, finishing runner-up overall, before winning nine of last year's 14 CFF races in Mandie Hadfield's Merlyn Mk20. Now he progresses to drive Euni Park's car from the Hadfield stable.

Lincolnshire driver Tilley enjoyed

his first test in the ex-Ken Delingpole/David Prophet machine over 50 laps of Blyton Park last week. "It feels fairly similar to a 22, with [50kg] more weight but a lot more power from the [185bhp] 1600cc twin-cam engine, so it really shifts," said the 19-year-old former Saxmax racer.

"There is work to be done on the Lotus but I'm really looking forward to competing against Peter [de la Roche] again, in identical cars, and doing longer races than I'm used to. The first Guards round at Donington on 30 March is over 40 minutes."

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

C1 CHALLENGE KICKS OFF

McAttack Racing and Amigo Motorsport shared the victory spoils at Croft last weekend as the Citroen C1 Challenge season kicked off with two three-hour races. Simon Walker-Hansell gave McAttack the lead in race one at the completion of the first hour, with team-mates Declan McDonnell and Joe Wiggin easing clear to win. Rhys Lloyd and Mathew Dawson triumphed in race two after a late pitstop for the rival Merlin squad.

HARVEY JR MAKES DEBUT

James Harvey, son of 1992 British Touring Car champion Tim, made his car racing debut in the C1 Challenge at Croft. "I had done loads of karting over the years, but never raced a car until now," he said. "I'd known [co-drivers] Paul and George Ingram for years; they were interested and I couldn't think of anything cheaper to have a go in." Their Squadra Budino Nero (Team Black Pudding) car was 24th in the first race, and 20th in race two.

DE SADELEER'S TITLE BID

Radical Challenge frontrunner Jerome de Sadeleer is targeting a title attack in the series this year. The older brother of LMP2 regular Hugo, Jerome won the Radical SR1 Cup in 2017 and took three wins in the Challenge last season. He will again compete with the 360 Racing squad. In the SR1 Cup, last year's rookie champion Will Hunt will remain with the Scorpio Motorsport squad.

COULTHARD IN GULLWING MERC

David Coulthard will be one of the stars of the Goodwood Members' Meeting on 6-7 April in the IWC Racing Team's Mercedes-Benz SL 300 Gullwing. The ex-Formula 1 racer will contest the Tony Gaze Trophy after making his Members' Meeting debut last year in the car. After qualifying 15th for the Salvadori Cup, the Scot went on to finish ninth (below).



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/JBLOXHAM



Support acts' ups and downs

The fortunes of the five series that back up the BTCC wax and wane, but the common factor among them all is excellent racing

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Motorsport, like so many things, runs in cycles. And the fortunes of the five British Touring Car Championship support series certainly can be described as cyclical. It's very rare for all five championships to be in tip-top shape at the same time, but equally they aren't usually in the doldrums together either. This year is no exception.

Let's start off with the Ginetta GT4 Supercup, as this was probably the 'worst' of the five series last year. Given that it's a category that features partially reversed grids for its third race of the weekend, you'd expect a good mix of race winners. But just four different drivers won over the course of the 23-race season in 2018 and Charlie Ladell was a fairly dominant champion. Not wishing to diminish Ladell's achievement, but it's clear that it was not the championship's strongest season.

But its fortunes appear to have turned around for this season. While promising 2018 rookies Harry King and Adam Shepherd are back and will be ones to watch, there are some interesting names joining the field this year too. Will Burns missed out on the 2016 title by just three points and will be eager to rectify that this season, and he will be joined by his former BTCC team-mate Mike Epps.

Past British Rallycross champion Nathan Heathcote is another intriguing addition and one of the stories of the season will be how he adapts to his change in discipline. Autosport is aware of other

“The two most competitive series of last year are the ones that are struggling a little this time around”

possible additions before the first round in two weeks' time, so the category is clearly bouncing back this year.

Another series that needs to do likewise is British Formula 4. The quality at the front of the field was good last year, with two evenly matched Red Bull juniors (Dennis Hauger and Jack Doohan), a McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist (champion Kiern Jewiss) and another pair of talented Brits (Ayrton Simmons and Johnathan Hoggard). But there wasn't much else, with the grid dropping to just 12 cars at one point.

There are green shoots evident for 2019, however. Carlin is back from its sabbatical, providing a much-needed boost and, even though it has only one confirmed driver at this point, there will be more on the way. The grid currently stands at 12, but Autosport understands a number of late deals will be struck

before the Brands Hatch opener. With major changes planned for 2020, that upward trajectory could continue.

Ginetta Junior had a tricky off-season last winter, with the frontrunning HHC and Douglas squads joining JHR Developments on the sidelines. And, while there was an intriguing title fight between Adam Smalley, Louis Foster and Luke Browning, those three were massively ahead of the rest.

This year it's set to have the largest entry of the five championships. Douglas is back with a multi-car line-up and Porsche squad In2Racing has joined to ensure there's a much-needed new team on the grid. All in all, it's looking pretty good, with a decent range of successful Winter Series drivers continuing, those embarking on a second season with far more experience, and exciting new karting graduates.

That just leaves the two most competitive series of last year: the Porsche Carrera Cup GB and Renault UK Clio Cup. And, yep, you guessed it — they are the ones that are, relatively, struggling a little this time around. These series both fielded small grids in 2014 (both had fewer than 12 cars at times) and the cycle has now rotated against them again.

There have been some brilliantly close Carrera Cup title battles in the past couple of seasons since the Dan Cammish dominance — and Dan Harper, George Gamble and Lewis Plato could provide another fascinating one this year. There are some interesting new drivers too, with Clio race winner Jack McCarthy, Ladell and MX-5 ace Tom Roche all joining. But there are noticeably fewer Pro-Am and Am drivers this time around, meaning the grid may not be as well stocked as in recent years — although there is still time for more to join.

But it's the Clio Cup that is looking more worrying. Aside from serial title contender Max Coates and International Clio Finale victor Jack Young, you struggle to see any potential title winners among the other nine drivers to have signed up so far.

That's perhaps not a surprise — it's the last season of the category and racers will be looking elsewhere, coupled with team departures and the after-effects of an incredibly turbulent 2018 season and a controversial title fight.

It would be a shame if the series — which has provided some of the best racing in the country, not just in the past few years but decades — goes out with a whimper. There's still time for it to secure a few more entries, and it has some welcome cash incentives this year that should be attractive, but whether it can do so remains to be seen.

There are undeniably winners and losers among the TOCA supports this year. But you can be sure there will still be some fantastic racing on the BTCC undercard regardless — even if it's different categories providing the pick of the action. 🏁

The first Caterham Team Enduro at Silverstone begins

Caterham Team Enduro a hit

**BRSCC
SILVERSTONE
MARCH 16**

The location for dreaming up a grand plan might sound familiar.

“We were sitting around at the curry house in Donington,” recalled Caterham’s chief motorsport and technical officer Simon Lambert. “By the end of the curry we’d worked it all out.”

Yet little else was usual about Caterham’s 2019 season curtain-raiser at Silverstone last weekend, the event devised around the Donington dining table. The Caterham Motorsport Team Enduro was a four-hour endurance relay; its format included a category for a car each from three Caterham series – Roadsport, 270R and 310R – joining forces to compete as ‘Super Teams’. An impressive 21 teams participated. But the initial plan was even more ambitious.

“We were talking about, ‘Wouldn’t it be great to do a Caterham 24-hour race?’, and then, ‘How would you do that?’” Lambert continued. “But that’s fantastically expensive and well beyond our means.

“Then we thought, how about we just use that same formula and reduce it to an endurance race?”

There was also a twist: a driver grading system to ensure no team could load up only with habitual frontrunners. And it bore fruit

for the inaugural winning Super Team, ‘Power Pratt’ made up of Martin and Oli Pratt as well as Tom Power.

“Oli’s been on the podium a few times; I’ve been doing this for six years and I’ve never got anywhere near!” said Martin.

Lambert added: “We spent a lot of time working out a formula – it’s fantastic that people who don’t normally have this opportunity can win.”

Power Pratt rose from dead last on lap one after Martin beached the car in the gravel during a damp-but-drying qualifying. There were other benefits from the format, including one not foreseen by drivers more used to short races.

“It was very hectic in the first hour as people got their heads around endurance racing,” said Lambert. “You actually have to think, and you do need a strategy. It was quite clear a lot of people had just come along to enjoy themselves, and realised...”

Oli Pratt noted: “It adds another tactical element. That has another appeal than just being a solo effort.”

The ‘Team OLARCH Racing’ squad took the overall victory. Its members – Alex Jordan, Rob Watts and Jack Sales – all competed in quicker 420Rs.

“It’s a great season-starter,” said Jordan. “One, it gives everybody an opportunity to blow the cobwebs away; two, it’s socially quite fun and it mixes up everybody. So



WALKER

WEEKEND WINNERS

CATERHAM MOTORSPORT TEAM ENDURO

420R Team Team OLARCH Racing:
Rob Watts/Jack Sales/Alex Jordan (*all 420s*)

Super Team Power Pratt:
Martin Pratt 310R/Oli Pratt 270R/
Tom Power Roadsport

BRSCC SALOON CAR TROPHY

Race 1 Lucky Khera
BMW M3 E46

Race 2 Lewis Kent (below)
Hyundai i30 N TCR

BRSCC SPORTS CAR TROPHY

Race 1 & 2 Ashley Hicklin
Radical SR3



For full results, visit tsl-timing.com

those who are new get to meet other people; they get to pick up a few tips.

“It’s been very good natured, and everybody’s had a good time.”

“We’d definitely like to do it again,” concluded Lambert. “That’s our hope, that it would be an annual thing.”

It was hard to find anyone at the Silverstone event who disagreed.

Elsewhere on the bill, TCR UK’s Lewis Kent starred in the Saloon Car Trophy, which he treated as a shakedown for his Hyundai. He missed the first half of race one – which Lucky Khera won in his BMW M3 – after a driveshaft problem on the green-flag lap. Kent won race two, storming through from 15th on the grid.

Ashley Hicklin took two Sports Car Trophy wins in his Radical SR3, despite a stuttering race two launch that left him seventh at the end of the first lap.

GRAHAM KEILLOH



HOW TO GET STARTED IN RACING

What do you do when you decide that reading about motorsport is no longer enough and it's time to get behind the wheel? Here's how to take your first steps, plus star rookies from 2018 tell the stories of their maiden racing seasons

HAWKINS

So, you've decided you want to get into racing, but how do you go about doing that? Well, before you can compete in an event sanctioned by the sport's national governing body, Motorsport UK, you'll need a National B licence, and that requires you to sit an ARDS (Association of Racing Drivers Schools) test.

There are centres across the country (see table, right) where you can take the test, but first you'll need to buy a 'Go Racing' starter pack from Motorsport UK. For £107, it contains all the information you'll need and covers the cost of your first licence.

The cost of actually sitting your ARDS test, which consists of a short written test and on-track assessment – will set

you back a further £300. The written test contains a section focusing on the flag signals and their meanings – which you'll need to get 100% correct – as well as a multiple-choice section where common sense should mean you'll pass with flying colours.

Then it's onto the track. You can bring your own car for the test or borrow one on the day.

Ray Grimes, an ARDS instructor with nearly 30 years' experience, states that people fail when they try to drive too quickly and don't listen to their instructor. "The first thing they have to understand is the instructor wants them to pass, that's their priority," he says. "What I always say when I'm in a car is, 'As far as I'm concerned you've passed –



Passing the ARDS test is not about speed – awareness, safety and composure are more important

it's up to you to fail.' My best advice is to go on a trackday where there are instructors, tell them that you're going to do an ARDS course, and they'll teach you a technique they know the instructor on the ARDS course will be looking for. That way you'll be a lot more confident when you turn up, and you're not frightened or nervous."

Grimes is keen to stress that an ARDS test isn't about pure speed, but is more about showing awareness and composure behind the wheel. With tests often taking place during trackdays where faster machinery is on track, it's crucial that you show you can blend in with other cars, are consistent with your racing lines and are safe.

"When I'm in the car with somebody on an ARDS course I say, 'If I feel that you're dangerous on the circuit and I wouldn't like to be on a circuit with you, you're going to fail,'" he says. "If I feel that you're going to be safe I'll pass you. I'm not looking for you to prove to me that you're Ayrton Senna, but I am asking you to prove to me that you're safe, you're consistent and you're aware of what's going on around you."

STEFAN MACKLEY

UK ARDS-APPROVED SCHOOLS	
SCHOOLS	LOCATION
Anglesey Performance Driving School	Anglesey
Castle Combe	Wiltshire
Croft Promosport	North Yorkshire
Goodwood Motor Circuit	West Sussex
Kirkistown Race School	County Down
Knockhill Racing Drivers School	Fife
MotorSport Vision, Brands Hatch	Kent
MotorSport Vision, Cadwell Park	Lincolnshire
MotorSport Vision, Oulton Park	Cheshire
MotorSport Vision, Snetterton	Norfolk
The Motorsports School, Mallory Park	Leicestershire
The Motorsports School, Lydden Hill	Kent
Thruxton Motorsport Centre	Hampshire

ROOKIE TALE

CHRIS ‘CHIPPY’ WESEMAEL

It’s quite an achievement to take pole position on your series debut. It’s even more impressive when it’s your first ever race car meeting. Sadly, snow prevented Chris Wesemael from lining up first at Donington Park in March last year, but the now 23-year old had made his mark on the 750 Motor Club’s RGB Sports 1000 series.

He continued to do so throughout the season, taking three wins and finishing runner-up to two-time RGB champion Billy Albone in the standings. Not bad for a rookie who had only competed in karts before 2018.

Wesemael believes key to his success was preparing ahead of the weekend, not necessarily through testing but making sure he knew which direction the circuits – which were all new to him – went.

“I got some footage from Scott [Mittell, 2015 RGB champion] himself from his seasons before most meetings,” he says. “Especially at the start of the season I went on the simulator games, like Assetto Corsa, anything like that. I’ve done thousands of laps before I turn up for a race meeting on those things. While it doesn’t simulate where I’m braking or anything like that, it shows me where the corners are. So when we turn up to go qualifying I don’t have to worry about learning the track as much.”

Wesemael’s very impressive rookie season wasn’t without its mistakes and mishaps. He stalled on the grid at Croft as he wasn’t familiar with the starting procedure, which differs between the two RGB races every weekend, and felt he lost a win at Brands Hatch after losing time in traffic when lapping slower cars. Both are things he intends to improve on ahead of his return to the series in 2019. “Race weekend format and traffic management for me were the two things that as a rookie were very evidently things I need to work on,” says Wesemael.

And despite battling hard at the front, he believes there remains a friendly nature and camaraderie within the RGB and other paddocks, which is something new drivers should attempt to become part of. “I think the community of club-level racing is what makes it great and everyone always seems willing to help anyone as much as they can,” he says. “Asking questions is another thing, I think. Not being afraid to ask questions, even if you think the question is silly.

“There are no stupid questions as far as I’m concerned in racing because everyone does something slightly different than everyone else, and no one will ever help you if you don’t tell them you’ve got a problem.”

STEFAN MACKLEY



Wesemael’s speed was immediately apparent. Preparation’s key, he says

IS KARTING THE RIGHT FIRST STEP FOR YOU?

Karting may be the entry point for many into the world of motorsport, but that doesn’t mean would-be drivers can simply turn up and compete. Just like car racing and rallying, there are certain steps that need to be taken first.

“People tend to think they can buy a kart, go to a kart track, go round and that’s it,” says Nigel Edwards, championship director of Karting UK, the motorsport governing body’s new karting division.

Instead, Edwards says it’s important that prospective drivers take stock and assess if karting is really for them.

Visiting local kart clubs is

the traditional route into the discipline, allowing drivers to view the classes available – with those aged six to over 66 catered for – but Edwards reckons getting behind the wheel at an indoor ‘arrive and drive’ event can be even more useful as it provides the chance to try karting out without needing a licence.

“You can head to your local club to have a look at the different categories, but if you want to get your bum on a seat to see if it’s something you want to do, the first port of call would be to go to one of the indoor facilities,” he says.

For those who are interested, the next step is to pay the £66 fee to

get a ‘Go Karting’ starter pack, with the ARKS (Association of Racing Kart Schools) test the next item on the agenda.

This can be undertaken at ARKS centres throughout the country, some of which can be found at kart tracks, others at racing circuits (such as Thruxton and Castle Combe) and the rest at bespoke facilities.

Edwards compares the test to getting your road licence, as it features theory and practical segments. And you don’t need your own kart.

“It can be pretty much done in a day – for the theory you sit down in a classroom and that

takes about an hour or so,” he explains. “Then with the practical you’re put with a karting examiner and they will monitor you throughout the session and give you some feedback. At the end of the day it’s a benchmark, normally within 10% of an average lap time [that you need to achieve to get the licence]. They’re not looking for the ultimate lap time.

“That would give you a probationary licence and then you have to get six signatures from events to get your full licence. “You need to do the test to make sure you can go on a track safely and you’re not a hindrance to others.”

Despite the large age range of karting competitors, the test is pretty much the same for all but is “tweaked a little bit for young kids”.

Edwards then recommends joining your local club, but warns against rushing to progress too quickly through the ranks.

As well as karting, under-15s can also get a taste for driving through the Under 17 Car Club’s events that allow youngsters to develop their driving skills in a non-competitive environment. Meetings are held throughout the country.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Brown Jr had the added pressure of bringing his dad's car home in one piece



LAWRENCE

ROOKIE TALE

HARRY BROWN

A 21-year-old electrician from the Isle of Wight, Harry Brown followed his father Paul into the HSCC's Historic Road Sports Championship in 2018 as a complete motorsport novice.

Brown Sr had been racing his MGB GT in Road Sports for 10 years, but offered to step aside for a season and allow his son to try his hand at competing. "He said if I wanted to have a go in his car I should get my licence, so last year was my first time competing in any form of motorsport," says Brown Jr.

The Isle of Wight is not an ideal base for a racing programme, so Brown concentrated on the more accessible circuits for his first year. "Every time we go racing we have to get on a ferry," he says. "We can't just nip off and do a day's testing from where we are based."

In fact, pre-race testing is the only significant thing that Brown would do differently if he was starting afresh again, as the first race at Donington Park delivered a culture shock. "I'd do the test days on the Friday before the race as I was learning the tracks in qualifying, which wasn't ideal," he says. "The first race was an eye-opener to say the least about just how quick these old cars are,

and how quick everyone on the grid is going — even those towards the back of the field. I started off at the back, but towards the end of the season I was overtaking people and moving up the grid a bit."

Being entrusted with his dad's pride and joy encouraged Brown to bring it back in one piece, which he managed to achieve across three race meetings and five races. "He was there watching all the time!" says Brown. "Thankfully there were no low points. The high was getting novice of the year in the championship and being joint winner of my class."

"There was a lot of support from the other drivers in the championship; they were all very welcoming and helped me out if I needed it. I even had the race leaders come up to me after the race and apologise if they got a bit close when they were lapping me! It was a brilliant season and I'd definitely recommend it to other novices. I'm going to race the MGB again this season and dad is building a TVR Vixen so he can race as well. We'll be in the same races. That means getting two cars to race meetings, but I can now tow the MGB and we're going to try to do more races this year."

PAUL LAWRENCE



Karting is a traditional entry-level form of motorsport, and covers a wide age range

FORMULA 1 FOR BEGINNERS



BOOK REVIEW **FORMULA ONE 2019: THE CARLTON SPORTS GUIDE** RRP £14.99

Despite referring to the grand prix season to come in its title, *Formula One 2019: The Carlton Sports Guide* is

not a preview. You won't find speculation about how new Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto will fare, or any arguments for or against F1 rookie Lando Norris outperforming his McLaren team-mate Carlos Sainz.

Instead Bruce Jones's 128-page book, now in its 23rd edition, is a handbook best suited to an audience who are brand new to F1. It's aimed squarely at a reader who is in need of an easily digestible overview of the 2019 line-ups.

That's why, after an introduction that explains the myriad regulatory and driver line-up changes for the new season, the team-by-team guide tracks Mercedes' current success from its previous guises as BAR, Honda and Brawn GP.

It's also why the page dedicated to George Russell explains his Formula 2 and McLaren Autosport BRDC Award-winning exploits to introduce him, rather than asking whether he can topple the returning Robert Kubica at Williams.

The chances are, because you're reading this review in Autosport, the 2019 *Carlton Sports Guide* isn't for you. As an F1 encyclopaedia, it's nowhere near in-depth enough to improve your knowledge, and neither is it a true preview as stated.

So, what is this book? It doesn't break new ground, but it is a pleasant summary of the history that's relevant to the current grid – don't expect references to Dan Gurney or Vanwall, for example.

Put the 2019 edition side-by-side with its 2018 predecessor and the design is broadly similar (the similarity between maroon front covers that feature Lewis Hamilton smoking the rear tyres on his Mercedes means they're easy to muddle up). But the content has been reworked sufficiently to – in places – draw out more context.

Jones moves on to explain at greater length the chain of events that led to Force India plunging into administration. He also muses on the absence of distinctiveness in F1 helmet design, and how Fernando Alonso's departure from F1 puts him alongside the likes of Emerson Fittipaldi and David Coulthard in terms of poor career choices. It's here that the book is strongest.

It continues in good form throughout its guides to each of the 21 tracks on the 2019 calendar. As Jones is also the author of *Formula One Circuits From Above*, perhaps that's unsurprising.

Although for the book's target audience this probably won't be an issue, it does frustrate Autosport to find so many blunders in the copy. It makes far too many sentences a chore to read. Still referring to Alfa Romeo as Sauber, though, will annoy many more than just the anally retentive.

If you've bought this book during the past three seasons, there's probably no need to plump for the 2019 version. But if you're trying to get another person interested in the pinnacle of motorsport for the first time, this may be the ticket.

Head to www.carltonbooks.co.uk



BOOK REVIEW FORMULA ONE: THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY RRP £30.00

This is a work that's been re-released multiple times, having first been published in 1999. Regrettably its age is beginning to show.

The revised 2018 copy briefly tells the story of each grand prix season up to 2017. The decades from the 1950s through to the 2010s are preceded by interviews with Tony Brooks, John Surtees, Jackie Stewart, Nigel Mansell, David Coulthard, Jarno Trulli and Mark Webber.

It's absolutely fine that these interviews have been reused, but it becomes jarring where elements are long out of date. References to Michael Schumacher being at the top of his game or Ferrari's two-decade dry spell are out of place.

You can be forgiving of the publishers not wanting to change too much. But sub-headings still describing Stewart as a team boss and references to how Max Verstappen will soon join the F1 grid ought to have been changed. This is a book in need of a thorough re-edit for when it's next released.

As for the season summaries, given the seven-decade scope of F1's history you can't reasonably expect them to be the last word in detail. The condensed format makes for a quick read and you begin to appreciate just how quickly a team can decline from championship-winning prime to propping up the tail end.

MATT KEW



youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



Imagine if you could take the best parts from each car in Formula 1 to create the ultimate design for the new season. Autosport has pieced together its own 2019 world-beater that takes in design elements from six of the 10 teams on the grid. To watch, head to <http://bit.ly/F1ultimate2019>

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

IndyCar Series

Round 2/16

Austin, Texas, USA

24 March

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sunday 1700

Formula E

Round 6/12

Sanya, China

23 March

TV Live BT Sport 1, Eurosport 1, Saturday 0630. BBC Red Button, iPlayer, online

Jaguar I-PACE eTrophy

Round 4/9

Sanya, China

23 March

TV Live BT Sport 1, Saturday 0445

European Rally Championship

Round 1/8

Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel, Azores

21-23 March

Livestream FIAERC.com

Wednesday 2125, Thursday 1400, Friday 1130, 1530, Saturday 1120, 1640

TV Highlights Eurosport 2, Wednesday 2335, Friday 0530, 0800, Saturday 0030, 0530, Sunday 0030. Eurosport 1, Friday 2345, Saturday 0235, 2330

NASCAR Cup

Round 6/36

Martinsville, Virginia, USA

24 March

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sunday 1730

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park

BARC

23 March

Sports/Saloons, Junior Saloons, Kumho BMWs, Pre-'66 Touring Cars, Pre-'83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre-'93 Touring Cars, Pre-'03 Touring Cars, Pre-'05 Saloon Cars, Blue Oval Saloon Series, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons

Brands Hatch

BRSCC

23-24 March

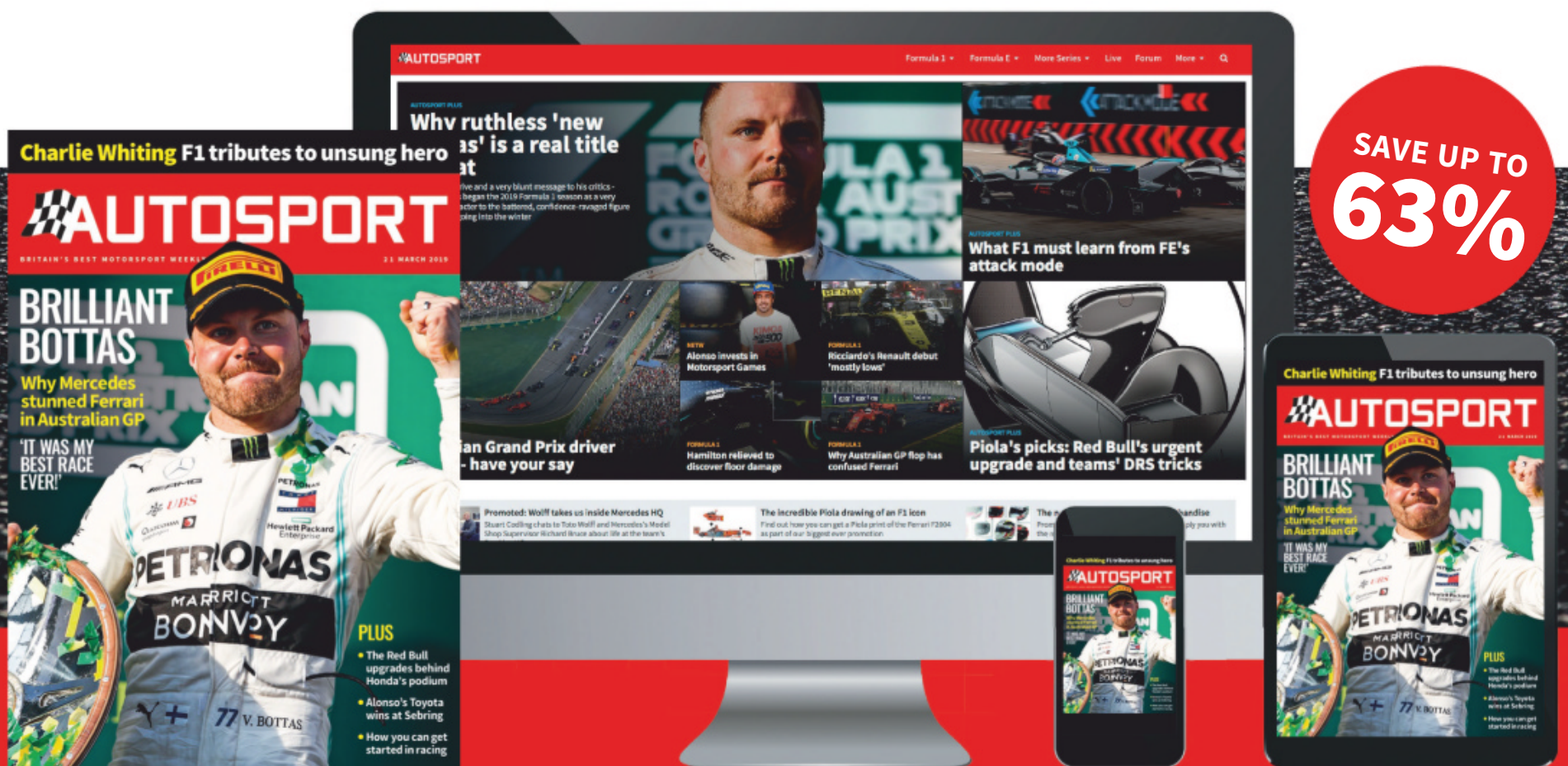
Porsches, Mazda MX-5s, Mazda MX-5 Super Series, BMW Compact Cup, Alfa Romeos, Fun Cup, Multi Marque/Nippon Challenge/Tricolore



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MY FIRST MOTORSPORT MEMORY



1995 2CV 24 HOURS

The lasting effects of a Guinness and Mondello Park cocktail

JAMES ROBERTS, F1 RACING ASSOCIATE EDITOR



“THERE WAS NOTHING I WANTED TO DO MORE THAN LIVE AND WORK AT TRACKS ACROSS THE WORLD”



At first I was struck by the eerie silence. As I pulled down the tent zip and peered into the gloom, I realised I was surrounded by fog.

Dawn had broken but the sun was still obscured. Climbing out, I looked at my watch – 0700hrs. I was told there had been a red flag. What *had* happened last night?

Grabbing a coffee, I started to piece together where I was. I recalled a long drive to Anglesey, a rough ferry crossing and breakfast in Dublin.

The last memory I had was of a blaze of headlights and the constant hum of twin-cylinder engines in the air. I was standing in the pitlane watching a driver change (via the passenger door), a refuel and repairs to a side door light.

A little earlier that evening the trackside commentator had invited *anyone* from the paddock to come and join him in the tower since he was getting a bit... er, lonely. This wasn't a typical race meeting. Then it dawned on me: I'd had my first ever sip of Guinness the previous night.

I was 17 when I camped in the paddock of Mondello Park. The annual Citroën 2CV 24-hour race was in its infancy and I had

travelled to only the sixth edition of the endurance classic with a race team fielded by my mate's brother-in-law.

When the 2CV we entered rolled off its trailer, they'd discovered it was virtually in two pieces. A lot of welding ensured the hobbled machine was allowed to start the race, albeit at the back of the grid.

Once underway, a late-night T-boning had jammed the driver's door shut. But from 26th, the car had reached the top 10 shortly before midnight – at which point the paddock bar was in full swing.

When I awoke, thick fog had halted the race but soon the field was away again to complete the 24-hour marathon. This was my first overseas visit to a motor race and the bug struck. In the following months I drove to every hillclimb, historic meeting, sportscar, single-seater or club race I could get to. I knew then there was nothing I wanted to do more than live and work at tracks across the world.

The 1995 Mondello Park 2CV 24-hour race was a heady mix of endurance and camaraderie. Despite the setbacks with our car we were delighted with the result, finishing eighth, 54 laps behind. And so the Guinness flowed again... ❧



FROM THE ARCHIVE

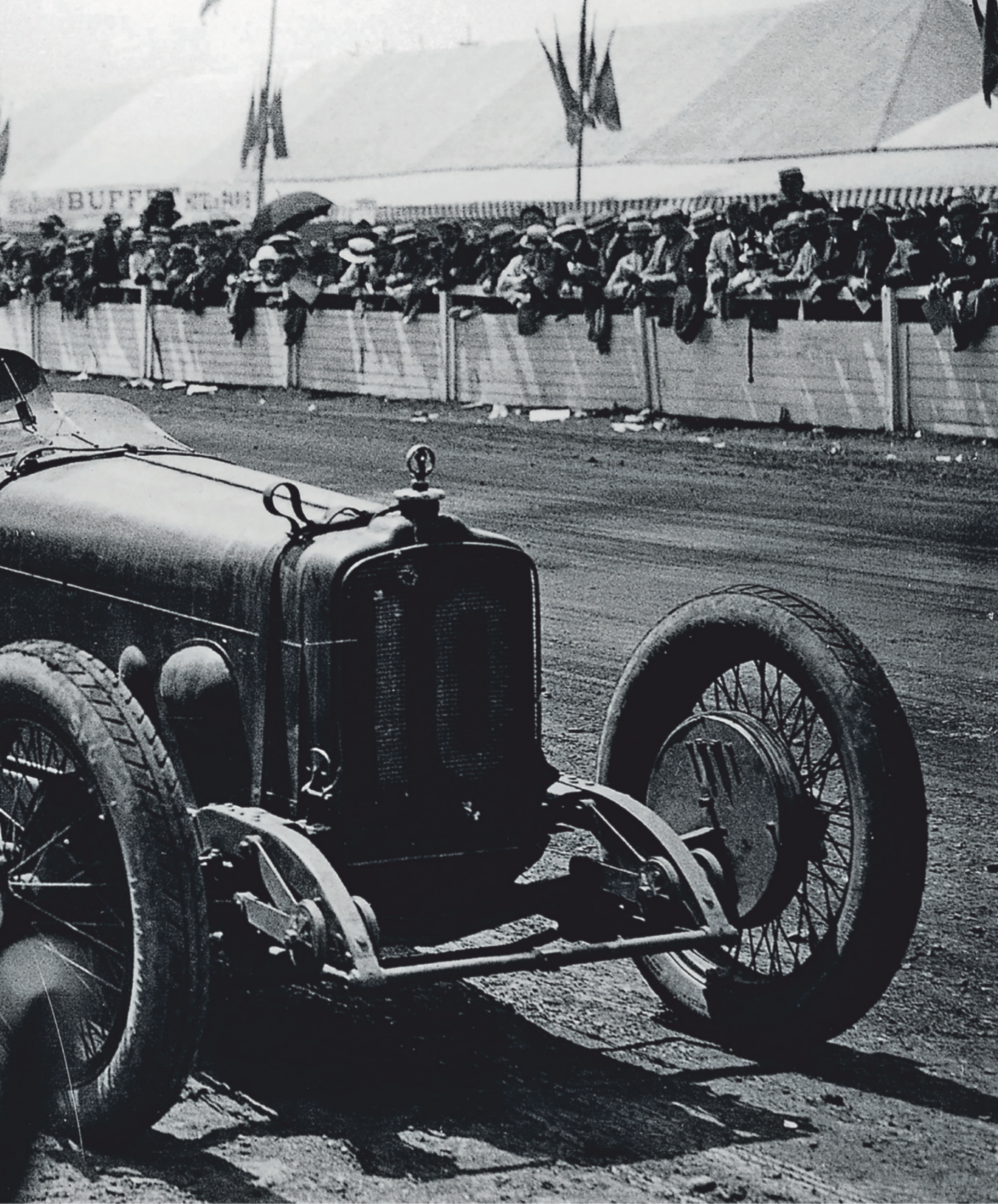
Henry Segrave changes a tyre on his Talbot during the 1921 French Grand Prix at Le Mans – no small undertaking, which he had to carry out 14 times due

to poor road conditions (during the race a stone knocked his riding mechanic Jules Moriceau unconscious for half a lap) and insufficiently cured rubber. Segrave was the last classified

finisher in ninth place, completing the 30-lap race distance in 5h08m06s, at an average speed of 62.6mph, just over an hour behind the winning Duesenberg of Jimmy Murphy.



Head to Duke Video's YouTube channel for classic Land Speed Record footage <http://bit.ly/HenrySegrave>



QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



WHO IS THIS?

This man in black would define his sport for a generation.

It was appropriate that he hailed from 'Cannon City' as he was no stranger to using heavy artillery to get his way on track. Despite family connections in the business, he was discouraged from taking up the sport, so was a late starter who took longer than usual to catch a break.

But when he finally found his groove, he was almost unstoppable. He completed an unprecedented back-to-back double before wrangling his way into a big-money move.

A return to his spiritual home united him with his signature colour and number and created an intimidating aura.

He faced up to a king and would have stolen his crown had fate not intervened. His fans threw their support behind his son, who never quite came up to his father's standards.

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS Who, what, where, when? Ho-Pin Tung, Dallara-Honda IR4, Sonoma, 28 August 2011. **Who is this?** AJ Foyt. **On this day** 1) Bruno Senna, Karun Chandhok, Lucas di Grassi, Vitaly Petrov, Nico Hulkenberg. 2) Michael Andretti, Luca Badoer, Rubens Barrichello, Fabrizio Barbazza. 3) Juan Manuel Fangio. 4) Michigan 1994. 5) 1964. **Name the helmet** Scott Dixon.

ON THIS DAY

1 Which Italian started his first grand prix on this day for Arrows in 1982?

2 Ayrton Senna was born on this day in 1960. For which grand prix did he fail to qualify?

3 Spaniard Paco Godia was born on this day in 1921. He scored two fourth places in the world championship, but for which marque?

4 It's Kenny Brack's birthday. For which team did he win the Indianapolis 500?

5 HWM founder George Abecassis was born on this day in 1913. He drove in two world championship grands prix at the same track. Which one?

NAME THE HELMET



IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Ferrari: temporary setback or more unfulfilled promise?



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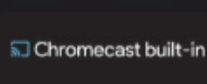
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