

F1 Gasly dropped
as Albon gets
Red Bull chance

PORSCHE 917
SPECIAL ISSUE

W Series Brit
Chadwick clinches
inaugural title

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

15 AUGUST 2019

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Celebrating one of motorsport's legendary machines

It's not often we get to put a 50-year-old sportscar on the cover of Autosport, but the Porsche 917 has always been a special case.

From the very start of the project it was a step into the unknown for Porsche, setting a theme that continued through the 240mph long-tailed Le Mans monsters all the way to the ground-breaking turbocharged Can-Am dominators.

Whether or not you think the 917 is the greatest racing car of all time, the story is a remarkable one, which we tell in this week's special issue with the help of some of those who were part of it.

Porsche will be taking its expertise to Formula E this year and is likely to become a serious challenger sooner rather than later. It will join a burgeoning category that has just crowned its first double champion – turn to page 36 to see how Jean-Eric Vergne did it.

As usual, we don't just look back this week, we also take a look forward, with the shock announcement that Red Bull will replace Pierre Gasly with Alex Albon from the Belgian Grand Prix (see p4). As Edd Straw points out on p8, it's both a big chance and a big risk for Albon, but the 23-year-old has been surpassing expectations for the past couple of seasons and could make a strong case for a 2020 Red Bull seat if he proves tough enough to handle the pressure.

Someone who did handle considerable pressure last weekend was Jamie Chadwick. Many congratulations to her for securing the inaugural W Series crown at Brands Hatch. There's some way to go before we know the true impact of the initiative, but it's hard to argue with Chadwick's fine 2019, which she began by taking the MRF Challenge title. Hopefully she will get the chance to step up in 2020 to see how much further up the single-seater ladder she can climb.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Editor

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NEXT WEEK
22 AUGUST

We speak to Chadwick and look at what's changed for women in motorsport



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Markus Leser

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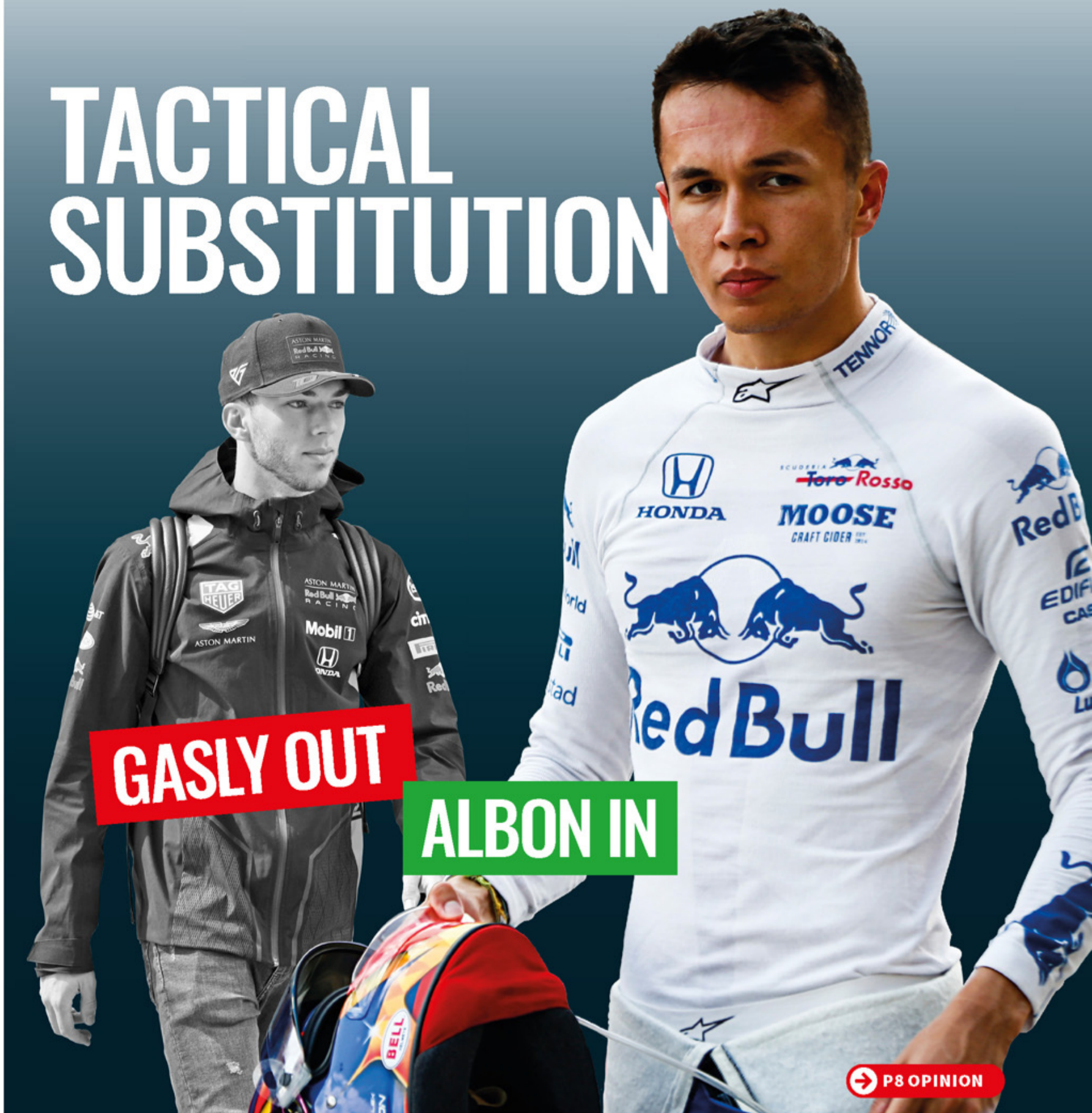
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TACTICAL SUBSTITUTION



FORMULA 1

Red Bull interrupted the start of Formula 1's summer break with the shock announcement that Pierre Gasly will be replaced by Alex Albon for the rest of the season.

Gasly's struggles to get close to the pace of Max Verstappen have been evident from the moment he crashed in pre-season testing, but Red Bull has staunchly supported its new driver since then.

As recently as the Hungarian Grand Prix weekend it insisted Gasly would see out the season, but just over one week later revealed that rookie Toro Rosso driver Albon will replace Gasly alongside Verstappen in the Red Bull line-up from the Belgian Grand Prix.

The arguments for Red Bull invoking this change are fairly simple on paper. Gasly has not merely been overshadowed by Max Verstappen, he has experienced a total eclipse, and Red Bull wants to evaluate Albon for a potential full-time seat at the senior team in 2020.

While Verstappen has 181 points and is fighting for second in the championship, Gasly has 63 and is only just ahead of the leading midfield drivers. Verstappen has two wins, five podiums and a pole position from

12 grands prix this year, whereas Gasly has not started or finished a race higher than fourth.

In qualifying terms, Gasly has the worst record of the current grid, averaging a 0.529s deficit to his team-mate at the point of elimination. For rigour, we have excluded the Azerbaijan and Canadian GPs from this comparison because of external factors that impact upon the gaps.

The general trend of Verstappen beating Gasly could probably have been expected. But in the context of Red Bull and Honda emerging with a higher quality package than may have been predicted, Gasly needed to produce better results, stronger pace and a bigger points haul than he has done.

Red Bull's performance and Verstappen's brilliance have transformed the team's short-term ambitions and strengthened its medium-term aim of fighting for titles from 2020. That, aligned with Gasly's struggles, has massively upped the ante. The pre-2019 ideal of a 'free'

"IT'S A BIG JUMP INTO THE DEEP END, BUT I'VE GOT MY SWIMMING SHORTS ON!"

season for Gasly, replacing Daniel Ricciardo and promised a learning year with relatively little at stake, has been eliminated.

It has not escaped Red Bull's attention that it has the ability to beat Ferrari to second in the constructors' championship this season. It would already be doing so were Gasly returning around the rate that the second Mercedes/Ferrari drivers are returning – Valtteri Bottas has 75% of Lewis Hamilton's points and Charles Leclerc has 85% of Sebastian Vettel's tally. Gasly is on a meagre 35% of Verstappen's haul.

Furthermore, in Hungary, Gasly's absence from the lead battle was the first time Red Bull seriously lost out because of its second car's poor performance. Verstappen and the team were checkmated by Mercedes' strategy at the front, left vulnerable by the enormous gap behind Hamilton that gifted him a free pitstop. That gap should have been filled by Gasly.

Short-term and medium-term, Gasly is hurting Red Bull's prospects. The team expects to fight for the title next season, and the version of Gasly seen over the first half of the 2019 campaign is not good enough for those ambitions. He has not been dismissed entirely from the 2020 picture and has the rest of the season back at Toro Rosso to rebuild his confidence.

Meanwhile, Albon has been handed another phenomenal opportunity. He was recalled by Red Bull for 2019 after an impressive Formula 2 season last year, when he fought Mercedes and McLaren proteges George Russell and Lando Norris for the title.

The London-born Thai was a Red Bull Junior seven years ago but lost his place on the scheme owing to a disappointing first season in car racing. He re-established his place on Red Bull's radar with his strong F2 form, having "begged" DAMS for a drive while suffering budget issues.

Albon has scored points at five races this season, and only trails his more experienced team-mate Daniil Kvyat in the championship because of the Russian's podium in the chaotic rain-hit German Grand Prix.

He described his shock call-up as "surreal" on social



Red Bull needs a driver who can get closer to Verstappen

media, adding he could not "thank [Red Bull] enough for believing in me and making this possible" and Toro Rosso, "especially [team principal] Franz Tost for the massive opportunity in F1 and never-ending support throughout my first year".

Albon added: "It's a big jump into the deep end, but I've got my swimming shorts on!"

SCOTT MITCHELL



Alonso is likely to return just for the 500 and not a full season

McLaren to enter IndyCar full-time next season

INDYCAR

McLaren has chosen the Schmidt Peterson Motorsports team as its partner for a full-time IndyCar entry for 2020, and launched Arrow McLaren Racing SP.

After its humiliating failure to qualify for the 2019 Indianapolis 500 with Fernando Alonso, when it was operating largely independently bar a logistical alliance with Carlin, McLaren prioritised finding an established IndyCar team to partner with for its long-mooted full entry. The deal means Schmidt's team will end its long relationship with Honda to run Chevrolet power in its two-car attack.

SPM co-owners Sam Schmidt and Ric Peterson will remain involved, but McLaren is drafting in its current sporting director Gil de Ferran – a double CART Champ Car champion and the 2003 Indy 500 winner – to lead the project. He will "helm a dedicated group from McLaren Racing, independent of the F1 team", read a team statement.

McLaren CEO Zak Brown described the Schmidt tie-up as giving "the right synergy as a strategic partner" and added "we come to IndyCar in full respect of the sport, our competitors, the fans and the task ahead".

Schmidt established his team for what was then the Indy Racing League in 2001, a year after his driving career was ended by a crash that left him as a paraplegic.

It initially specialised in the

junior categories, taking seven drivers to titles during a period of dominating what became Indy Lights, before acquiring the FAZZT team and launching a full IndyCar effort for 2011.

Now co-owned by Peterson and with sponsor Arrow Electronics – which backs McLaren in F1 – having stepped up to become a full partner, SPM won seven IndyCar races with its initial lead driver Simon Pagenaud and his successor James Hinchcliffe across the 2012-18 seasons.

The McLaren SP driver line-up remains unclear. Brown recently underlined that while Alonso was "top of the list" for any IndyCar entry, the double Formula 1 world champion was reluctant to commit to a full season – though he would be favourite for a third McLaren seat at Indy.

Hinchcliffe's strong Honda ties appeared to clash with the McLaren-induced switch to Chevrolet, prompting other Honda teams to begin pursuing him, but he has intimated a willingness to prioritise the McLaren opportunity over his Honda backing. He has an existing contract for 2020.

IMSA SportsCar champion Felipe Nasr recently tested SPM's IndyCar and has been mooted as a McLaren contender, as has F2 frontrunner Nicholas Latifi – who is also in the mix for a 2020 Williams F1 drive. Hinchcliffe's team-mate Marcus Ericsson is thought unlikely to be retained.

MATT BEER

Hartley joins Dragon Racing for 2019-20 Formula E attack



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/GALLOWAY



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/S BLOXHAM

FORMULA E

Ferrari Formula 1 simulator driver and Toyota World Endurance Championship regular Brendon Hartley will compete for the Dragon Racing ABB FIA Formula E team in the 2019-20 championship.

Ex-Toro Rosso F1 driver Hartley, who is set to contest the 2019-20 World Endurance Championship in Toyota's LMP1 car, is the American FE squad's first confirmed signing for the next campaign.

The factory Porsche driver was a candidate for the manufacturer's own

2019-20 line-up — and Hartley drove for Porsche in the initial stages of its FE manufacturer-allocated private testing programme — before Andre Lotterer was signed up to partner Neel Jani.

"Formula E is totally different from any other race series I've been in," said Hartley. "I am hoping my experience in many categories with energy management will pay dividends and give me a head start."

"I've always been a fan of street tracks and FE has some of the wildest I've seen."

"That, together with some of the best drivers and manufacturers in the world,

makes it an exciting place to be.

"I've already started working with most of the Dragon team, and I have a strong feeling that we can share some good success together in the coming season."

It is not yet clear who will partner Hartley at Dragon next season, or which of his 2019-20 deals will take priority at the two remaining FE/WEC clashes next season.

Dragon has already started its private testing programme, with 2019 Formula 2 and IndyCar driver Jordan King running for the team.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Breen back for Rally GB, Tanak to stay at Toyota



McKLEIN

WRC

Craig Breen will reunite with Thierry Neuville and Andreas Mikkelsen at Hyundai after securing a drive for Rally GB.

Breen made his first WRC start since being dropped by Citroen for 2019 in Rally Finland earlier this month. He impressed in the third i20 Coupe (left), fighting for a top-five finish for the majority of the event

before dropping back to seventh in order to boost team-mate Neuville's result.

He is also thought to be in contention for more Hyundai outings, and for a seat next season.

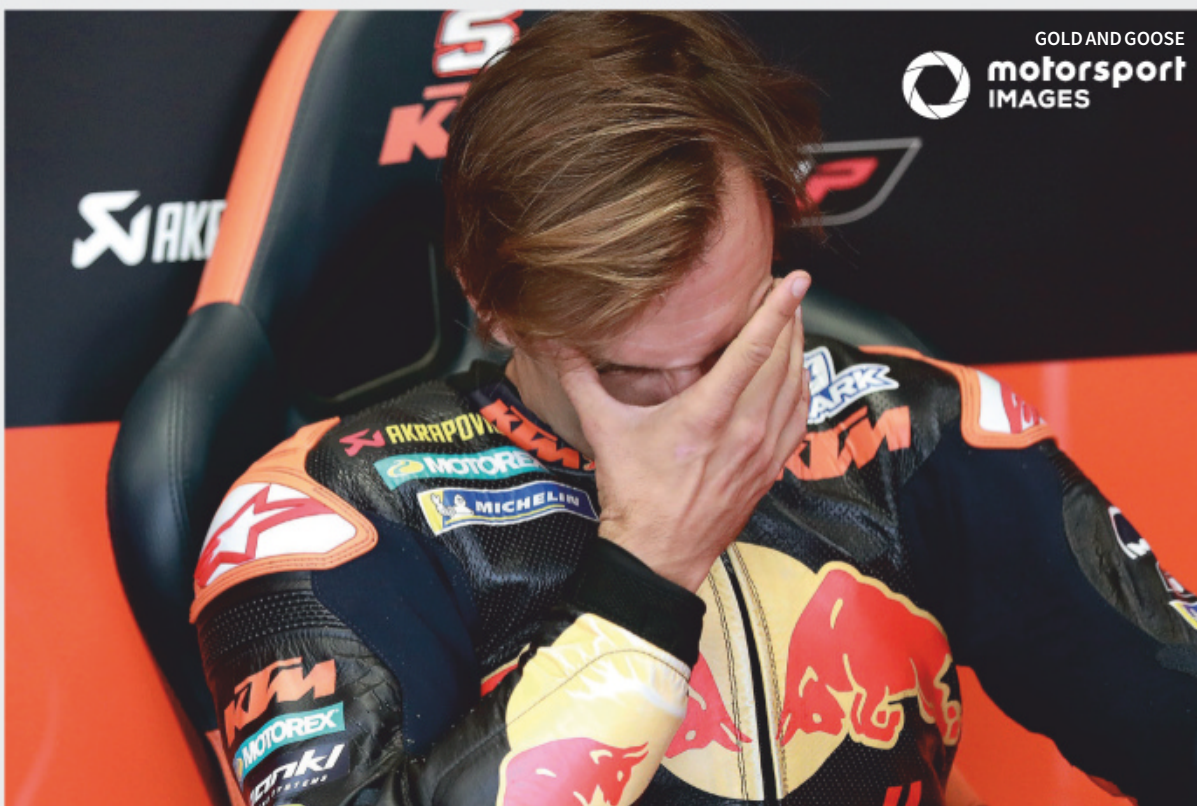
Meanwhile, Ott Tanak looks set to end speculation surrounding his future by signing a renewed deal with Toyota. An announcement is expected after this month's Rally Germany.

Tanak left M-Sport to

drive for Toyota in 2018, and narrowly missed out on the title last season after a late run of victories failed to undo his troubled start.

Both M-Sport and Hyundai have expressed interest in signing the Estonian for 2020, but Autosport understands that the WRC points leader will stick with Toyota, which is currently second in the teams' championship.

DAVID EVANS



KTM and Zarco split for 2020

MOTOGP

KTM's once-marquee signing Johann Zarco will vacate his seat at the end of 2019, as the two parties agreed to an early termination of his two-year contract.

The Austrian manufacturer had courted the two-time Moto2 champion following his breakthrough MotoGP debut on a satellite Yamaha in 2017, and Zarco ultimately snubbed interest from Honda and Ducati to become a KTM rider.

Yet having starred on the user-friendly Yamaha M1, he has been unable to make his smooth riding style gel with the KTM RC16, and has so far been roundly outperformed by team-mate Pol Espargaro. He has amassed just over a third of Espargaro's points tally, and also trails

rookie Miguel Oliveira, who rides an RC16 run by the satellite Tech3 operation.

The impending split was announced on Monday, after KTM's home grand prix in Austria, with the manufacturer saying it had been a "mutual decision".

A different two-year MotoGP contract had been the talk of the paddock throughout the Red Bull Ring weekend, with Jorge Lorenzo and Ducati believed to have been exploring the possibility of a shock reunion in 2020, much to the private chagrin of Lorenzo's current employer Honda.

Three-time champion Lorenzo (left, on a Ducati in 2018), out injured since Assen, has so far not managed to come to grips with Honda's RC213V, finishing no higher than 11th in his seven grands prix on the same bike that Marc Marquez has been using to dominate the championship.

Ducati – and its technical chief Gigi Dall'Igna in particular – was believed to be open to reuniting with Lorenzo as early as 2020, which would have meant placing him at Pramac in place of Jack Miller.

Pramac itself made it clear it would prefer to keep Miller, a two-time podium finisher this season, and Lorenzo ultimately decided against continuing to pursue an early departure from Honda. Yet Lorenzo's agent Albert Valera has admitted that any extension to his current Honda deal would be "complicated", and it is understood that the rider is actively looking at other options for 2021, having already offered his services to the Petronas-backed Yamaha satellite team.

VALENTIN KHOROUNZHIY



IN THE HEADLINES

EX-FERRARI ENGINEER TO WEC

Ex-Kimi Raikkonen Ferrari Formula 1 race engineer Dave Greenwood has joined United Autosports as technical director ahead of its full-time graduation to the World Endurance Championship next season. The team has also recruited former Audi factory LMP1 driver Oliver Jarvis, who will step into the car at Fuji later this year.

DALY BACK FOR INDY FINALE

Conor Daly will return to Andretti Autosport for IndyCar's 2019 season finale at Laguna Seca. He drove for Andretti at the 2019 Indianapolis 500 and finished 10th on his first outing for the team. He then subbed for Max Chilton at Carlin for the oval races after the ex-Formula 1 driver opted against racing on the speedways.

FIRE HITS E-BIKES AGAIN

MotoE suffered another fire-related incident in Austria as points leader Niki Tuuli's bike ignited while being charged. The electric MotoGP support series was already forced to delay its opening race after a fire took hold in the charging station during a Jerez test earlier this year, destroying the series' entire fleet of bikes.

REBELLION REVEALS DRIVERS

Rebellion Racing has revealed its driver line-up for its single-car LMP1 entry in the 2019-20 World Endurance Championship season. Gustavo Menezes, Bruno Senna and newcomer Norman Nato got the nod over Felipe Nasr and Nathanael Berthon, who ran for the team during the pre-season 'prologue' test.

KOVALAINEN JOINS HAKKINEN

Heikki Kovalainen (left) will join fellow ex-McLaren Formula 1 driver Mika Hakkinen competing in the Suzuka 10 Hours. Kovalainen will share a Ferrari 488 GT3 with fellow Super GT champion Nick Cassidy and Nick Foster. Meanwhile, double F1 champ Hakkinen is making his first international racing start since 2011, and will partner Katsuaki Kubota and Hiroaki Ishiura in a McLaren 720S.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/COATES



Opportunity knocks

For Alex Albon to make the most of his surprise promotion to Red Bull, he needs to understand that he doesn't have to beat Max Verstappen

EDD STRAW

Last September Alex Albon thought he was signing up for a very different kind of electric career to the one in which he now finds himself. He had secured a deal to race in Formula E with e.dams, tacit acceptance that his Formula 1 dream was probably over. Yet in less than three weeks he will make his debut for one of the big three teams in grand prix racing. Nobody has found themselves in a winning car so soon after their F1 debut since Lewis Hamilton 12 years ago.

There's always a counterweight to such startling progress, in this case Pierre Gasly. While all the noises emanating from Red Bull suggested that the beleaguered Frenchman would stay on for the remainder of this season, his struggles in the race at Hockenheim and throughout the Hungaroring weekend doomed him.

While Gasly is undoubtedly a fast driver, two crashes in pre-season testing knocked his confidence and he's spent the time since often overdriving and largely off the pace. A solid weekend at Silverstone looked to have steadied the ship before he damaged a brand new chassis on Friday in Germany — although even then he recovered with a time that matched Max Verstappen in qualifying, only for it to be disallowed for a track-limits violation at the last corner. Since then, not a single green shoot.

Having given up on Gasly, Red Bull's logical move would seem to have been to promote Daniil Kvyat. He has had a strong season,

“Albon has every chance of fulfilling the supporting role in which Gasly fell short”

knows Red Bull Racing from his previous stint there and has plenty of experience. But Red Bull is already very familiar with Kvyat, so there's a certain logic to the decision to fling Albon in at the deep end. The 23-year-old is still raw, but if the team has framed the move to him properly it can mitigate the extreme pressure he faces.

Albon can be guaranteed a slot at Toro Rosso next season regardless of what happens, but he now has a shot at showing he can cut it at the front before that. If he is able to see the next nine races as a bonus, rather than a chance he can lose, that might take an edge off the pressure. And it will ensure that Red Bull has the maximum data to choose between Albon, Kvyat and (nominally) Gasly for next season.

If none cuts the mustard, then it can bring in a stop-gap from outside the programme. Driver evaluation is a factor in this

decision — if it was only about attacking Ferrari's second in the constructors' championship then Kvyat would be the safe option.

Albon came into single-seaters with a stellar reputation after excelling in karting, but he admits that “maybe it took me longer to get up to speed in single-seaters, I didn't come in with a bang”, even though he measured up fairly well to Charles Leclerc as a team-mate in GP3. He has come into F1 anything but undercooked, scoring points five times this season, grabbing the attention early on when he recovered from a huge accident in FP3 to finish 10th from the pits in China.

His standout race was overshadowed by team-mate Kvyat's podium finish, but in the German GP Albon was the superior Toro Rosso driver, running near the front for most of the race after making an early stop when the safety car first appeared. That earned him a rare maximum score in Autosport's driver ratings despite Kvyat's late slick gamble.

What has really impressed is Albon's attitude. He's bounced back from mistakes and not been afraid to admit that he has gone wrong. That capacity to understand errors, accept them and correct the problem is essential and is perhaps an area where Gasly has struggled. That mental strength will serve Albon well, as will his driving style.

Last year Gasly was a livewire driver, attacking the corners with aggressive rotation on the brakes right from the start of practice and making it work. He made few errors and found pace in the car quickly even when the rear end was a little unstable. But this is not a technique that works well with the Red Bull, in which he has spent much of the season braking later than Verstappen but not rotating the car effectively enough.

Albon's default approach is to be smoother, carrying speed into the corner in what might be termed a more Daniel Ricciardo-esque style. Verstappen has got the best out of the car by not overdriving it and Albon might find this to his advantage, even though he's had to adapt his approach to a Toro Rosso that has to be worked harder.

Albon doesn't need to beat Verstappen, and if he can remember that and set aside the natural instinct to beat his team-mate, he has every chance of fulfilling the supporting role in which Gasly fell short. If that happens, he could make this move permanent.

The mindset will be crucial, as it always is in elite sport. At every step of the way, athletes are subjected to ever-more intense mental tests. If Albon can remain the phlegmatic, robust character he has been so far this season, he might just thrive.

It will be difficult, since being team-mate to Verstappen is one of the toughest gigs in motorsport. But while Albon's promotion is premature, those who really have the all-round ability to succeed at the top have a habit of making the most of these opportunities. Cometh the hour, cometh the man. 🍀

YOUR SAY

It would be hard to imagine a circus less in tune with concerns about global warming than the F1 caravan descending on 22 global locations in 2020

STEVE SINGLETON

F1's fundamental problems remain

Yes, the past few races had their moments, but the problems in Formula 1 remain obvious:

- 1) Even the tight races are not photo-finishes between several competitors – like Monza in 1971 – comparing poorly with, say, MotoGP (right), horse racing and athletics. In fact, even Hungary was only an actual wheel-to-wheel dice at the front for one lap, as opposed to a tyre and DRS assisted pass four laps from the end.
- 2) It is barely road relevant, even looking forward, in a world where hybrids and carbonfibre are hardly cutting-edge and Formula E is attracting big manufacturer investment.
- 3) The audience for both F1 and even high-performance cars is ageing and gradually diminishing.
- 4) It would be hard to imagine a circus less in tune with concerns about global warming than the F1 caravan descending on 22 global locations in 2020 – even without updated front wings etc arriving at the last minute as passenger baggage.

And I say all this as someone who has been a motorsport fan in all its forms since 1971.

Steve Singleton
Yorkshire

Officialdom is not the issue

Ben Anderson is a fine racing driver. But was that a slight whiff of sour grapes I detected in his column in your 25 July issue?

The track-limit problem is not officialdom, it is the effect of the current obsession with health and safety on circuit design. It should not be possible to gain an advantage by exceeding track limits, but these now seem to be defined only by painted lines and this has necessitated the imposition of hard and fast rules when it comes to transgression.

There is no need for a judicial decision in Monaco. We didn't need judges to keep us in check on the original versions of Paddock Bend at Brands Hatch, Russell at Snetterton, Tower at Castle Combe, Knickerbrook at Oulton Park or Copse at Silverstone. The potential downside of any rash decision used to be a hefty repair bill – maybe even a visit to the medical



centre. Now we either have acres of asphalt runoff or low-speed chicanes emasculating all the major challenges and the downside is just a summons to race control and a time penalty.

There should be an inbuilt penalty for getting it wrong, but let's not go back to catch-fencing. How about bringing the gravel traps back to the track boundaries and let's stop replacing grass runoffs with astroturf, which seems remarkably grippy. If we need asphalt runoffs for safety reasons, let's find another way of encouraging drivers to respect track limits. A six-foot strip of Teflon at the immediate boundary might do it.

Andrew Nimmo
Teddington

Gratuitous use of fowl language


Regarding Darren Gilpin's comments (Letters, 1 August), I agree entirely. Except, as we are talking F1, it would be "minimising mass in the avian production unit, facilitating further weight and dimensional savings from the ovum output, thus reducing the risk of sub-optimal performance in structural integrity". Now, anyone for an omelette?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland, West Yorks


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THE 2020-21 PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB JUNIOR PROGRAMME

It's one of the largest prizes in UK motorsport. A two-year programme of extensive support – that includes financial backing, bespoke physical training, and technical advice – and a wealth of unique opportunities are available to the winner of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB Junior shootout.

And it's a scheme with a proven track record of success. Previous winners Josh Webster and Charlie Eastwood both claimed the Carrera Cup championship, while current Junior Dan Harper is firmly in title contention this year.

It's no wonder these drivers have achieved such success – with Eastwood on course to land a factory GT deal. Porsche meticulously assesses who would make its best junior from the dozens of applications received through a series of interviews and an intense shootout that tests everything from fitness to driving ability.

The £85,000 per season budget contribution for 2020 and 2021 may be the attention-grabbing figure, but the benefits of the scheme range far wider. The winner will get a training programme at the Porsche Human Performance facility that is specifically tailored to them. They will receive technical support from Porsche Motorsport engineers that know the second-generation Type 991 911 GT3 Cup car inside-out. And they will get the chance to represent Porsche at major motorsport events. Harper had the opportunity to drive the famous 'Moby Dick' Porsche 935 at the Goodwood Members' Meeting, sample the new Cayenne Turbo, a 718 Cayman GT4, the classic 909 Bergspyder and 908/3 at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, as well as competing in the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup alongside the British Grand Prix.

"I wish I could go back on for another two years!" says Harper. "I can't recommend it enough."

He picks out the technical support as being one of the most beneficial elements of the scheme – especially given it traditionally takes a while for drivers to get to grips with the Carrera Cup car.

"The two engineers that work with me – there's nothing they don't know," he says. "There's also lots of opportunities that you would never get if you're not on the Junior programme. I've got to drive some awesome cars and meet a lot of people."

"On race weekends, Porsche have a lot of customers and guests from Porsche Centres all over the UK and, as the Porsche Junior, I talk with them so it's really good for getting your name out there."

Harper urges aspiring GT drivers born between 30 November 1999 and 1 March 2003 to apply, no matter the level of their current experience. Three of his four fellow finalists had previously raced GT machinery, while Harper's only prior racing came in Ginetta Junior.

"I was the only one to come from junior racing and it shows that as long as you can perform and they see potential in you, you're in with a shout," he says.

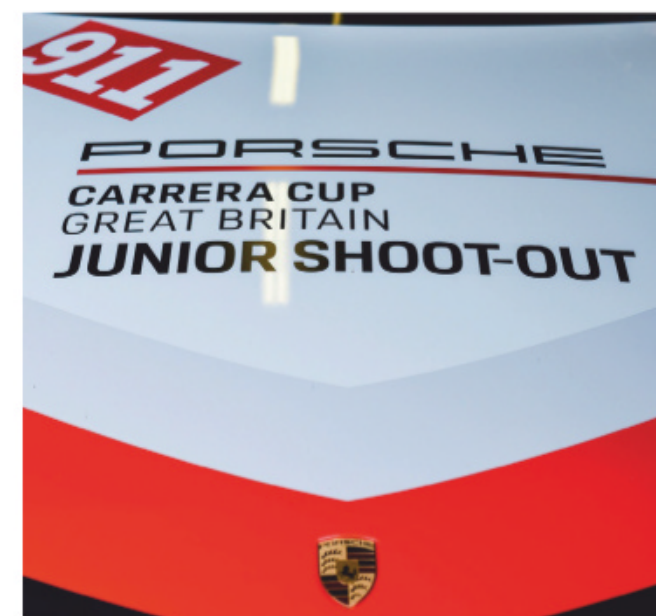
But he came very close to not entering at all. "I knew Charlie Eastwood quite well and knew his two years as the scholar were coming to an end but I had no intention to go for it because I was 16 and had no experience," Harper adds. "He messaged me the night before the entries closed saying had I entered the Porsche scholarship and I said no. He said, 'Don't be stupid, even if you don't win it, it will be an amazing chance to get your name out there'. So I decided to enter. It shows that even if you doubt yourself, there's no reason not to enter."

For your chance to follow in Harper's footsteps, make sure you don't make the same mistake he nearly did, and apply now.



PORSCHE

CARRERA CUP GREAT BRITAIN



HOW TO APPLY

If you were born between 30 November 1999 and 1 March 2003, hold a minimum of a National A race licence and have competed in no more than one Porsche Carrera Cup GB weekend you are eligible to apply for the Porsche Carrera Cup GB Junior programme. In order to apply, head to porsche.com/uk/pccgb-junior-programme and complete the application form along with a letter of no more than 300 words explaining your interest in the programme and your racing ambitions. **The closing date is 10 September 2019.**

porsche.com/uk/pccgb-junior-programme

PORSCHE 917 AT 50

THE GREATEST • UNDER THE SKIN • RESTORING 001 • RECORD RUN • KREMER'S CAR • PIECH'S GENIUS • 917 IN HISTORICS



PORSCHE'S 917: THE GREATEST?

The iconic sports-racer is now 50 years old. Time to look back at just how special Porsche's first Le Mans winner really was

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES



S

ome cars have scored more victories. Others have had longer careers. But few – if any – can match the impact of Porsche's first Le Mans 24 Hours winner, the 917.

Being the greatest in anything means more than just numbers. How do people *feel* about something? How did it move the game on? Does it still stop people in their tracks?

The 917 wasn't just a milestone car for Porsche, it was a seminal machine for motorsport. The project, started in 1968, ended up encompassing many new motorsport technologies or cutting-edge ideas, from drilled brake discs to turbocharging via the use of exotic materials. There also can't be many cars that have essentially been banned from two international categories.

Before success a big hurdle often needs to be overcome – essential for a good hero story – and the 917 had that too. Aerodynamically unstable when it first appeared, it gained a fearsome reputation early on: way faster than anything else but too much of a handful. When that was overcome, the car defeated rivals from Ferrari, Alfa Romeo and Matra, only to be outlawed by the introduction of three-litre world sportscar regulations for 1972.

Porsche then teamed up with Penske to switch to Can-Am, but perfecting turbocharging proved a tough challenge. The project came close to being postponed before a late breakthrough allowed

George Follmer to steamroller the opposition, including the hitherto dominant McLarens. The 917/30 and Mark Donohue perfected the theme, creating arguably the ultimate unrestricted race car, in 1973. It was so good Can-Am forever turned its back on the unlimited ethos that had made it so special in the first place.

Fifty years since the 917 appeared, here's our tribute to one of motorsport's true legends.

STEPPING INTO THE UNKNOWN

Porsche had largely been restricted to class wins in sportscar racing in the 1950s and 1960s, punching above its weight with small-engined machines. The move to three-litre sports-prototypes/five-litre GTs in the world sportscar championship for 1968 brought the small German company to the forefront and the 907s and 908s were race winners, but Porsche lost the title – and, crucially, Le Mans – to JW Automotive's ageing Ford GT40s.

When the FIA reduced the number of cars needed to homologate a model into the five-litre Group 4 category, Porsche's Le Mans-obsessed Ferdinand Piech saw an opportunity. In just a few months, and in secrecy, Porsche designed and built 25 4.5-litre flat-12 racing cars, and the 917 was unveiled to the world at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1969. >>



The car followed Porsche's low-drag, lightweight philosophy, with a 1.3mm glassfibre skin bonded to an aluminium frame. The engine had been given the type number 912, the same designation for Porsche's four-cylinder 'sub-911' road car, to throw people off the scent. Strictly speaking it was a 180-degree V12 – the pistons were not opposed as in a flat 'boxer' engine because the connecting rods shared the same crankshaft journal – and one of the keys to the engine's success was the central drive from the crankshaft and a new lubrication system, which helped reduce vibration and save weight. The engine had to be installed at a particular angle, estimated to be around seven degrees, and three or four people were needed to get each engine aligned in the car.

All parts were ordered off the drawing board and in the first tests the air-cooled engine produced 540bhp.

Power was not the problem. But instability was, and all the drivers complained as soon as the 917 hit the track at the Le Mans test day in April. The cars were so fast that they were entering a realm unexplored by racing cars and were starting to lift off the road. Earlier Porsche long-tails had sometimes shown worrying high-speed handling traits, but the extra power of the 917s brought the issue into sharp focus. Windtunnel work had been conducted, but the aim had been to minimise drag – downforce was not yet the designers' obsession.

With the highly competitive three-litre 350bhp 908 also on its books, Porsche found it difficult to get drivers enthused about the new 4.5-litre monster. In practice at Spa in May, lead driver Jo Siffert lapped 6.7 seconds faster than the best 908 in the new 917, but chose to drive the 908 in the race. He and Brian Redman won, while Gerhard Mitter/Udo Schutz failed to finish in their 917. It was easy to miss a shift and over-rev the engine, though some felt Mitter did it deliberately to avoid driving the car in the wet on such a difficult circuit.

At the fearsome Nurburgring, Porsche couldn't persuade its drivers to take on the 917 challenge and BMW stopped Armin Hahne and Dieter Quester from doing so too. The intrepid Australian Frank Gardner and Brit David Piper stepped in and brought the car home eighth. Siffert and Redman won again in a 908.

The high-speed Le Mans circuit was much better suited to the 917. Porsche's primary aim was to win the 24 Hours, but it attracted a lot of criticism when privateer sportscar driver John Woolfe lost control of his 917 on the first lap and perished in the subsequent crash.

The two lead 917s fared better, at least to begin with. Rolf Stommelen scored a storming pole position and Vic Elford/Richard Attwood nursed their example to within three hours of victory before the bell-housing cracked. Porsche's mammoth onslaught again lost to JWA's GT40, a car conceived five years earlier.

By the end of the season the 917 had racked up its first major victory – at the Osterreichting – but the car's inherent instability remained. Many thought the chassis was flexing. Porsche wanted to push on with development, but also decided that getting someone else to run the cars at the circuit might be a good idea. It approached JWA.

The crucial test at Zeltweg has become famous – and somewhat controversial, as people from both JWA and Porsche claim credit for the subsequent breakthrough. JWA's John Horsman was certainly key in solving the aerodynamic problems – spotting the lack of dead bugs at the rear, indicating a lack of airflow there – but Porsche had also brought aluminium sheets with the expectation that bodywork changes would need to be tried. Porsche bringing the open 917 PA Can-Am car, which had a higher tail and the drivers preferred, also pointed the way to the solution.

The outcome was a higher rear-end and a more stable car. "After three laps I had shed four seconds," recalls driver Kurt Ahrens Jr. "We knew that was what Porsche would have to work on. Aerodynamics was the crucial point."

The new 917K (kurzheck or short tail) body shape appeared for the start of the 1970 season, just in time to meet Ferrari's own five-litre sports-racing powerhouse, the 512S.

FASTER THAN FORMULA 1

JWA made several changes when it received the cars, including strengthening certain areas and using flexible piping to carry the oil, rather than the chassis tubes. There was even a small use of carbonfibre lattice. Porsche's computer was used to set up the differential and gear ratios and the 917 was slightly lighter, and a bit more powerful, than its Ferrari rival. With the aerodynamic problems solved, the 917 became the car to beat for the next two seasons.

Although much-improved, the car wasn't easy to get the best out of, such was its performance. "The K wasn't easy to drive, but it wasn't that difficult," reckons Elford, who drove all versions of the 917. "It needed respect because it was very powerful. It wasn't twitchy, but you had to know what you were doing. Everything about it was beyond what most people were capable of getting to."

There was also internal politics. JWA boss John Wyer was unimpressed to see a factory-tended 917K, running under the Porsche Salzburg banner, arrive at the Daytona 24 Hours season opener, for Elford and Ahrens. The Salzburg team, and the Martini squad in 1971, was essentially a second works team, Piech using it to keep JWA on its toes as well as running new developments if Wyer didn't want them.

JWA's Pedro Rodriguez and Leo Kinnunen, joined by Redman, won Daytona, but Sebring was a disaster. Porsche brought a new design of front wheel hub that hadn't been fully tested. JWA fitted them, but the hubs failed, contributing to Porsche losing the race to Ferrari and – perhaps more importantly – making Wyer a little less enthusiastic about bolting on new parts.

After Rodriguez's famous virtuoso wet-weather performance at Brands Hatch, a new 4.9-litre engine arrived at Monza in April. It provided extra torque and 20bhp more power, but sprung an oil leak in

practice, so JWA decided to revert to the 4.5-litre. At which point, the engine was offered to – and accepted by – Porsche Salzburg for Elford/Ahrens. They duly led, only to be thwarted by a puncture and related damage, leaving Rodriguez to pull off another fine victory from a Ferrari 2-3-4.

A similar thing happened at Le Mans. JWA decided against the new long tail, Redman still regarding it as insufficiently stable, only to see Elford storm to pole in the car in Porsche Salzburg colours, though in truth there was little to choose between the 917L and 917K on lap time. The 917 v 512 duel was perhaps at its peak point. Porsche-Ferrari-Porsche-Ferrari-Porsche-Ferrari-Porsche-Ferrari-Porsche-Ferrari was the look of the grid, immortalised by the film *Le Mans*, with the best of the rest being a works Matra MS650 in 14th, 12.4s off pole.

Remarkably, the eventual winning car of Richard Attwood and Hans Herrmann qualified even slower, but survived a race of attrition to take Porsche's long-awaited first Le Mans win.

Despite his own car's failure, Elford picks out the 1970 24 Hours as one of his best 917 moments. "It was the ultimate Le Mans car," he says of the 917L. "The first couple of times down the Mulsanne Straight I thought it was a lot shorter! At the kink I was doing over 240mph, and the first couple of times I was lifting a little bit. I convinced myself it was going to be flat-out and it was. When I came out the other side it was easy – I'd not changed the attitude of the car at all. With a lift I had been changing the balance of the car, when I went without lifting it was glued."

"It rained a lot that year and I was flat-out through there in the rain and the dark with no problem. That's probably my ultimate 917 experience."

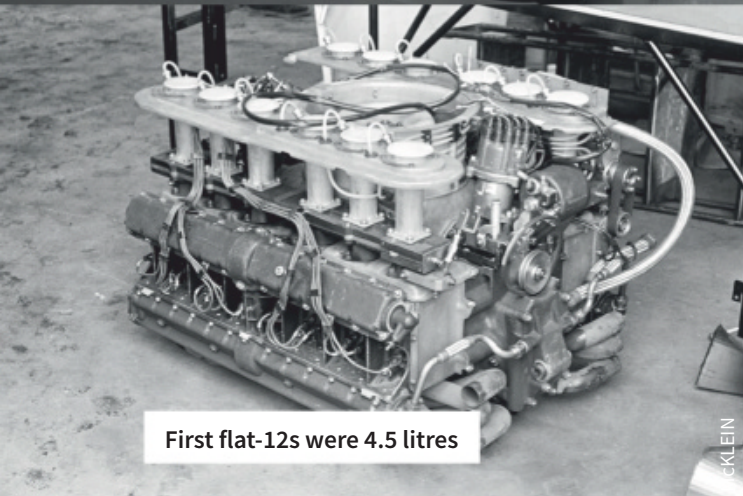
A lap time comparison with Formula 1 underlines just how fast the five-litre sportscar monsters were in 1970. At Monza, Elford's fastest 917 lap in the 1000Km was 0.4s faster than the best lap that would be set in the Italian Grand Prix four months later, while Rodriguez's 3m16.5s during the Spa 1000Km was a remarkable 10.9s faster than March driver Chris Amon's fastest time in the Belgian GP. The more agile F1 cars were quicker at Brands Hatch and Watkins Glen, but even there the margin was never large. >>

"EVERYTHING ABOUT THE 917 WAS BEYOND WHAT MOST DRIVERS WERE CAPABLE OF GETTING TO"



Geneva launch, 1969

MCKLEIN

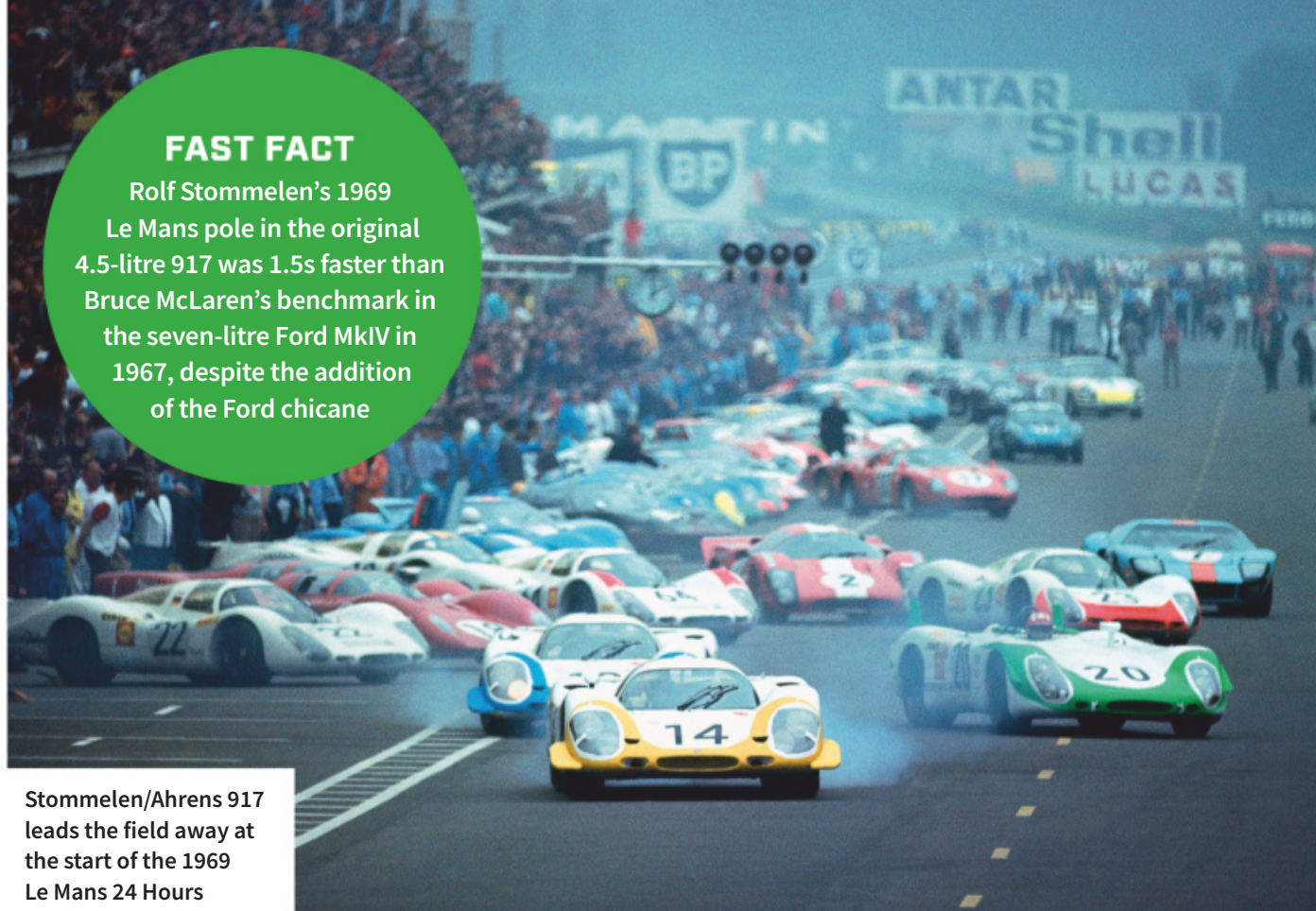


First flat-12s were 4.5 litres

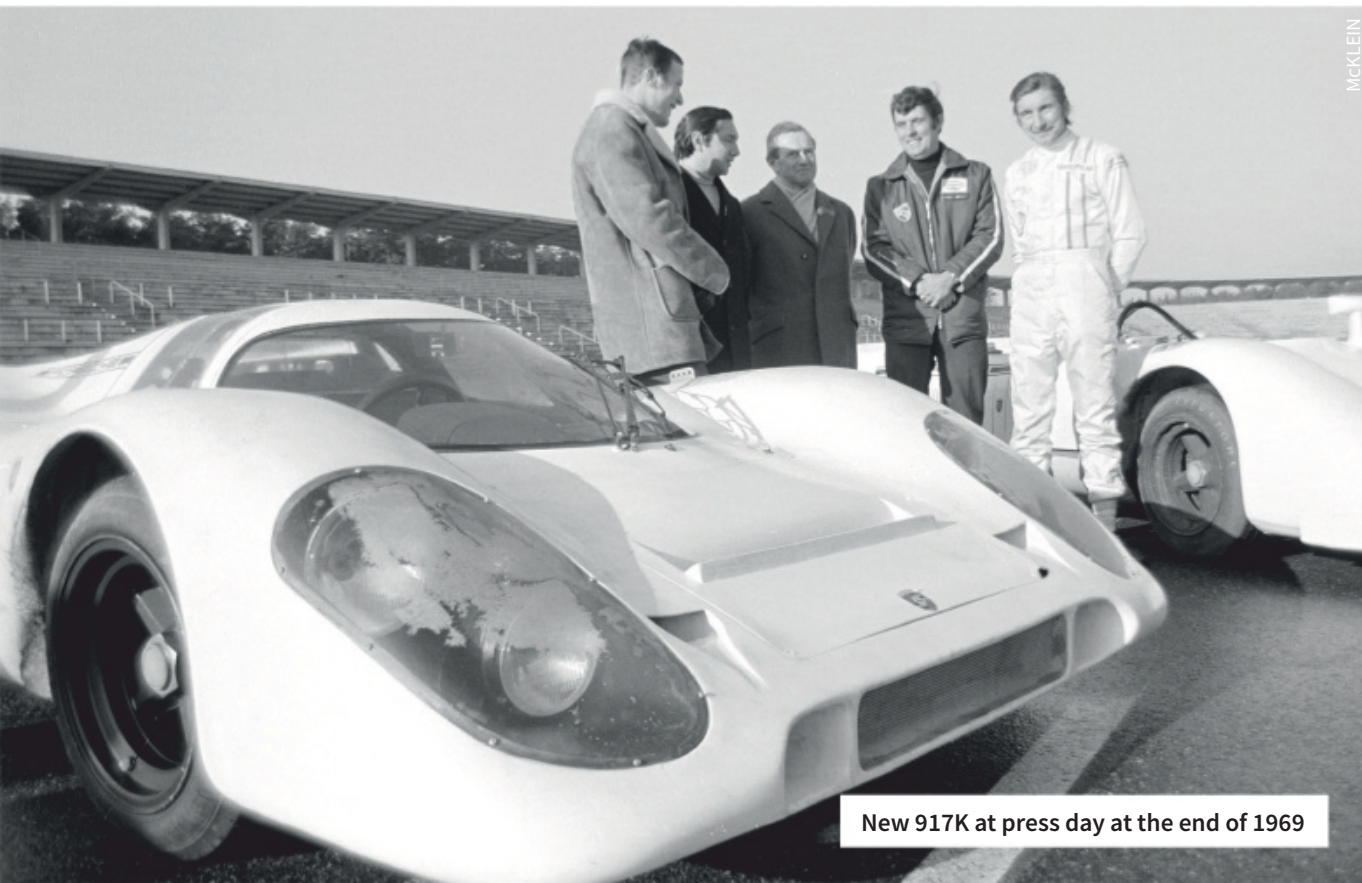
MCKLEIN

FAST FACT

Rolf Stommelen's 1969 Le Mans pole in the original 4.5-litre 917 was 1.5s faster than Bruce McLaren's benchmark in the seven-litre Ford MkIV in 1967, despite the addition of the Ford chicane



Stommelen/Ahrens 917 leads the field away at the start of the 1969 Le Mans 24 Hours



New 917K at press day at the end of 1969

MCKLEIN

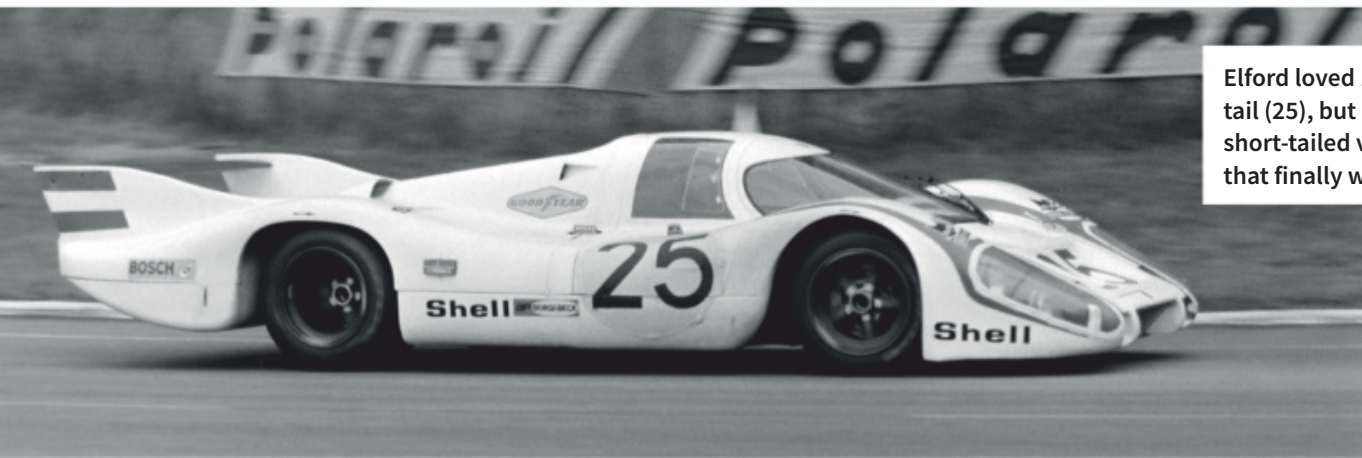
The rivalry between Siffert (24) and JWA 'team-mate' Rodriguez gets intense at Spa, '70



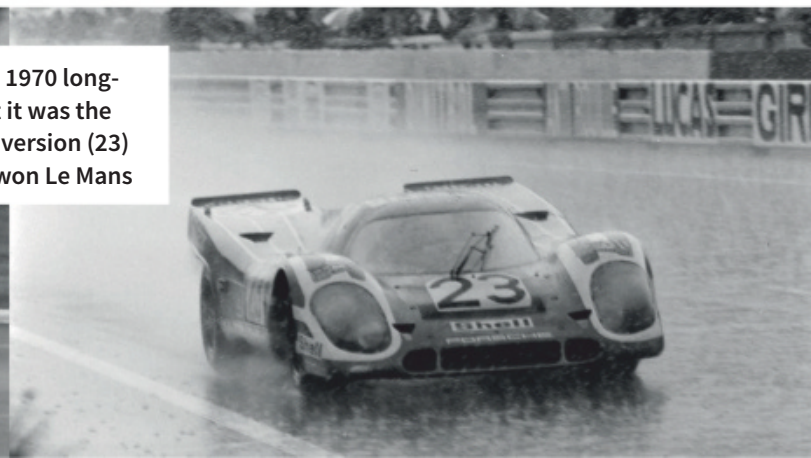
Kinnunen, Rodriguez, Redman, Siffert



Rodriguez was masterful on way to victory at Brands in 1970



Elford loved 1970 long-tail (25), but it was the short-tailed version (23) that finally won Le Mans



MORE MOTORSPORT EXPLORATION

Early on in the project, it had been announced that three-litre regulations would come into force in 1972, but Porsche pressed on with development on multiple fronts throughout 1970 and 1971. Partly that was because of the remarkable pioneering momentum and drive Piech's team in Zuffenhausen had, and partly it was due to Ferrari.

In the 1970 season finale at the Österreichring, Jacky Ickx had outpaced the 917s in the new 512M. Faulty electrics handed the race to Porsche, but victory in the non-championship Kyalami 9 Hours underlined the speed of the new Ferrari.

Both Porsche and JWA continued working on different aerodynamic improvements, the engine was stretched to five litres and there was even experimentation with anti-lock brakes and a sucker system utilising the engine's cooling fan, though neither was ever raced. As was the norm for the time, the wheels and tyres grew larger too – punctures were not uncommon as tyre technology moved on rapidly.

Some drivers complained of spongy brakes and Porsche developed the brake discs extensively during the 917's life, but Elford recalls the car being superior to its competition in this area. "I never had any trouble with brakes," he says. "They were always outstanding."

"I only did it in practice or qualifying a couple of times, but at Le Mans in 1970 at Mulsanne Corner, when you were coming down from 240mph I could brake at about 270 yards. Nothing could get even close."

Porsche pioneered drilled brake discs on the 908/3 (successfully used instead of the bigger car at the Targa Florio and Nurburgring) and 917, underlining that the team was at the cutting edge of racing technology.

Elford also gives a fine example of how far the car's handling had come by the Buenos Aires 1000Km, which opened the 1971 season: "Pedro and I were having a really great race. There was a pretty fast right, a pretty fast left, a long straight and then a 180-degree right-hander a bit like the Parabolica at Monza. I could close just a bit, but not enough to go by. Eventually I thought I'd try the outside [into the right-hander]. I made to go to the inside, Pedro moved a little bit to close the door and I went to the outside. Because he was a gentleman he gave me room and I was able to drive around the outside of him on this 150mph corner. I don't think either of us would have wanted to do that in any other car."

By Le Mans, Porsche had come up with the final iteration of the long-tail, which the drivers considered stable enough that even Wyer agreed to run two. The three examples qualified 1-2-3, but all three retired. Porsche nevertheless scored a 1-2, with the winning Martini 917K of Helmut Marko and Gijs van Lennep sporting a lightweight magnesium alloy chassis.

Interestingly, despite Rodriguez's pole being 6s quicker than the 1970 best, Elford doesn't feel the 1971 long-tail was significantly better: "When I went back in 1971 I didn't feel any difference. The top speed and handling felt the same."

"THE LONG-TAILED CAR WOULD HAVE BEEN ABSOLUTELY PHENOMENAL AT SPA. THE BALANCE WAS PERFECT"

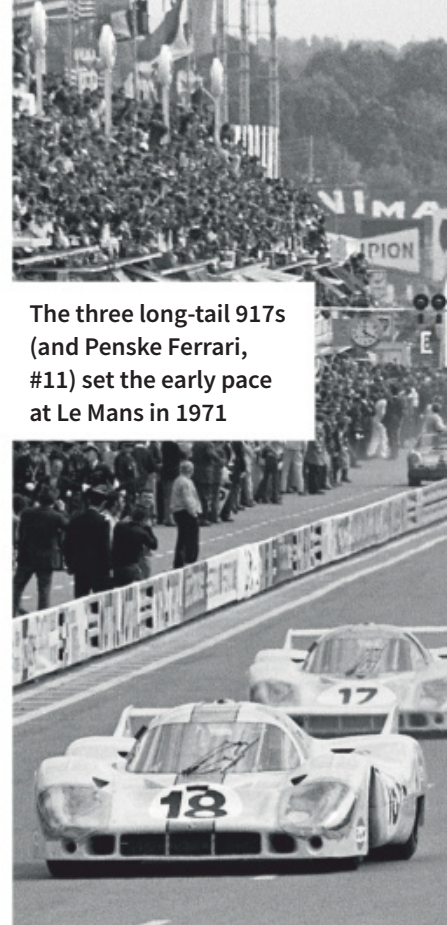
But Jackie Oliver, who went even faster on the Le Mans test day, believes the 1971 long-tail was so good it could have been run at other venues, such as Spa or Monza. "I spoke to John Horsman and he said John Wyer was never very happy with the long-tail car – he wasn't even happy that it went to Le Mans," recalls Oliver. "The long-tailed car would have been absolutely phenomenal at Spa. Maybe Wyer thought the cars were competitive enough. But it's a shame that it never ran anywhere else except at Le Mans. The balance was perfect."

The result of the 1971 Spa 1000Km probably reveals why Wyer didn't feel the need to take the risk. Rodriguez/Oliver led home Siffert/Derek Bell in a formation finish, *four* laps clear of the field...

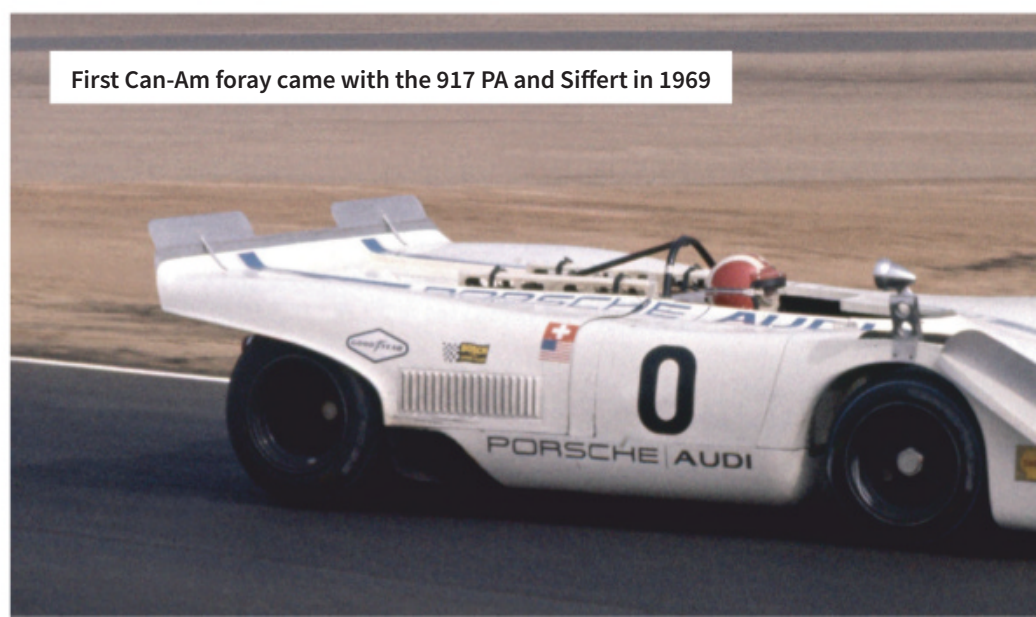
By the end of 1971, the 917 had racked up 15 world sportscar championship victories, including two Le Mans wins. The regulation changes for 1972 meant Porsche had to look elsewhere to continue the project, but Piech already knew where the 917 was headed. >>



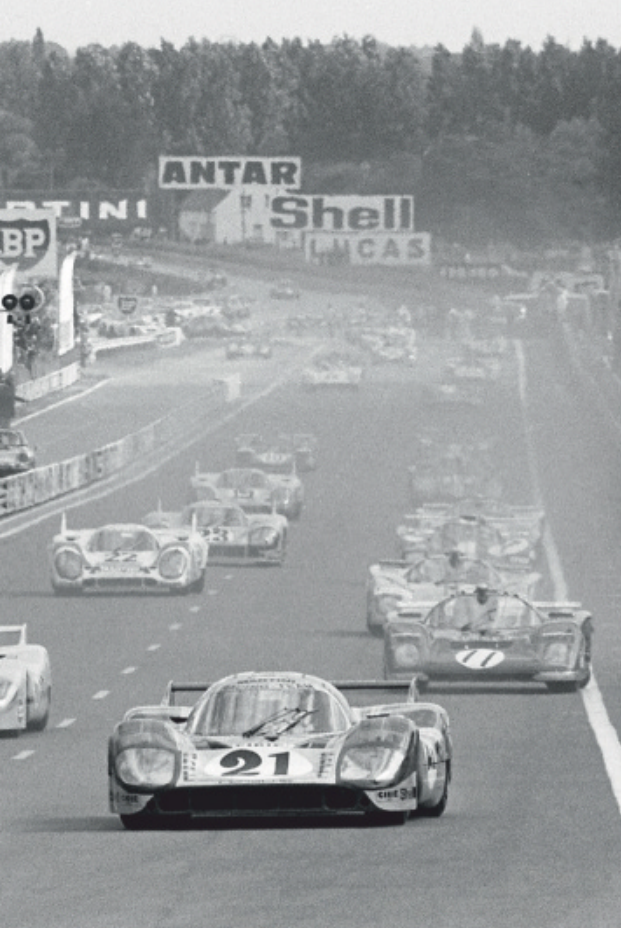
1971 Le Mans winner set distance record



The three long-tail 917s (and Penske Ferrari, #11) set the early pace at Le Mans in 1971



First Can-Am foray came with the 917 PA and Siffert in 1969



Short-tail, long-tail and infamous 'Pink Pig' share garage space ahead of the 1971 24 Hours



TOP FIVE 917 DRIVERS



1 PEDRO RODRIGUEZ

Of the 917's 15 world sportscar championship victories, Rodriguez was at the wheel on eight occasions. And those included several of the most virtuoso 917 performances, such as almost single-handedly defeating Ferrari at Monza in 1970 and charging back to win at the Osterreichring in 1971. Rodriguez, who normally had a small edge over his rival and team-mate Jo Siffert, also put in one of the greatest wet-weather drives of all time in a 917, dancing to a five-lap victory with superb finesse at Brands Hatch in 1970.



2 MARK DONOHUE

The Penske team and Donohue in particular were instrumental in making Porsche's turbocharged Can-Am programme a success. Donohue was denied the chance to reap the rewards of his efforts in 1972 by a huge crash, instead helping stand-in George Follmer to the crown in the 917/10. But he made amends the following season, pummelling the opposition into submission with six wins from eight starts in the 917/30. Donohue led a Porsche 1-2-3-4 in the standings, a situation that contributed to the rules being changed for 1974.



3 JO SIFFERT

Siffert was Porsche's lead driver in 1969 and, along with Kurt Ahrens Jr, gave the then-undeveloped 917 its first championship race win in Austria that season. Siffert and Brian Redman were then 'Porsche's' drivers brought in to the JW Automotive operation and didn't always feel that things went their way in 1970. Nevertheless, Siffert duelled with Rodriguez for supremacy in the team, their battles occasionally getting too close for comfort, such as through Spa's Eau Rouge in 1970. Four 917 wins was Siffert's final tally.



4 VIC ELFORD

If any driver echoed the 917 godfather Ferdinand Piech's approach it was Elford. Both men were keen to push the boundaries and find the next big step. That's why Elford often ended up going for the faster-but-not-yet-developed elements of the 917, such as the long-tail and the early 4.9-litre engine. Elford was a constant thorn in the side of the JWA cars, far more so than his single 917 success at the Sebring 12 Hours in 1971 suggests.



5 BRIAN REDMAN

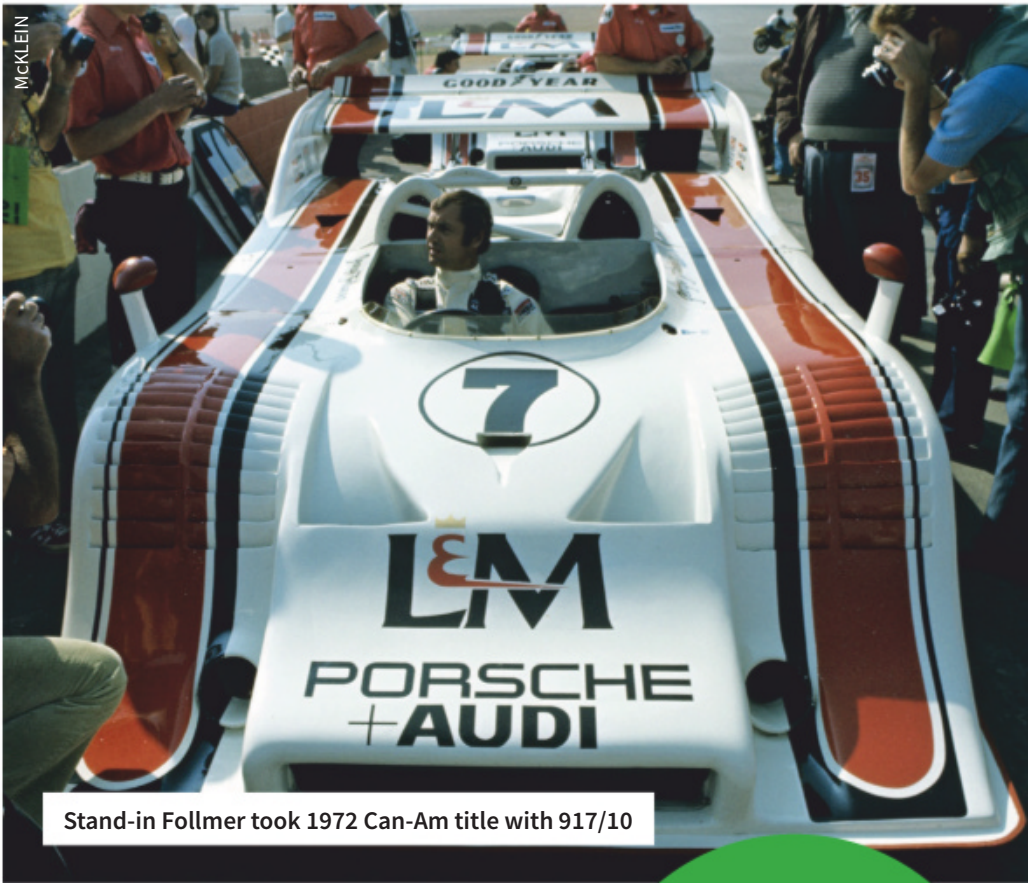
Rolf Stommelen and Jackie Oliver could both have taken this spot, partly thanks to two of the greatest Le Mans laps in 1969 and 1971 respectively, but Redman just snatches it. He wasn't the luckiest driver in the Porsche camp in 1970 – and co-driver Siffert blew the engine when a Le Mans victory was on the cards – but still he won three times, including at the fearsome Spa and Osterreichring circuits. Redman would probably have achieved more in 917s had he not prematurely (and temporarily) retired from racing at the end of 1970.

MAJOR VICTORIES

1969	
Osterreichring 1000Km (WSC) Jo Siffert/Kurt Ahrens	
1970	
Daytona 24 Hours (WSC)	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen/Brian Redman
Brands Hatch 1000Km (WSC)	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen
Monza 1000Km (WSC)	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen
Spa 1000Km (WSC)	Jo Siffert/Brian Redman
Le Mans 24 Hours (WSC)	Richard Attwood/Hans Herrmann
Watkins Glen 6 Hours (WSC)	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen
Osterreichring 1000Km (WSC) Jo Siffert/Brian Redman	
1971	
Buenos Aires 1000Km (WSC)	Jo Siffert/Derek Bell
Daytona 24 Hours (WSC)	Pedro Rodriguez/Jackie Oliver
Sebring 12 Hours (WSC)	Vic Elford/Gerard Larrousse
Monza 1000Km (WSC)	Pedro Rodriguez/Jackie Oliver
Spa 1000Km (WSC)	Pedro Rodriguez/Jackie Oliver
Le Mans 24 Hours (WSC)	Helmut Marko/Gijs van Lennep
Osterreichring 1000Km (WSC) Pedro Rodriguez/Richard Attwood	
1972	
Road Atlanta (Can-Am)	George Follmer (917/10)
Mid-Ohio (Can-Am)	George Follmer (917/10)
Road America (Can-Am)	George Follmer (917/10)
Edmonton (Can-Am)	Mark Donohue (917/10)
Laguna Seca (Can-Am)	George Follmer (917/10)
Riverside (Can-Am)	George Follmer (917/10)
1973	
Mosport (Can-Am)	Charlie Kemp (917/10)
Road Atlanta (Can-Am)	George Follmer (917/10)
Watkins Glen (Can-Am)	Mark Donohue (917/30)
Mid-Ohio (Can-Am)	Mark Donohue (917/30)
Road America (Can-Am)	Mark Donohue (917/30)
Edmonton (Can-Am)	Mark Donohue (917/30)
Laguna Seca (Can-Am)	Mark Donohue (917/30)
Riverside (Can-Am)	Mark Donohue (917/30)
Porsche 917 drivers also won six consecutive European Interserie titles – Jurgen Neuhaus (1970), Leo Kinnunen (1971-73), Herbert Muller (1974-75).	

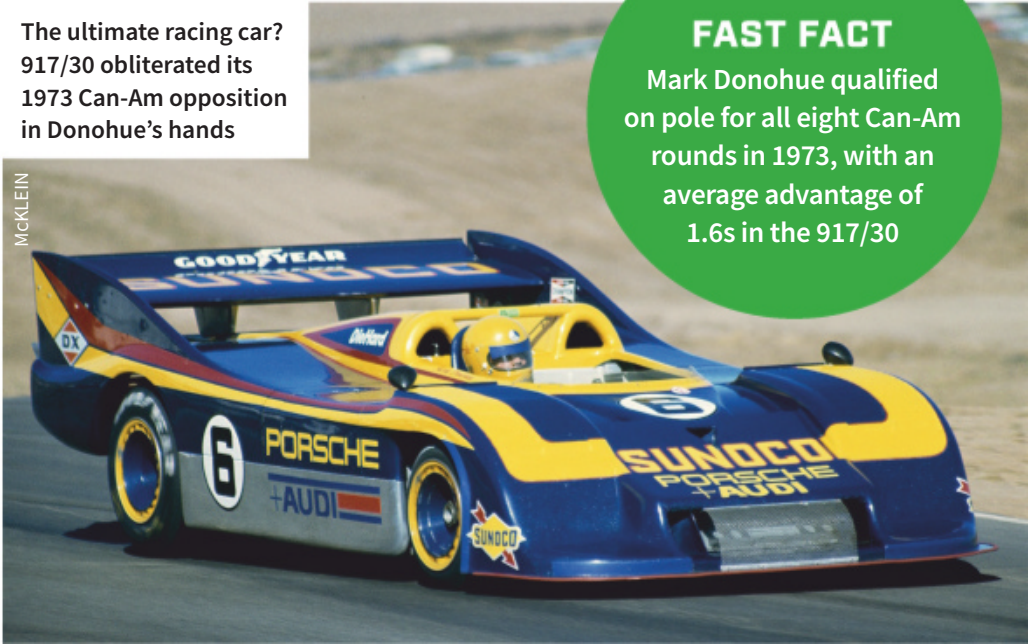


Piech was the driving force behind the 917 project



Stand-in Follmer took 1972 Can-Am title with 917/10

The ultimate racing car? 917/30 obliterated its 1973 Can-Am opposition in Donohue's hands



FAST FACT

Mark Donohue qualified on pole for all eight Can-Am rounds in 1973, with an average advantage of 1.6s in the 917/30

BLOWING CAN-AM APART

There had been talks with Wyer about a Can-Am programme for 1971, with the aim of being a more serious assault in 1972. Relations between Piech and Wyer, however, were always strained and the deal didn't happen. Siffert ran an open normally-aspirated 917, loaned by the factory, to fourth in the championship, but McLaren remained the team to beat.

As Porsche's attention was beginning to turn to Can-Am, it had found itself facing a modified 512M in selected 1971 world sportscar championship races. Penske's blue Ferrari appeared at four rounds and outpaced the regular 917Ks every time – only at Le Mans did it struggle against the special long-tails. Clearly impressed, Porsche did a deal with Roger Penske, and ace driver-engineer Mark Donohue and Penske's Don Cox joined the Can-Am programme. They would prove crucial in persuading Porsche that bigger was better when it came to wings and downforce, a very different philosophy to that which Porsche had begun the 917 project with in 1968–69. The Penske team, with its knowledge of US tracks and wider tyres, also made changes to the suspension geometry and pick-up points.

The big technical challenge was developing turbocharging for road racing. Porsche knew it had to find more power to match the ever-bigger American V8s in Can-Am and, after experimenting with a 16-cylinder unit, it chose the forced induction route.

Turbocharging brought new problems, chiefly dealing with the heat and throttle response. Blowing the five-litre flat-12 gave high power straight away, but harnessing it was another matter. Two smaller turbos (as opposed to one large one) and a pop-off valve helped things slightly, but once the engine was in a car it struggled to even start. And when it did run, the throttle was like a switch, with a time delay.

An engine was shipped to Penske early in 1972 but it proved troublesome before blowing up, and Donohue flew to Weissach to help solve the problems. The American provided the spark of the answer to the starting problem – to run the engine normally aspirated. Testing without the boost at idle and mid-range, with different throttle levels, provided lots of data that Bosch then used to find the right settings for the fuel injection

pump – essentially making the engine run leaner at low boost pressures. Suction-operated valves were also added to suck in air at low manifold pressures. Now Porsche – and Penske – had a 900bhp five-litre engine that would start *and* was relatively driveable. Combined with various other developments, including beefier brakes, the new open-bodied and bewinged 917/10 was ready to take on McLaren in Can-Am.

A sticking manifold pressure valve delayed poleman Donohue in the Mosport opener and allowed Denny Hulme's McLaren to win, before the project suffered a major blow when Donohue had a huge crash in testing at Road Atlanta when the rear bodywork flew off. Donohue survived but was forced to miss several races and George Follmer was thrown in at the deep end with the new turbo car.

With Donohue's help, Follmer rose to the task. He narrowly missed pole at Road Atlanta, took a fortuitous victory on race day, and Hulme won again at Watkins Glen in an impressive McLaren showing, but thereafter it was almost all Porsche. Follmer won four of the remaining six rounds – with the returning Donohue also taking a victory – to comfortably become champion. McLaren withdrew from Can-Am.

The 917/10's handling was never brilliant, however, and Porsche pressed on with building a new car. The 917/30 would be the ultimate iteration, with better aerodynamics, a longer wheelbase and 5.4-litre turbo capable of producing 1500bhp but normally run at 'only' 1100bhp.

Even the combination of rising star Jody Scheckter and a turbocharged 917/10 was incapable of truly challenging Donohue and the 917/30. Donohue took pole at the Mosport opener by 1.7s in a Porsche 1-2-3-4-5. An off in traffic cost Donohue the race (won by Charlie Kemp's 917/10) and he suffered a fuel valve failure at Road Atlanta (won by Follmer's 917/10), but he won the remaining six rounds. Such was the Porsche domination (during an oil crisis), that fuel consumption rules were introduced for 1974. Porsche might have been able to meet even that

challenge, but got the distinct impression it wasn't welcome.

No-holds-barred Can-Am was over.

The 917 continued to enjoy success in the lower-level European Interserie but 1973 was the zenith of the programme. In Peter Morgan's book, *Porsche 917: The winning formula*, long-time Porsche engineer and race manager Peter Falk said: "I think the 917/30 was really the best racing car we ever built. Better than all the cars that followed, even the 962."

Looking at the cars, it's easy to suggest the 917/30 wasn't really the same model as the early coupes, but Elford disagrees. "The only difference was colossal power and speed," says Elford, who made an Interserie appearance in the factory's experimental 917/30 at Hockenheim in 1973 to liven up a series that was being dominated by the 917/10s of Kinnunen and Willi Kauhsen,

"I'd never driven a turbo car before and hadn't raced for a couple of years so we had a test at Weissach," says Elford, who was run by Norbert Singer. "I felt instantly at home, it was just so beautiful.

"Norbert said, 'They keep on turning the screw up, how much power would you like?' I said I didn't mind so he said, 'How about 1250bhp?'

"It was tricky at the chicanes at first because I guess the delay in the reaction time of the turbo was about 0.2s and at 150mph you go a long way in 0.2s! That took a bit of getting used to."

Elford took pole and won. He had already mastered left-foot braking so had a novel approach to starting the race: "I asked Norbert, because of the delay, if I could keep a foot on the brake and a foot on the throttle, to keep the turbo pressure up. He said other drivers hadn't liked that but that I could try. So at the start I had my left foot on the brake and the throttle flat on the floor. The moment the flag came out all I did was take my foot off the brake and was about 50 metres ahead by the first corner.

"I took the [pre-chicane] Ostkurve in third and was changing up on the exit at 150mph. If I chose I could leave two black marks down the road –

that's how much power there was. It was probably the most exciting car I've ever driven, and not in a bad, dangerous way. As long as you were careful and knew what you were doing it was wonderful to drive."

So what was Elford's favourite version? "All of them," he fires back. "Even including the first

nasty monster because it was so much quicker than anything else. We never had to 'race' against anything. We simply waited until we drove around the next corner and then drove past."

ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

To top off its record the 917 had one last hurrah in August 1975. Dusted off, Penske's 917/30 set a closed circuit land speed record at Talladega (see page 26), more than six years after the original car first appeared.

In that time motorsport had changed a great deal. Just comparing the nose of the high, soft-edged original 917 to the lower, squarer version of the 1971 Le Mans long-tail demonstrates the aerodynamic strides. The 917 was at the vanguard of an era before ever-tighter restriction started pushing designers to pursue marginal gains. Its impact on Porsche is almost immeasurable, setting off a sequence of success at Le Mans that still leaves the marque well clear on the all-time wins list. The 936 that won the 24 Hours three times was closely related to the Can-Am 917.

The 917 also left a big legacy beyond the sport. Porsche used much of the knowledge gained through the project in its road cars, particularly in the areas of lightweight materials, brakes and turbocharging.

Porsche car collection manager Alexander Klein agrees the 917 represents a special time in motorsport history. "In its era it was *the* car," he says. "The period was colourful, racing was dangerous and it was a car that doubled the horsepower of its predecessor. We reached speeds that had not been reached before. It was a step into a new era. It was the first time that, without aerodynamics, nothing worked anymore."

The extraordinary sight and sound of the 917 in all its forms also adds to the legend, giving the car a higher status than its mere numbers – impressive as they are – suggest.

Porsche's own 956/962, the 1988 McLaren MP4/4 and the Ferrari F2004 were *better* racing cars, but the 917 is the *greatest*. 🏆

"IT WAS THE BEST RACING CAR WE EVER BUILT. BETTER THAN THE CARS THAT FOLLOWED, INCLUDING THE 962"



UNDER THE SKIN

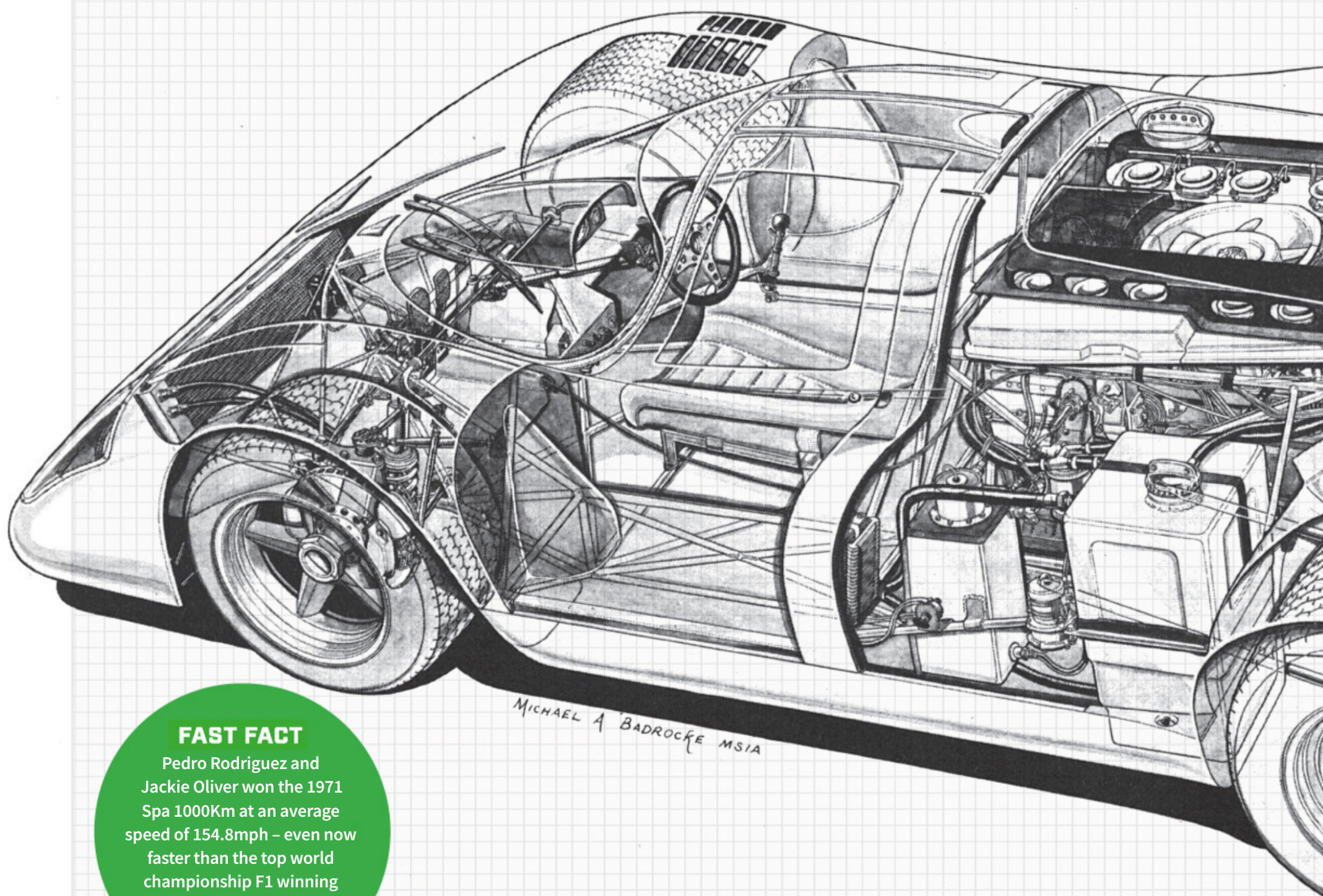
During the 917's competitive life Porsche continued to develop and experiment. Our technical editor looks at some of those iterations, focusing on the 917K

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

When the Porsche 917 hit the track for the first time 50 years ago, there was something gravely amiss. The handling (or lack thereof) was a colossal problem for the first generation of the 917, and Porsche took time to get to the bottom

of the issue. Arguably, the development paths Porsche took throughout 1969 were a case of barking up the wrong tree; initially, the engineers surmised there was too much chassis flex, and the car couldn't cope with the weighty 4.5-litre flat-12 engine mounted in the back.

Although the frame was beefed up, the car's wayward and unpredictable behaviour continued to make it a handful. It wasn't until Porsche elected to tie up with sportscar guru John Wyer to run its works outfit for 1970 that the instability issues were solved.



FAST FACT

Pedro Rodriguez and Jackie Oliver won the 1971 Spa 1000Km at an average speed of 154.8mph – even now faster than the top world championship F1 winning speed – despite driver changes and fuel stops

AERODYNAMICS

John Wyer's JW Automotive team, which had been one of Porsche's chief rivals, was present at an Österreichring test in the late stages of 1969 when it became clear that the 917's Achilles' heel was not the torsional rigidity of the chassis but the aerodynamics. With the low tail, the airflow tended to separate as it moved towards the rear of the car, resulting in an unhealthy amount of rear-end lift.

Accounts on exactly who spotted what differ, but legend has it that dirt and detritus had gathered everywhere on the car except its rear deck during the course of testing. Although

race-car aerodynamics were still in their nascent stages, the team realised this was strange and that it indicated sub-optimal airflow. A new 'aero package' was fabricated on the spot out of sheet aluminium, essentially aimed at raising the tail.

It worked, addressing the stability issues perfectly. Porsche was tasked with building the new bodywork for 1970, and the car became known as the 917K, the 'K' standing for 'Kurzheck', or 'short-tail'. JWA later made its own developments too, such as introducing a small aerofoil (below) within the valley of the tail, during its two-season campaign. The shape of the cars

gradually changed (partly to accommodate bigger wheel rims and tyres) and vertical tail fins in 1971 allowed a lower rear deck.

Porsche also worked hard on developing the long-tail, lower-drag concept, designed for the demands of Le Mans and its long straights. The JWA squad and the 1970 Le Mans-winning Porsche Salzburg pairing stuck with the 917K thanks to its greater advantage in the corners. Meanwhile the Martini-backed works effort took the long-bodied variant to second place, albeit five laps down, though the polesitting Vic Elford/Kurt Ahrens example had been in the fight at the front while it lasted.

ENGINE

The initial 4.5-litre flat-12 engine produced a little over 540bhp, before a 4.9-litre edition became available in time for the Monza 1000Km round of the world sportscar championship in April 1970. It was more powerful, with an output of over 575bhp, and was used in the frontrunning 917s at Le Mans. But it was the 4.5-litre unit that gave Porsche its 1-2 in the 24 Hours.

Over-revving was a danger with the 917 and attempts to rev-limit the engine resulted in random misfires as the potentiometers used would quickly lose calibration.

Porsche did find reliability, experimenting with different materials used within the engine components to develop titanium valves. For most of 1970, Porsche also used only four speeds in the transmission to avoid missed shifts, particularly grabbing third instead of fifth. A new five-speed gearbox was developed for 1971, though four speeds were still often used, and even the 1973 917/30 was a four-speeder.

A full five-litre engine had been developed by the end of 1970 to combat the Ferrari threat. Even more exotic materials helped push the power output to around 630bhp, but later turbocharging (and expanding to 5.4 litres) for Can-Am would double that.

CHASSIS AND BRAKES

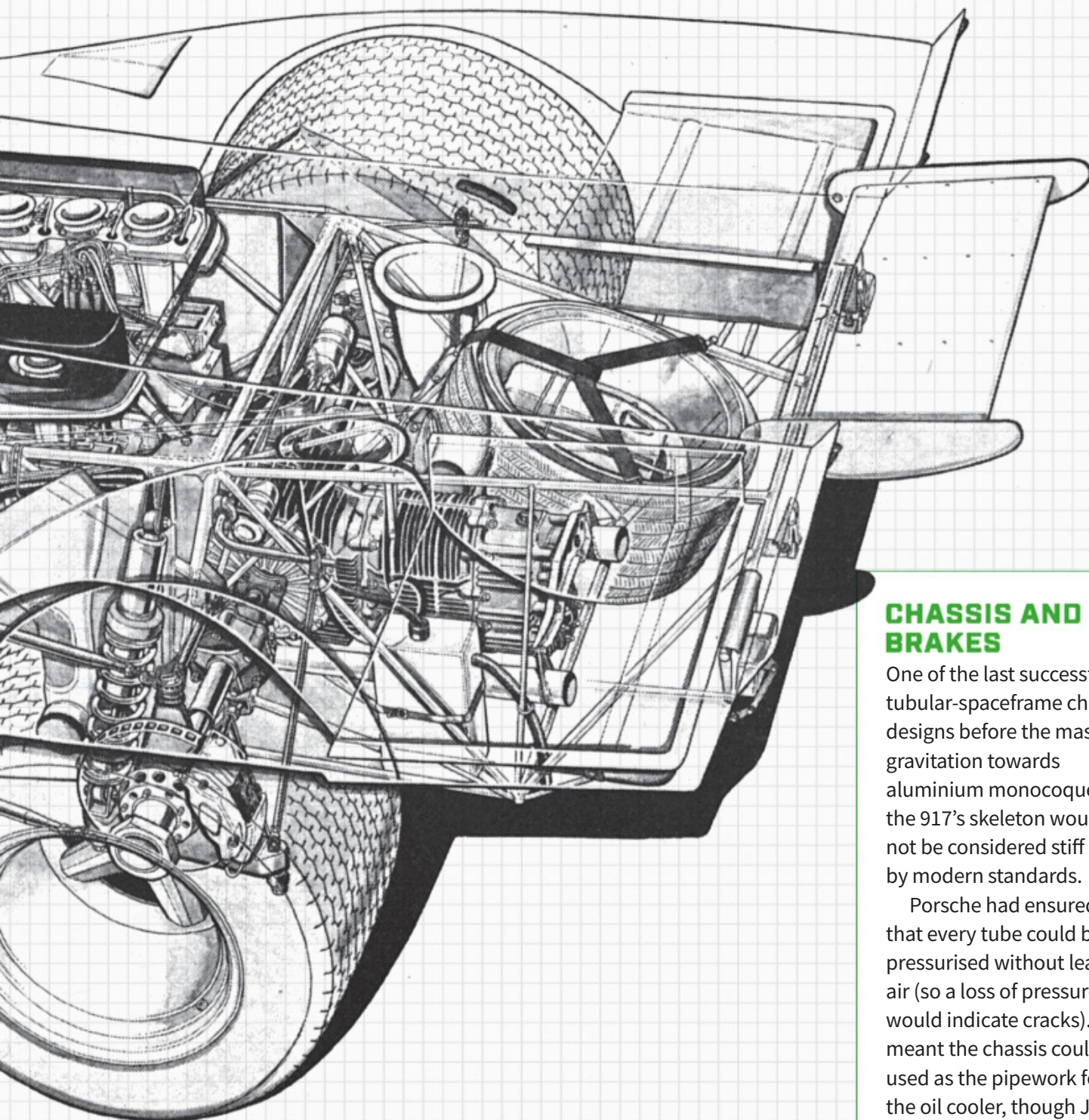
One of the last successful tubular-spaceframe chassis designs before the mass gravitation towards aluminium monocoques, the 917's skeleton would not be considered stiff by modern standards.

Porsche had ensured that every tube could be pressurised without leaking air (so a loss of pressure would indicate cracks). That meant the chassis could be used as the pipework for the oil cooler, though JWA

wasn't keen on this and used flexible pipes instead.

Teves/ATE brake discs were used initially, but JWA (and some others) switched to Girling early in 1970 to improve spongy brake feel and uneven-wear issues. Drilled brake discs with chamfers were also introduced during the world sportscar championship programme as Porsche continued its pursuit of light weight.

Carbon discs were considered too, though this didn't come to fruition.

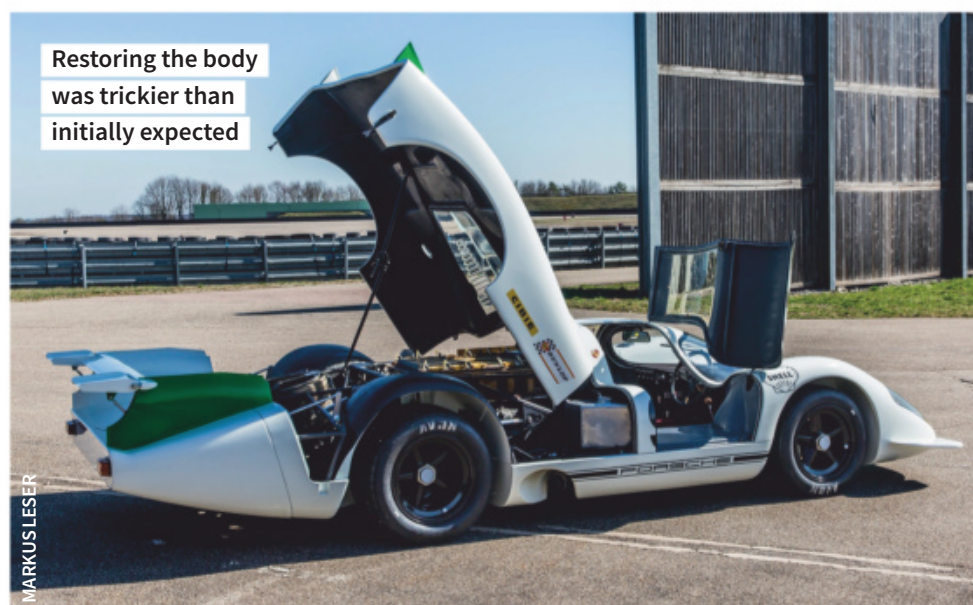




REVIVING THE FIRST OF A FAMOUS LINE

For more than 40 years, the original 917 pretended to be something else, but Porsche has rebuilt it to celebrate its 50th birthday

KEVIN TURNER



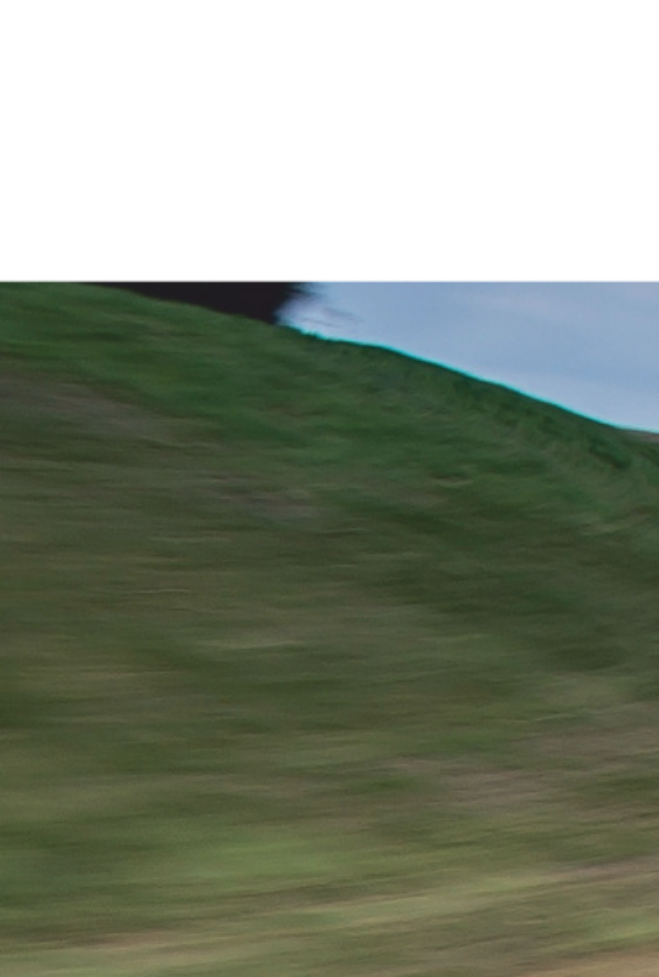
Restoring the body was trickier than initially expected

MARKUS LESER



Much of the cockpit, with its evocative patina, was retained

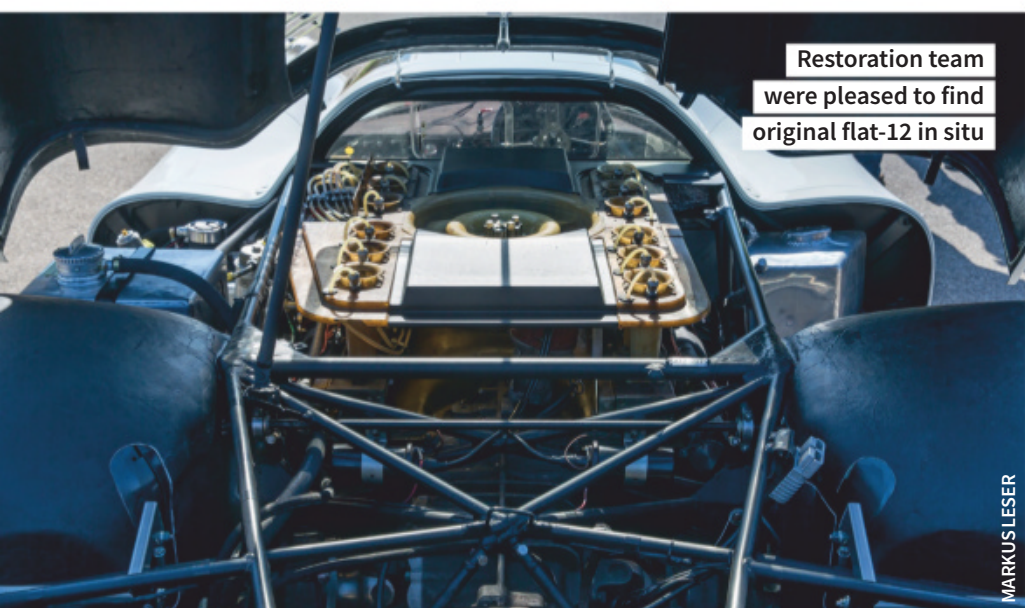
MARKUS LESER



001 and sisters
await the FIA's
Dean Delamont



MARKUS LESER



Restoration team
were pleased to find
original flat-12 in situ

MARKUS LESER

The shot of the first 25 Porsche 917s lined up in Zuffenhausen on 21 April 1969 is one of the most famous in motorsport history. Against an incredibly tight timeframe – the green light for the project had only come the previous September – the relatively small German firm had produced the required number of vehicles to homologate the 4.5-litre groundbreaker into Group 4 (later to become Group 5) for the world sportscar championship. It was a statement to the sport's governing body.

Heading the line was 917-001 and it was to have an unusual future, spending most of its first 50 years pretending to be one of its stablemates. But now it's back.

Chassis 001 was the car that announced the 917 to the world at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1969, having been finished just two days before. Presented not on the Porsche stand but that of the Automobile Club of Switzerland, it created a sensation. "The first time I ever saw it was at Geneva," recalls Vic Elford, one of the 917's greatest exponents. "It was on a plinth. It looked so beautiful and powerful. I half fell in love with it right away."

While other cars in that first batch of 25 were raced and tested to find a solution to the 917's wayward handling, 001 became the show car. It appeared at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September 1969, sporting a different livery, before being used as a promotional car for Gulf after the deal with the JW Automotive team to run the

"I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A BIT EASIER – REMOVE THE BODY AND REPLACE IT WITH ANOTHER. WE DIDN'T DO THAT"

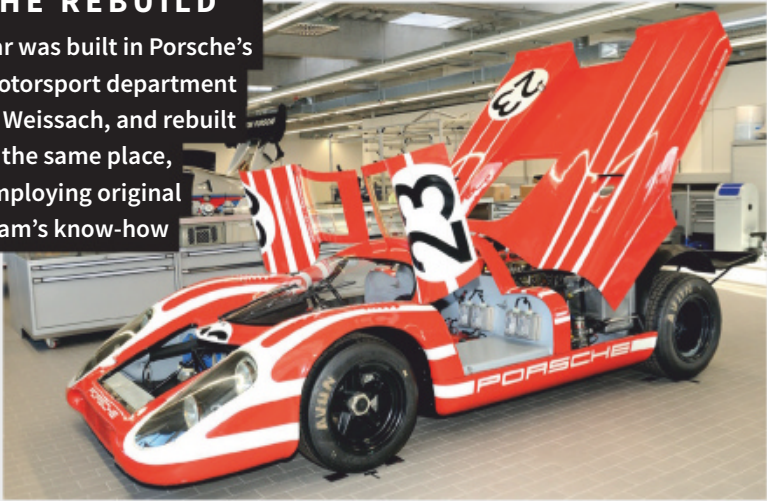
works machines in 1970 was announced. Although the powder-blue-and-orange livery would become iconic on 917s, by the time they raced in those colours the car had changed considerably, making the photographs of 001 in its Gulf guise rather special.

When Porsche finally scored its long-awaited first Le Mans win in June 1970, it needed a car to promote the success. With the actual winning car, chassis 023, still being used in competition, 001 was modified to short-tailed K specification. Remarkably, it stayed that way until 2017, when Porsche took the decision to return the car back to its original form in time for the half-century celebrations.

"It was quite a lot of work to turn it back to 1969 Geneva specification," says Porsche car collection manager Alexander Klein. "I thought it would be a little bit easier – remove the body and replace it with another, but we didn't do that."

The aim was to keep as much of the original car as possible. Once 001 had been stripped back and the (high) number of original parts >>

THE REBUILD
Car was built in Porsche's motorsport department at Weissach, and rebuilt in the same place, employing original team's know-how



established, the task was to use as many of them as possible in the restoration. Porsche also had other parts available, but the 917s were hand built in a hurry. Each was different and parts were not interchangeable, nor did they always match the original drawings!

"We had to work out which parts were available and it was not easy to figure out," says Klein. "Even the fairings on the wings were not the same [from the 1969 body to the K], but the windscreen, roofline and firewall are still the same. And the lamp pods."

The original fuel tanks were also retained, as was much of the cockpit, including the switches. Only the labelling was renewed.

The spaceframe chassis was in good condition and the frame at the front again confirmed how little 001 had been touched over the years. Later cars had an extra strut and 001 did not, thanks to the fact it never raced. Its early modifications had purely been to make it look like the 1970 Le Mans winner. But changing even the car's shape was a challenge.

"We did not just exchange the body, we added to the original parts to make the 1969 shape," continues Klein. "We did that in layers, using digitised old photographs and blueprints."

Porsche even consulted many of those who worked on the

"WE RE-ESTABLISHED THE TEAM OF 1969, ALL TO BUILD THE CAR AS REALISTIC AS POSSIBLE"

original project. "We re-established the team of 1969 and we did it together," adds Klein. "The chassis builders, the glassfibre specialists, all to build the car as realistic as possible."

Among them were body specialists Klaus Ziegler and Roland Bemsel, and Gerhard Kuchle, for whom the work on the engine programme remains a career highlight. "It was a big challenge for Porsche to make these cars," says Kuchle. "The 12-cylinder engine was unknown territory for us. But I have very fond memories of this time – in the department there was huge euphoria to tackle this project. Everybody was proud to be part of it."

There's the sense of a similar feeling about 001's restoration, which was led by Amin Berger. Klein estimates the first example

PORSCHE'S SPECIAL CELEBRATION				
	1969	1970	1971	
<p>To honour the anniversary of the launch of the 917, the Porsche Museum has gathered together a pack of 917s – including the restored 001 – for a special exhibition.</p> <p>After arranging the cars at Porsche's Zuffenhausen headquarters to recreate the famous 1969 shot of the first 25 917 chassis built, the 10 models have been arranged inside the</p>	<p>museum on the same site.</p> <p>The exhibition, 'Colours of Speed', is running until 15 September and includes four additional car exhibits, as well as various stands and information stations detailing the transfer of technology from the 917 to subsequent Porsche racing and road models. Here are the nine 917s that have joined 001.</p> <p>ALEX KALINAUCKAS</p>	<p>917 PA SPYDER</p> <p>Porsche developed the 917 Spyder to compete in the final two thirds of the 1969 Can-Am series, with the 'PA' standing for Porsche + Audi, to reflect the relevant division of Volkswagen America Inc it was advertising. Two cars were built, with Jo Siffert finishing fourth in the 1969 championship with one, while the other was a test car that was later fitted with a 6.5-litre 16-cylinder engine – the most powerful naturally aspirated race engine ever built at Porsche – before entering the museum in 1971.</p>	<p>917K (SHORT TAIL)</p> <p>The first Porsche to win Le Mans – the #23 4.5-litre entry from the 1970 race was driven by Hans Herrmann and Richard Attwood, racing under the Porsche Salzburg banner. The pair won an attritional race in appalling conditions, despite starting only 15th. There were only seven classified finishers in the race, which was famous for being the first Le Mans not to feature a 'Le Mans start' on foot, as well as appearing in the film <i>Le Mans</i>. The winning chassis, 023, raced on into 1971.</p>	<p>917K (SHORT TAIL)</p> <p>The #21 917K won the 1971 Spa 1000Km – the sixth round of that year's world sportscar championship – in the famous Gulf colour scheme. Pedro Rodriguez and Jackie Oliver led home Jo Siffert and Derek Bell in a formation finish, averaging nearly 155mph to set an all-time sportscar record, beating the third-placed Alfa Romeo by four laps. It was perhaps the 917 coupe's finest hour, with Team Auto Usdau's privateer entry making it a Porsche 1-2-4.</p>

"Greatest racing car in history" 917/30

Special exhibition at Porsche HQ runs until 15 September



Chassis 001 become
a promotional car
sporting Gulf colours

of a famous line had done just 300km prior to the rebuild, mainly at Porsche's Weissach test circuit and the Nurburgring Sudschleife, and was pleased to find that the engine was still the original unit, rather than the five-litre version of the flat-12 that came later.

"The car was never a race car and we are glad it wasn't," he says. "We were quite curious to find out [about the engine]. We did not dismantle the whole crankcase, we opened the heads and figured out the dimension of the pistons and specification of the cylinders were the same as the 4.5-litre."

The moment 001 took to the track in a private test in Germany was a special one for the team. Experienced Porsche factory driver and 2016 Le Mans winner Marc Lieb was there to add a handful of miles to the rarely-used machine. "It's nice for me to drive these cars," he says. "It's a raw experience, no clutter – bare basics."

Along with four other 917s – all representing different stages of the car's rapid development – 001 was then taken to the Goodwood Members' Meeting. On 6 April 2019 it made its first post-rebuild appearance, with 1970 Le Mans winner Richard Attwood at the wheel, to kick off a special season of celebrations for one of motorsport's most iconic machines. 🏁

1971

1971

1971

1972

1972

1973

917L (LONG TAIL)

The #21 Martini-liveried 1971 car – driven by Vic Elford and Gerard Larrousse – was, along with the two JWA Gulf-entered examples, the ultimate iteration of Porsche's low-drag, long-tail 917s for Le Mans, capable of topping 240mph on the Mulsanne Straight. The three cars qualified 1-2-3 for the 24 Hours, which was the first Le Mans to feature a rolling start, but all retired. The Martini car succumbed to an overheating engine after its cooling fan came adrift. None of the 917Ls raced again.

917K (SHORT TAIL)

The 1971 Le Mans-winning Martini-liveried 917K, chassis 053, featured tail fins to give additional directional stability and, unlike other 917 coupes, had a lighter magnesium chassis. Helmut Marko and Gijs van Lennep covered 397 laps, 3315 miles, at an average speed of 138mph – benchmarks that would stand until 2010. Martini's victory denied JWA winning Le Mans with a 917, Richard Attwood and Herbert Muller finishing second. 053 was retired after winning its only race.

917/20 (‘PINK PIG’)

The 917/20, which became famous as the 'Pink Pig', was an attempt by the SERA organisation in Paris to have less drag than the 917K but the same level of stability. At 2.21 metres it is nearly 24cm wider than the conventional 917, with a shorter front section and an unchanged track width, which means its wheels sit deep in the arches. Drivers Willi Kauhsen and Reinhold Joest retired from the car's second and last race at Le Mans in 1971 when a suspected brake issue caused a crash.

917/10 (CAN-AM)

This open-top version of the 917 was developed for the 1972 Can-Am championship. It features a 1000bhp turbocharged engine, which allowed Porsche to end the domination of bigger-capacity American V8 units, as used by McLaren. The 917/10 took six of the nine Can-Am races that season with Penske drivers George Follmer, the eventual champion, and Mark Donohue. The cars lived on into 1973, but Porsche privateers were unhappy to find things had moved on thanks to the 917/30...

917/30 (INTERSERIE)

917/30-001 was restored ahead of its inclusion in the exhibition, in the colours of its 1975 sponsor Vaillant, which it wore when Herbert Muller won the 1975 Interserie opener at Hockenheim. That was the last official outing of a factory 917. This car was a Can-Am test model that featured an adjustable spaceframe for experimenting with different wheelbase sizes. Like 917-001, it made its post-restoration return at April's Goodwood Members' Meeting.

917/30 (CAN-AM)

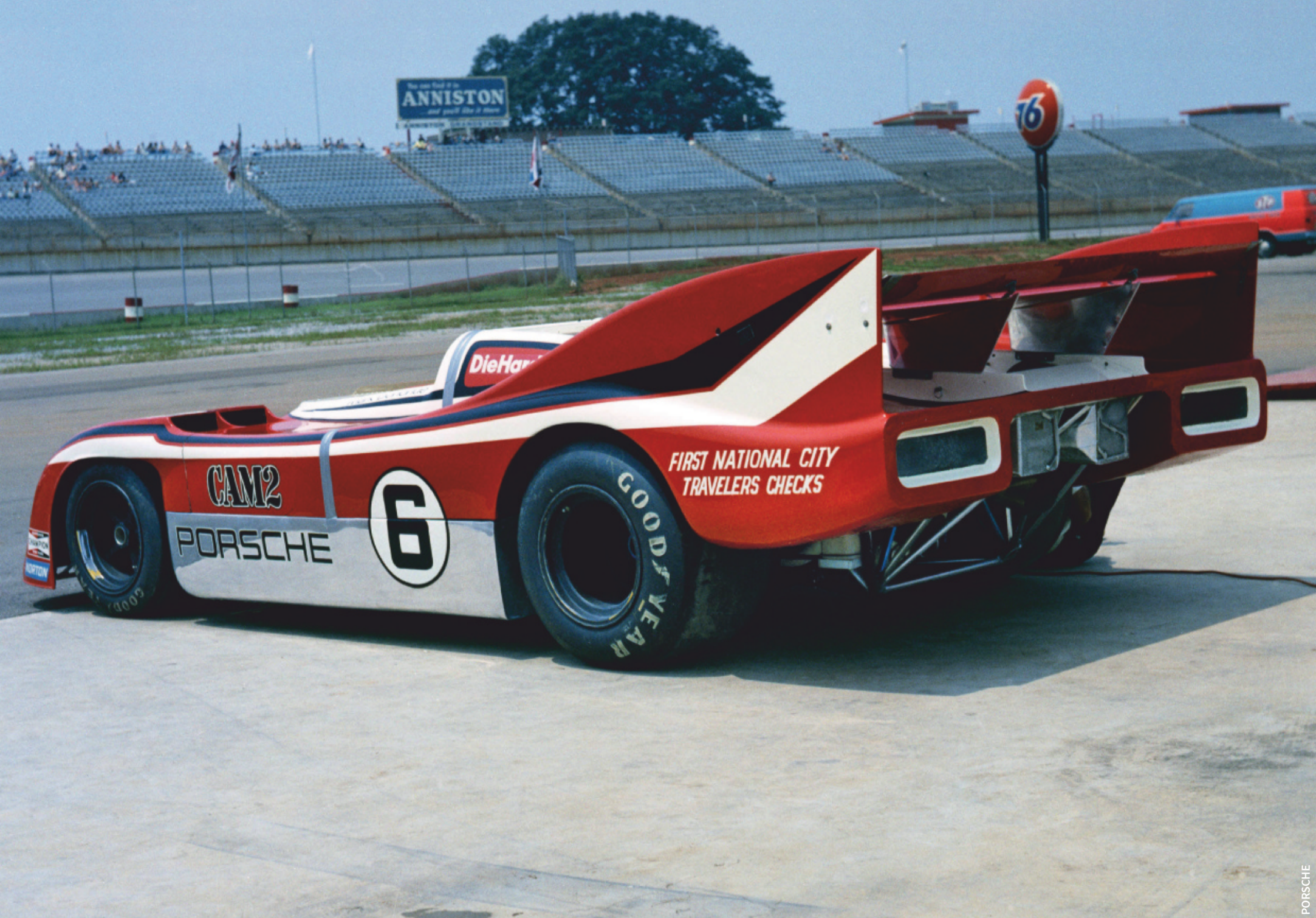
With the increased stability from its longer wheelbase, the 5.4-litre 12-cylinder twin-turbo 917/30 dominated Can-Am in 1973. Mark Donohue took six wins in the Sunoco-liveried monster, as well as setting fastest lap in all eight rounds, to take the title. Peaks of 1500bhp were seen on the dyno, though the 917/30 usually raced with around 1100bhp. George Follmer and Charlie Kemp took the other two 1973 Can-Am wins in 917/10s, resulting in rule tweaks that changed the nature of the series.



WHEN THE 917 BECAME A LAND SPEED RECORD HOLDER

The ultimate version was no longer racing when Penske legend Mark Donohue took a 917/30 to Talladega for one more bit of bravery

TOM ERRINGTON



It would be one of his final acts and was overshadowed by his death. Just 10 days after Mark Donohue had set a famous record, a tyre failed on his Penske-run March 751 during practice for Formula 1's 1975 Austrian Grand Prix and sent 'Captain Nice' into and over the catch fencing at the Hella-Licht Kurve. He initially seemed to have escaped but, after complaining of headaches, was admitted to hospital, lapsed into a coma from a cerebral haemorrhage, and died two days later.

But before that tragic turn, Donohue had set what at the time was the fastest lap ever recorded on a circuit, storming around the Talladega tri-oval at a staggering 221.120mph aboard the Porsche 917/30 in which he had dominated Can-Am in 1973. Those figures become all the more daunting when you consider the tumultuous journey that car had undergone, pushing Donohue to the edges of his patience and testing every inch of his famous technical knowledge.

Vanity record hunts tend to fall on deaf ears, but that one still resonates today. So much so that, when Porsche canned its World Endurance Championship LMP1 programme, the Talladega run wasn't far from the minds of the decision-makers, and the manufacturer's media and marketing team suggested a fitting farewell for a 919 Hybrid that managed three drivers' titles, three manufacturers' crowns and a trio of Le Mans 24 Hours successes.

Porsche's then-LMP1 boss Andreas Seidl explained: "One of the ideas was a record attempt, comparing it to stuff done in the 1970s by Penske. I was a bit sceptical at the beginning, as there is a risk in these records. But the idea was so convincing that we said, 'OK, if we can find the budget, let's go for it.'"

Soon after, it claimed a Formula 1-beating 1m41.770s record with Neel Jani at Spa in 2018, while in June of that year Timo Bernhard went around the Nurburgring quicker than anyone ever: 5m19.546s.

It's unlikely that Porsche would ever have committed to such a programme if it wasn't for Donohue's – and Penske's – work to turn the Porsche's turbo programme from a troublesome, nightmarish one into Can-Am domination that played a role in bringing an end to the innovative and exhilarating series.

Can-Am was (temporarily) gone by the time Donohue arrived at Talladega in 1975, and the rumour was that the run was all because of a bet. The Penske team had been fined \$10,000 for an infringement in a NASCAR race and team owner Roger Penske was allegedly keen to win back his cash from long-time friend Burge Hulett. The bet itself was for the 917/30 to beat AJ Foyt's world record speed for a closed course, set at Talladega at 217.854mph in his Coyote-Ford USAC machine.

Putting aside any flutters, this was a target Penske was convinced could be beaten, and he reckoned that the 917/30 had more to accomplish than its Can-Am dominance of two years earlier. He convinced Donohue, Weissach head of research Dr Helmut Flegl, engine specialist Hans Mezger and turbo expert Valentin Schaffer to try for the record at Talladega.

Donohue had been coaxed out of his role as general manager of Penske Racing to have another go at F1 from late 1974, and the Talladega bid came during a run of European races in the summer of 1975, falling between the German and Austrian GPs.

When he was at Talladega, he was far from happy. Donohue had shown annoyance that the 917/30 had kept blowing engines in testing – which had begun in January – and in one run the car caught fire at the rear.

The car simply hadn't been designed for such flat-out running and its 5.4-litre turbo got extremely hot. Porsche developed some special intercoolers, but even then the engineers were allegedly not quite brave enough to keep the engine at full power on the dyno for the required two minutes...

The video of the attempt – worth digging out on YouTube – is a scary watch. Donohue describes being unable to keep his

“THE CAR HADN'T BEEN DESIGNED FOR SUCH FLAT-OUT RUNNING AND ITS 5.4-LITRE TURBO GOT EXTREMELY HOT”

foot planted throughout the lap and reports the steering being “fragile” and “very light”. Penske remarks that, to beat Foyt's record, Donohue must find two tenths on a 2.66-mile circuit. And do it while coping with a gust of wind at Turn 2 that would attempt to push the car around.

“Going into the first turn is an eerie feeling,” Donohue told reporters at Talladega. “I was a little chicken and got what we call ‘balloon foot’. The g-forces are strange at that speed. It gives you the tendency to fall asleep, to forget who you are and where you are.”

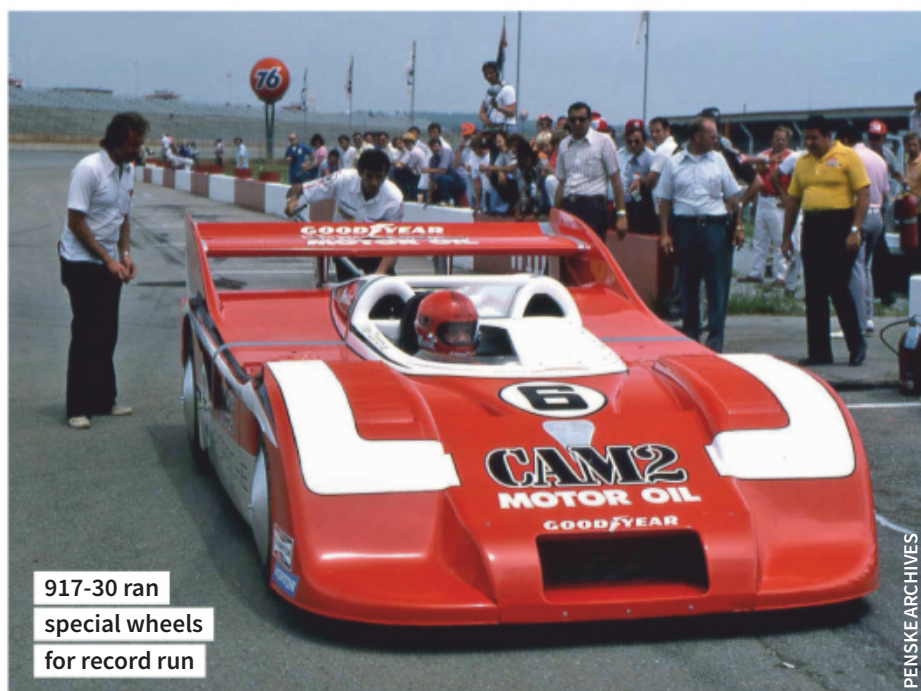
And yet, weird sensations and all, he did it. Donohue lapped at a stunning average speed of 221.120mph.

“I don't think this is an ultimate speed here as far as the track is concerned, but there is a limit for technology,” said Donohue. “This type of car was not built for high banks. It was set up for 200mph on the Can-Am circuit.”

Cue catcalling from Indycar and NASCAR. Foyt reckoned he could take his Indycar, make a few adjustments, and beat the record, while noises from NASCAR suggested some radical engineering tricks on a stock car could smash Donohue's record.

Donohue was ready for such efforts: “If someone beats my record, I'd love to come back and try again. But I can assure you, it will be in a completely different looking car built to set a record here.”

No car has ever gone faster around Talladega, but the record was later beaten elsewhere. By then, Donohue was no longer around to respond, and the 917/30 had earned its retirement. ❧



917-30 ran special wheels for record run

PENSKE ARCHIVES



Donohue had to cope with light steering and severe g-forces

PENSKE ARCHIVES



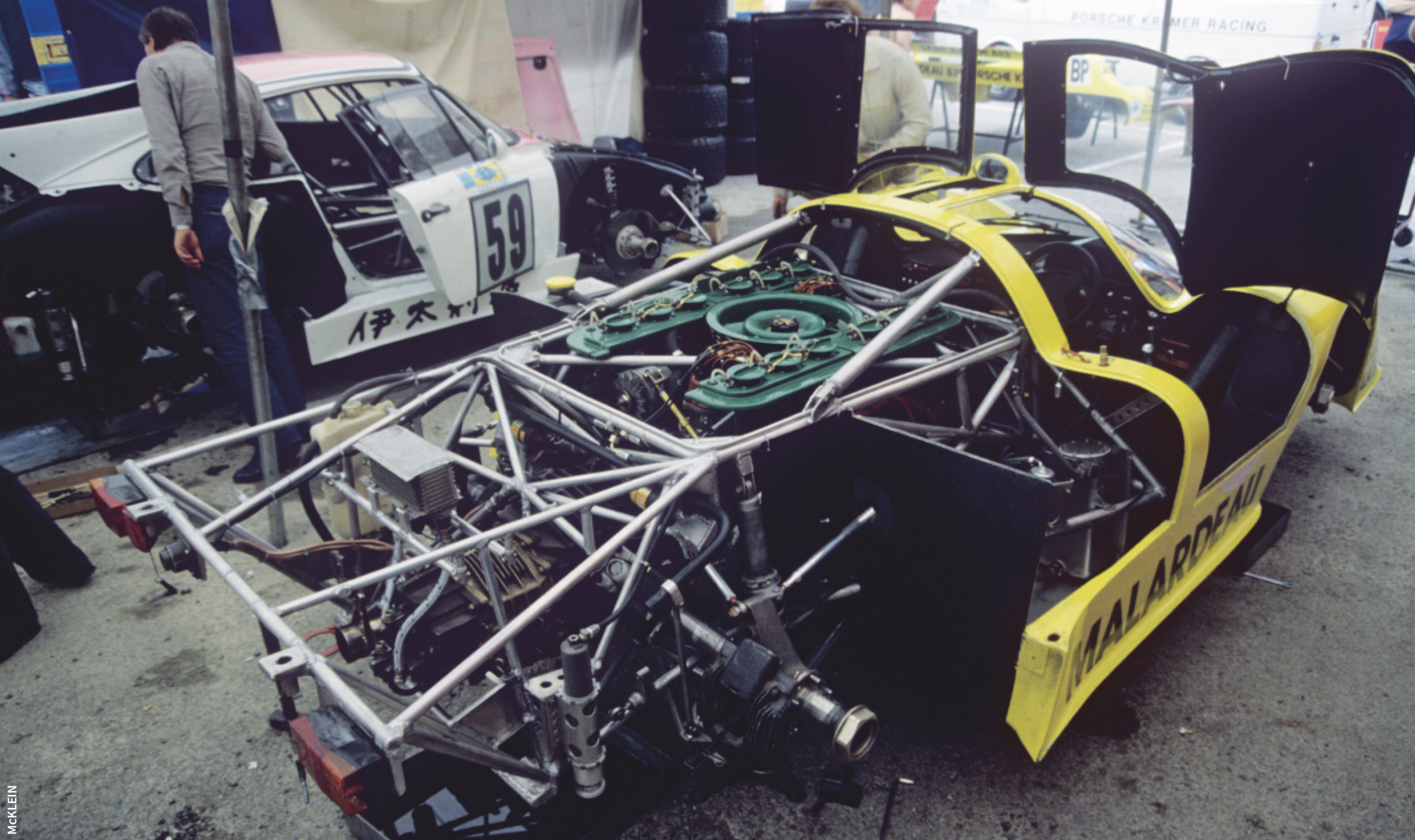
HOW THE 917 BECAME A POST BOX

A strange sequence of events resulted in a 'new' 917 appearing at Le Mans in 1981, but it didn't get to show its true potential until the Kremer machine raced in the UK

GARY WATKINS



Last-minute
'post box' can be
seen above the
driver's side
window



MCKLEIN



 **motorsport**
IMAGES

Transposing the design of a racing car, however great, from one era to another might sound outlandish today. But that's what the German Kremer Racing squad did for the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1981. It hatched a plan to field a born-again Porsche 917 in the French enduro and remarkably carried it through with a car that was quickly dubbed the 'Post Box'.

The nickname can be partly explained by a bright yellow livery that was perhaps only a Pantone shy of the colour of post boxes in what was then West Germany. Maybe Kremer's slab-sided take on the 917 aerodynamics played a part. But there was another reason for the slightly disparaging nickname, and it stemmed from a failure to interpret the regulations properly.

No one needs reminding that the 917s that raced at Le Mans in 1969-71 were all coupes, but the Group 6 prototype rules in force nearly 10 years after the car was legislated out of the World

“KREMER’S SOLUTION WAS TO FIND A SAW AND CUT A SLOT IN THE ROOF BETWEEN THE DOORS”

Championship for Makes called for open-top cars. The Cologne-based team, run by brothers Erwin and Manfred Kremer, turned up for race week with a car it called the 917K/81 – with the K standing for Kremer and not Kurzheck – in fully-enclosed coupe form.

Automobile Club de l'Ouest official Alain Bertaut, who exerted a tight control over the Le Mans rulebook for the better part of 30 years, got wind of the oversight ahead of scrutineering. Long-time Kremer team manager Achim Stroth takes up the story.

“Bertaut sent someone to summon us to see him in his office,” recalls Stroth. “He told us the car had to have an open cockpit, but I asked if the rules said anything about the size of the opening. His reply was that the driver had to be able to look up and see the big, blue sky.”

Kremer's solution was to find some kind of mechanical saw and cut a slot in the fibreglass roof between the doors. And so, Porsche 917K/81 became the 'Post Box'. >>

The team's failure to read the rules properly wasn't quite the open-and-shut case – excuse the pun – that it might appear. With the new era of Group C coupes approaching for 1982, FISA – the FIA's sporting arm – had opened up the WCM to cars built to the forthcoming chassis regulations.

The ACO, not for the first or last time, opted for a different interpretation of the regulations to the world governing body. Witness the 'sunroof' that the British GRID team had to cut in the top of the Lola T600 it was running in a full-season programme.

Bertaut was happy to oblige the Kremer team, because he wanted the car in the race. The late Erwin Kremer even suggested that the fiery Frenchman inspired the Le Mans assault.

"The ACO came to see me, saw the car and said, 'Why not bring it to the 24 Hours?'" he remembered in an interview in 2001. "Bertaut said it would make a great story to have a modern version of the 917 back at Le Mans."

Le Mans needed storylines in 1981. Sportscar racing in general and the French enduro in particular was not in the best of shape in the final year before the introduction of Group C.

The elder Kremer brother, who died in 2006, couldn't recall when the decision to go to Le Mans with the 917 was taken, but he reckons that it was well into 1981 and that the car was only "60-70% finished at the time".

The Kremer 917 project – we'd call it a continuation car today – had been on the stocks for some time. The team had a lucrative sideline in historic restoration. "Over a period of about two years we collected so many 917 parts that we started thinking about building a car," recalled Kremer. "At that time we weren't thinking of racing it, except perhaps in historic events."

The team also had in its workshops another 917, a real one, that acted as a kind of template for the updated version. Kremer remembered it belonging to a British customer who was having the car reconverted from the open-top Spyder trim (in which it had raced in Interserie) to closed Kurzheck, short-tail spec. Contemporary press reports suggested that Kremer borrowed a car from the Midlands Motor Museum in Shropshire to aid construction of the 917K/81.

Stroth can't remember which, if either, story is correct, but they might not necessarily be contradictory.

What is fact is that Kremer still needed some drawings from the factory to complete its modern interpretation of the 917. Legend has it that a complete set of blueprints found their way from Porsche racing headquarters in Weissach to Cologne. Not true says long-time Porsche senior engineer Norbert Singer.

"We didn't give them the complete plans," he says, "but we were happy to help because we thought they were building a show car that would have no race history."

Porsche also provided a couple of 917 flat-12s and even instigated a short production run of transmission parts to enable the project to become a reality. Selling engines and gearboxes was, after all, the bread and butter of Porsche's racing department.

Kremer added strengthening to the aluminium spaceframe chassis and came up with its own bodywork, though the car remained recognisable as a 917.

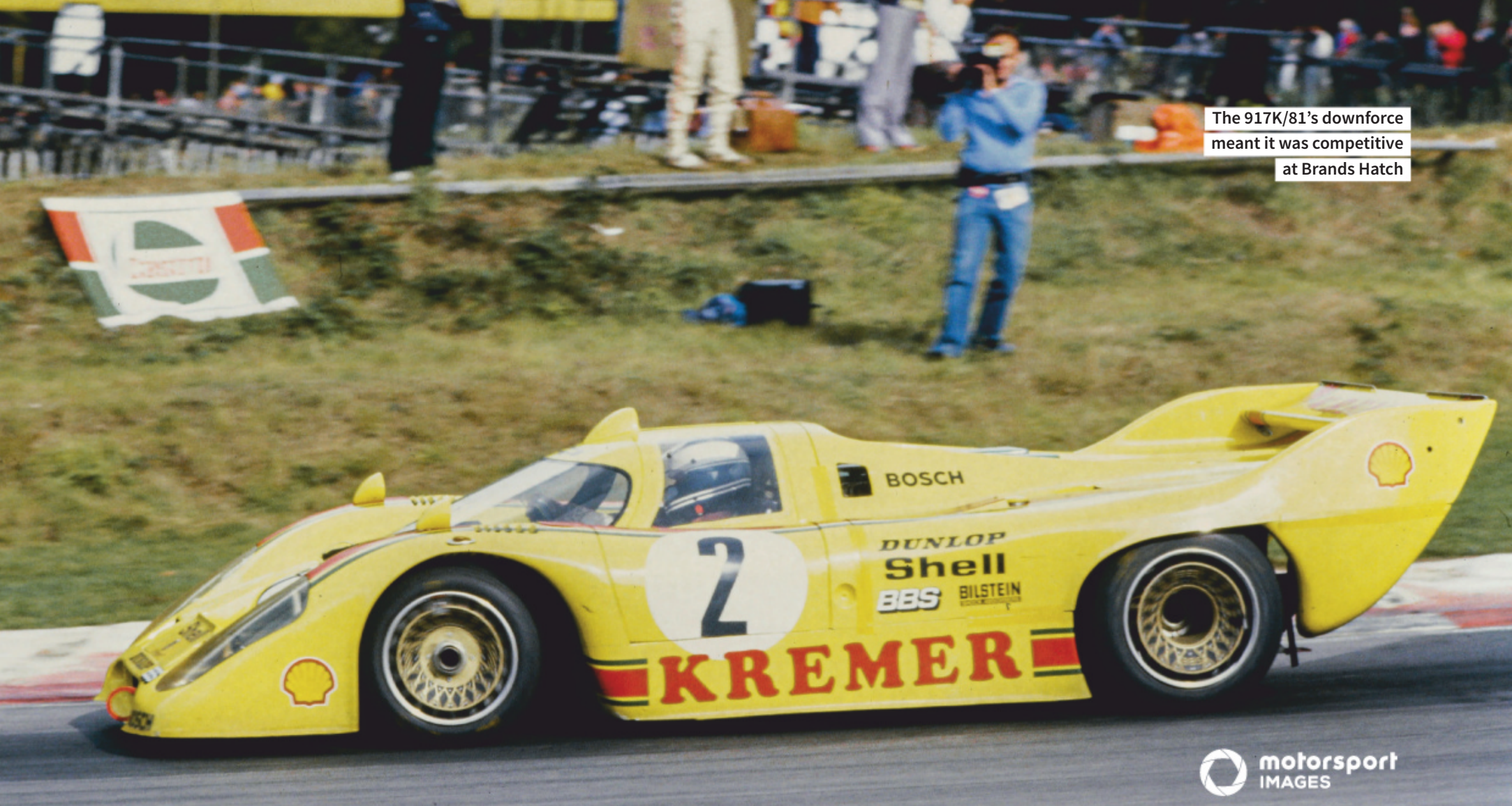
"Apart from the windscreen and doors, everything was custom-made," explains Stroth. "We were trying to bring the concept up to date, but we never went into a windtunnel."

Kremer also needed funding. It turned to Jagermeister, which was backing its 1981 assault on the DRM in Germany with one of the team's K3 versions of the 935 driven by Bob Wollek. A picture of the French driver standing in the middle of the chassis supported



Unlike the originals, the Kremer 917 struggled for speed at Le Mans





by Erwin and Manfred failed to persuade the German drinks manufacturer to part with any funds.

Kremer, instead, found two well-funded French paying drivers. Guy Chasseuil, who'd finished second at Le Mans in 1975 driving a Ligier, came with BP money and Xavier Lapeyre had the backing of a Toulouse-based property company called Malardeau.

Everything had fallen into place to get Kremer's bizarre project to Le Mans, though with little time for testing. The car had managed 50 miles or so at the briefest of shakedown at the Nurburgring.

It showed on the first day of qualifying. The car ended up only 28th on the provisional grid, its biggest problem a lack of straightline speed. The last Le Mans 917s had nudged towards 250mph on the Mulsanne Straight in 1971; in reincarnated form

“THE CAR WASN'T BAD, BUT THAT BIG WING MADE IT DESPERATELY SLOW ON THE MULSANNE STRAIGHT”

it could only initially hit 180mph or so.

“The car wasn't bad,” said the experienced Wollek, speaking shortly before his death in 2001. “The new body gave more downforce at the front, but that big wing on the back blew the 917's number one advantage, namely its straightline speed. It was desperately slow down the Mulsanne.”

But the engine also wasn't breathing correctly and the ratios in the four-speed 917/30 Can-Am gearbox proved to be incorrect. Holes were drilled in the engine cover to try to alleviate the former and new ratios provided by Porsche — which was running a similar 'box in its factory 936s — went some way to overcoming the latter. Lead driver Wollek found four seconds to move up 10 grid places on Thursday, though he was still way off the pace.

“Part of our problem was that the two drivers of, let's say, medium talent needed a lot of track time in that kind of machine,” says Stroth. “I'm sure that if we could have kept Bob in the cockpit we would have sorted it out.”

Wollek made little progress in the opening hours of the race and called it quits at about 8pm on Saturday evening after the race was interrupted by two serious accidents, one of which claimed the life of Rondeau driver Jean-Louis Lafosse.

“I asked myself what I was doing driving this shitbox with a couple of slower team-mates,” said Wollek, who complained that the car was nervous on the long straight. “I knew we didn't have a chance of a decent result. I really had a bad feeling about that race, so I just walked away.”

The two amateurs didn't get much further. Lapeyre was involved in a collision with one of Joest Racing's 935s and the car sustained some chassis and oil cooler damage. Chasseuil managed a handful of laps after repairs were completed before the car retired with what was officially listed as a failure of its 4.9-litre engine in hour eight.

Erwin Kremer suggested that a twisted chassis had resulted in a broken exhaust manifold that put the car onto 11 cylinders. Stroth, on the other hand, remembers that there was nothing actually wrong with the engine.

ACO rules at the time put a stipulation on the number of laps that had to be completed between oil top-ups. Kremer had made sure that the cooler, on its replacement, had been full of oil to circumvent this rule, something to which the race organiser took exception.

“The ACO told us that either we withdraw the car or they would do it for us,” explains Stroth. “They allowed us to retire without losing face. But without those five litres of oil, the engine would have blown up.”

The primary reason why the 917K/81 proved uncompetitive on the Circuit de la Sarthe in the days before the chicanes dissected the Mulsanne was illustrated on a second appearance for the car at Brands Hatch. Downforce has always been at a premium around the full Grand Prix Circuit at the former British Grand Prix venue, and the Kremer Porsche flew in the 1000Km.

Wollek, who was joined in the car by Henri Pescarolo, qualified on provisional pole in wet conditions and ended up third on the grid after the track dried out for final qualifying. The 917 led the race, too, Wollek moving to the front after Kremer pitted the car for fuel during an early safety car period.

But shortly after taking the lead, Wollek parked the 917K/81 tight up against the barriers at Dingle Dell. A steering arm had broken and he was unable to bring the car back to the pits.

Kremer had proved, belatedly, that its efforts to reimagine the 917 for a new era perhaps wasn't quite so off the wall as some imagined.

“At Le Mans we were probably 10 years too early,” says Stroth in reference to the pair of chicanes inserted into the Mulsanne Straight for the 1990 race. “We'd asked Bertaut to bend the rules a little bit to help us, but expecting him to put bends in the circuit for us was probably asking a bit too much!” ❧



PORSCHE PASSION

PORSCHE AND LE MANS GO TOGETHER LIKE WINE AND CHEESE.

They share a long history, complement each other perfectly and work best in refined company. There is arguably no Porsche model more iconic than the 911, and there are probably few people more passionate about Porsches at Le Mans than Paul Stephens.

Stephens is an independent Porsche specialist who had his first drive behind the wheel of a 911 in 1974, aged nine. He went to Le Mans in 1984 to witness Henri Pescarolo and Klaus Ludwig win the race in a 956, and won the BRSCC's Porsche championship as a racing driver in his own right in 1994.

For 25 years he's specialised in restoring and developing old 911s. His 2007 Clubsport was followed by a Series 2 edition 10 years later, and now Stephens has created a new, highly-limited edition of the famous 911 – the Le Mans Classic Clubsport.

This will honour the 10th edition of the Le Mans Classic, which takes place in 2020. Conceived in collaboration with event organiser Peter Auto, just 10 of these hand-crafted and numbered examples will be built to celebrate one of historic motor racing's finest events.

Stephens starts with an original 911 body tub, which is restored then converted into his Clubsport model. The car features a de-seamed roof panel, composite

bumpers and engine cover, aluminium bonnet, soundproofing, and aerodynamic external mirrors – all lightweight.

The car is powered by a 300bhp, 3.4 litre air-cooled flat six engine with ITB injection system, GT3RS plenum, bespoke camshafts, a lightened and balanced crankshaft, lightweight conrods, and a lightweight flywheel mated to a Getrag G50 gearbox and limited-slip differential, all of which allow the engine to rev to 8000rpm.

Tipping the scales at just 1000kg (kerb), the car has a favourable power-to-weight ratio and should sprint from 0-60 mph in 4.5 seconds, before topping out at 175mph.

The Le Mans Classic Clubsport is styled with green, black and white interior to reflect the heritage and image of the event that inspired it – including a 24-hour clock on the dash – and each of the 10 editions comes complete with a specially commissioned Le Mans Classic luggage set. Le Mans Classic bodywork detailing is the final flourish.

"To have teamed up with Peter Auto in creating this unique Le Mans Classic Clubsport is an honour," says Stephens. "The passion of the event, from the organisers through to the enthusiasts attending, reflects our own devotion to the finest classic cars, and to be able to dedicate a bespoke version of our Clubsport model feels like an ideal match."

Porsche specialist Paul Stephens has a long personal history with the German marque, and is now taking his interest to the next level by developing a very special edition of the iconic 911



PAUL STEPHENS





THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND

Ferdinand Piech made the 917 a reality, but it was only the start of a remarkable – and sometimes controversial – career

GARY WATKINS

The conception of the Porsche 917 set the tone for Ferdinand Piech's amazing automotive career that ended as recently as 2015. He also instigated development of a rally legend in the Audi Quattro, pushed through the Bugatti Veyron supercar, and spearheaded Volkswagen's takeover of Lamborghini and Bentley. And he did it all with the iron will of an autocrat and the eye for detail of an engineer.

The grandson of company founder Ferdinand Porsche, Piech joined the family firm in 1963 and quickly rose to become the marque's development boss, giving him control of motorsport. He stamped his mark on the department with the Porsche 906 or Carrera 6, introduced ahead of the 1966 season. The slippery shape, the first from Porsche to be honed in the windtunnel, and lightweight design of the Group 4 GT racer was a hint of what was to come.

When the FIA's sporting arm, the Commission Sportive Internationale, realigned the rules for international endurance racing, it created a loophole. Piech saw the change in the homologation

requirements for Group 4 as an opportunity to build a big-engined prototype to chase the one prize missing from Porsche's sportscar racing CV – overall victory in the Le Mans 24 Hours.

The legend of Piech obsessing over maximising straightline speed and minimising weight is pretty much spot on.

When the 917 made its debut at Le Mans at the test weekend in March 1969, Piech insisted that every orifice was taped up to reduce drag in pursuit of a big number through the Mulsanne Straight speed trap. The fact that he had a line of works drivers



“AT LE MANS, PIECH INSISTED EVERY ORIFICE WAS TAPED UP TO REDUCE DRAG THROUGH THE SPEED TRAP”

concept of powerplant. It didn't become a reality, but the car under development to take the engine eventually turned into a Bentley.

As chairman of Bentley when the marque's return to racing was being hatched, Piech had to sign off the car that became known as the EXP Speed 8. He maintained a keen interest in the project after giving it the go-ahead.

“I had to report to Piech in the supervisory meetings and you could feel his passion,” says former Bentley motorsport boss Brian Gush. “He had an engineer's interest in all the detail.” ❦

queuing up to tell him the car was a death trap mattered not.

Porsche works driver Vic Elford recounts a story about a mechanic questioning Piech's order to drill holes in the ignition key of one of the marque's hillclimb specials in the name of weight reduction. He was swiftly given new duties away from the racing department.

Elford describes him as “cold, organised and dictatorial”.

“Piech was convinced that his cars rolled out of the truck as the ultimate machine for whatever track we were at,” he recalls. “He didn't like the idea of drivers wanting to make changes.”

Elford believes he was one of the few drivers who gained Piech's trust and was allowed to tinker with the set-up.

The autocratic management style didn't change when Piech moved to Audi and then onto the big job of VW Group chairman. The Veyron was his pet project: he made it a reality despite widespread opposition to what was regarded by many at VW as a vanity project.

Piech had a love of the W-configuration engine at the heart of the Veyron. He had a dream to take VW to Le Mans with the same



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RUNNING A 917 IN HISTORIC RACING

It's a rare sight, but Porsche's iconic machine can still impress

KEVIN TURNER



Pearson starred
in Monteverde's 917
at Silverstone Classic

Unsurprisingly, given their rarity and value, Porsche 917s are not common sights in historic motorsport. Sometimes, however, one does pop up, normally towards the front of series such as the Masters Historic Sports Cars, or Classic Endurance Racing events.

Historic ace and preparer Gary Pearson ran one for Carlos Monteverde earlier this decade. Monteverde, who also owned (and still owns) the 1970 Le Mans-winning car, bought a 917 from David Piper. Although not an original chassis, the car was built with lots of original parts and the duo put it into competition against cars such as the Lola T70s, which have moved on a long way since they were regularly thrashed by Porsche and Ferrari in period.

"I'd worked on 917s before because I'd done some work for David Piper and Richard Attwood in the 1980s," says Pearson. "It's a lot more challenging to run than the T70s.

They've been developed so well. The Chevrolet engines [in the Lolas] are night-and-day different to how they were – they're powerful and reliable now.

"You can also run a T70 so much stiffer than in period, but you can't with a 917 because you'd crack the chassis. And because the body is bonded to the chassis it's hard to keep on top of. We couldn't run it as low and stiff as the T70s, but it was lower and stiffer than they ran 917s in period and it was competitive."

A key change in the balance of power is in the engine department. When they originally raced, the T70s would have struggled to get beyond 450bhp, at least 100bhp down on the leading 917s. Subsequent developments have pushed the V8s past 500bhp, while the Porsche's flat-12 has to be run conservatively.

"When we first had it, it had a misfire, which took us a while to track down," says Pearson. "When we put it on the dyno after it was sorted it was just over 500bhp, so it's a bit down on the good Lolas, but it felt plenty powerful enough!"

Suspension and set-up-wise, Pearson found the 917 relatively conventional, but the engine and gearbox were rather more tricky. "We did a lot of work on the gearbox and then it was really nice to drive," adds Pearson, who starred in the car, most notably at the Silverstone and Le Mans Classics.

"It was nice to have one to run and develop as a race car. It was definitely a bucket-list car to drive. It was a phenomenal car to race. At the Le Mans Classic during the night you had the time to appreciate what you were doing. In terms of handling, it was fantastic."

Unfortunately, the crank broke in 2015 and, during the rebuild, Monteverde bought a Ferrari 512M that the duo still races. "That's taken a bit of time to develop," says Pearson, "but, because it's a stiffer frame than the 917, it's a really nice car. There's a lot of weight in the back with the engine and gearbox, but it's fantastic.

"Despite all the developments elsewhere, Porsche 917s and Ferrari 512s can still definitely mix it at the front." ❧



Lola T70s – 917's main
opposition – are more
competitive today

SEASON
REVIEW

HOW VERGNE BECAME FORMULA E'S FIRST DOUBLE CHAMPION

Formula E entered its fifth season with big changes to the car and rules. They all worked — but couldn't stop Jean-Eric Vergne taking his second crown

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

The 2018-19 ABB FIA Formula E Championship season could have represented the electric series' time-honoured 'difficult second album'.

As horribly clichéd as that is, FE faced real danger as it entered a new era with its second-generation car, with questions ahead of the campaign about its reliability and ability to create close racing. Not forgetting that switching to a new machine has killed other championships in the past.

But by most measures, the season just gone was a success — despite what FE's (mostly) Twitter-based, tribalist detractors would say. This isn't cheerleading — 2018-19 was intriguing and engaging in many different ways, from exciting racing to tech bust-ups and final-round controversy.

There are a few main takeaways from the first season of FE's Gen2 era. First, the mid-race pitstops are not missed. The car swaps added to FE's early spectacle, but came with issues including EV-range anxiety. In their place came the *Mario Kart*-inspired attack mode, which was a broad success. It added to the races, provided spice for the drivers with some unusual and some boring zone placements, and overall made for a good show. Even better, it has made the purist-maligned fanboost basically irrelevant.

Other rule changes for 2018-19 also played their parts superbly, and created an intriguing title battle to go alongside the individual contests. In particular, putting the top drivers in the >>



Vergne did enough in NYC
R2 to clinch second title

GALLOWAY

TEE



Vergne's philosophy for this season was to win a fresh crown, not defend an existing one

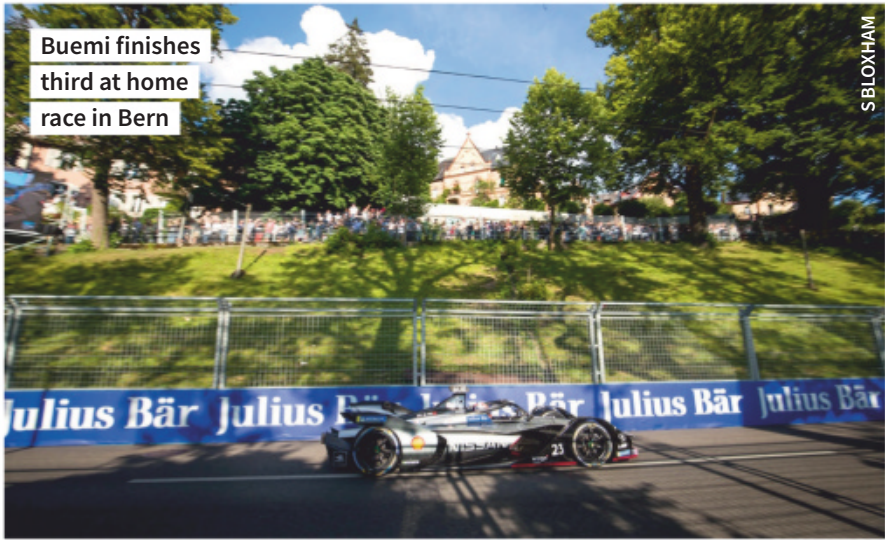
championship in the opening – and usually slower – qualifying group meant a remarkable spread of success, with eight different drivers winning the first eight races. This frustrated the top drivers – and those observers wishing for a more traditional narrative when it came to the title fight – but it added significance at each round. Interestingly, only on four occasions did a superpole session not feature at least one runner from the opening group, while Antonio Felix da Costa shone by topping group one six times out of 12 (not including the rain-affected Ad Diriyah opener). The rule ultimately did not stop the best drivers rising to the top positions in the standings and, with the top men in points regularly down the starting order, this led to close and usually action-packed races.

Another tweak to the racing rules was the switch to a timed 45-minutes-plus-one-lap format. In general, this worked well, although a change to pausing the clock under red flags was needed from Rome’s mid-season round onwards, as the previous approach of running it down and adding the time lost back on created needless confusion. With the Gen2 packages more efficient than their predecessors, any slight interruption – safety car or full-course yellow – meant the drivers did not have to save as much energy with the time still counting down. That led to some gripes, but overall the timed races worked well and created the sensational finish in Mexico City, where Lucas di Grassi won the race of the season as long-time leader Pascal Wehrlein hit 0% within sight of the flag.

The new car did cause one problem. It was too robust – particularly at the front end – and the pack quickly figured out that rivals could be clouted pretty hard without much front damage. This led to some ugly scenes during the early races – and a run of three red flags in four races from Mexico City, when FE had previously gone 48 with just one. This was more or less solved from the Rome round with a move to introduce ‘yellow flag’ warnings, and the stewards being instructed to take a harder line on contact.

But despite all the changes, FE’s close-racing nature remained undisturbed. The top runners broke clear in just under half the races, but even those were generally fiercely contested fights for the win. The reliability worries were unfounded too. The Gen2 car can run hotter – with 72C now the critical battery temperature figure, up from 55C – and the only known race-ending battery issue was caused by an improper connection of a cooling circuit.

Big regulation shifts cause problems for the established frontrunners, so another motorsport cliché goes. And that both did and didn’t apply in 2018-19. Audi certainly lost its grip on the title of ‘best powertrain’, but Jean-Eric Vergne made history by becoming the first FE driver to win two crowns in a row, and in the process



Buemi finishes third at home race in Bern

SBLOXHAM



Rising star Evans gave Jaguar its first FE win

STALEY



Vergne and Sims collide in Hong Kong

PORTLOCK

ROUND BY ROUND

Ad Diriyah

1 Da Costa

2 Vergne

3 D'Ambrosio

Da Costa converts BMW’s testing form into the season’s first pole, but it is DS Techeetah that is class of the field in Saudi Arabia. Vergne and Lotterer rise to run 1-2, only to get hit with regen-software-infringement drivethrough penalties. Da Costa wins ahead of the frustrated Vergne and Mahindra’s D’Ambrosio.

Marrakech

1 D'Ambrosio

2 Frijns

3 Bird

Another win gets away from Vergne as he spins at the first corner after a “massive excess of confidence” while attacking polesitter Bird. With Vergne out of the picture the BMWs show their strength again, and da Costa and Sims run 1-2 before they collide, handing d’Ambrosio victory and Frijns and Bird podium spots.

Santiago

1 Bird

2 Wehrlein

3 Abt

Gen2 car gets its first real test in sweltering heat, which results in a battery-temperature-limited race. Buemi leads before crashing out due to an issue with his car – thought to be twin-motor-related – which leaves Bird to defend from new star Wehrlein until the Mahindra’s battery nears the critical 72C mark.

Mexico City

1 Di Grassi

2 Da Costa

3 Mortara

The race of the season. Wehrlein leads throughout from pole before running out of energy metres from the chequered flag. Di Grassi battles past the fast-starting Rowland and sensationally pips Wehrlein at the line. Wehrlein drops to fifth with a post-race penalty for cutting a chicane in the last-lap drama.

Hong Kong

1 Mortara

2 Di Grassi

3 Frijns

Lotterer and Bird rise to the front and run clear of the pack, but late and controversial contact leaves long-time leader Lotterer with a puncture that eventually puts him last, and Bird is penalised post-race and drops from first to sixth. Mortara inherits Venturi’s first FE win ahead of di Grassi and Frijns.

Sanya

1 Vergne

2 Rowland

3 Da Costa

After being in the wars since Marrakech, Vergne finally kickstarts his season. From second on the grid, he stalks polesitter Rowland and then nips by with a late pass at the final corner. Rowland defends robustly against the pursuing pack – and da Costa in particular – to pick up his and Nissan’s first FE podium.



became the series' first repeat champion. It was a wild ride for DS Techeetah team leader Vergne. Whereas his 2017-18 title was clinched as much through consistency as it was through race wins, his defence — not that he saw it that way, preferring a mantra of winning a fresh crown than defending an existing one — was rather up and down.

It should have started perfectly in Riyadh, but a drivethrough penalty for a regen-software infringement meant he finished second, and a needless spin at the first corner cost Vergne a likely win in Marrakech too, before he showed the best pace of all on his way back from last to fifth. His worst run was Santiago-Mexico-City-Hong Kong, where contact in the pack and an ill-handling and damaged car hampered him. But a majestic win from second on the grid at Sanya kickstarted Vergne's flailing season and put him back in the mix.

“THE NEW CAR WAS TOO ROBUST. RIVALS COULD BE CLOUTED HARD WITHOUT MUCH FRONT DAMAGE”

When it really counted on the title run-in, Vergne was strong just as his opponents showed weakness, with his poles in Monaco and Bern helping him to two more victories and a practically unassailable lead heading to the season finale. Things went wrong, big-time, in the first race in New York, but he did enough in the second event to take an emotional second title. The scandal around his radio calls in the first Brooklyn race did take some shine from his celebration, but, with an appropriate punishment fitting the indiscretion (it was *not* a crime), it should not diminish his season.

Behind Vergne in the final order came Sebastien Buemi, who put on a late-season charge to cap off a dramatic season for Nissan e.dams (see page 40). But it was di Grassi who was Vergne's real title rival. With two wins, the Audi driver was again to the fore, but a disqualification from pole in Santiago, which enraged him, and a poor showing against the clock in Bern cost him dear. As did, it must be noted, being taken out in collisions in Sanya and Monaco.

That the final order of the championship table changed so much in the final races shows how tight the fight behind Vergne became. So, while FE will be pleased that eight drivers made it to the season finale with a shot at the title, Vergne's brilliance meant the season »

Rome

1 Evans

2 Lotterer

3 Vandoorne

Another pulsating two-horse race. Lotterer leads from pole but is tracked by Evans as the duo leave the pack far behind. Evans muscles by with a move that earns FE's first 'yellow-card' warnings from the FIA, and holds on to secure Jaguar's first FE win. Vandoorne takes his and HWA's first FE podium in a lonely third.

Paris

1 Frijns

2 Lotterer

3 Abt

Nissan looks like the clear favourite with first and second on the grid, but early leader Rowland hits the wall and then Buemi picks up a puncture entering the attack-mode zone in contact with Frijns. Frijns survives the ensuing wet-weather chaos to take his first FE win ahead of Lotterer and Abt.

Monte Carlo

1 Vergne

2 Rowland

3 Massa

Vergne's charge to the title really begins here. He nails qualifying to start first once Rowland's grid penalty is applied, then defends well to win ahead of the recovering Nissan driver and Massa, who takes his first FE podium. Di Grassi is eliminated in a clash with Sims, improving Vergne's title chances.

Berlin

1 Di Grassi

2 Buemi

3 Vergne

Di Grassi hits back with victory on Audi's home turf ahead of Buemi, who takes pole and first podium of the season as Nissan's energy-efficiency disadvantage bites again. Vergne battles up to third. Another contender for the title slips up as Lotterer misses out in quali and then retires with a battery-cooling connection issue.

Bern

1 Vergne

2 Evans

3 Buemi

Vergne all but seals the title with a masterful drive — nailing group-one qualifying, grabbing pole and then defending from the charging Evans and Buemi. But it is di Grassi qualifying 19th and finishing ninth that really boosts the reigning champion in a race that also features a farcical crash at the first corner.

New York 1

1 Buemi

2 Evans

3 Da Costa

Buemi finally snaps his winless streak as he leads from pole throughout, helped by a safety car called for the unfortunate Lynn stopping while looking threatening in second. Evans charges to second from 13th on the grid to finish ahead of da Costa, while Vergne has a nightmare, crashing twice and finishing 15th.

New York 2

1 Frijns

2 Sims

3 Buemi

Frijns collects his first points since his Paris win with a charge to first, featuring two brilliant passes on Buemi and then polesitter Sims, who collects his first FE podium. Vergne seals his second title with a calm run to seventh, boosted by both Evans and di Grassi crashing on the last lap.



NISSAN’S TRIUMPH AND SADNESS

Year of contrasts
for Nissan

PORTLOCK

When Sebastien Buemi triumphed in the first race of the New York double-header finale, he ended a run of disappointment that stretched back over two years to his previous Formula E victory with what was then the Renault e.dams squad.

This season, e.dams was partnered with Renault partner Nissan in what was a tumultuous campaign. Before anything had even started the team was in trouble, with new signing Alexander Albon suddenly off to join Toro Rosso in F1, and Oliver Rowland coming in as a late replacement. Then the season opener was a disappointment, and further early strife came with Buemi’s crash while leading from pole in Santiago and both Nissan drivers retiring thanks to a dramatic energy-management miscalculation in the Mexico City thriller.

But the overriding saga of Nissan’s season concerned its powertrain. It was widely understood that the team was the only FE squad to be employing a twin-motor set-up, which was not against the rules and had been tried with little success by other teams in previous seasons. But Nissan’s worked – very well in qualifying. The system was clearly arranged in such a way that the car was rapid under acceleration, but the extra weight caused energy-efficiency issues in races. This is why Nissan scored five poles (three for Buemi and two for rookie sensation Rowland) but just the one race win.

Buemi’s New York victory came in the follow-up to the Bern race, which in turn came after the FIA’s announcement that it was banning the twin-motor concept for the 2019-20 season. In Switzerland’s de facto capital, team principal Jean-Paul Driot made what would be his final visit to the FE paddock before his death in early August following a lengthy illness.

Despite all he was going through away from the track, Driot was the same as he had always been: direct, no-nonsense, passionate. In the pre-race press conference, many were intrigued to hear his thoughts on the twin-motor saga.

Driot acknowledged what had happened, accepting the FIA’s decision and saying rival squads had done “some lobbying” over the way Nissan’s twin motors were arranged. In an interview with Autosport shortly before the New York weekend he was in a similarly combative mood, honestly assessing the strengths and weaknesses of his drivers and warning that the FIA must be consistent on cost-control issues or risk “the start of killing the championship”.

Buemi dedicated his New York win to Driot, and rightly so for many reasons. The single-seater stalwart had been in FE since the beginning, presided over the best team of the championship’s early years with Renault, and had embarked on a new challenge with Nissan with his famous plain-speaking style. The FE paddock will be a poorer place without him, as it was for much of last season as he battled his illness. But at least there was one last win to savour.

Thank you, Jean-Paul.

“THE FE
PADDOCK
WILL BE A
POORER PLACE
WITHOUT
DRIOT”

was robbed of the thrilling showdown it had been building to for much of the campaign.

“Last year I said was a perfect season maximising absolutely everything,” says Vergne. “But this year there were external factors that were a lot harder on us than last year. But this season was better than last, although it may look like the other way around.”

The reason why Vergne feels this way is because of the performance of his DS Techeetah team, which clinched the teams’ title after missing out by a fraction last year. To do that it had to

“THE NEW QUALIFYING FORMAT
DROVE US CRAZY, BUT DELIVERED
AN EXCITING TITLE FINALE”

overhaul Audi, the previous FE benchmark. The German manufacturer knew ahead of the season that its energy-efficiency advantage had been trimmed as the field converged, but it never became fully clear which team had the best package in 2018-19.

Techeetah (who, for the many fans of last year’s season review, went from being not quite Leicester City to Paris Saint-Germain in a metaphor that intentionally never worked) shone early on, and showed it had an edge on more occasions than any other team. But Audi, allied with its new customer squad Envision Virgin Racing picking up plenty of positive results and taking a fine third in the teams’ standings behind the factory squad, was still a force to be reckoned with.

When asked if he had expected to take both titles, DS Techeetah team boss Mark Preston says: “No, because we thought it was such

TEAMS’ CHAMPIONSHIP		
POS	TEAM	PTS
1	DS Techeetah	222
2	Audi	203
3	Envision Virgin Racing	191
4	Nissan e.dams	190
5	BMW Andretti	156
6	Mahindra Racing	125
7	Jaguar Racing	116
8	Venturi	88
9	HWA	44
10	Dragon	23
11	NIO	7

a competitive season, especially with the new qualifying format, which just has driven us crazy, but obviously delivered an exciting finale to the championship.”

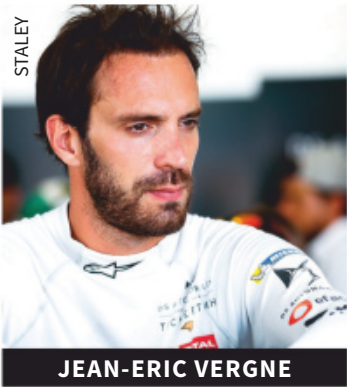
Behind the top three came Nissan and the rapid-but-inconsistent BMW Andretti squad, with Mahindra Racing following in sixth after again starting strongly before fading. Jaguar had a solid season, capped with a fine win for Mitch Evans in Rome, but it was hamstrung by its second car picking up just 11 points to Evans’s 105. Venturi shone on occasion but struggled with reliability, which also impacted on its customer HWA – although the rookie squad still came away with one pole and one podium via the impressive Stoffel Vandoorne. The Dragon drivers were never far from chaos and the less said about NIO’s season, which team principal Gerry Hughes called a “nightmare”, the better.

So all in all FE’s second album has so far gone down pretty well, but there’s a new record already in the works featuring two mighty motorsport manufacturers in Mercedes and Porsche. FE has sailed through one test of its close nature – introducing a new car – but those are two teams that make domination their business. Not that FE’s new king cares.

“I don’t think Porsche or Mercedes will come and kick our asses,” says Vergne. “I look at Audi – the best brand to me in motor racing. The fact that they have been here from the very beginning of FE, and us, DS Techeetah, beat this team, tells me I’m not very afraid of Mercedes or Porsche.”

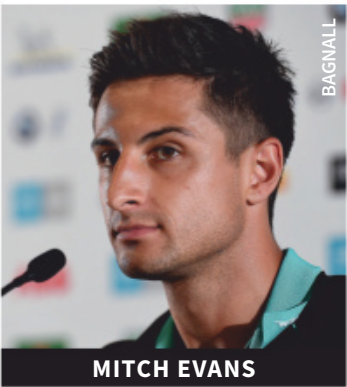
A new phase and therefore another new tune is already on FE’s horizon, but the challenge it brings has already been accepted. ❧

AUTOSPORT’S TOP 10 DRIVERS



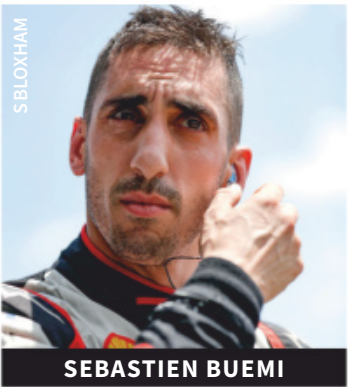
JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

1 Perhaps not quite as good as last season, but deserves the crown and top ranking. Should have had more early on and endured a rocky mid-season, but his rivals all hit trouble too. Entered a purple patch when it mattered, during the title run-in.



MITCH EVANS

2 A young driver shining. Evans earns second for the way he led Jaguar and completely destroyed his team-mates (including 2014-15 FE champion Nelson Piquet Jr, who left) in terms of results. Produced probably the drive of the season from 13th to second in NY1.



SEBASTIEN BUEMI

3 Buemi reckoned he'd have been champion with "one less problem". He certainly surfed Nissan's saga-season well, with a win and podiums in the last four races. But he did benefit from few group-one appearances and was pushed hard by his rookie team-mate.



LUCAS DI GRASSI

4 Possibly a little hard done by here, but this simply wasn't the consistent di Grassi FE has become used to. Yes, he was taken out a couple of times, but disqualification from qualifying in Santiago and a lowly grid spot in Bern really hurt him.



ROBIN FRIJNS

5 One of several drivers wondering what might have been. Showed pace all season and led the standings after brilliant Paris win, but didn't score again until his equally impressive finale victory. Unlucky in the pack during that run, but also sometimes let down by quali.



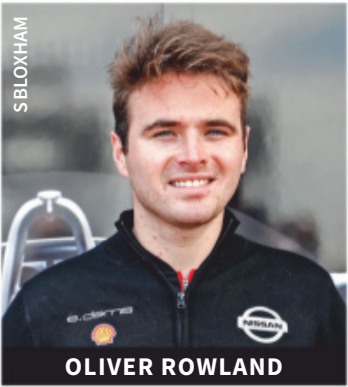
ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA

6 The standout group-one qualifier. He topped the opening segment six times, was the only driver in that group all season, and made it to superpole more than any other group-one runner. Race results and *that* clash in Marrakech proved costly for the BMW man.



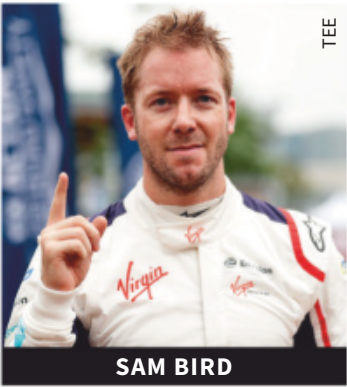
ANDRE LOTTERER

7 It's remarkable that Lotterer was second in the points with four races to go and ended up eighth. Now a fully fledged FE star but somehow still without a first win, which he should have got in Hong Kong. Shocking title run-in drops him down the order.



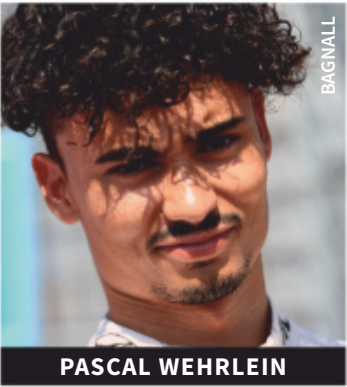
OLIVER ROWLAND

8 The Nissan late signing was the standout rookie of the season. Rowland did make mistakes – hitting the wall in Santiago and in Paris in particular – but made a big impact with a tricky car against a top team-mate. Announced his arrival with a Turn 1 dive in Mexico.



SAM BIRD

9 It's hard to see what Bird did wrong this year – other than the clash with Lotterer in Hong Kong. He didn't deserve the awful run of luck he had mid-season, where he was taken out on several occasions. Took a brilliant win in Santiago.



PASCAL WEHRLEIN

10 After the early season, he looked like FE's top rookie, but Wehrlein and Mahindra faded in unison as the campaign wore on. Made an instant impact, shining in Santiago and Mexico City before battery temperature and a lack of energy thwarted him.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	PTS
1	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE19	2	5	R	13	13	1	14	6	1	3	1	15	7	136
2	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM01	6	8	R	21	R	8	5	15	5	2	3	1	3	119
3	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi / Audi e-tron FE05	9	7	12	1	2	15	7	4	R	1	9	5	18	108
4	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Envision Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE05	12	2	5	11	3	14	4	1	17	13	R	R	1	106
5	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 3	4	9	6	7	7	9	1	16	6	12	2	2	17	105
6	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	BMW Andretti / BMW iFE.18	1	R	R	2	10	3	9	7	EX	4	12	3	9	99
7	Daniel Abt (DEU)	Audi / Audi e-tron FE05	8	10	3	10	4	5	18	3	15	6	6	6	5	95
8	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE19	5	6	13	5	14	4	2	2	7	R	14	17	R	86
9	Sam Bird (GBR)	Envision Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE05	11	3	1	9	6	R	11	11	16	9	4	8	4	85
10	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM01	7	15	R	20	R	2	6	12	2	8	R	14	6	71

11 Jerome d'Ambrosio (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M5Electro) 67; 12 Pascal Wehrlein (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M5Electro) 58; 13 Alexander Sims (BMW Andretti BMW iFE.18) 57; 14 Edoardo Mortara (Venturi Venturi VFE-05) 52; 15 Felipe Massa (Venturi Venturi VFE-05) 36; 16 Stoffel Vandoorne (HWA Venturi VFE-05) 35; 17 Maximilian Gunther (Dragon Penske EV-3) 20; 18 Alex Lynn (Jaguar Racing Jaguar I-TYPE 3) 10; 19 Gary Paffett (HWA Venturi VFE-05) 9; 20 Oliver Turvey (NIO NIO 004) 7; 21 Jose Maria Lopez (Dragon Penske EV-3) 3; 22 Nelson Piquet Jr (Jaguar Racing Jaguar I-TYPE 3) 1; 23 Tom Dillmann (NIO NIO 004) 0; 24 Felipe Nasr (Dragon Penske EV-3) 0; 25 Felix Rosenqvist (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M5Electro) 0.

RACE CENTRE

DTM BRANDS HATCH • W SERIES BRANDS HATCH • MOTOGP RED BULL RING • NASCAR CUP MICHIGAN



Tensions run deep as Audi runs rampant at Brands

The 2019 DTM championship seems to be funnelling down into an internecine fight between Audi stablemates Nico Muller and Rene Rast

TOM ERRINGTON

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

Two-time DTM champion Timo Scheider was not a popular figure with Audi at Brands Hatch. Heading into the weekend, the ex-Audi driver penned a column for broadcaster RAN that hit out at his former employer's handling of its current title contenders.

"There are very, very high tensions among the drivers," he wrote of DTM points leader Rene Rast and his nearest rival and Audi stablemate Nico Muller. Criticising "political correctness", Scheider suggested the "truth was not told" when the duo claimed to have a friendly relationship.

Scheider signed off with one last barb, about his spell at Audi when it "kicked me [out] without warning" at the end of 2016. When Autosport probed the situation, one Audi employee retorted: "You need to perform to stay [at Audi]..."

But while Scheider's comments made Audi motorsport boss Dieter Gass "smile", he did, along with Muller and Rast, admit that tensions exist. Still they played down the severity of it all as the DTM heads into the home stretch, where it usually indulges its notorious team-orders habit.

Rast claimed his relationship with Muller was amicable, adding: "There's always tension, we just don't play kindergarten games. We are professionals, we have dinner together and WhatsApp each other, it doesn't affect [us] professionally."

Muller said: "On track, definitely we all want to win and beat the other guys out there, and Rene is the one to beat at the moment. I end up driving at the same

brand, having the same tools and driving the same car.

"We spend time together. Obviously we don't only share DTM duties, we've shared cars in endurance racing and we get on well as colleagues off the track.

"We won't all agree on everything, which is the most normal thing on the planet because we are sportsmen and we want to put ourselves in the best position. We will always have these little things."

Regardless of how deep the tensions run, the DTM title fight is increasingly looking like a Rast-versus-Muller affair. That's hardly surprising given Rast's run to challenge Gary Paffett for the 2018 title and Muller's emergence as a more consistent and mature contender during that season.

But this time around, the Audi isn't the second-best package in the DTM — it looked in a class of its own on Sunday at Brands Hatch. Rast led a top-eight qualifying lockout, a feat not seen since Audi at the Hungaroring in 2016. BMW and even Audi itself were baffled as to how it made such a step forward.

But Rast then made a poor getaway at the start of Sunday's race, compromised by being unable to run his "best set" of tyres after picking up a puncture in parc ferme. He lost his lead to fellow front-row starter Loic Duval on the run to Paddock Hill Bend but then breezed past Duval on the run to Hawthorns later on the first lap.

Behind, Muller had begun to climb his way up the order from sixth after a strong start gained him places before he then overtook Audi counterparts Mike

Rockenfeller and Jamie Green. Muller moved up to second when he replicated Rast's move on Duval to then begin his chase of Rast. But Muller's bid to overhaul the leader took a hit when the pair both pitted at the end of lap 10 of 42.

Rast's pitstop was straightforward, but problems fitting the left-rear tyre on Muller's Audi RS5 DTM cost him five seconds. Returning in a net second place, once he cleared Robin Frijns and Duval while the pair completed their out-laps on cold tyres, Muller had a gap of 3.3s to make up to the race leader.

The battle then swung to-and-fro over the second half of the race, and a series of fast laps enabled Muller to close within 0.2s at the flag, but he proved unable to prevent Rast from taking his fourth win of 2019. Muller admitted to playing it safe against a team-mate, and at a track where overtaking is at a premium. It all means that Rast holds a 37-point advantage heading to the next round at the Lausitzring.

Fellow Audi driver Frijns completed the podium places in third, boosted by a long-running battle in his wake between Philipp Eng and Rockenfeller. Eng had started ninth on the grid and ran a long first phase that gave him a fresh-rubber advantage in his second stint.

The BMW driver cleared Rockenfeller with a smart move on the inside of Surtees but found Duval a sterner proposition, making slight contact at Surtees when Duval closed the door on Eng at the exit, and a lap later Eng ran side-by-side with the Audi on the run to Hawthorns. >>





When Wittmann found clear air, he was able to run clear of his Audi foes

But Eng failed to find a way past Duval and instead had to settle for fifth ahead of Rockenfeller, though he was still the best-placed BMW driver. That was a contrast to the marque's triumph in Saturday's race, which had suggested that BMW's Marco Wittmann would remain a thorn in the side of Audi during the title bid, even if the M4 DTM package appears to lack Audi's engine power and reliability.

The crucial move in race one came when polesitter Wittmann steered his M4 through a narrow gap caused by the early-stopping Green running wide at Paddock Hill Bend. There was enough space for Wittmann to power past the Audi driver and then-net leader Rast as the pitstops began to shake out.

A slow lap from Wittmann late in the race allowed Rast to close to within three seconds, and the Audi driver loomed large on the final lap. But Rast was unable to find a way past and crossed the line 0.3s adrift.

Rast had put himself into position to hound Wittmann by picking off two Audi stablemates on the run to Hawthorns in quick succession following his mandatory pitstop, having lost places early on. He first passed Duval and then relegated Muller to the final place on the podium.

But while Wittmann's victory eventually took the headlines, Saturday also featured the R-Motorsport Aston Martin team leading in front of its 'home' crowd, before several camera angles showed that Paul di Resta had jumped the start – fractionally. Di Resta had given R-Motorsport the

second-best qualifying result of its debut campaign by placing his Vantage in fourth after the team reacted well to the changeable conditions on Saturday morning.

When Wittmann and fellow front-row starter Rast bogged down at the beginning, di Resta swept to the outside and passed the BMW into Paddock Hill Bend to lead.

Di Resta kept Wittmann behind him for 14 laps, but he was then required to serve a 5s time penalty at his mandatory pitstop. That dropped him down the field before he eventually retired with an engine-related problem.

In footage shown to Autosport, di Resta's Aston rolled slightly forward just before the lights went out, but di Resta was adamant that it did not constitute a jump start.

"If that's a jump start, then every single start every single person has done for the past 15 years would be illegal," di Resta said. "They [the stewards] need to look at themselves and [decide] if that's the tolerance they want to work to. That's fine. But that was acceptable in the years before, so I don't see why it is unacceptable now, or the way it now works."

When di Resta's comments were put to DTM boss Gerhard Berger, the series chief admitted it was a tough call to make.

"You know, firstly I cannot tell you 100% it is right or wrong – it is a bit like in football, sometimes you discuss everything [that is an incident]," Berger said. "It is measured by sensors. So, it's not a problem from my eyes – I would say I've not seen it – but it was on the limit.

"That's what it should be. But the sensor doesn't lie. I have no arguments against it. At the end of the day, it's happened. But it would be great if this [start] would still be OK. It's [decided by a] sensor."

Despite its penalty controversy, the R-Motorsport squad did enjoy improved engine power, going from 10km/h down on its rivals on the straights at Hockenheim three months ago to around 7km/h down. Stronger reliability allowed the Vantage's HWA-built engine to be turned up without fear of repercussions.

While R-Motorsport scored a double points finish on Sunday, it came with the frustration of knowing that di Resta had missed out on a likely seventh-place finish when a radio problem prevented him and the team from organising a pitstop just as a slow zone was called for Joel Eriksson's stricken BMW.

"Ultimately it was a radio issue – I've had an issue for the past few races – and the way the radio ban works in the DTM when you can and can't speak; you can under a yellow flag," said di Resta. "When they called a slow zone or attempted to... I saw it at the last corner and couldn't send a message.

"The [Eriksson] car was sat there for a number of laps before. It confused and caught them off guard because it wasn't clear what happened. It was a good chance missed, probably P7."

While the radio issue is an ongoing headache for R-Motorsport, it could pale in comparison to Audi having to manage two title contenders under its roof. ❧

RESULTS ROUND 6/9, BRANDS HATCH (GBR) RACE 1 (42 LAPS – 102.198 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Marco Wittmann (DEU)	RMG / BMW M4 Turbo DTM	56m39.275s
2	Rene Rast (DEU)	Team Rosberg / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	+0.374s
3	Nico Muller (CHE)	Abt / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	+8.566s
4	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Abt / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	+15.646s
5	Loic Duval (FRA)	Team Phoenix / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	+18.236s
6	Philipp Eng (AUT)	RMR / BMW M4 Turbo DTM	+18.813s
7	Mike Rockenfeller (DEU)	Team Phoenix / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	+20.056s
8	Sheldon van der Linde (ZAF)	RBM / BMW M4 Turbo DTM	+29.909s
9	Jonathan Aberdein (ZAF)	WRT / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	+37.087s
10	Daniel Juncadella (ESP)	R-Motorsport / Aston Martin Vantage DTM	+37.385s
11	Jamie Green (GBR)	Team Rosberg / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	+48.996s
12	Bruno Spengler (CAN)	RMG / BMW M4 Turbo DTM	+52.465s
13	Timo Glock (DEU)	RMR / BMW M4 Turbo DTM	+1m05.237s
14	Paul di Resta (GBR)	R-Motorsport / Aston Martin Vantage DTM	-3 laps
15	Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT)	R-Motorsport / Aston Martin Vantage DTM	-4 laps-accident damage
R	Jake Dennis (GBR)	R-Motorsport / Aston Martin Vantage DTM	0 laps-accident damage
W	Pietro Fittipaldi (BRA)	WRT / Audi RS5 Turbo DTM	accident damage
NS	Joel Eriksson (SWE)	RBM / BMW M4 Turbo DTM	gearbox

Winner's average speed 108.232mph. Fastest lap Eng 1m17.862s, 112.504mph.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Wittmann 1m15.654s; 2 Rast 1m15.723s; 3 Duval 1m16.012s; 4 di Resta 1m16.067s; 5 Frijns 1m16.249s; 6 Linde 1m16.304s; 7 Dennis 1m16.342s; 8 Muller 1m16.365s; 9 Glock 1m16.384s; 10 Juncadella 1m16.533s; 11 Eng 1m16.541s; 12 Rockenfeller 1m16.600s; 13 Green 1m16.675s; 14 Spengler 1m17.087s; 15 Habsburg 1m17.510s; 16 Fittipaldi 1m27.390s; 17 Eriksson; 18 Aberdein.

RACE 2 (42 LAPS – 102.198 MILES)

1 Rast 57m28.564s; 2 Muller +0.240s; 3 Frijns +0.598s; 4 Duval +2.362s; 5 Eng +2.889s; 6 Rockenfeller +3.523s; 7 Linde +4.789s; 8 Juncadella +5.229s; 9 Dennis +6.193s; 10 Wittmann +7.837s; 11 Habsburg +12.091s; 12 Glock +20.594s; 13 Aberdein +27.882s; 14 di Resta +35.392s; 15 Green +51.851s; 16 Fittipaldi +55.065s; R Spengler 21 laps-engine; R Eriksson 20 laps-electrical.

Winner's average speed 106.685mph. Fastest lap Fittipaldi 1m18.169s, 112.062mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Rast 1m15.134s; 2 Duval 1m15.432s; 3 Frijns 1m15.834s; 4 Green 1m15.919s; 5 Rockenfeller 1m15.959s; 6 Muller 1m15.968s; 7 Fittipaldi 1m16.015s; 8 Aberdein 1m16.016s; 9 Eng 1m16.175s; 10 Juncadella 1m16.257s; 11 Glock 1m16.274s; 12 Wittmann 1m16.296s; 13 Linde 1m16.396s; 14 Eriksson 1m16.425s; 15 di Resta 1m16.710s; 16 Spengler 1m16.715s; 17 Dennis 1m16.805s; 18 Habsburg 1m16.997s.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Rast 206; 2 Muller 169; 3 Wittmann 147; 4 Eng 129; 5 Rockenfeller 108; 6 Frijns 93; 7 Duval 89; 8 Spengler 77; 9 Green 51; 10 Eriksson 43.



VANTAGES STRUGGLE AS BRANDS THRIVES



While Aston Martin didn't secure home glory for the fans at Brands Hatch, it can take comfort in the fact that strong crowds have played a part in helping to secure the circuit's DTM future.

On multiple occasions during 2019, Brands and Misano had been cited as "struggling" rounds. Sources had suggested there was pessimism going into the weekend about how much UK fans really engaged with the DTM.

But the proactive marketing approach of the supporting W Series helped boost ticket sales, and Brands laid on other crowd-pleasing elements, such as David Coulthard's Red Bull RB7 Formula 1 runs.

"From what we have experienced in [successful new addition] Assen, in particular, the promoter was massively active and did lots of different things," said Audi motorsport boss Dieter Gass. "It paid off. If you want to motivate the people to come here, you have to do it. If you have the right promoter, you won't need to change tracks."

Series boss Gerhard Berger (below, right) has continually stressed that both Britain and Italy are important markets for the DTM, and underlined his interest in adding a French round as well. While conceding that the DTM will likely need to move away from Misano to another Italian circuit, Berger was glowing about Brands's prospects.

"After another year we're going to look really alright here [at Brands]. After this weekend, I'm very positive," he said.

"You need a little bit of Formula 1 tracks [on the calendar], they help in general. But [on] the other side, modern F1 tracks have their characteristics and I love to come to places like this. I think we need a mixture."



Chadwick makes history as Powell wins at Brands



W SERIES
BRANDS HATCH (GBR)
11 AUGUST
ROUND 6/6

Jamie Chadwick headed to Brands Hatch last weekend having already claimed one title this year in the MRF Challenge, signed a contract to become a development driver for the Williams Formula 1 team, and was on the cusp of claiming the inaugural W Series crown too.

It's safe to say that 2019 has already been a particularly impressive year for Chadwick. And her career looks set to gain even more momentum after she left the

circuit on Sunday night with the W Series championship trophy, \$500,000 of the \$1.5million total prize fund and a guaranteed drive in the series next year – when it will have superlicence points on offer.

But Chadwick's drive to title glory didn't quite pan out according to plan. Although she clinched the championship, she did so while finishing off the podium for the first time in a points-scoring race this year.

Chadwick had only just beaten Alice Powell to pole in qualifying, setting a blistering lap of 1m22.425s in the final minute of the session. She managed to hold the lead from the line, ahead of Powell and Assen winner Emma Kimilainen.

Chadwick's title rival Beitske Visser, who trailed her by 13 points ahead of the weekend, started the race in fifth after having had her practice sessions blighted with technical problems. From the beginning of the race she slipped back from the leading trio of Chadwick, Powell and Kimilainen.

For Powell, Brands Hatch represented her final opportunity at stealing a win, having endured a miserable mid-season of heavy crashes and technical problems through Misano and the Norisring. So the former GP3 driver piled the pressure on Chadwick as the race approached its midway point.

Chadwick was forced by Powell to begin an emphatic defence, which in turn enabled

Kimilainen to close in and challenge for the lead herself. The trio duelled for several laps before both Powell and Kimilainen overtook Chadwick at once through Paddock Hill Bend.

Powell and Kimilainen then began to pull out a lead of almost nine seconds ahead of Chadwick, while Visser began to inch closer to her title rival before proceedings were thrown into turmoil when Miki Koyama suffered a spin at the entry to Sheene Curve.

With Koyama's car stranded in the middle of the circuit and requiring a safety car so it could be recovered, the gap between the leaders closed. Crucially this enabled Visser to overtake Chadwick for the final podium position on the restart.

That was unnerving for Chadwick, who had known that whatever happened in the race, a podium would guarantee her the title. But Visser still had to win with Chadwick in fourth, and third proved to be her limit. Chadwick had done enough to become the first-ever W Series champion.

"This year has been a whirlwind and today's race was more intense than any other racing day I've ever had," said Chadwick as she digested her achievement.

"As a race goes, [it was] probably the most stressful 30 minutes of my life and I've never felt that pressure before, especially when you have in the back of your mind





Visser was ready to pounce on Chadwick when the race restarted



Koyama off triggered a safety car and left Chadwick vulnerable



Chadwick held on to pole to lead the race's early phase

that you just want to win the race. It was definitely not a pretty race, but in terms of the championship, we did everything we needed to do."

Powell's first W Series win elevated her to third in the championship, moving clear of Norisring winner Marta Garcia, while Kimilainen's second place moved her ahead of Fabienne Wohlwend in the final standings to fifth.

Wohlwend ended the race fifth behind Chadwick, but ahead of Vicky Piria, who climbed from 10th on the grid to move to ninth place in the championship and cement her place on the grid for 2020.

Jessica Hawkins ended the final race of the year in seventh place, which also ensured her safety since it vaulted her from 14th to 11th in the standings.

Others safely through to next season are Tasmin Pepper and Sabre Cook, while Caitlin Wood moved in the other direction. Thirteenth in the championship leaves her among the drivers facing a new selection process in order to re-enter.

LUCY MORSON



RESULTS ROUND 6/6, BRANDS HATCH, 11 AUGUST (21 LAPS - 51.099 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Alice Powell (GBR)	31m24.967s
2	Emma Kimilainen (FIN)	+0.511s
3	Beitske Visser (NLD)	+5.784s
4	Jamie Chadwick (GBR)	+9.321s
5	Fabienne Wohlwend (LIE)	+9.732s
6	Vicky Piria (ITA)	+10.730s
7	Jessica Hawkins (GBR)	+11.060s
8	Marta Garcia (ESP)	+11.613s
9	Sabre Cook (USA)	+12.179s
10	Sarah Moore (GBR)	+13.420s
11	Caitlin Wood (AUS)	+13.881s
12	Tasmin Pepper (ZAF)	+14.221s
13	Gosia Rdest (POL)	+14.735s
14	Vivien Keszthelyi (HUN)	+18.656s
15	Naomi Schiff (ZAF)	+20.585s
16	Esmee Hawkey (GBR)	+20.755s
17	Shea Holbrook (USA)	+20.839s
18	Megan Gilkes (CAN)	+21.681s
19	Sarah Bovy (BEL)	+22.061s
20	Miki Koyama (JPN)	19 laps-spun off

Winner's average speed 97.591mph.

Fastest lap Kimilainen 1m23.301s, 105.158mph.



Powell rounded out the season with first win

QUALIFYING 1 Chadwick 1m22.425s; 2 Powell 1m22.793s; 3 Hawkey 1m22.864s; 4 Kimilainen 1m22.901s; 5 Visser 1m23.210s; 6 Wohlwend 1m23.210s; 7 Koyama 1m23.326s; 8 Moore 1m23.534s; 9 Hawkins 1m23.572s; 10 Piria 1m23.607s; 11 Garcia 1m23.801s; 12 Cook 1m23.850s; 13 Rdest 1m24.218s; 14 Wood 1m24.316s; 15 Pepper 1m24.338s; 16 Bovy 1m24.570s; 17 Keszthelyi 1m24.775s; 18 Gilkes 1m24.870s; 19 Holbrook 1m25.202s; 20 Schiff 1m25.351s.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Chadwick 110; 2 Visser 100; 3 Powell 76; 4 Garcia 66; 5 Kimilainen 53; 6 Wohlwend 51; 7 Koyama 30; 8 Moore 24; 9 Piria 24; 10 Pepper 22.

Dovizioso stuns Marquez with last-corner win

MOTOGP

RED BULL RING (AUT)

11 AUGUST

ROUND 11/19

As Andrea Dovizioso readily admitted after the race, his final-corner Austrian Grand Prix triumph over Marc Marquez didn't have major championship ramifications. It did yield a 10-point swing between the pair, but because Marquez had already assembled such a comfortable lead in the standings this alone was not enough to rejuvenate the title race.

But the symbolic value of Dovizioso's win was far more significant than the small dent it made in Marquez's points lead. After several races in which Honda was beginning to look unbeatable, the Red Bull Ring stood as perhaps Ducati's last stronghold on the calendar – a horsepower track where it had won each MotoGP race since the event was reinstated in 2016.

A defeat in Austria would have hurt a lot, but as the race approached that outcome looked increasingly likely. Marquez, who had already come close to upsetting the Ducatis at the circuit in the past despite riding acceleration-limited Honda machinery, now had an improved engine at his disposal, and put it to good use by setting the pace through practice and qualifying.

The margin of his pole position – a record 59th in grand prix racing's premier class – was 0.434 seconds. This was



Dovizioso left it as late as possible to seize his moment and pass Marquez

a dispiriting advantage, bigger than the gap between second place and 11th.

Marquez insisted that margin wouldn't be reflected in the race, saying Dovizioso was "much closer" in race simulations. Perhaps this expectation influenced the way Marquez rode on the opening lap – for when Dovizioso challenged him for the lead into Turn 3, Marquez blocked off the inside and braked late, running out wide and compromising them both.

Three riders got the jump on the pair as a result, and while Marquez and Dovizioso made relatively light work of passing Jack Miller and Alex Rins, rookie Fabio Quartararo managed to hang on to the lead for a few laps.

It was the high point of a superb weekend by the Petronas Yamaha rider, who had split

Marquez and Dovizioso on the front row and asserted himself as the benchmark among the M1 riders, despite running a lower-spec Yamaha with reduced rpm.

Ultimately, he couldn't stave off the two main protagonists for more than five laps, and rode a lonely race to third afterwards, finishing immediately ahead of his two factory counterparts Valentino Rossi and Maverick Vinales.

By the time Dovizioso and Marquez were easing past Quartararo, Dovizioso had passed Marquez in traffic. But once in clean air Dovizioso would only lead for a couple of laps before Marquez cut in from the outside line exiting Turn 1, and then powered past his rival's Ducati.

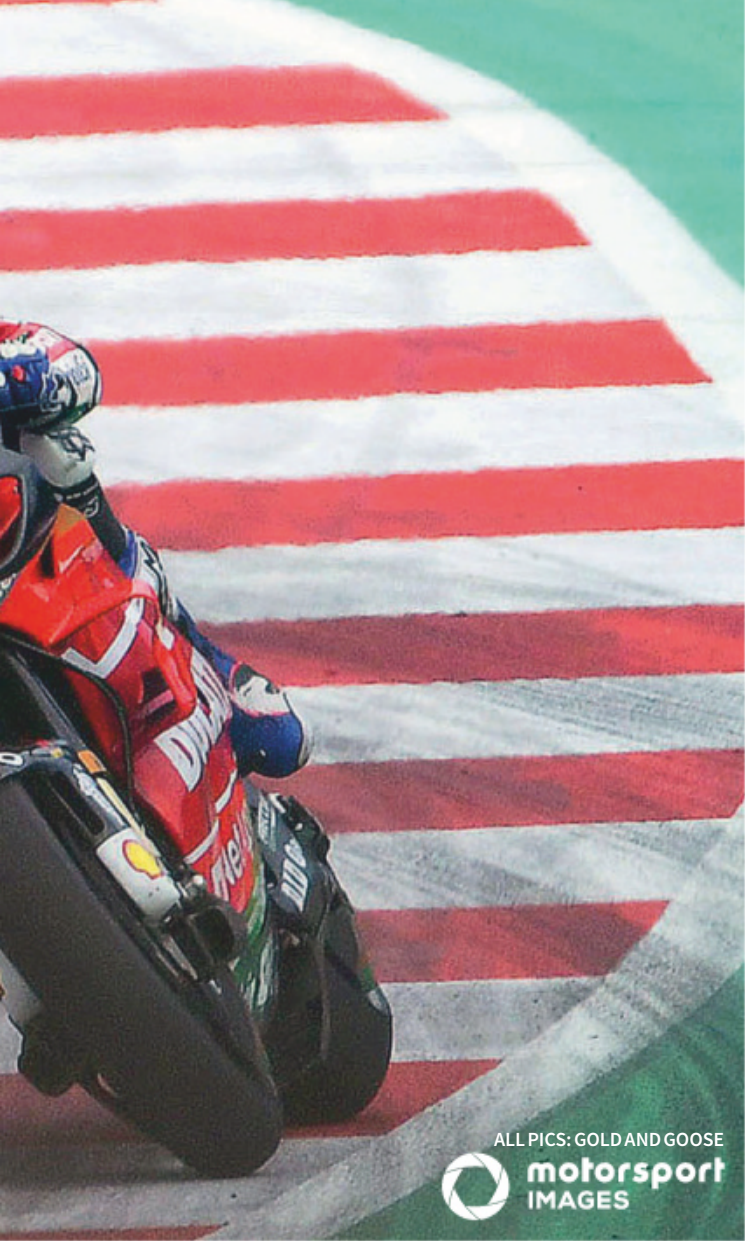
Yet there would be no customary Marquez breakaway since, once overtaken,



Ducati has won every race in Austria since its return to the calendar



Dovizioso got ahead earlier on, but Marquez mounted a comeback



RESULTS ROUND 11/19, RED BULL RING (AUT), 11 AUGUST (28 LAPS – 75.126 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Andrea Dovizioso (ITA)	Ducati	39m34.771s
2	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	+0.213s
3	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Petronas Yamaha	+6.117s
4	Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Yamaha	+7.719s
5	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Yamaha	+8.674s
6	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	+8.695s
7	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+16.021s
8	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Tech3 KTM	+16.206s
9	Danilo Petrucci (ITA)	Ducati	+17.350s
10	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	+20.510s
11	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+22.273s
12	Johann Zarco (FRA)	KTM	+25.503s
13	Stefan Bradl (DEU)	Honda	+31.962s
14	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+34.741s
15	Karel Abraham (CZE)	Avintia Ducati	+48.109s
16	Andrea Iannone (ITA)	Aprilia	-1 lap
R	Tito Rabat (ESP)	Avintia Ducati	20 laps-crash
R	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	7 laps-crash
R	Hafizh Syahrin (MYS)	Tech3 KTM	2 laps-crash
R	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	KTM	1 lap-engine shutdown
R	Cal Crutchlow (GBR)	LCR Honda	1 lap-crash

**WEEKEND
WINNERS**

MOTO2
**RED BULL RING
(AUT)**
Brad Binder
Ajo Motorsport
KTM

MOTO 3
**RED BULL RING
(AUT)**
Romano Fenati (below)



Winner's average speed 113.886mph. **Fastest lap** Dovizioso 1m23.827s, 115.226mph.

QUALIFYING 2

1 Marquez 1m23.027s; **2** Quartararo 1m23.461s; **3** Dovizioso 1m23.515s; **4** Vinales 1m23.523s; **5** Bagnaia 1m23.652s; **6** Nakagami 1m23.669s; **7** Rins 1m23.681s; **8** Miller 1m23.688s; **9** Crutchlow 1m23.754s; **10** Rossi 1m23.817s; **11** P Espargaro 1m23.866s; **12** Petrucci 1m23.964s.

QUALIFYING 1

1 Crutchlow 1m23.829s; **2** Bagnaia 1m23.928s; **3** Oliveira 1m24.130s; **4** Morbidelli 1m24.270s; **5** Rabat 1m24.389s; **6** Zarco 1m24.392s; **7** Abraham 1m24.423s; **8** Iannone 1m24.526s; **9** A Espargaro 1m24.749s; **10** Syahrin 1m24.759s; **11** Bradl 1m25.020s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Marquez 230; **2** Dovizioso 172; **3** Petrucci 136; **4** Rins 124; **5** Rossi 103; **6** Vinales 102; **7** Quartararo 92; **8** Miller 86; **9** Crutchlow 78; **10** Nakagami 62; **11** P Espargaro 61; **12** Morbidelli 58; **13** Joan Mir 39; **14** A Espargaro 33; **15** Oliveira 26; **16** Bagnaia 24; **17** Zarco 22; **18** Iannone 21; **19** Jorge Lorenzo 19; **20** Bradl 16; **21** Rabat 14; **22** Michele Pirro 9; **23** Abraham 4; **24** Sylvain Guintoli 3; **25** Syahrin 3; **26** Bradley Smith 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Honda 236; **2** Ducati 202; **3** Yamaha 179; **4** Suzuki 141; **5** KTM 69; **6** Aprilia 47.



Dovizioso seemed to have little trouble keeping up – and Marquez intimated after the race that the Italian had been “playing” by releasing the throttle to avoid getting back ahead sooner.

Dovizioso finally did reclaim the lead on the start/finish straight at the end of lap 19 of the 28-lap race, allowing Marquez to spend a few laps in the tow sizing up his rival, before their battle kicked off in earnest with fewer than three laps remaining.

Marquez sent it down the inside of Dovizioso at the Turn 7 right-hander, and though the Ducati rider stayed alongside through Turn 8 and held the inside line at Turn 9, he outbraked himself and handed Marquez the advantage.

Using the Ducati's superior acceleration, Dovizioso attacked again on the start/finish straight, only for Marquez to show him the inside line and cut across to ensure a better exit on the run down to Turn 3. On the final lap, the same exchange was repeated and Marquez emerged in front once more.

There he remained until the last corner, where Dovizioso squeezed through on the inside of the downhill right-hander and got the bike stopped just well enough to thwart any potential retaliation from Marquez.

The five-time MotoGP champion was therefore consigned to a third straight last-lap defeat at the Red Bull Ring, a track where the ultimate prize continues to elude him. But while Dovizioso emphasised the psychological impact of this triumph for Ducati, Marquez calmly shrugged off the significance of his defeat.

“I learned already a few years ago,” he said. “If you win the championship at the end of the season, nobody will remember this race until we come back here next year.”

VALENTIN KHOROUNZHIY



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Harvick (4) is third in the standings and 70 points off leader Kyle Busch



Harvick victorious after late spin prompts economy run

NASCAR CUP
MICHIGAN (USA)
11 AUGUST
ROUND 23/36

The NASCAR Cup race at Michigan was defined by fuel conservation, which placed Stewart-Haas Racing driver Kevin Harvick on the right side of an equation many of his rivals miscalculated.

It was an innocuous spin from Cup debutant Spencer Boyd which triggered a critical final caution, but with 50 laps – a quarter of the race – remaining, it backed teams into a corner. Since a full tank of fuel was likely to last just 48 laps, heavy fuel saving would be required to reach the finish.

Despite locking out the top three positions after the restart, Penske was one of several teams to fumble. First, polesitter Brad Keselowski dropped out of a provisional third place, pitting with 12 laps to go after the team failed to brim his car with fuel at the final scheduled stop.

Penske's Joey Logano had led 52 laps before Harvick, seemingly unconcerned

by his fuel numbers, completed his charge to first and dived to the inside of the reigning champion at Turn 1.

Logano would then sacrifice second place for a splash-and-dash with four laps to go.

His team-mate Ryan Blaney pitted on the penultimate lap as other drivers such as Kurt Busch attempted to complete the final tours on fumes, and then slid down the order.

While several drivers' days unravelled in the final stage, Harvick's was nearly undone in the first after he picked up a right-front puncture while rounding Turn 3 in second place ahead of the opening round of stops. He dived into the pits and would even salvage stage points in sixth.

Playoff hopeful Jimmie Johnson eventually dropped eight laps down after hitting the wall at Turn 2 in stage one. Entering the weekend level on points with Ryan Newman on the playoff cut-line, Johnson now faces the prospect of not reaching the next stage for the first time, sitting 12 points adrift of qualification with three races remaining.

KYRAN GIBBONS



Lager than life: Harvick rehydrates with a beer

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IMAGES

WEEKEND WINNERS

NASCAR CUP
MICHIGAN (USA)
Kevin Harvick
Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford Mustang)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
MID-OHIO (USA)
Austin Cindric
Team Penske (Ford Mustang)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
MICHIGAN (USA)
Austin Hill
Hattori Racing Enterprises
(Toyota Tundra)

ADAC GT MASTERS
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
Race 1 Christian Engelhart/Mirko Bortolotti
GRT Grasser
Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo
Race 2 Ricardo Feller/Dries Vanthoor
Land Motorsport
Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS
CAMPO GRANDE (BRA)
Race 1 Thiago Camilo
Ipiranga Racing
(Chevrolet Cruze)
Race 2 Rubens Barrichello
Full Time Sports
(Chevrolet Cruze)

TITANS RX
MONTALEGRE (PRT)
Race 1 Kevin Hansen
Pantera RX
Race 2 Timmy Hansen
Pantera RX

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BRITCAR PLANS TO BRING BACK PRODUCTION SERIES

BRITCAR

Britcar bosses are pursuing plans for additional races in 2020 dedicated to production cars.

Feelers were put out on social media at the end of last month by series chief Claire Hedley, who proposed to run two races of 30 or 45 minutes length on Sundays for the class 5-7 production cars, while the two one-hour races would remain on Saturdays for the existing more powerful GTs in the series' 1-4 classes.

Hedley said the idea had already attracted strong interest from drivers, who were largely in favour of 45-minute races instead of half-hour sprints.

"When I started, productions was what we were doing [a production series ran alongside the main Britcar Endurance Championship for many years]," she said. "I thought about what to develop with Britcar and there is nothing wrong with class fives – they want to be in Britcar but they don't want to be lapped by GT3s. The feedback has been incredible, and I think we understand what our customers want.

"It would be crazy not to look at doing something. There was a wake-up moment that we are going to lose our class fives if we don't do something about it."

The championship currently hosts its two races on

a Saturday, but according to series staff it already has its hospitality tent in place until Monday mornings at race weekends, meaning it is only additional catering and overnight staff accommodation that would need to be added to begin running Sunday races.

While no formal proposal is in place yet, work is continuing on the logistics, race fees and negotiations with the British Automobile Racing Club to establish the feasibility plan.

It has not yet been decided whether the new Sunday races would run as a series or championship, although Hedley admitted having championship status would likely draw in more competitors.

• The VR Motorsport Praga R1T of Grant Williams and Alastair Boulton was unable to take up its front-row start in the first Snetterton Britcar race last weekend. The Praga was wheeled off into the pitlane just minutes before the green flag lap with a fuel switch issue. The three-time winners got going but later suffered a fuel-flow problem – which proved terminal for their race and any chance of starting the second encounter.

JASON NOBLE

➔ P70 SNETTERTON REPORT

Uncertain wait for Donnelly over injured leg

FORMULA 1

Ex-Formula 1 driver Martin Donnelly must wait up to another four months before finding out whether he can keep the leg damaged in a recent moped crash during a charity ride.

In excess of £50,000 was raised in a crowdfunding campaign to support Donnelly while he is unable to work, having broken his already damaged left leg while riding in Ireland to raise money for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

After his 1990 Spanish Grand Prix practice crash at Jerez, Donnelly contracted the MRSA bacterial infection.

The 55-year-old suffered another infection while in hospital last month, which meant he was unable to have a cast fitted to his broken leg.

"The whole of the thigh just turned to what looked like bubble wrap," said



Donnelly. "It was red and orange blisters and then it moved to my other leg and back. It was all infection."

Donnelly has since had a metal structure screwed into the bone, but so far his body has been slow to accept it. Last Thursday he was expecting to find out from doctors if he will keep his leg, but that decision has been postponed in order to give Donnelly's body more time to begin the healing process.

MATT KEW

TOP SUPERKART RACERS TO JOIN LEGENDS SERIES

LEGENDS

Successful British Superkart racers Paul Platt and Chris Needham have lined up outings in the National Legends Championship ahead of next season, when they intend to join fellow karter Daniel Clark.

Five-time Superkart champion Platt has agreed to share a Clark Motorsport Legend with 2017 MSA Superkart champion Clark, potentially prior to the end of this season.

Clark returned to Legends this summer after 13 years away, and also hopes to expand into a two-car entry for 2020.

"I'd sold all my karts and bought two Legends in about 24 hours," said Clark. "It's so much fun, and it'll be great sharing with a few old friends in something a bit different."

Platt intends to dovetail racing in Legends with further Superkart outings, adding: "By sharing a car, only the car is registered for points, so we can both take it in turns to help me dip my toe in the water of something new. I'm really looking forward to it."

Fellow karting champion Needham also visited Clark at the recent Legends meeting at Donington Park with plans to join the series next season, but as a privateer entry with car owner Gareth Sheridan.

"Gareth and I are going to do this ourselves," said Needham. "We've got the car, so it will just be about getting a feel for it. It feels safer too, so you step back a bit and think what's best for you."

Clark (below) enjoyed a strong weekend at Donington, taking a best result of seventh.

DAN MASON



Brabham to make racing return

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Sam Brabham and the Brookspeed Motorsport squad will return to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB at Thruxton this weekend.

Brabham, the son of three-time Le Mans 24 Hours class winner David, will make his first outing since a one-off appearance in the Porsche category at Silverstone last year. The 2016-17 scholarship finalist and British Formula Ford race winner now plans to contest the remainder of the season in the Pro-Am class.

GT regular Brookspeed will also be making

a return to the category after last fielding Jayde Kruger in the series in 2015. The squad powered James Gornall and Jon Barnes to the 2008 British GT title in a Dodge Viper and has more recently fielded Porsche Cayman GT4s in a variety of endurance categories.

"It feels amazing to be heading back to the track and rejoining Porsche Carrera Cup GB," said Brabham. "Last September seems a long time ago so it's great to be back in the race seat with a four-race commitment, which will really help me with consistency and understanding the car to build on progress each round."

British drivers triumph at Nurburgring Oldtimer GP



Stretton won both F1 races in his Tyrrell 012

SAWYER



Wolfe and Thomas took Gentlemen Drivers glory

SAWYER

MASTERS HISTORIC RACING

A Historic Formula 1 double for Martin Stretton headed a crop of victories for British drivers in Masters Historic Racing categories at the Nurburgring Oldtimer Grand Prix event last weekend.

The Tyrrell 012 driver led from the front in the opening race to beat Mike Cantillon's Williams FW07C, but Stretton had to fight his way through the field to triumph in the second contest.

Another double winner was Andy Wolfe. He took the Masters Historic Sports Car spoils with Jason Wright in their Lola T70, passing leader Michael Gans's T290 shortly after the pitstops. Wolfe also triumphed in the Masters Gentlemen Drivers race, sharing a Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe with Julian Thomas after a close fight with the Ferrari 250 GTO of Nicky Pastorelli.

British Touring Car racer Jake Hill claimed another triumph alongside Rob Fenn in the under two-litre class of the Gentlemen Drivers, despite their Lotus Elan getting stuck in third gear. The duo inherited the class win – and fifth overall – after the similar car of last year's BRDC British Formula 3 runner-up Nicolai Kjaergaard was disqualified for his Elan being underweight.

Jackson to share Elan with Hoy in Spa Six Hours

HISTORICS

Historic Formula Ford 1600 champion Cameron Jackson will make his Spa Six Hours debut next month in a freshly rebuilt Lotus Elan 26R alongside Olympian Chris Hoy.

Single-seater specialist Jackson has only previously raced one car with a roof, having driven a Musso pickup in the SsangYong Challenge back in 2017.

He has been invited to compete alongside six-time Olympic gold medal winner

Hoy in the 28 September enduro by the Elan's owner, Lee Penson.

"I'm really excited, everything I hear about Chris is great," said Jackson. "He's going to need a seat in the Elan for each one of his thighs!"

Jackson and Hoy will begin a test programme in what is thought to be the ninth-oldest Elan still in existence.

"A car's a car, you drive within its characteristics pretty quickly," Jackson added. "I've seen a few

Elans driven at full chat and they look gorgeous."

Although Hoy has previously competed in the LMP2 class in the Le Mans 24 Hours and most recently at Spa in the GT4 division of British GT, Jackson has not set any targets for the six-hour historic race.

"Any kind of result would be amazing but so much can happen," he said. "I just want to drive as many different varieties of car as possible so this is a nice one to get checked off the list."

MATT KEW

MOTORSPORT IMAGES/JEP



Hoy will partner Historic FF1600 champ Jackson

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IN THE HEADLINES

EDGERTON QUILTS GINETTA JR

Ginetta Junior driver Theo Edgerton has left the series after a difficult start to the season. The Total Control Racing driver took a best result of third at Donington Park, but felt a lack of straightline speed was hampering his efforts. He contested the first two races of the four-round Snetterton weekend earlier this month, then decided against racing in the other two. TCR team boss Lee Brookes says Edgerton is now looking at alternative categories.

CLASSIC DATE SET FOR 2020

A provisional date of 31 July-2 August has been given for next year's Silverstone Classic. The 2020 meeting will be a special event to mark the 30th birthday of the historic racing festival. For logistical reasons, the Classic normally runs two weeks after the British Grand Prix, and won't clash with any British Touring Car Championship dates.

SERIES ELITE CANCELS AGAIN

Series Elite took the "difficult" decision not to race at Donington Park last weekend due to brake-related issues. The Jaguar XE Project 8 championship's races were called off on Saturday morning after overheating brake problems emerged from testing at the circuit earlier that week. It was another setback for the series, after curing electronic issues that led to the Brands Hatch event in June being cancelled.

NSX MAKES UK RACE DEBUT

Tegiwa Imports' Honda NSX race car (below) made its UK debut in the 750 Motor Club Enduro at Silverstone last weekend. The car was driven by Taiwanese competitors Sheng Ping Yuan, boss of aftermarket suspension and brake specialist Yellow Speed Racing, and Nankang Tire man Yuan Hu Lin. It climbed from 17th on the 49-car grid to the back end of the top 10 in the early stages before retiring later when a misfire set in.



Prebble takes podiums after switching from 205 to Civic

HOT HATCH

Club saloon car ace Gary Prebble switched horses to a Honda Civic for last weekend's 750 Motor Club Hot Hatch races at Silverstone, recording encouraging third and second place finishes despite its engine being down on power.

The successful Castle Combe racer bought the car to replace his Peugeot 205 and hurriedly prepared it for Silverstone.

"Last time out at Cadwell Park, Billy Oakley made me an offer I couldn't refuse for my Peugeot 205," explained Prebble, who still has his SEAT Leon. "Then it

dawned on me that I'd have nothing to race in the remaining rounds unless I found something to replace it.

"I hunted around and a 1996 Civic sort of found me. It was road legal but had been part-converted for trackdays. It had a cage, but needed a lot of safety equipment to go racing, plus tyres and wheels which I was able to source.

"By Donington in three weeks we should have proper power and know where we are. Considering we built the car up over two weeks, third and second places out of the box is a result."

MARCUS PYE

Eastwell to make racing return

FORMULA FORD 1600

Michael Eastwell will return to National Formula Ford 1600 for the remainder of the season, after taken a sabbatical from racing.

The 23-year-old, who reached the final selection of last year's Mazda Road to Indy Shootout, finished runner-up in the National series in 2018 with Kevin Mills Racing.

After buying a US\$2000 car, Eastwell had planned to

race in the USA this year, but the strain of trying to forge a career abroad meant he took a step back from racing at the start of the season.

"I did just run myself into the ground," he said. "Kevin [Mills] has tried to convince me [to come back to FF1600] since I told him I wasn't doing America this year.

"When I came back to the UK and met up with Kevin a lot of memories came flooding back and I do miss it. I'm definitely at a point now

where I'm ready to get back."

Eastwell will drive his Spectrum 011C, which he used last year, at the remaining National rounds, as well as the Brands Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy.

"Don't get me wrong, I've been out of a car seven months so I'm going to be a bit rusty, but I know what I've achieved in the past," added Eastwell. "I wouldn't be going back if I wasn't going to be at the front though."

STEFAN MACKLEY



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Will it be third time lucky?

An imbalanced timetable did no favours for the DTM meeting at Brands Hatch last weekend. As the series is set to return in 2020, let's do better

MATT KEW

For those who can get properly excited by something as humble as a Citroen Saxo with a rollcage and bucket seats, the spectacle and sound of 18 near-prototype DTM cars charging through Paddock Hill Bend at Brands Hatch is something to truly behold.

But without question, it was the two Mini races for the combined Miglia and Se7en grids that provided the best wheel-to-wheel action of last weekend. Aaron Smith was twice victorious, but he was made to work hard to seize the spoils thanks to the relentless pressure from pursuers Rupert Deeth and Kane Astin.

What's even more pleasing is that the battles for A-series honours played out in front of a crowd that appeared far larger than the one to have graced the circuit last season when Brands made its long-awaited return to the DTM calendar.

The Minis were present through mixed fortune. After Silverstone was first resurfaced, a deluge across the 2018 MotoGP weekend flooded the circuit. The water wouldn't dissipate and one of the circuit's biggest events was cancelled.

That led to the asphalt having to be relaid once more, and as a result the Mini meeting fell off the schedule and sought refuge on the DTM support bill. Combined with the grandstands and natural elevation of Brands, which result in a clear view of much

“Who can blame fans for not turning up when on Saturday there was only one race?”

of the Indy configuration, there was plenty of opportunity to watch the fights unfold.

But, unfortunately, it was only to be seen on the Sunday.

On the second day of the meeting, history was made as Jamie Chadwick was crowned champion of the inaugural season of W Series. At the same circuit where she became the first female to win a BRDC British Formula 3 race, the 2015 British GT4 class champion stormed to pole to lead a home drivers top-three lockout, ahead of 2010 F1 Renault BARC title winner Alice Powell and current Porsche Carrera Cup GB racer Esme Hawkey.

Powell was victorious in the race and, despite slipping to fourth, Chadwick snared the \$500,000 top prize and will now hopefully leapfrog her way up the single-seater ladder.

But again, this was only on the Sunday, rather than

W Series' usual Saturday race format. That was the most frustrating aspect of the DTM meeting last weekend: the timetable. The rain and wind on the first day might well have delayed some spectators' visits, but the Saturday turnout was at best poor. And who can blame fans for not turning up when on Saturday there was only one race in the form of the DTM opener?

The remainder of the day comprised practice and qualifying, which was a shame. Granted, the DTM takes top priority and so it dictates the schedule. But surely there must have been scope to stage the first of the two Mini encounters on the Saturday to entice a few more people through the circuit gates?

There's no denying that the Miglias and Se7ens were a stark improvement over last year's tame Audi Sport Seyffarth R8 LMS Cup encounters, but it seems unlikely that they will again support the DTM next season given the circumstances that led to their spot in the limelight this year.

It's difficult not to think that a trick was missed, as those attending Brands only on the Saturday must have either come away disappointed at the lack of competitive action, or have rocked up more or less just for the DTM race.

Given 13-time grand prix winner and W Series commentator David Coulthard twice demonstrated the Red Bull RB7 Formula 1 car on Sunday, could one of those runs not have taken place the previous day? Coulthard was in attendance, having presented BMW driver Marco Wittmann with the winner's trophy.

Make no mistake, most aspects were a triumph. The marshalling was exceptionally efficient when the Minis came to blows and beached themselves in the gravel. The mass-media reception to Chadwick's title success is welcome and the DTM machines are always impressive.

But even on the Sunday, due to the second DTM race's 1333 start time and the W Series finale following straight away, the headline acts were all but wrapped up by 1600, leading to something of an exodus. The second Lotus Europe Cup race faced a tough task keeping people enticed and by the time Coulthard completed his last run and the final Mini bout closed proceedings, most spectators were well into their journeys home.

This column is not meant to put a downer on another excellent and high-profile addition to the British motorsport calendar. It's more that there remains huge scope to improve the fan experience on the Saturday by having more than just one race.

The dates of the 2020 DTM calendar are yet to be announced, and finalising the support package for next year's Brands meeting will be even further behind. But let's hope for some strong national series to be included, and for the racing to be spread across both Saturday and Sunday to boost interest and spectator numbers even further third time around. 🍀

A first heat win of 2019 was soon followed by another for Legends racer Gibson



Gibson's will to win finally leads to Legends glory

**DONINGTON PARK
BARC
10-11 AUGUST**

For Will Gibson, wins in National Legends are like buses. Arriving at Donington Park without a victory to his name in 2019, he subsequently left with two, sharing heat honours with Sy Harraway and Miles Rudman.

"We've been in need of some luck," said Gibson, who snatched his first with a bump-drafting boost from Sean Smith heading into the final chicane, then came through the pack the following day to win again after dodging the spinning Jonty Norman at the Craner Curves. "I was one row away from a massive crash," he added.

Mickel Motorsport starred in both finals, and series leader John Mickel's

slipstreaming partnership with team-mate Paul Simmons was timed to perfection as the former won a nine-car chess game at the final chicane. From a pit start in the second final, Mickel climbed to fourth as Simmons won by 0.051 seconds in a drag race with Smith and Rudman, who had staged their own heat four photo finish.

The weather was not as kind to others. A sodden Pickups opener dealt a perfect hand to wet-weather specialist George Turiccki, who won the restarted race from Mark Willis after a Coppice off for erstwhile leader Mel Collins – one that cost him a maiden victory.

"[Turiccki's] the master in the wet," said Willis, but it was points leader Michael Smith who then mastered the dry in a fierce last-lap contest with Turiccki and Dan Petters. The latter pounced after a Turiccki

error, but spun while defending at the chicane as Smith emerged ahead of Collins.

Downpours also prompted Super Silhouettes organisers to put all competitors on wets for their opener, a decision double winner Malcolm Blackman cunningly countered with a pitlane start on slicks. Despite a visit through the mud giving him doubts, it proved inspired as he clawed back the lost time to overturn Mallory winner Chris Brockhurst's similar Vauxhall Tigra. Blackman then charged from seventh to double up in race two.

In contrast, the CNC Heads Sports and Saloons endured deteriorating dry-to-wet conditions for their opener. Victory went to the Caterham of Danny Winstanley, after a costly excursion for Paul Woolfitt's Lotus Exige. Both retired from winning positions in the second race, allowing Luke Armiger to grab victory despite "driving one-handed at times" due to his Tigra's door making a bid for freedom. Driveshaft issues meant Danny Bird only contested one race, fighting from last to fifth in his Spire.

A new winner took centre stage in the quartet of Division 1 Truck races, as Simon Reid broke the 10-race victory streak of in-form Ryan Smith.

Reid defended precisely from Stuart Oliver in a tight, five-truck squabble for a maiden win in race two, a wide moment costing a closing Smith in

Kirkpatrick (l) and Jenkins
battled in Super Mighty Minis



ALL PICS: WALKER

DONINGTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

NATIONAL LEGENDS

Heat 1 Sy Harraway

Heats 2 & 3 Will Gibson

Heat 4 Miles Rudman

Final 1 John Mickel

Final 2 Paul Simmons

PICKUP TRUCK

Race 1 George Turiccki

Race 2 Michael Smith

SUPER SILHOUETTES

Races 1 & 2 Malcolm Blackman (Vauxhall Tigra)

CNC HEADS SPORTS AND SALOONS

Race 1 Danny Winstanley (Caterham Superlight)

Race 2 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra)

BRITISH TRUCK RACING DIVISION 1

Races 1 & 3 Ryan Smith (MAN TGA)

Race 2 Simon Reid (Iveco Stralis)

Race 4 Jamie Anderson (MAN TGX)

DIVISION 2

Races 1 & 4 Luke Garrett (MAN TGX)

Races 2 & 3 Paul Rivett (MAN TGA)

MIGHTY MINIS

Race 1 Neven Kirkpatrick (Super)

Race 2 Greg Jenkins (Super)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

his surge from eighth to third.

"You can't win them all," lamented Smith, who had won Saturday's opener from a battling David Jenkins and Shane Brereton. Smith won race three from pole, but could not catch Jamie Anderson, who battled mechanical issues to end on a high with victory in the finale.

Multiple Renault UK Clio Cup champion Paul Rivett rebounded in style to share a brace of Division 2 victories with Luke Garrett.

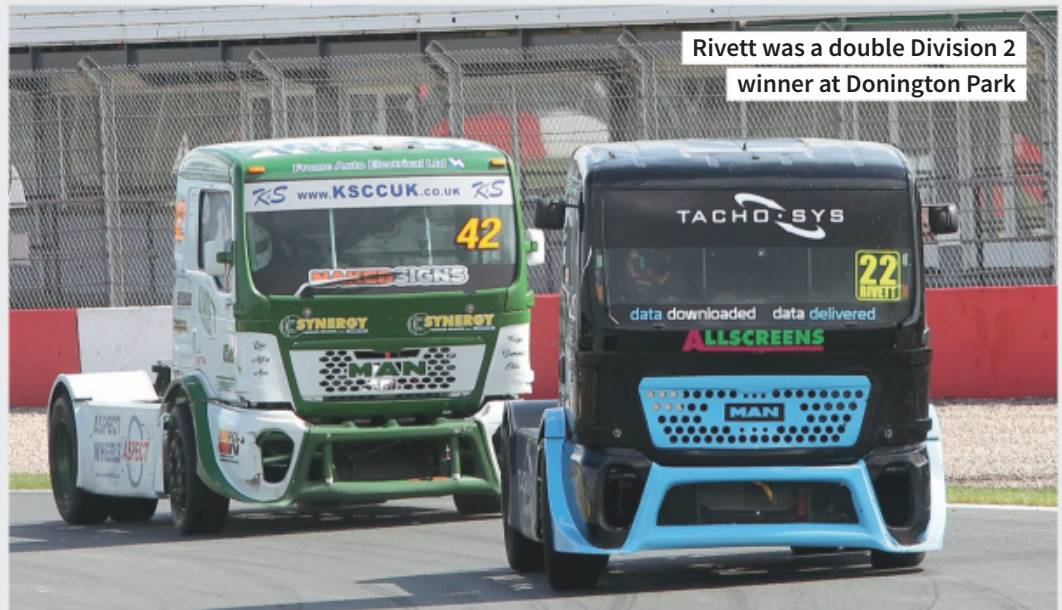
An early pit visit to change a setting cost Rivett in race one, but the reversed grid allowed him to sprint clear for success by over 12s in race two from the charging Steven Powell, who grass-tracked by Erik Forsstrom for second.

Garrett triumphed in the first and fourth races, but injector issues left him limping in the other contests. Rivett's retirement while leading later helped Garrett return to winning ways, although he admitted: "I hated driving for points, because I love racing at Donington."

Super Mighty Minis shared the grid with their Mighty counterparts. Neven Kirkpatrick was denied a Supers double by millimetres as Greg Jenkins perfectly judged his final-corner exit in race two. Mighty Minis matched the theme, as late entry Greg Daw was denied a brace by David Burns in a final-lap exchange.

DAN MASON

CLIO CUP ACE RIVETT FINDS A SUCCESSFUL NEW HOME



Paul Rivett's name has become synonymous with the Renault Clio, so it takes a bit of time to get used to the sight of him driving anything other than the French hatchback. But this year he has had a very different challenge on his hands as he's been competing in Division 2 of the British Truck Racing Championship.

Having secured an unprecedented fourth Clio crown last season, Rivett decided to move elsewhere for 2019. That 'elsewhere' proved to be trucks, as the man dubbed Mr Clio Cup had previously contested a one-off outing in 2017, driving the truck of his WDE Motorsport team boss Wayne Eason.

"It was always going to be hard to make a decision on what to do," said Rivett, who competed in Ford Fiestas and stock cars in the USA before entering the Clio Cup in 2001. "Clio Cup has been such a good championship and to find something that can replace that is a hard task. But I think we've found it here."

"After racing Wayne's truck in 2017, it gave me the bug to come truck racing. I grew up watching touring cars and truck racing on TV. Having Tachosys [a tachograph company] as title sponsor, it fits in well. With Wayne having a recruitment company and having raced trucks before, it just seemed

the right thing to come and do."

But taming his 12,000cc MAN TGA truck is quite a different prospect to racing a Clio, although Rivett feels he's now fully up to speed in his new environment.

"The driving style is completely different," he said. "You've got the gears, left-foot braking and building the boost up – it's back to old-style driving and there's a lot of finesse with the pedals."

"The truck weighs nearly six tonnes – about five times the weight of a Clio. You have to be very respectful of everything around you, the circuit, the other trucks and even moving around the paddock. When two of these clash you have a massive accident, but fortunately it's a very good bunch of drivers."

Unsurprisingly, Rivett soon found himself at the front after battling a few teething issues with the truck in the opening contests. He claimed his first win in the second event at Pembrey, another followed at the Nurburgring before he triumphed twice more at Donington Park last weekend.

It's not just a truck Rivett's been racing this year, either. He's also been sharing the RAW Motorsports Fun Cup entry with Alex Macleod.

And he's enjoying his racing more than ever. "This year's a bit more relaxed and a bit more fun," added Rivett, who eventually intends to graduate to a Division 1 truck and possibly compete in the FIA European series. "I was running the Clio team and it was getting quite stressful at race weekends."

"I will race anything that has got an engine in it – I've raced jet skis and motocross bikes – and it's nice to do something a little bit different."

STEPHEN LICKORISH



No denying the Nearys at Snetterton

SNETTERTON
BARC
10-11 AUGUST

Father-and-son pairing Richard and Sam Neary were handed a windfall in the Britcar Endurance round at Snetterton when a pitstop under a safety car gave them an entire lap on their closest rivals.

Neary Sr was at the wheel of the Team ABBA Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 with a healthy 14.9-second lead before the pit window. The JPR Motorsport Saker RAPX had been in second after Chris Hart handed over to Steve Harris, but broke down on the straight – causing a safety car – at half-distance.

Since Richard Neary had yet to stop, the “mega lucky” Team ABBA car benefited from pitting under the yellows and catching up to the rest of the field before the green flags flew, gifting son Sam a full-lap lead as the race went green.

With Hart/Harris out, it was the stablemate Saker of Paul and Kristian Rose that was promoted to second. Paul put in a remarkable first stint, having been unable to qualify the car as a result of exhaust problems, recovering to the podium spots in just three laps.

The Nearys cruised to win number two in the second contest, only dropping the front spot during the pit phase. The biggest beneficiaries of the stops in that race were the championship-leading Paul Bailey/Andy Schulz Ferrari 488, which jumped



A well-timed safety car was key to Merc duo's opening Britcar victory

from ninth to second during the pit sequence, and the Taranis shared by Jonny MacGregor and Ben Sharich – which vaulted to third from 10th.

But the MacG Racing squad couldn't hold third and had to retire because of damage to the top wishbone from a heavy hit with the kerbs. The Saker of Alan Purbrick and David Brise took that spot.

Ronan Pearson, James Colburn and Simon Freeman fought for Michelin Clio Cup honours in a pair of thrilling encounters. Race two was the highlight for winner Colburn.

Freeman made the most of race one winner Pearson's wide moment at Wilson on the first lap with a classy two-car pass to go into the lead. Colburn made a move stick at Agostini to claim the lead but Pearson wasn't able to follow him through.

Not for want of trying, though – and he banged wheels with Freeman several times.

It took until the final three minutes for the three-hour Citroen C1 Challenge to be decided in favour of Declan McDonnell, Joe Wiggin and Simon Walker-Hansell.

The Renvale car of Mark and Stephen James spent most of the race ahead and, leading after the final stops, looked on for the win. But a downpour 22 minutes from home greased the asphalt nicely, causing an off for Dave Whitehouse and a final safety car.

The green flag flew with six minutes to go and, although Renvale held its lead initially, it was the McAttack machine with Wiggin at the wheel that enjoyed the slippery surface best and stole the place at Turn 3 on the final lap. Wiggin led by 0.742s as they crossed the finishing line.



McDermid (r) won both MG Owners Club contests after Mellor (l) battled a suspected misfire over the weekend

SNETTERTON WEEKEND WINNERS

BRITCAR ENDURANCE

Races 1 & 2 Richard Neary/Sam Neary
(Mercedes-AMG GT3)

MICHELIN CLIO CUP

Race 1 Ronan Pearson (below)
Race 2 James Colburn

CITROEN C1 CHALLENGE

Declan McDonnell/Joe Wiggins/
Simon Walker-Hansell

MG OWNERS CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Steve McDermid (ZR)

CLASSIC FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 Rick Morris (Royale RP29)

UK SPORTS PROTOTYPE CUP

Race 1 Rob Wheldon (Revolution A-one)
Races 2 & 3 Jon Macrae (Radical SR3)

MAX5 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1 & 2 Paul Roddison (Mk4)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

David Mellor lost two potential MG Owners Club wins thanks to a suspected misfire. He made a slow getaway from pole in his ZR, enabling Steve McDermid to take the lead, then was running second when the fault manifested itself and he dropped to 12th. The issue recurred on the third lap of race two into Turn 3 while Mellor was leading, enabling the squabbling duo of William Sharpe and Lee Sullivan to grab the advantage. But McDermid had superior pace to both of them and sneaked through to claim another triumph.

Double Classic Formula Ford 1600 winner Rick Morris feared Mike Gardner, starting in second for race one, would steal the lead since the series returnee wasn't in title contention and had nothing to lose.

But Morris need not have worried — he eased to an untroubled 5.110s win while Gardner retired after a single lap when his left-rear wheel broke. That left Gardner with work to do from 22nd in the second race, but he proved why he is a double champion with a rapid drive through the field to sixth as Morris repassed Craig Currie to win again.

JASON NOBLE



GOOD CAUSE Ginetta Cars manager Sam Tomlinson and friend Will Stacey made their first Britcar Endurance appearance at Snetterton in support of Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, scoring two top-six finishes. The pair were at the wheel of a Rob Boston Racing-run Ginetta G55 in memory of Tomlinson's daughter Molly, who was treated at the hospital. Molly was born in December 2018 with a rare genetic condition that affected development of her heart and lungs, and died in April.



GARDNER'S RECOVERY Two-time Classic Formula Ford 1600 champion Mike Gardner continued his rehabilitation at Snetterton, having rejoined the grid for the last round at Thruxton after more than a year on the sidelines. Gardner broke five tendons in his shoulder, and had only been out of a sling for two weeks before his series return in June. He qualified his Crossle 30/32F second, but suffered a rear-left wheel breakage. In race two he made a storming drive from 22nd to sixth.



DRIVERS JOIN THE REVOLUTION Mark Hignett (above) and Marcus Clutton joined the UK Sports Prototype Cup to try out the new Revolution A-one car. The series combines the Revolution UK Trophy with the traditional Radical SR3 machines. Snetterton was the last of three UK races in the pilot series, which heads to Portimao in October ahead of a planned full launch in 2020. Half of the eight-car grid comprised A-ones; James Abbott and Rob Wheldon piloted the other two.

Bikesports treble tops five-star weekend for the Mittells



Work to create larger rear diffuser for the MC-41R paid off as Mittell won all three Bikesports races

SILVERSTONE 750MC 10-11 AUGUST

Scott Mittell's maiden Bikesports victory presaged a stunning five from five for Southampton-based Mittell Cars as Ian Mittell's continuously evolved Suzuki GSXR-powered designs scaled new heights at the 750 Motor Club's annual International Circuit weekend. "It was a fantastic team result," beamed Scott.

One year after his breakthrough RGB Sports 1000 win here, Chris Wesemael closed on the title with another double in his MC-53 – the second a marque 1-2 over Danny Andrew, third behind Spire's Richard Morris on Saturday. That spurred Scott Mittell on to complete his Bikesports treble in the slick-shod centre-seater.

A fortnight's toil by Mittell Sr creating a larger rear diffuser for the lone MC-41R enabled Scott to scream through Abbey flat and shake off ex-Formula 3 racer Charles Hall (Radical SR3 RSX) each time. Former Locost and RGB champion Mittell lapped inside 63 seconds, his 1m02.88s best a 105.92mph average.

Best of the rest was Ash Hicklin, whose joy at two third places was dulled when he spun to avoid revolving points leader Joe Stables at Abbey in the third stampede and was collected by Aaron Bailey. The clash necessitated a safety car.

Rescheduled last in the hope that savage crosswinds would subside, Saturday's Formula Vee jostlefest was a corker in which aspiring champ Graham Gant

aced Danny Hands, Craig Pollard, John Hughes and Ben Miloudi. The quintet were split by 1.03s after a remarkably clean contest. Sunday's race was equally tough but less ruly, Miloudi leaping off Hands after a clash at Vale. Miloudi broke, but Gant's torquey engine helped him back from fourth to win in the unique Worm's Eye View from Pollard and Hands (GACs).

Sport Specials poleman Andy Hiley's Chronos beat Eclipse trio Paul Boyd, Paul Collingwood and Martin Gambling – his car repaired having been tripped into the pitwall during qualifying – and Austen Greenway's Elite Pulse in race one. Stewart Mutch's MEV retired from the pack with a front corner askew but was fixed for the exceedingly wet finale.

After Collingwood pitted and the surviving Eclipses rotated, Hiley was clear. But Mutch, trialling new treaded tyres, lapped "The Flying Brick" ever quicker.

"I couldn't see anything, but when Stewart arrived he was too quick for me," said Hiley. Both hands shaken aloft at the chequer showed Mutch's joy as his ungainly looking machine trounced very serious kit for a famous victory. "I had so much grip," he grinned.

Was a Classic Stock Hatch surprise on the cards when James Haslehurst, whose previous best result was seventh at Mallory Park, qualified on pole? The Peugeot 205 driver led Saturday's opening lap but was stopped by an electrical glitch, leaving Lee Scott and Marcus Ward (Ford Fiesta XR2is) to pip Pug stalwart Matt Rozier, whose dad Derek's 205 careered off at Stowe without a rear wheel.

Haslehurst was back on P1 for Sunday's stanza, spiced up by rain and a safety car interlude after Andy Philpotts's XR2i was flicked into the pitwall, which deflated Haslehurst's hard-earned cushion. Again



ALL PICS: JONES

SILVERSTONE WEEKEND WINNERS

RGB SPORTS 1000

Races 1 & 2 Chris Wesemael (Mittell MC-53)

BIKESPORTS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Scott Mittell (Mittell MC-41R)

FORMULA VEE

Races 1 & 2 Graham Gant (WEV FV01)

SPORT SPECIALS

Race 1 Andy Hiley (Chronos HR 1S)

Race 2 Stewart Mutch (MEV MX150R)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Race 1 Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i)

Race 2 James Haslehurst (Peugeot 205 GTi)

RENAULT CLIO 182

Races 1 & 2 Ryan Polley

HOT HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Ben Rushworth (Honda Integra DC2)

WELSH SPORTS & SALOONS

Races 1 & 2 Keith Butcher (Audi R8 LMS)

CLUB ENDURO

Joe Taylor (Lotus Elise S3)

BMW CAR CLUB RACING

Race 1 Rick Kerry (1 Series V8)

Race 2 David Kempton (E36 M3)

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

he kept his nerve, repelling stout challenges from the success-ballasted Rozier Jr and Scott – holders of eight titles – on the dash to the flag.

James Bark's unbeaten Clio 182 venue record ended when he holed his sump over the kerbs at Farm in Sunday's hairy opener and slewed to a smoky halt. Points leader Ryan Polley was relieved to win after an engine change. Returnee Jack Kingsbury was second, from on-form Scott Edgar. Polley outran Don De Graaff and Kingsbury in a tamer sequel.

Ben Rushworth's Hot Hatch double was fortuitous. A massive spin when his Honda Integra's tailgate flew off approaching Stowe enabled Chris Southcott (Peugeot 205) to rasp past on Saturday, only for his engine to blow. Stephen Sawley and Gary Prebble chased in Honda Civics. Sawley's engine threw a rod on Sunday, so Prebble grabbed second.

Pontyclun's Keith Butcher topped Sunday's Welsh miscellanies in his gorgeous Audi R8 LMS, but "turned the traction control and ABS right up" to keep the slick-shod beast ahead of Chris Everill's newly acquired Ginetta G50 in the rain-soaked second outing. Dave Cockell gave Butcher an early fright until his Ford Escort Cosworth haemorrhaged oil after a kerbing.

MARCUS PYE

TAYLOR DEFEATS THE CLUB ENDURO HORDES



Baker (l) and Sedzikowski led 49-car field at the start

A virtuoso solo drive by Lotus Cup UK convert Joe Taylor trumped 48 rival teams to land his first 750MC Club Enduro victory last Saturday.

If dodging constant traffic for two hours from the low sightline of his Elise's cockpit wasn't exhausting enough, leaping out at the mandatory three-minute stop and refuelling the car he prepares with mates Chris Cox and Tiff Pedley made it extra special. "I'm spent, but couldn't believe the car," said the Walsall warrior. "We didn't have the pace [to win] but it ran faultlessly as the quickest cars hit trouble."

Rob Baker (Honda Civic Type R) and Luke Sedzikowski of race sponsor Tegiwa (BMW M4) out-accelerated Chris Brown's M4, which son Mika qualified on pole, at the rolling start. Abreast into Stowe, the duo made the running until chaser Baker installed Carl Swift along with fresh front tyres at half-distance.

Taylor settled into a chase in which Brown, Matthew and Simon Wallis's bewinged SEAT Leon, Owen Fitzgerald (BMW E36 M3) and David Trigg in a Ginetta G50 were his main rivals.

Matt Maxted (starting Ben Salmon's Spa-winning E36 M3), Andy Baylie (VW Golf GTI) and championship leader Steve Cheetham (Porsche Boxster) – squeezed off track early on – led the Class B onslaught. James Munro

(Mazda MX-5) and Imran Khan (BMW 330ci) disputed C honours initially.

Khan's exit was dramatic, for his bonnet flew open at high speed, smashing the windscreen and rippling the roof. He crept back into the pitlane, where marshals restored forward vision, but scrutineers vetoed Andrew Lightstead resuming. Nick Dougill in Munro's car was penalised for refuelling before the fire extinguisher was present. The uprated Ginetta G40 of Amanda Black/Ian Anderson thus went ahead in C, but was overhauled by James Kell in the MX-5 started by dad Darren.

Leader Sedzikowski was lapping metronomically, 15 seconds clear, when a left front tyre blew through Abbey corner on lap 52. He nursed it back to the pits with sidewall shredded, but co-driver David Whitmore continued, as Taylor enjoyed three laps in front before stopping. Matt Wallis and Paul Huxley (SEAT Supercopa) led as the pit phase unwound, while CV joint failure sent Swift spinning into retirement from fifth.

When Taylor returned to the top on lap 71, with a 45s advantage, 1.2s covered pursuers Rory Hinde (replacing Fitzgerald), Whitmore and Mika Brown. With fastest lap on his slate, Brown picked the other BMWs off for silver. Whitmore pitted on the penultimate lap but only dropped to fourth, gifting Hinde a podium, while the Wallis brothers completed the top five.

Cheetham's fourth B win from five starts means he could clinch the crown on home soil at Oulton Park next time out. "I'd settled for third, following a spin [exiting The Loop] but made up 13 seconds," he said. He passed Baylie's partner Luke Schlewitz with five laps to spare.

MARCUS PYE



Taylor's Elise was triumphant



THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Michael O'Brien's journey from historics to McLaren Young Professional via SsangYong pickups is unconventional, but has made him all the better for it

JAMES NEWBOLD

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES

Michael O'Brien cut a pretty deflated figure following the recent British GT meeting at Brands Hatch. In sharp contrast to Spa two weeks earlier, where a second GT4 Pro-Am victory of the season put him and Balfe Motorsport co-driver Graham Johnson just half a point behind class leaders Beechdean AMR in the standings, O'Brien had closed to within half a second of the Beechdean car when persistent engine problems with his McLaren 570S forced his retirement. A yawning 29-point deficit can now only be overturned by victory in the final round at Donington Park next month, with Beechdean's Martin Plowman and Kelvin Fletcher not being classified, if O'Brien is to avoid landing in the runner-up position he has been all-too familiar with in recent years.

But that he should have done so in such disparate championships as Historic Formula Ford 1600 and British GT is nothing to be sniffed at, and hints at the remarkable journey the 25-year-old has taken to reach this point, in just his third full season of racing.

A contemporary of British Touring Car star Ash Sutton in a partial British Formula Ford season in 2014, O'Brien stepped up to BRDC F4 in 2015 and took a reversed-grid win at a sodden Rockingham with Mark Godwin Racing, but was again hindered

by a lack of budget and only contested three more rounds after a mid-season switch to Chris Dittmann Racing. He sat out 2016 and eventually settled on a season in Historic FF1600 running with his father Mike O'Brien's Classic Team Merlyn in 2017.

O'Brien Sr, who raced in the BTCC and British Formula 3, played an important role in the careers of several young British drivers through his Speedsport outfit in the 1990s and 2000s, including former IndyCar racer Darren Manning. He steered his son towards an unlikely springboard.

"It wasn't the conventional route but I'm quite happy with the way it all worked out," says O'Brien Jr. "You could maybe say I missed some things on the traditional ladder, but the slipstreaming, the way you have to heel-and-toe in the historics and the way that the cars move around on the old Dunlop tyres, there are lots of skills where I'm probably one of the few young drivers that really has a good idea of those."

Johnson agrees, citing O'Brien's lap to qualify 13th for race two at Oulton Park with an incorrectly-mounted wishbone – that left him with negative camber and a very small contact patch – as "one of the best laps I've ever seen anyone do".

"You will not find anyone on the grid with better car-control

O'Brien has made the rare move to GT professional from historics



Co-driver Johnson (left) has been impressed with O'Brien this year



O'Brien narrowly lost out on 2017 Historic Formula Ford 1600 title

skills than him and I think that comes from his historics background,” says the 2016 British GT4 champion. “When it rains, I call him a lunatic, but to watch the onboard is just a joy. He’s not out of control, but the car is at some ridiculous angles and he’s doing stuff that a McLaren GT4 doesn’t normally do with all these aids that we can’t turn off, like ABS and traction control. Because he’s been wrestling this older machinery that’s difficult to drive, he finds it much easier when he gets into anything modern.

“When the set-up isn’t where we want it to be, I always have a go at him because his talent masks the problem. Every now and again, he does a lap where I’ll turn round to Geoff Kingston, our chief engineer, and say, ‘I can’t do that’. He’s a real inspiration to work with, I don’t think I’ve seen anyone with that kind of ability before.”

Eschewing the typical route also allowed O’Brien to race with seasoned campaigners that he could learn from – not least in 2017, when embroiled in a superb three-way fight for the Historic

Formula Ford crown with Richard Tarling and Callum Grant, and against 2008 British GT champion James Gornall in the unloved SsangYong Racing Challenge for 2.2-litre turbo-diesel pickup trucks. Remember that?

“Racing against a driver like James really helped fast-track my racecraft, and obviously that’s something that even 10 years down the line I’ll still be developing,” O’Brien says. “It was the same with the Formula Ford in more of a slipstream way where you had the guys like Callum, Richard and Benn Simms that had been doing it for a number of years and knew all of the ins and outs of where you can and can’t pass.

“Although they were both so different and not your conventional route into GT racing, I certainly learned a lot from the more experienced guys in both championships.”

That humility is another strength, according to Johnson.

“He’s so humble with it,” he says. “Michael has this incredible >>

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THE CAR IS MY BRUSH"** GRAHAM HILL



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attitude where he's like a sponge, he's desperate to learn from everyone and that will take him far. He's a great brand ambassador for McLaren, I think he'll be with them for many years to come."

O'Brien took the 2017 HSCC FF1600 title down to the wire at Silverstone and was in position to seal it when a puncture forced him to stop, handing Tarling the title.

"I should have got over it by now but I feel more disappointed now than I did then!" he says. "At the time I was not quite able to believe what had happened. I was in a championship-winning position with a 20-minute sprint race to go, but when I pulled up over at the side of the track by Brooklands, it was such a strange feeling of not necessarily being disappointed, but just being confused because of my inexperience."

That experience only made 2018 harder to take. In his first season of GT racing with Tolman Motorsport as part of McLaren Automotive's Driver Development Programme, O'Brien and co-driver Charlie Fagg missed out on the GT4 crown by just two points. Despite the setbacks of retiring with suspension damage at Silverstone, losing out on a near-certain victory at Spa to a poorly timed safety car and suffering a puncture on the in-lap at Brands Hatch, the pair finished second on four occasions and did everything bar grace the top step of the podium. Under the circumstances, third in the outright GT4 standings and second in the Silver Cup was a bitter pill to swallow.

"Because I had come close in 2017, I thought, 'This might be the year that we can do it,'" O'Brien says of 2018. "We were always there or thereabouts in the championship. Coming into the last race, we were a bit of a way behind but we had no pitstop penalties and the car is good around Donington.

"We had a really good race there, but it's a bit of a shame that the Equipe Verschuur McLaren was in a race of their own so we had to settle for second in the race and third in the championship. I think 2018 was a bit harder to take because there was even more expectation to do well."

Being part of McLaren's DDP run by Renault UK Clio Cup champion Danny Buxton, with Charlie Hollings assigned as his mentor for the year, helped O'Brien accelerate his learning curve in GTs exponentially. Now a graduate of the programme and with the title of McLaren Young Professional, he is in no doubt about the value of the experience.

"My only experience in GT racing from the start has been with big manufacturer support and with one of the best teams," he says. "And when you went testing it was always out on good tyres, which is what every kid dreams of.



O'Brien won reversed
grid BRDC F4 race at
Rockingham in 2015

"Having the support of McLaren there whenever you needed anything was a huge part of how quickly I got to learn both the car and the GT style of racing."

This season he has had a different pressure of getting the maximum out of Johnson, and working in a family-owned and run team. But O'Brien has knuckled down to the task at Balfe and impressed new coach Jonny Kane, the 1997 British F3 champion and a Le Mans class winner.

"He's doing a really good job," says Kane. "He's very professional, a good thinker, he's looking at the bigger picture. He knows the best way to get the best result is to have a car that Graham is comfortable in and can do his best job. Sometimes as a racing driver you have to be selfish, other times you have to think about the bigger picture and do what's best for the group."

Although results have been somewhat patchy – after finishing second in GT4 and winning Pro-Am in the second race at Oulton, Johnson's contact with Paul Vice's Jaguar cost them a victory at Snetterton, and more good results were lost to refuelling dramas at Silverstone and Donington – O'Brien says he's "much happier with the way I'm driving this year".

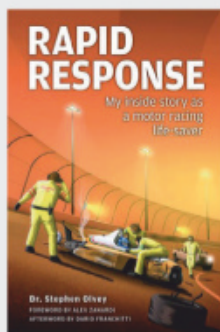
After four years with Mike Robinson, Johnson has also enjoyed working with O'Brien, and sees him as a star in the making.

"He's been slightly under the radar this year simply because of some issues that we've had. When he gets his real opportunity then people will be surprised just how quick he is," he says. "It's obvious to me that five or 10 years down the line I'll be watching TV and he'll be doing some special stuff at a very senior level." ❦





THE AMERICAN RACING SAFETY CRUSADER



BOOK
RAPID RESPONSE:
MY INSIDE STORY
AS A MOTOR RACING
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A young medical student called Stephen Olvey was waiting anxiously next to a hearse. It was doubling up as the only ambulance present at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway during practice for the 1966 Indianapolis 500. Then, an alarm sounded to signal an incident on track.

Olvey hesitated momentarily, then grabbed the back-door handle as the hearse driver – the embalmer of the funeral home it was borrowed from – floored the throttle. Having bundled himself into the speeding vehicle, Olvey was bloodied when he arrived at the scene of his first on-track rescue, where a bemused Graham Hill was more concerned by the condition of the future CART medical director.

“I’m fine,” the 1962 world champion told Olvey. “But you look bloody awful!”

To coincide with a documentary due out in September, Dr. Olvey’s acclaimed 2006 memoir *Rapid Response* has been re-released with three new chapters and an afterword from Dario Franchitti.

Olvey oversaw the increasing professionalism of care for US open-wheel drivers from the mid-1970s until the early 2000s, and was a driving force in supporting safety innovations such as the HANS device, inner-ear

accelerometers and improved cockpit safety structures. So his story makes for fascinating reading.

The second version, which reproduces the original’s foreword from Alex Zanardi and afterword by the late Professor Sid Watkins, is updated with the inclusion of Olvey’s latest work. That includes building up the medical facilities at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin and his collaboration with Neuro Kinetics on the I-PAS system – adopted last year by IndyCar to identify concussion symptoms in drivers – as well as his thoughts on recent developments in the wider world of motorsport, including the halo.

Olvey is an excellent raconteur. He illustrates incidents with a vivid turn of phrase, such as Gordon Johncock being tipped out of an ambulance “as if being buried at sea” when his stretcher wasn’t tethered down after a crash at Milwaukee in 1974, and Mario Andretti fortunately avoiding serious injury when he crashed into Olvey’s recovery vehicle at Detroit in 1993.

Refreshingly, he doesn’t leave the reader in any doubt about his opinions. Notably, that includes USAC officials who regarded Olvey and expert paediatrician Dr Terry Trammell as “the bastards at the family picnic” at IMS prior to the split. Also under the spotlight are the “greedy, selfish and arrogant” CART owners who brought about the demise of their own series, or the “aloof” risk managers at NASCAR whose reluctance to embrace safety measures was only jolted by the loss of Dale Earnhardt Sr in 2001.

Some small details in the original copy that haven’t been updated are jarring. Olvey laments the passing of legendary IMS announcer Tom Carnegie in one of the



newer chapters, while the first chapter refers to him still attending the Speedway. But for fans who haven't read his original work, it remains an invaluable insight into how things have changed for the better.

Most of all, Olvey is a passionate motorsport fan at heart. Throughout his career he convinced numerous drivers to check themselves out of medical care at local hospitals and undergo riskier treatment elsewhere to give them a better chance of resuming their racing careers sooner.

It's therefore apt that in a closing rallying cry, Olvey urges rulemakers to continue pushing the envelope and not to forget the appeal of risk.

"I would feel reasonably comfortable with the cars averaging 235 mph to perhaps greater than 240mph," he writes. "People want to see records broken, trust me."

JAMES NEWBOLD

YouTube youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



Across the 1995 Formula 1 season, Benetton, Williams and Ferrari won races while Forti, Pacific and Simtek fought just to stay afloat. But taking performance out of the equation, which cars were the best-looking during that year? Take a look at our countdown, and let us know the order in which you would put the cars! **Go to bit.ly/1995F1beauty**

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL
MOTORSPORT

IndyCar Series
Round 13/16
Pocono, USA
18 August
 Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1900

Super Formula
Round 5/7
Motegi, Japan
18 August
 Livestream
Motorsport.tv,
Sun 0600

Japanese Formula 3
Round 7/8
Motegi, Japan
17-18 August

NASCAR Cup
Round 24/36
Bristol, USA
17 August
 Live Premier Sports,
Mon 0000

Super TC2000
Round 7/12
San Nicolas, Argentina
18 August

ADAC GT Masters
Round 5/7
Nurburgring, Germany
17-18 August

**UK
MOTORSPORT**
Thruxton BARC
17-18 August
BTCC, F4, Carrera Cup,
Renault Clio, Ginetta
GT4, Ginetta Junior
 Live ITV4, Sun 1130

Anglesey BRSCC
17-18 August
Fun Cup, BMW
Compact, FF1600,
Ford Fiesta, Fiesta
Junior, Cockshoot
Cup, Porsches

Snetterton BARC
16-18 August
2CVs, BARC Saloons,
Hyundai Coupes,
Classic VW/Honda VTEC

Brands Hatch 750MC
17 August
BMW 116 Trophy,
Locost, Type R Trophy,
Toyota MR2

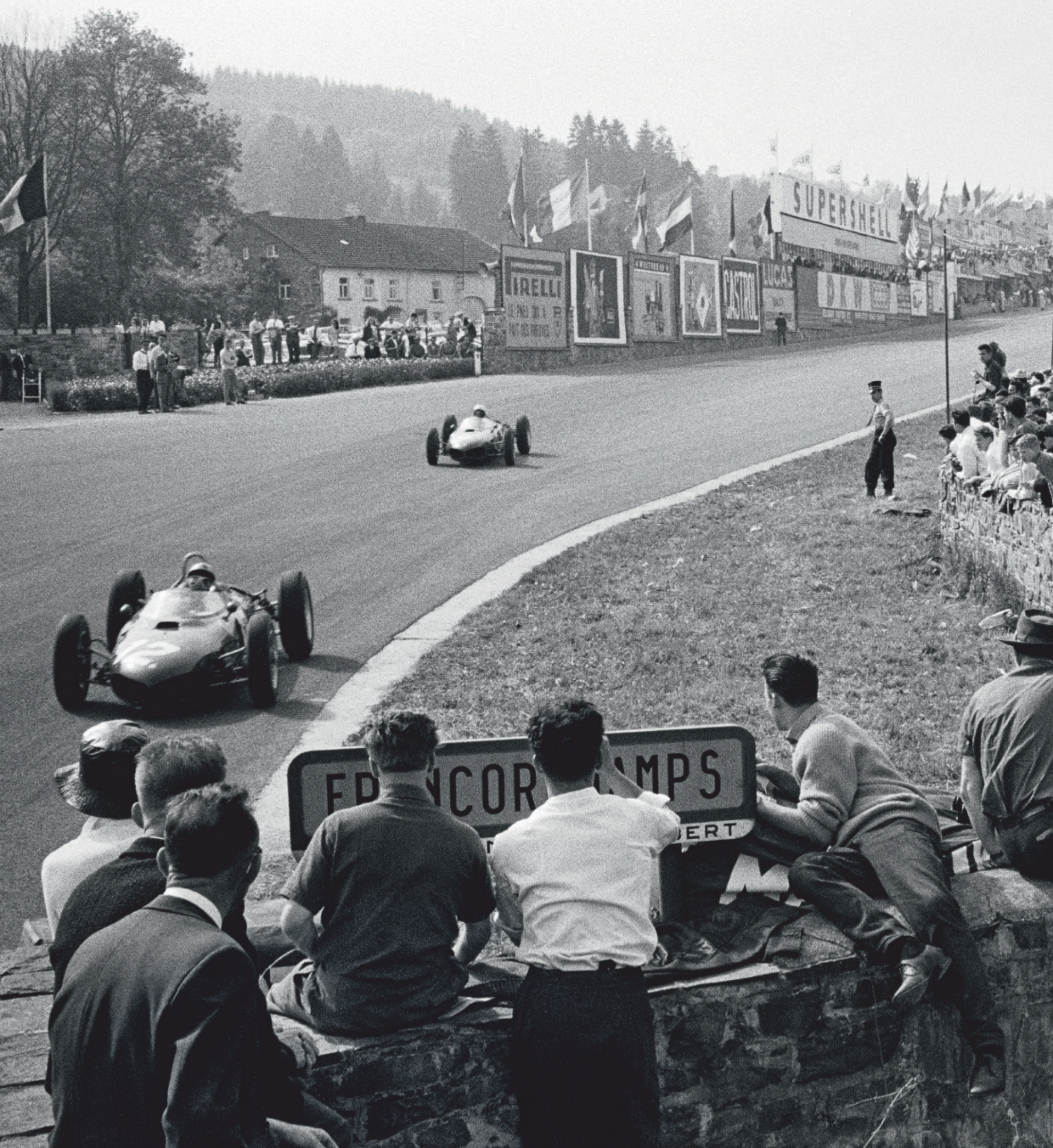
Silverstone MSVR
17-18 August
British F3, GT Cup,
Radical Challenge,
Monoposto, F3 Cup,
Trackday Trophy

**Donington Park
BRSCC**
17-18 August
Caterham Academy,
Caterham Roadsport,
Caterham 270R,
Caterham 310R,
Caterham 420R, Mazda
MX-5, Production GTi

Croft DDMC
17-18 August
Focus Cup, Northern
Saloon & Sportscar,
Classic Sports
and Saloons

Mondello Park
17-18 August
Future Classics,
Historic Racing Cars

Brands Hatch MSVR
18 August
Festival Italia: Ferrari
Classic, Ferrari Club,
Allcomers, Alfa Romeos



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Ricardo Rodriguez leads his Ferrari team-mate Phil Hill in the plunge to Eau Rouge during the 1962 Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps.

Although Rodriguez and Hill qualified seventh and fourth – with Willy Mairesse sixth and Giancarlo Baghetti 14th – the four-car Ferrari squad faced slim pickings in this landmark race. The iconic 156

‘Sharknose’ was no longer the class of the field and the monocoque Lotus 25 of Jim Clark was already well up the road after qualifying 12th. It was the first GP victory for a monocoque chassis.



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QUIZ

1) Who, what, where, when?



2) Who is this?

This superstar-in-waiting never had a chance to show what he was truly capable of. From pedal power to horsepower, he was a winner right from the off and a national champion before he left school.

He kept it in the family for a ride on a stallion and this test of endurance would ultimately make his name.

Having upped sticks and hit the road he demonstrated great versatility, but what should have been a joyous homecoming ended in tragedy. After deciding to carry on he hit the beach in style, while after a series of false starts his career started to blossom.

He barrelled into a winning drive but was delayed by a former great losing its touch. But when he tamed a beast like no other he stood atop the world. Having walked on water no miracle could save him in the end, although he remains in the hearts of his countrymen.

3) On this day...

A Which racing maverick made his first world championship Formula 1 start on this day in 1982?

B Elio de Angelis claimed his maiden F1 victory on this day in the 1982 Austrian GP. Where did he score his second win?

C Two Austrian drivers made their F1 debut on this day in the 1971 Austrian GP. Name them.

D Which driver claimed their maiden grand prix win on this day in 1993?

E It's team owner Sam Schmidt's birthday today. Where did he score his only IndyCar win as a driver?

4) Name the helmet



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS **Who, what, where, when** Mark Skaife, Formula 3000 Reynard 92D, Magny-Cours, France, 18 October 1992. **Who is this?** Mark Webber. **On this day** 1) Patrick Tambay. 2) Five. 3) 1995. 4) Francesco Dracone. 5) Takazumi Katayama. **Name the helmet** Craig Lowndes.

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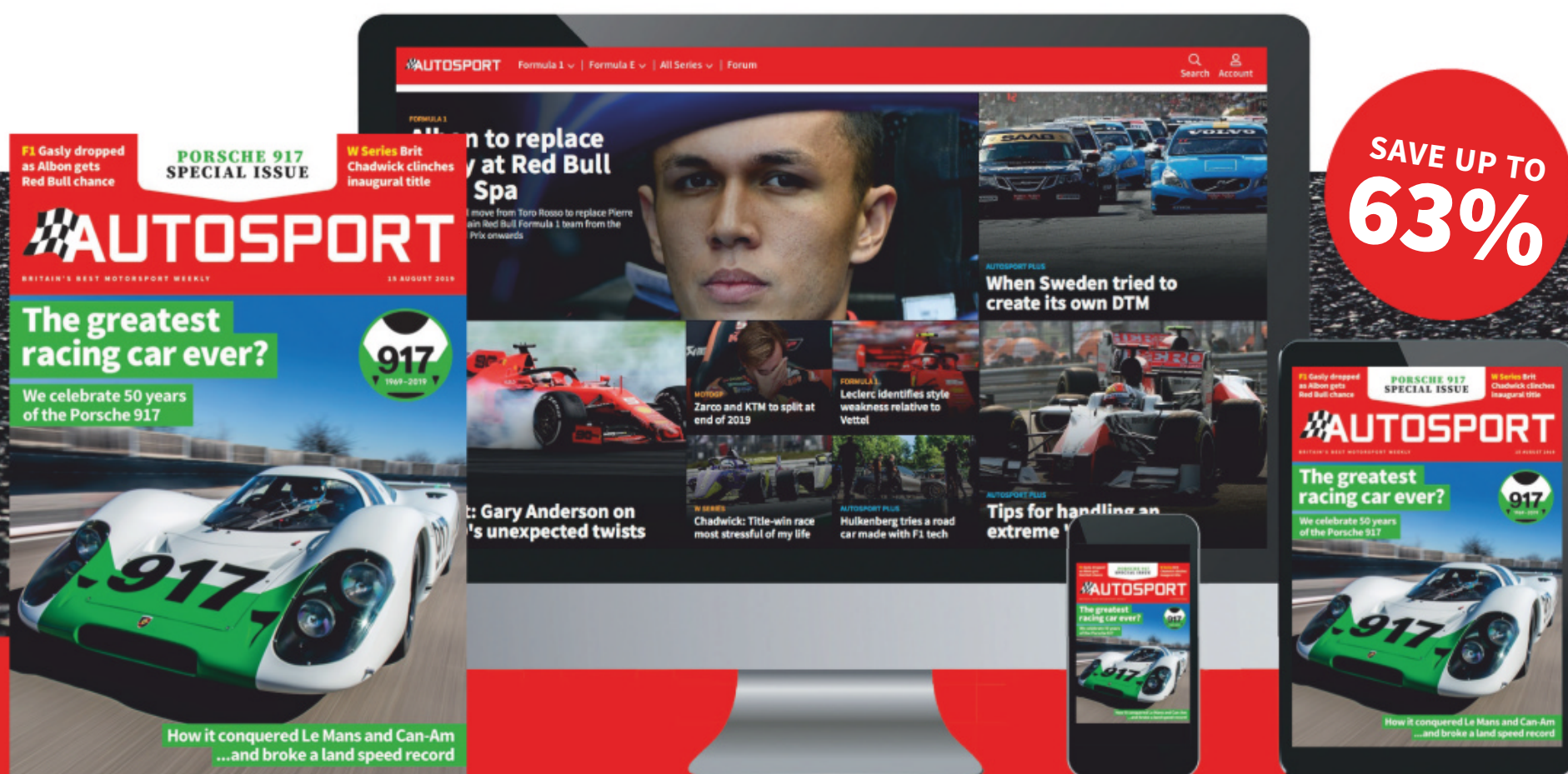
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