

F1 2020 NEW CAR SPECIAL ISSUE

AUTOSPORT

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20 FEBRUARY 2020

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'EXTREME'**



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Now things start to get serious for F1 2020

As happens every year, it seems to take ages before the new Formula 1 launches arrive and then they all come along at once. And this week all the new machines will hit the track at Barcelona for the first test.

Ferrari claims it has gone 'extreme' to address the downforce deficit it has suffered in recent seasons (see page 22), while Mercedes has decided to try a few new paths to give its W11 development potential (p28). Our technical editor Jake Boxall-Legge has been joined by world championship-winning engineer Tim Wright on our F1 team and they cast their eyes over the new challengers in this issue. Look out for more from Wright, including a piece on his illustrious career, in future issues of the magazine and on Autosport.com.

We also speak to Red Bull's 'other' driver, Alex Albon, about the challenge he faces in 2020 (p34) and investigate the continuing resurgence of McLaren, following the launch of its MCL35.

Much was made of the German invasion before the Formula E season began in November, but now it's a New Zealander and a famous British name that look strong. As our new series correspondent Matt Kew points out on p54, the performance of Mitch Evans and Jaguar in Mexico City means they have to be considered serious contenders for the championship.

- Many congratulations to Elfyn Evans for his victory on Rally Sweden (p48). The event may have been shortened, but he still had to outrun reigning world champion Ott Tanak and his highly lauded Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier. Can Evans now launch a title bid?



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Editor

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NEXT WEEK
27 FEBRUARY

Who's looking good in testing? Our analysis from Barcelona



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Motorsport Images; Ferrari; Mercedes; Red Bull Content Pool

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Last year's Chinese GP was the 16th since it joined the F1 calendar in 2004



CHINESE GP CANCELLED – AND

FORMULA 1

The Chinese Grand Prix has been called off due to the ongoing coronavirus epidemic, and concerns are now growing about the inaugural Vietnamese GP planned for the beginning of April.

Formula 1 announced last week that it had postponed the Chinese race scheduled for 19 April at the Shanghai International Circuit following a request from the event promoter, having monitored the epidemic in recent weeks. At the time of going to press, over 70,000 cases of coronavirus have been reported in China, causing 1771 deaths. Outside China, over 500 cases have been reported in 30 other countries.

“As a result of continued health concerns and with the World Health Organisation declaring the coronavirus as a global health emergency, the FIA and Formula 1 have taken these measures in order to ensure the health and safety of the travelling staff, championship participants and fans, which remains of primary concern,” the FIA and F1 said in a joint statement. “All parties will take the appropriate amount of time to study the viability of potential alternative dates for the grand prix later in the year should the situation improve.”

A number of alternative options have been considered by F1 officials, including a possible November slot that would force a date change for the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, which is due to be the season finale.

But F1 CEO and chairman Chase Carey conceded in an exclusive interview with Autosport that it

would be difficult to find a new place for China. “It’s challenging,” said Carey. “We’ve started to wrestle with contingencies. Moving other dates when they’ve had dates locked has complexities to it. We’re dealing with it, we haven’t really worked through all the possibilities.

“We value our Chinese partners, they’ve been good partners. We’ve had good growth in China, so certainly we’d like to maintain that.”

Asked how the process of rescheduling the race will work amid uncertainty about the future of the crisis, Carey said: “I don’t think anybody knows, you’re in uncharted territory. I don’t think they have a handle yet on when do they get on top of it, when are things normal. So it’s tough to get too far down the road on the situation where everyone is dealing with it real-time.”

The postponement of the Chinese GP has created a four-week gap in the calendar between the Vietnamese race on 5 April and the returning Dutch Grand Prix on 3 May, equivalent to the length of the summer break, and this could be extended if the former race suffers.

Vietnam shares a land border with China, and local officials took the decision last week to quarantine villages in the Son Loi farming region – just 25 miles outside Hanoi, where the track is located – for the next 20 days after six coronavirus cases were discovered. Over 10,000 people live in the region, while there have been 16 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Vietnam.

“The health and safety of our people is priority one,” Carey said. “Outside of China right now, from what we know, in most places it seems to be six, eight, 10 people.

IMOLA THROWS HAT IN RING FOR SHANGHAI SLOT

FORMULA 1

Imola has offered to host a Formula 1 round in place of April's postponed Chinese Grand Prix, though the circuit's boss acknowledges the bid could be "mission impossible".

The circuit, which last hosted a world championship round when it held the San Marino Grand Prix in 2006 (below), has approached the Italian motorsport federation about the possibility of staging a race.

Imola president Uberto Selvatico Estense insisted the venue could be ready on time. "It would be very difficult to arrange it, but the track is ready," he told Autosport. "We can move very fast to host a grand prix as we did in the past. We would not be at our best, of course. But if it's necessary, we will move on with it."

But Selvatico Estense acknowledged that logistical and commercial issues could prove to be insurmountable. "It's kind of a mission impossible," he said. "But why not? Anything is possible if Liberty wants. I'm a dreamer! I always hoped that this opportunity would come. But it's very difficult, it's true."

Given the timeframe, which would hamper ticket sales, Imola would not be able pay a representative European race-hosting fee, which may make the plan a non-starter for Liberty even without any logistical issues. "But we are facing a good time with the political situation," said Selvatico Estense. "We have a new president of the region, Reggio Emilia [Giorgio Zanni, elected in October 2018]. And we are talking about a very important sports event."

ADAM COOPER



COOPER



Shanghai scenery
could be lost to
F1 this season

NOW VIETNAM IN DOUBT

Nobody knows what it will be in a week or two, so it's a tough thing to say what the situation is going to be in four weeks. I think you can only be on top of it and aware of it, stay in touch with people, and deal with what arises as you know more."

F1 is yet to raise Vietnam with the teams as a race facing any uncertainty, but McLaren chief Zak Brown confirmed he was already closely following the developing situation.

"Obviously the well-being of McLaren and the greater world is of utmost importance," said Brown. "Vietnam has not been raised yet as a potential issue, but obviously it's neighbouring, so we're going to monitor the situation. We definitely would not do anything that would put our people at risk. I don't think Formula 1 would as well, so I think like the rest of the world we've got to monitor the situation. But we would never put a McLaren employee in an uncomfortable situation they wouldn't want to be in."

The promoters of the Vietnam race are understood to be planning for the race to go ahead as planned. Should it be scrapped, the break between the second round in Bahrain and the following race in the Netherlands would stand at six weeks. "I think other things such as sport don't matter when it comes to situations like that," added Brown. "Hopefully that gets solved and then we'll just respond accordingly. If there's a month off, then there's a month off. Maybe Chase will look for some races to fill that gap, but I think it's a very fluid situation."

LUKE SMITH



Carey: finding
new slot is tough

ANDRE



Fan pressure causes Penske to keep qualifying tradition

INDIANAPOLIS 500

There will be no guaranteed spots in the Indianapolis 500 for full-time IndyCar Series entries, IndyCar and Indianapolis Motor Speedway owner Roger Penske announced last Friday.

Penske, who originally put forward the controversial idea and gained support from many rival team owners including Chip Ganassi and Michael Andretti, noted the public's broadly negative response to the notion, and has now scrapped the idea. Instead, the enticement for teams running full-season entries is the increase in prize money available, which sends the overall purse for the Indy 500 from \$13million to \$15m.

Other significant changes for qualifying include the Last Row Shootout contenders being allowed multiple attempts over a 75-minute session, rather than the one-run-and-done featured last year.

In order to help counteract the extra weight and drag caused by the aeroscreen, Fast Friday and qualifying weekend will see the Chevrolet and Honda engines run 1.5-bar turbo boost, as opposed to the 1.4 in recent years. Race boost will remain at 1.3-bar.

Penske, Mark Miles – president and CEO of the new Penske Entertainment group – and IMS president Doug Boles also announced some well-received structural and visual changes to the Speedway's facilities, and significantly increased coverage of both days of qualifying on NBC Sports.

Penske had further reasons to be cheerful last week. Although rain washed out the first day of Spring Training at Circuit of The Americas,

Team Penske's 2014 IndyCar champion Will Power topped the 6hr10m session on the second day, heading Andretti Autosport's Alexander Rossi by just under a quarter of a second.

Red flags in the final 75 minutes due to spins hindered some flying lap attempts, but that shouldn't detract from the efforts of DJR Team Penske's two-time and reigning Australian Supercars champion Scott McLaughlin, who finished the day third, half a second off Power but ahead of champion team-mates Josef Newgarden and Simon Pagenaud, who both finished in the top six.

McLaughlin (above), who has been confirmed in a fourth Penske entry for the Grand Prix of Indianapolis on the Indy road course in May, went on to join IndyCar's 2020 rookie class at Texas Motor Speedway two days later and successfully passed his oval test, before heading back Down Under for this weekend's Supercars season opener in Adelaide.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

TOP 10 CoTA TIMES		
POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Will Power (Penske)	1m46.7603s
2	Alexander Rossi (Andretti)	1m46.9999s
3	Scott McLaughlin (Penske)	1m47.2630s
4	Josef Newgarden (Penske)	1m47.2750s
5	Colton Herta (Andretti)	1m47.3672s
6	Simon Pagenaud (Penske)	1m47.5568s
7	Oliver Askew (McLaren SP)	1m47.5611s
8	Scott Dixon (Ganassi)	1m47.6921s
9	Alex Palou (Coyne)	1m47.7070s
10	Pato O'Ward (McLaren SP)	1m47.7151s

Aitken targets F2 title shot

FORMULA 2

Williams Formula 1 reserve driver Jack Aitken has targeted the Formula 2 title after confirming that he will remain with Campos Racing for 2020, while Honda-linked Nobuharu Matsushita has made the same pledge on his move to MP Motorsport for the coming campaign.

Aitken (below), who was a protege of the Renault F1 team from 2016-19, finished fifth in the championship with Spanish team Campos last season, with three wins.

"We were challenging for wins and the championship throughout the whole season, so that's what we need to try and do again: build the season as a whole and make progress step by step," said Aitken. "Last year we did a great job of taking the challenge to the bigger teams. This year we will carry on that work by going for the championship itself."

Aitken will be joined at Campos by Guilherme Samaia. The Brazilian has raced in British F3 and Euroformula Open since moving to Europe in 2017, and took in all three days of the post-season F2 test at Yas Marina last December.

Matsushita's deal for a fifth season at GP2/F2 level has come after turning down an offer from Honda to compete at the top levels of the Japanese domestic scene – as he did in 2018. He transfers from Carlin to MP, as does engineer Daniele Rossi, who will again work with the Japanese.

"Honda offered me a Super Formula and Super GT seat in Japan for this year," Matsushita told Autosport. "But it is still my goal to be in F1. It's going to be my fifth season in F2 but I'm ready to go for the win in each race and fight for the championship. Before I was not ready I think, but last year we did a really good job with Carlin. So this year if I do a really good job with MP Motorsport in F2, we may have a chance to realise my goal."

JACK BENYON, JAMIE KLEIN, ERWIN JAEGGI





Barrichello to race at Aussie GP

S5000

Multiple grand prix winner Rubens Barrichello and Lewis Hamilton's GP2 team-mate Alexandre Premat will both be on the grid at the Australian Grand Prix – in the Albert Park event's support races for the new S5000 single-seater series.

Ex-Ferrari star Barrichello provided the headline act for the inaugural round of the series at Sandown last September (above), taking second in a crash-shortened feature race, and he's now locked into a return to Team BRM for the two high-profile events that bookend the 2020 schedule.

While Barrichello will next month look to add more Albert Park podium finishes to the five he took as an F1 driver, he will then head back down under in November for the inaugural Bathurst International, where he'll sample the Mount Panorama circuit for the first time.

"I am thrilled to be coming back to Australia, not once but twice in 2020, to continue my open-wheel career in S5000 at the two biggest and most iconic race tracks in the country," said Barrichello.

"Sandown provided a tremendous insight into Australia's new high-profile motorsport category for me, and I'm sure that the events at the Australian Grand Prix and then Bathurst in November will well and truly put S5000 on the international map. The Grand Prix event will allow many, many international drivers to see – and hear – S5000, and they will then understand the attraction."

Barrichello will continue to race full-time in the Brazilian Stock Car and Argentinian Super TC2000 series in

between the two S5000 appearances.

Meanwhile, Premat will race for Garry Rogers Motorsport, the same squad that he drove for in Australian Supercars in 2012 and 2013. It will be his first outing at the Melbourne circuit since 2013, as well as his first race in a single-seater since finishing third in the 2006 GP2 season – his ART Grand Prix team-mate Hamilton (below, with Premat) won the title. Premat will conduct a test day at Winton beforehand.

"I think it's going to be pretty cool and fun," said Premat, who is now running an Audi RS3 LMS with his new Team Premat squad in the TCR class of the Michelin Pilot Challenge, a support series to the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

"It has been a long time since I have driven a single-seater. It's hard to know what the target is going to be, but we've seen that the team wants to win and we'll try and do the best job possible."

Premat, who won last year's Bathurst 1000 with Scott McLaughlin but has been left out of DJR Team Penske's 2020 enduro line-up, has won a berth at Tickford Racing for the late-season Supercars blue-ribands.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



IN THE HEADLINES

VANDOORNE'S MERC F1 ROLE

Mercedes Formula E driver Stoffel Vandoorne has been named as a reserve for the manufacturer's Formula 1 team, alongside fellow ex-F1 racer Esteban Gutierrez. Mercedes says the duo will "share reserve duties on race weekends".

ALBERT PARK CHANGES?

Major resurfacing work is expected to the Australian Grand Prix Albert Park circuit – either for 2021 or 2022. Melbourne officials are also looking into potential tweaks to the layout, which has not been famed for producing scintillating races. Race CEO Andrew Westacott said: "The sorts of things we're looking at are asphalt mix and its impact on tyre degradation, we're looking at turns and whether they can be adjusted."

MAINI STAYS IN RENAULT

Kush Maini, a race winner in British F3 in 2018 and sixth in the Formula Renault Eurocup last season, will stay in the Eurocup for 2020. Indian Maini has switched to R-ace GP. Other recent recruits to the series are Swiss Gregoire Saucy, who graduates from F4 with single-seater powerhouse ART Grand Prix, and Australian Jackson Walls, a race winner in the Toyota Racing Series who has joined Arden.

MACDOWALL TO BARWELL

Ex-Aston Martin factory driver Alex MacDowall has joined Barwell Motorsport to contest the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup. MacDowall will share a Lamborghini Huracan in the Silver Cup with Lambo Super Trofeo World Finals winner Frederik Schandorff and Jordan Witt, who stays with the team. Sandy Mitchell joins the line-up again for the Spa 24 Hours, where he was part of Barwell's 2019 Silver winning team.

PETER ARGETSINGER 1950-2020

Former British Formula 3 Championship racer Peter Argetsinger has died at the age of 69. The son of Cameron Argetsinger, the prime mover in the establishment of racing at Watkins Glen after World War 2, he graduated from the British Formula Ford ranks to F3 in 1982 with a Ralt run by the Hampshire Automobiie Racing Team. He subsequently went on to a 30-year career in sportscars in North America alongside his work as a racing instructor.

BLUNDELL PUTS NAME TO WINNING BTCC SQUAD

BTCC

Ex-Formula 1 driver and Le Mans winner Mark Blundell has moved into team management in a deal with the British Touring Car Championship race-winning AmD Tuning squad.

AmD will become Mark Blundell Motorsport for 2020, with the 53-year-old taking on the sporting director role.

Blundell made his BTCC debut last year in an Audi S3 run by AmD sister team Trade Price Cars Racing, but called time on his driving career after a difficult season. He will be partnered at MBM by long-time AmD boss Hollamby, who will remain as team principal overseeing trackside operations.

The team will run a pair of Honda Civic FK2s for Jake Hill (Blundell's team-mate in 2019) and Sam Osborne (pictured below in testing at Brands Hatch earlier this week).

"I made no secret of how impressed I was with the British Touring Car Championship as a platform last year," said Blundell, who continues to run his MB Partners driver-management stable. "As I found out quite clearly, it is fiercely competitive, and if you ask anyone involved, it's that unpredictable race result that is a huge attraction."

Hollamby added: "Mark found out first-hand just how tough this championship can be, but he brought with him a new level of detail, processes and the highest of standards to our operation. Our hope is that combining our pedigree within the BTCC, Mark's experience and profile, and MB Partners' commercial expertise can really take our whole operation to a new level."



Kubica secures BMW DTM seat

DTM

Williams Formula 1 refugee Robert Kubica will contest the 2020 DTM season in a customer BMW operated by single-seater giant ART Grand Prix, which returns to the series after a three-year absence.

Kubica becomes the seventh BMW driver in the series alongside the marque's six factory signings in a deal that inches the grid up to 15 cars — still short of the 18 from last season, before the pullout for 2020 of the R-Motorsport Aston Martins.

ART operated two factory Mercedes entries in 2015 and 2016, running Gary Paffett and Lucas Auer in the first season, and Paffett and Esteban Ocon the following year, before Ocon's (right) call-up to F1 resulted in Felix Rosenqvist replacing him. When the manufacturers downscaled to six cars each in 2017, Mercedes moved all its drivers to long-time works squad HWA.

As expected, Kubica's deal has been bankrolled by his personal backer PKN Orlen, and has received the blessing of the Alfa Romeo Formula 1 team, which signed him as its reserve driver last month.

"The DTM has appealed to me for a long time, and the test in December at Jerez really gave me a taste for more," said Kubica. "I believe the DTM is one of the strongest and best race series in the world. I immediately felt at home in the BMW M4 DTM at the test."

"ART Grand Prix has been a big name on the international motor racing scene for years. I am sure we can achieve a lot together in the DTM. We obviously still have to gain experience compared to the established DTM teams, but we will work

hard to ensure that we improve all the time."

BMW motorsport boss Jens Marquardt hailed the capture of Kubica as "really great news for the DTM. We are delighted to welcome ART Grand Prix to the DTM as a private customer team."

"It has always been our goal to make the DTM field even larger and more attractive with privately run BMW M4 DTMs. There were several options and we have held many discussions with potential teams in recent months. Considering all the aspects, we opted for the package provided by ART."

"Robert showed during the test that he is very good in a DTM car. He is a real asset to the series. We have our fingers crossed for ART Grand Prix and Robert, and hope they have a successful DTM season."

It is speculated that a second privateer contender may join Kubica in 2020, and could come from BMW's junior driver roster. This would also allow BMW to share the cost of running the two-car customer team.

RACHIT THUKRAL AND SVEN HAIDINGER





JEP

Ferrari gets Shanghai win back

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Ferrari has been reinstated as GTE Pro class winner in last November's Shanghai round of the World Endurance Championship, after the disqualification of James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi was overturned by the International Court of Appeal last week.

The Italian manufacturer and the factory AF Corse team successfully argued that the splitter damage that resulted in the #51 Ferrari 488 GTE failing the rideheight test

was caused by an incident with another car. They also provided a report from an expert witness stating that the damage, which lowered the car on the left-hand side, could not have offered any aerodynamic advantage.

New evidence was provided to the court by Johnny Mowlem, the driver of the AF-run Red River Sport GTE Am- class Ferrari, who said in a written statement that he had made contact with the factory car on lap 101 of the race.

The court ruled that the "non-compliance

of the car is the result of exceptional circumstance, namely a normal racing incident". It stated that splitter damage "could not reasonably be detected" by the team and that there was "no reason to call the car in for repair".

The decision means that Calado and Pier Guidi have moved into second position in the standings, 15 points behind Aston Martin Racing pairing Nicki Thiim and Marco Sorensen.

GARY WATKINS



Caldwell joins F3 grid with Trident

FORMULA 3

Formula Regional European Championship race winner Olli Caldwell has become the third Briton on the FIA Formula 3 grid for the 2020 season.

The 17-year-old, who made his FIA F3 race debut in last November's Macau Grand Prix with Trident, will remain with the Italian squad for his graduation. He joins fellow Brits Max Fewtrell (Hitech GP) and Jake Hughes (HWA) in the field.

The announcement comes just after an aborted sportscar debut in the Bathurst 12 Hours. Caldwell was due to share an R-Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage with Luca Ghiotto and Marvin Kirchhofer, only for a mammoth qualifying shunt for Kirchhofer to sideline the car.

Trident chief Maurizio Salvadori said: "We had the chance to evaluate his skills and qualities last year in post-season testing at Valencia and in the Macau Grand Prix.

He impressed our technical staff on both occasions."

Meanwhile, Caldwell's old FRegional squad Prema Powerteam has completed its line-up for that series. Czech Roman Stanek, who starred in German and Italian Formula 4 last year, will join Ferrari proteges Arthur Leclerc and Gianluca Petecof. Van Amersfoort Racing also has a driver, French F4 race winner Pierre-Louis Chovet.

MARCUS SIMMONS

AUTOSPORT PLUS

Smart insight published daily

DTM

Team Rosberg boss goes into retirement

DTM

One of the most significant figures behind Audi's recent DTM success has stepped down and entered retirement.

Arno Zensen, 63, has left his post as director of Team Rosberg, which carried Rene Rast to the 2017 and 2019 DTM crowns. Together with Rast's team-mate Jamie Green, Team Rosberg-run Audis have won 26 races in the past five years.

The popular and ever-helpful Zensen is being replaced by the team's long-time sporting chief Kimmo Liimatainen – the

41-year-old Finn was a race winner as a driver with Team Rosberg in the 2002 German Formula 3 Championship, but then hung up his helmet and has since been employed on the management side.

Zensen, previously team manager at the Walter Lechner Racing Formula Ford squad, has been ever-present at Team Rosberg since it was established in 1994. It made its bow in the 1995 DTM as an Opel works team with Klaus Ludwig and Keke Rosberg. Ludwig took the team's first win in that season's finale at Hockenheim, and Hans Stuck scored victories in 1996 as the series

morphed into the ITC before imploding.

Team Rosberg ran Nissans in the German Super Touring Cup, before becoming a second-string Mercedes team in the revived DTM from 2000-04. It moved into the Audi fold in 2005, and has also run the make's cars in ADAC GT Masters.

The team, based not far from Hockenheim, has also enjoyed single-seater success, notably in 2002, when Gary Paffett won the German F3 title and Nico Rosberg took the German Formula BMW series. It also ran Team Austria in the first season of A1GP.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Ludwig took team's first win in Calibra



McKLEIN

Fresh-faced Rosberg Jr was BMW champion



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Rast is now the DTM talisman



DTM

Carlin closes on G-Drive in race for Le Mans entry

ASIAN LE MANS SERIES

Top British team Carlin could snatch an automatic Le Mans 24 Hours entry after its LMP2 Dallara took its first victory in last weekend's Asian Le Mans Series round at Sepang.

The win, earned by Ben Barnicoat, Harry Tincknell and Jack Manchester, puts the team just nine points adrift of the Aurus-badged G-Drive ORECA in the race

for the title – and a Le Mans entry – before this weekend's finale at Buriram.

The race was won on the road by the Eurasia Motorsport Ligier of Roberto Merhi, Aidan Read and Nick Foster, but with five minutes to go the car was called to the pits by race control for repairs to its rear lights. This was not done, and the resulting time penalty elevated the Carlin machine (right) to the win.

G-Drive trio Roman Rusinov, James French and Leonard Hoogenboom were third, while the other Eurasia Ligier – which Nick Cassidy had qualified on pole – went out early on with hub failure in the hands of Daniel Gaunt.

Inter Europol Ligier pair Nigel Moore and Martin Hippe now lead the LMP3 rankings after finishing third, with victory going to Graff Norma led by David Droux.



ASIAN LE MANS SERIES



Rebellion calls time on racing

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

The Rebellion Racing name will disappear from motor racing after this summer. The Swiss entrant, the top LMP1 privateer of the current era, is ending its involvement in the sport less than three months after announcing it was partnering with Peugeot for the French manufacturer's return to front-line sportscar racing in 2022.

The decision by the Rebellion Corporation, the watchmaker owned by Alexandre Pesci, "to reorient its investment policy" after the climax of the current World Endurance Championship campaign in June brings to an end an involvement in endurance racing stretching back to 2007. In the 13 seasons since, Rebellion has claimed no fewer than seven top-six results at the Le Mans 24 Hours, topped the WEC privateers' P1 classification every year there was one, and notched up two outright victories in the series.

Rebellion stuck around in the P1 ranks while others departed in the face of a widening gulf between the privateers and the big-spending manufacturers and their high-tech hybrids. But when it went in search of opposition with a step down to LMP2 in 2017, it claimed both the drivers' and the teams' crowns, winning half the

eight races along the way. It also won the Petit Le Mans enduro at Road Atlanta in 2012 and 2013 when it pitched one of its Lola-Judd B12/60s up against the American Le Mans Series regulars.

Pesci's first steps in sportscar racing came with a Spyker GT2 car run under the Speedy banner in 2007. He then forged a partnership with the British Sebah Automotive squad for a move into LMP2 with a Lola as Speedy Racing Team Sebah.

They expanded into LMP1 the following year with an Aston Martin-powered Lola before the team was rebranded Rebellion Racing for 2010 with a two-car P1 entry for the first time in the Le Mans Series. Rebellion commissioned its own car – the R-One developed by French constructor ORECA – for 2014, yielding a fourth-place finish on its debut at Le Mans that year.

ORECA took a bigger involvement in the team on Rebellion's return to P1 with the R-13. Sebah boss Bart Hayden remained as team manager, however.

Rebellion's involvement in the Peugeot LM Hypercar project was never fully defined, but the French manufacturer has stated that its plans will be unaffected by the Swiss entrant's withdrawal from motorsport.

GARY WATKINS

SIGNATECH RUNS ALL-FEMALE CREW IN LMP2 RANKS

EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

An all-female squad will line up in the LMP2 ranks of the European Le Mans Series this year. Alfa Romeo Formula 1 test driver Tatiana Calderon, ex-Formula 3 racer Sophia Florsch and British all-rounder Katherine Legge will race an ORECA-Gibson 07 run by the French Signatech squad under the Richard Mille Racing banner.

An entry has also been made by the team, which has support from the FIA's Women in Motorsport initiative, for the Le Mans 24 Hours in June. If successful, it would make them the first female trio to compete at the wheel of a prototype in the French enduro since 1991, when Desire Wilson, Lyn St James and Cathy Muller drove a Group C Spice-Cosworth.

Calderon, Florsch (below) and Legge will be one of two all-female crews in the ELMS this season. Rahal Frey, Michelle Gatting and Manuela Gostner will continue in GTE with a Ferrari 488 GTE now run by the Iron Lynx squad of brothers Andrea and Giacomo Piccini.

GARY WATKINS



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Hamlin wins a brutal 500

The now three-time winner's celebrations were overshadowed by Ryan Newman's terrible last-lap crash, the culmination of a contest marred by rain delays and multi-car wrecks

CHARLES BRADLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Denny Hamlin won the 62nd Daytona 500, but the juxtaposition of him celebrating in the tri-oval grass while injured rival

Ryan Newman was tended to by medical crews after somersaulting across the finish line was as stark as the brutality of superspeedway racing sometimes gets.

The opening round of the 2020 NASCAR Cup Series came down to a fearsome shootout in overtime, going way beyond the planned 500-mile distance, and finished a day later than scheduled. Toyota's 2019 Daytona 500 winner Hamlin — who led a race-best 79 laps for Joe Gibbs Racing — was up against a phalanx of Fords, led by 2008 winner Newman and Team Penske's Ryan Blaney.

Blaney pushed Hamlin on the opening lap of the two-lap sprint to the chequered flag. Hamlin blocked Newman's first attack, but Blaney linked up with Newman, shoving him past Hamlin through the final corners. But then Hamlin took on the role of 'pusher', shoving Blaney off the final turn as Newman weaved to block his run.

Blaney's momentum was too strong to resist, however. As Newman attempted to block him, contact was made and Newman turned hard right, slamming into the fence and launching skywards. Hamlin scooted past Blaney to win by 0.014 seconds, while Newman's flying car fell to earth inverted via a sickening, driver-side impact with the nose of Corey LaJoie's Mustang. His car in flames, Newman skidded along the track on his roof towards Turn 1 — hundreds of

yards from where the accident had begun. The whooping crowd quickly fell silent.

Blaney said of his run: "Newman blocked it and I was committed to push him to the win, and we got our bumpers locked up wrong. It looked pretty bad. I was definitely trying to push him to the win. I feel really bad about it."

Hamlin rejoiced in the majesty of his third Daytona 500 win, only the fourth driver to record back-to-back victories, completely unaware of the gravity of Newman's crash, and some fans booed him. It was an unseemly end to an often bizarre and crash-strewn event.

"We're praying for Ryan," said Hamlin when informed of the severity of the situation. "We worked really well through the whole race, and obviously he got turned



LaJoie and Newman
(#6) make contact
before last-lap crash

there. I knew they would come with a big run, I just knew I couldn't throw a block that would wreck me. When [the Fords] came past me, I knew the race wasn't over."

Perhaps third-placed finisher Chris Buescher summed it up best: "It was a Wild West last lap."

Sunday's glitzy pre-race ceremonies began with President Donald Trump jetting in on Air Force One to give the command for drivers to start their engines and two-time 500 winner Dale Earnhardt Jr waving the green flag to start the 200-lap event around the fabled 2.5-mile superspeedway.

Ricky Stenhouse started from the pole, a perfect start to his new deal with JTG Daugherty Racing and benefiting from Hendrick Motorsports power in his Chevrolet Camaro. That snapped a five-year streak of the Hendrick team's own fleet of cars starting from pole.

The manufacturer games started right from the off, with Stenhouse quickly losing his Chevy tailgunners as Fords swept into the five positions behind him. Team Penske's Joey Logano led that charge, and he was content with saving fuel behind Stenhouse. Meantime, the five Toyotas in the field — the manufacturer with the fewest entries and further depleted by the Daniel Suarez qualifying race disaster (see panel) — very deliberately sank to the rear of the field.

The fickle Floridian climate intervened — just 20 laps were run before rain caused a red flag. All attempts to get the track raceable were thwarted by multiple showers, and NASCAR gave up completely when a deluge soaked the venue at around 7pm.

Thanks to network TV demands, the restart occurred some 21 hours later under blue skies and far higher temperatures on Monday. Brad Keselowski led a pack of Fords, with Stenhouse the only interloper to spoil the Blue Oval's early party. With the end of stage one approaching, and the first 2020 points on the line, a Chevrolet armada — led by Chase Elliott — made a power move to surge past the Fords with 15 laps to go.

With seven laps remaining, William Byron speared off into the wall on the back stretch on the approach to Turn 3, turned by the nose of Stenhouse, who appeared to be too preoccupied with blocking a run by Aric Almirola to notice he was firing off last year's polesitter. Byron, one of the youngest contenders in the field at 22, was fuming: "I got hit in the back bumper, he was kind of moving when he hit me the first time, and then he hit me again off-centre... he just turned me around. There's no reason to be that aggressive on lap 45."

This heralded a two-lap dash to the end of stage one, with Elliott staying out front, pushed home by Hendrick Chevy teammate Alex Bowman, ahead of the Fords >>

SUAREZ LOSES HIS DUEL



Daytona's 'Duel' qualifying races can bite if you're not locked in for the 500.

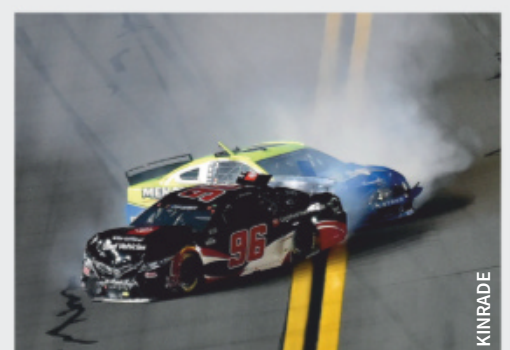
Daniel Suarez lost his drive with top Ford team Stewart-Haas Racing in mid-November. He arrived at Daytona with a hastily arranged Toyota ride at Gaunt Brothers, a part-time team aiming for a full season in 2020, without the 'Charter' spot guaranteeing its car a start.

Suarez's #96 Camry was strong in the draft, topping 202mph in practice. But, despite running a 2020 engine and body, they were mounted to a 2019 chassis. It meant the team couldn't run the rear end as low as rivals, to get the huge spoiler out of the airstream, so Suarez was 9mph off pole in qualifying.

Forced to race his way in, he was running strongly inside Duel 1's top 10 before the mid-race pitstops. He left the pitlane with no drafting partner to get him back up to speed, so Suarez latched on to the yet-to-pit leaders as they lapped him, still safely in the important transfer spot into the main race.

Then the unbelievable happened: Ryan Blaney was unaware that his Ford team-mates were pitting (his spotter wasn't in the correct chatroom group!) and when they all dived for the pits Blaney slammed on his brakes, forgetting Suarez was in his draft, and sparked a wreck that sent the Mexican head-on into the wall. "Boneheaded" was Blaney's blunt opinion of the mess, and he apologised to Suarez via text.

Suarez, the only non-American entry, missed the biggest race of the year and lost his Daytona 500 start money (over \$200k): "There's a lot of frustration and a broken heart, because I've been working my butt off to try to make this happen."



of Almirola and Logano.

Stage two started with Hamlin out front, the Toyotas having opted to bin their stage one points quest in favour of track position for stage two. The race's second crash occurred off Turn 2, as rookie Quin Houff misjudged the run Almirola had on him and spun himself around his nose to smash into the wall. Meanwhile, Floridian journeyman BJ McLeod wrecked behind them for no particular reason. The major significance of this incident was Ford superstar Kevin Harvick incurring right-rear quarter-panel damage during the manic avoidances behind.

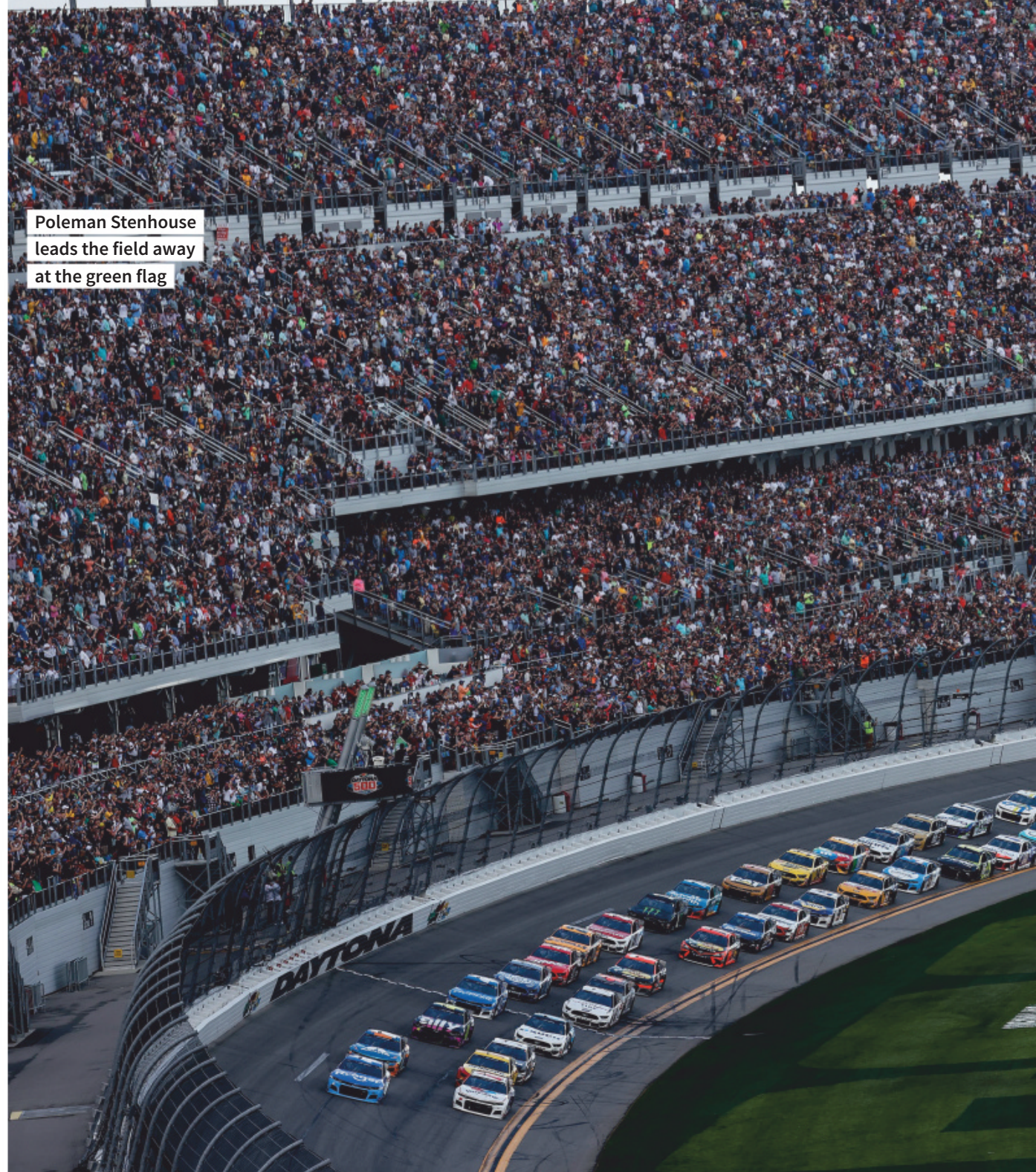
Toyota lost Busch Clash winner Erik Jones from its lead posse when a tyre hose got stuck under his nose during a pitstop, and its rookie Christopher Bell got bullied backwards on a restart.

Hamlin stayed resolute out front, fending off a late challenge from Stenhouse that opened the door for Kyle Busch to finish second. Truex took fourth, ahead of an impressive Ross Chastain, the former melon farmer enjoying the first of two Cup outings for Chip Ganassi. Truex suffered a disaster when he drove into an errant gas can in pitlane, the offending item being hurled in his direction by Elliott, who was penalised.

This was all preamble for what was to come. Only start money and minor points had been earned thus far; now the majority of the \$23.6million prize purse was on the line. Blaney and Logano hooked up immediately for a Ford 1-2, with Stenhouse and Hamlin in tow, and for the following couple of laps the aggressiveness ramped up to an insane level – but, amazingly, without wrecks.

Suddenly, four Toyotas surged to the front, with Kyle Busch leading Hamlin, Bell and Jones, bringing a semblance of organisation to the borderline chaos. It seemed to reality-check the manufacturer packs, as Ford assembled its avengers on the outside line.

Keselowski and Blaney led its charge as the race entered its final 50 laps. Having pushed Keselowski to the lead, Blaney dived to the inside to thwart the Toyota threat,



Poleman Stenhouse leads the field away at the green flag

and took Stenhouse, the Chevy joker in the lead pack, with him. Stenhouse – always a threat on the big tracks, but with judgement skills as questionable as his mullet haircut – passed Blaney below the yellow line on the back stretch, which forced NASCAR to call a drivethrough penalty on him.

This meant that Keselowski and Logano were able to put a Penske block on both lanes, with Jimmie Johnson now up to third, in what might be his final Daytona 500. To show his urgency, Johnson door-slammed Keselowski in the tri-oval with 30 to go.

Green-flag pitstops occurred, with Busch winning the race off pitroad. Moments later,

Stenhouse wrecked off Turn 4, sent spinning by a flat-out Jones as Stenhouse was attempting to pit, but NASCAR chose not to throw a yellow almost as if to spite him.

Busch led with 25 to go, with the Fords of Logano, Keselowski, Buescher, Clint Bowyer and Almirola in tow. Hamlin was seventh, ahead of Newman. Keselowski hit the front with 16 to go, as Busch's car blew up in the tri-oval – another year without a Daytona 500 win for the 2019 Cup champion. But another title winner without a 500 victory to his name, Keselowski, wouldn't win either. He was in the wall soon after – along with the majority of the field as the first 'big one' struck.

Logano shoved Almirola viciously into Keselowski on the approach to Turn 3, but none of their Fords were properly aligned. Keselowski was spat into the outside wall, while Almirola turned hard left into Bowman and bedlam ensued. "A lot of kinetic energy there," said Keselowski of the physics. "I knew [Almirola] was coming. It's a lot of energy when there's three or four of them [pushing]. It adds up real quick."

Miraculous avoidances included Logano – who'd started it all – while Bowyer and Harvick threaded the needle to make it through unscathed. Johnson, who was taken out in the melee, called out Logano by saying it was "a matter of time" before his "aggressive pushing" caused a big crash.



Stenhouse (#47) and Kyle Busch battle for position



RESULTS ROUND 1/36, DAYTONA 500 (USA), 17 FEBRUARY, 209 LAPS – 522.50 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME	GRID
1	Denny Hamlin	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota	3h42m10s	21
2	Ryan Blaney	Team Penske Ford	+0.014s	27
3	Chris Buescher	Roush Fenway Racing Ford	+0.109s	19
4	David Ragan	Rick Ware Racing Ford	+0.306s	30
5	Kevin Harvick	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford	+0.482s	10
6	Clint Bowyer	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford	+0.571s	29
7	Brendan Gaughan	Beard Motorsports Chevrolet	+0.847s	39
8	Corey LaJoie	Go FAS Racing Ford	+0.856s	36
9	Ryan Newman	Roush Fenway Racing Ford	+0.929s	7
10	Kyle Larson	Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet	+1.641s	8
11	John Hunter Nemechek	Front Row Motorsports Ford	+1.901s	23
12	Austin Dillon	Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet	+2.910s	13
13	JJ Haley	Kaulig Racing Chevrolet	+3.299s	33
14	Michael McDowell	Front Row Motorsports Ford	+3.474s	26
15	Darrell Wallace Jr	Richard Petty Motorsports Chevrolet	+9.932s	11
16	Brennan Poole	Premium Motorsports Chevrolet	+18.157s	34
17	Chase Elliott	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet	+57.236s	25
18	Erik Jones	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota	-1 lap	14
19	Matt DiBenedetto	Wood Brothers Racing Ford	-2 laps	16
20	Ricky Stenhouse Jr	JTG Daugherty Racing Chevrolet	-3 laps	1
21	Christopher Bell	Leavine Family Racing Toyota	205 laps-accident	17
22	Aric Almirola	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford	-4 laps	5
23	Joey Gase	Petty Ware Racing Chevrolet	-6 laps	37
24	Alex Bowman	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet	-6 laps	2
25	Ross Chastain	Spire Motorsports Chevrolet	201 laps-accident	20
26	Joey Logano	Team Penske Ford	200 laps-accident	3
27	Timmy Hill	MBM Motorsports Ford	200 laps-accident	32
28	Tyler Reddick	Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet	199 laps-accident	22
29	Ryan Preece	JTG Daugherty Racing Chevrolet	198 laps-accident	31
30	Ty Dillon	Germain Racing Chevrolet	198 laps-accident	24
31	Reed Sorenson	Premium Motorsports Chevrolet	192 laps-accident	40
32	Martin Truex Jr	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota	186 laps-accident	15
33	Kurt Busch	Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet	184 laps-accident	18
34	Kyle Busch	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota	184 laps-engine	28
35	Jimmie Johnson	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet	184 laps-accident	6
36	Brad Keselowski	Team Penske Ford	183 laps-accident	9
37	Cole Custer	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford	174 laps-rear end	12
38	BJ McLeod	Rick Ware Racing Ford	105 laps-accident	38
39	Quin Houff	StarCom Racing Chevrolet	89 laps-accident	35
40	William Byron	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet	58 laps-accident	4

Winner's average speed 141.110mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 **Hamlin** 50; 2 **Blaney** 43; 3 **Harvick** 39; 4 **Buescher** 38; 5 **Newman** 36; 6 **Larson** 35; 7 **Elliott** 34; 8 **Ragan** 33; 9 **Stenhouse** 32; 10 **Almirola** 32.

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Path to Red Bull redemption

Both Pierre Gasly and Daniil Kvyat are in a good place to rebuild their careers. But pressure comes from above and below on the climb to the pinnacle of F1

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The ruthless reality of Red Bull's junior programme isn't exactly new. But some of its members getting second (or third) chances is a relatively recent change. In 2017, Brendon Hartley was brought back. At the end of the following year, Alexander Albon was plucked from a plum Formula E deal to rejoin the Red Bull fold, and Daniil Kvyat, who had barely been jettisoned when Hartley and Pierre Gasly were being brought through, returned to Toro Rosso.

Last year, Gasly was the latest driver to feel the sting of Red Bull demotion. Now, he's the latest to attempt Red Bull resurrection. For the first time in his single-seater career, Gasly is going into a new season feeling the benefits of staying with a team – even if it was one he found himself unceremoniously returned to ahead of last year's Belgian Grand Prix. That switch followed an underwhelming start to his first season with the Red Bull senior squad after Daniel Ricciardo's decision to fly the nest to Renault.

Gasly was actually one of the stars of the second half of 2019, and it would have been some feat not to feel a swell of cheer at his second-place finish in the Brazilian Grand Prix.

He's moved around a lot so far in his career, shifting from team to team in the junior ranks. In 2017, he switched to Super Formula, where he narrowly missed out on the title as a rookie. That was his main programme that year, which is why his claim at the start

“I didn't have to adapt to a new environment. It's a bit more stability than I had in the past”

of 2020 that “for the first time since my first year in single-seaters I see the same faces for more than one year” stacks up – despite him making five starts for Toro Rosso in 2017 before becoming a full F1 rookie with the team now known as AlphaTauri in 2018.

“Over the winter, I didn't have to adapt to a new environment, or build a new relationship, which always takes time,” he says. “It's a bit more stability than I had in the past.”

The 24-year-old needs to start 2020 as strongly as he finished last year – for his own peace of mind more than anything. After all, in 2019 he vindicated those who felt he had been promoted to Red Bull a little too soon with two big crashes in testing. Plus, there was the big performance gap to Max Verstappen that ultimately led to his seat swap with Albon when that issue cost Red Bull victory in the Hungarian GP. Although he's no doubt

aware of the need to maintain the momentum he did so well to find in the second half of 2019, Gasly maintains he won't alter his attitude to the tests at Barcelona that are taking place this week and next, despite his accidents in the equivalent sessions last year. “I won't change my approach,” he says. “Of course I need to be careful – it's not something you want, and going into testing I want to do all the tests clean.”

On the other side of the garage to Gasly is Kvyat, who is in the middle of his own Red Bull redemption story. Before 2019, his previous two F1 seasons – 2016 and 2017 – were blighted first by being demoted from the senior squad and then being dropped from Toro Rosso before 2017 had even ended.

At the Red Bull season launch in London in 2016, Kvyat had sounded tense and defensive – a sign of things to come. But at last week's AlphaTauri unveiling at Red Bull's Hangar-7 exhibition space in Salzburg, he sounded confident and refreshed.

“I feel very good,” he said. “First of all, my first year in Formula 1 was with them, and it felt like home. Then I came back [in 2016] and then things weren't very smooth at that time. So, the break [in 2018] was a very good thing for me and for the team. Then I obviously came back and last year felt like really at home.”

Neither Gasly nor Kvyat has any assurances that they will remain in F1 beyond this campaign, but – barring sensational seasons from junior proteges Juri Vips and Yuki Tsunoda – they are in the best position possible to carry on. Assuming of course that Albon continues to shine at Red Bull and both the AlphaTauri drivers satisfy Helmut Marko's requirements...

The AlphaTauri duo are at least in a different situation to any other driver who has competed for Red Bull's junior F1 team. In AlphaTauri, they are finally representing *something*. When the former Minardi squad was Toro Rosso, its purpose was solely to evaluate Red Bull's young drivers for their ultimate potential. It will still do that, but it will also advertise the company's in-house fashion brand, which is quite a show of faith from Red Bull.

Gasly and Kvyat are adamant that they're not looking over their shoulders at Vips and Tsunoda in 2020. But it is surely logical that they will seek to return to the promised land alongside Verstappen at some point.

The problem for both is that even if their new-found at-home feeling results in them producing their best, if Albon improves in his first full year with Red Bull then there's no movement upwards. And if the two juniors closest to F1 take their time to deliver in Super Formula and F2, then Gasly and Kvyat stay in limbo – albeit a very stylish one. But if the reverse happens in either of those scenarios, then expect the Red Bull ruthlessness to reappear. ❧

 **P34 ALBON ON HIS 2020 CHALLENGE**

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The fallout from Holden's demise

The decision to kill off an Australian motorsport icon has cranked up the urgency in deciding a way forward in Supercars' existential debate

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

The demise of Holden — announced last week by parent company General Motors — won't kill Supercars in Australia. But it will force the series to face its future with a sense of genuine urgency.

Even without GM's decision to axe the Holden name, it's unlikely that there would have been Holdens racing in Supercars for long. It always felt like the current factory deal, which is supposed to run through to the end of 2021, would be the last one for Holden in its traditional sense. Then, best-case scenario, the out-of-production Commodore would be replaced by a racing Camaro or Corvette — backed by GM. None of that necessarily changes. What the Holden demise has done, however, is make 2022 the hardest of hard deadlines for Supercars. In fact, it may even be a year too late.

Before we get onto the future, let's take a quick look at the past. Holden, Australia's first and only true car maker, is a local icon. For as long as there was a love affair with the mid-size sedan, the Commodore was a big player — right alongside the Aussie-built Ford Falcon.

Where and when did it all go wrong? There's no single factor that led to the downfall of a once-loved manufacturer. Some lay the blame at the feet of changing government subsidy policies that failed to protect the local industry. The death of manufacturing on Australian soil certainly didn't help,

“Can the series survive without Ford versus Holden? Reality is, it was going to have to anyway”

particularly when the famous Commodore nameplate was slapped on a front-wheel-drive European sedan that didn't come with a V8 option, alienating even the most rusted-on of buyers. The pivot to the SUV market, at a price point dominated by Japanese and South Korean makes, was a marketing misstep. Then there's the simple, inescapable fact that Australia is a relatively small market with an expensive problem — the steering wheel is on the right-hand side of the cabin. The GM business case is clear: focus on the big, profitable left-hand-drive markets (China and the US); leave the right-hand-drive markets for manufacturers better placed to wear the additional engineering costs.

Naturally, the death of Holden has sparked a wave of pessimism about the future of Supercars. Can the series really survive without Ford versus Holden? The reality is it was going to have to anyway.

With Holden announcing last year that the Commodore was being booted from showrooms, it was unlikely there would have been another factory deal centred on the four-door. The next GM spend was going to need to be for either a Camaro or a Corvette — exactly the kind of car the new Gen3 rules are likely to cater for.

The timing of the Holden demise is, however, awkward. The existing Holden deal matched up perfectly with the 2022 introduction of Gen3, which meant a swansong year for the Commodore in 2021. There's every chance that will still happen. The Commodore is a homologated Supercar (the Falcon raced on long after Ford stopped selling it), so there are no technical issues. Even if the factory funding dries up as expected, Triple Eight can go back to being Red Bull Racing Australia and play on for another year. Sure, it's a little weird that Holden won't actually exist, but it's not an insurmountable problem.

The second option is that elements of Gen3 are moved forward — something Supercars hasn't closed the door on. When asked by Autosport if it could happen, the response was a statement that read: “The Gen3 regulations are set to be implemented in 2022. If any components of those plans are to be introduced next year, that will be a result of consultation with manufacturers, teams and the Supercars Commission.”

If GM is serious about a ‘GM Special Vehicles’ arm in Australia, then perhaps a two-door programme can be rushed through for 2021. It may well be Ryan Walkinshaw who's best placed to make it happen. After all, his Melbourne-based HSV company converts Camaros to right-hand drive with GM's blessing... and is tipped to be a major part of the GMSV plan. Walkinshaw has tried to get the Camaro into Supercars before, but opted to wait in the hope that Gen3 would bring a control chassis better suited to two-doors. Perhaps that's a process that can be expedited to keep GM interested.

There's a whole other conversation about how reliant a series should be on manufacturers, and whether Gen3 should be purely built around fast, loud cars that are dirt cheap for privateer teams to run — even if there's no relevance to the automotive market.

These are all things that, with the Holden-and-Ford rivalry still ticking along nicely, Supercars had time to ponder. What this Holden news has done is made nailing down the direction of Gen3 a matter of urgency. Adding to the pressure is the fact that Supercars is deep into selling its TV rights, with the current deal to expire at the end of this year. Potential broadcast partners will want clear answers on how the series will look beyond 2020.

A sedanless future has always been coming, but it's never been coming quite this fast. Until yesterday, Gen3 could have delayed until 2023 if absolutely needed. Now that's simply not an option. Even 2022 feels like it may be a year too late. 🏁

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YOUR SAY

Thank you for featuring the volunteers who give up their time to help make motorsport a safer sport for everyone

JON BOLTON

Marshalling volunteers north of the border

Really enjoyed reading the column about marshalling in Autosport's National racing supplement (30 January); thank you for featuring the volunteers who give up their time to help make motorsport a safer sport for everyone.

We just wanted to highlight that the Scottish Motorsport Marshals Club is the only club in Scotland that is dedicated to marshalling. BMMC doesn't operate north of the border.

We also run a motorsport radio group providing safety radio network to events, a motorsport rescue team operating three rescue units to provide immediate medical and technical extrication for incidents, and a motorsport medical group as a community of interest for medics working in pre-hospital trauma care in a motorsport setting.

Jon Bolton

Publicity and communications coordinator

Scottish Motorsport Marshals Club

smmc.org.uk

Filling the gap in the Formula 1 schedule

As F1 has lost one grand prix and may lose another in Vietnam, why not have the International Trophy, as a non-championship F1 race, on the Easter weekend?

Nicholas Binns

Wirksworth

Much the same discussion was had in the Autosport office, including a suggestion that teams use only their reserve drivers. Imola's 'mission impossible' bid is fanciful but intriguing – ed

PICTURES OF THE WEEK

IndyCar stars (clockwise from left) Marcus Ericsson, Graham Rahal, Takuma Sato and Jack Harvey practice their entry/egress technique with the new aeroscreen-equipped racer during testing at Austin




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F1
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FERRARI

The Reds go 'extreme' in bid to topple Mercedes

The Italian giant is hoping its aggressive approach to aerodynamic development will be enough to steal a march on Mercedes in 2020

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The Teatro Romolo Valli is quite a setting. The sharply tiered, elliptical opera house is a place built to showcase drama. So, it could be that Ferrari was sending a message by choosing the venue for the launch of its 2020 Formula 1 car — the SF1000.

After a lengthy, dance-filled build-up, the Italian squad's new challenger was revealed. Initially, things didn't look too different to the car that won three races and took nine poles last year, but there is plenty that's new. Although the stable regulations from 2019 mean the car is indeed an evolution of the SF90, Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto explained on stage that his designers had gone "extreme on all the concepts" it was carrying over to the new machine.

"We try to go for maximum aero performance, and try to maximise downforce levels, so the entire car — the monocoque, the power-unit layout, the gearbox — has been really packaged to have a narrower, slim bodyshape," he added. "I think that is quite visible."

"Extreme" is key for Ferrari in 2020. It has looked to be extremely promising at times in the two most recent seasons, before ultimately being extremely underwhelming.

In 2018, Ferrari challenged Mercedes for much of the season, but a combination of strategy mistakes and Sebastian Vettel errors — as well as Red Bull getting in on the winning early on — meant it was playing catch-up when Lewis Hamilton took Mercedes out of reach in the concluding half of the campaign.

Last year, the team threw points away thanks to strategic and operational errors (such as deciding not to send Charles Leclerc back out in Monaco Q1, condemning him to an early exit), and its drivers' intra-team strife and errors. Plus, there were the reliability glitches that cost it, most notably in Bahrain and Russia.

But the biggest issue in 2019 was its performance in slow corners compared to the Mercedes. Ferrari had rapid pace on the straights with its punchy power unit, but the time it lost in the corners made the difference at too many tracks.

To fix this, the team has made significant upgrades to the bargeboards, which are a lot more complex on the SF1000 than they were on the SF90 last season. The team is persisting with the tapered front-wing design it pioneered for 2019, which several rival squads later assessed, and even though the example used for the launch was a 2019 wing, Binotto says Ferrari "will not change our concept" in this area. There's also extra detailing, such as the horns around the air intake and the revised T-wing, which shows how Ferrari has focused on adding downforce to fix its 2019 shortcomings. That's a good show of intent, but the question will be whether it has gone "extreme" enough to bridge the gap to Mercedes.

"Certainly, we increased our downforce a lot," says Binotto. "By >>

doing that we increased the level of drag as well, so we believe that we'll certainly have a car faster in the cornering but maybe slower on the straights. Where the right balance is, I think it's difficult to know, difficult to know what the others are doing as well. But, certainly, we increased our downforce by quite a lot."

Assuming it has indeed cured its downforce deficiency, Ferrari still has other dramas to fix if it is to finally topple Mercedes.

For a start, it needs to make the most of any early-season weaknesses displayed by its rivals. Fernando Alonso has recently been vocal about Hamilton starting the year slowly, which isn't necessarily accurate, but Ferrari has dropped early points in both of the past two years, which it cannot afford to do again. If Mercedes gets a lead, it doesn't tend to lose it.

One factor that Ferrari must watch out for concerns Red Bull, which *does* have a tendency to underperform early on – something that should be negated by the rules stability this year. So, if Ferrari takes points off Mercedes, it mustn't lose them to Red Bull.

The headline act of drama in Ferrari's 2019 season was the tension between its drivers, which culminated in the clash that put them both out of the Brazilian Grand Prix in November. Ahead of last season, Binotto said Vettel was Ferrari's "priority", but now he and Leclerc start 2020 as co-leaders. "Charles has now got a year's experience with us," explained Binotto. "And I think

"If Ferrari is locked in a struggle against Mercedes, then the team will have to decide which driver it backs"

that while last year at that time we said that Seb would've been first driver, Charles second, I think that after a year both have proven they can fight for the best result, they will be on the same level. They can both fight for being ahead, as much as we get ahead, and that's it. So, let them race."

The question now is, 'for how long?' If Ferrari finds itself finally locked in a close, year-long struggle against Mercedes and Leclerc and Vettel are still finding ways to cost each other points, then at some point the team will have to make a call on which one it is backing. Mercedes is not afraid to make such a decision – as Valtteri Bottas found out at Sochi in 2018 – so Ferrari cannot afford to let the drama between its drivers play on into a new season. Perhaps this makes any launch-setting message clearer – get the questions about a team-mate war out early so they're addressed and not a distraction going into the new campaign...

Leclerc explained that "we both learned the lesson of what happened in Brazil" and that, as a result, "the margins will probably be a bit bigger to be a bit more on the safe side".

"Of course, we are free to race each other but, on the other hand, we are team-mates," he added. "There are a lot of people working behind the scenes on the car and for us to perform at our best on track. And again, we're a team so things like in Brazil shouldn't happen. But yeah, I've definitely learned from it."

The 2020 season will be Leclerc's second with Ferrari and, although he did well enough last year to earn a mammoth contract extension until the end of 2024, he did make several mistakes over the course of 2019. Although this was part of his course as a young driver, he knows errors such as the costly crash in Baku qualifying cannot be repeated if he's to challenge for the title with a team that clearly sees him as its future.

His off in the rain in Germany was also needless – although

Ferrari last won an
F1 constructors'
championship title
in 2008



many others, including Hamilton, made the same mistake and so that one was more understandable – but Leclerc picks that Azerbaijan accident as his biggest mistake from his first season at Ferrari.

It's one of a number of areas he has identified for improvement heading into 2020: "It was just very unnecessary and I think I've learned the lesson. And then just overall during the year I think I've probably learned many smaller lessons. But very useful ones – on the strategy and on the race.

"It's quite a lot more complex in Formula 1, and on this I've still got a lot of improvements to make, and I'm working with the team on that. I'm pretty sure there's room for improvement everywhere, but if I have to choose one thing at the moment it's probably on my side to try and have a better vision of the race, and I'm pretty sure this will be useful for the future."

Another motif that Ferrari needs to correct concerns Vettel's mounting mistakes over recent seasons. A run that started with his off in the rain at Hockenheim in 2018 did look as if it had been arrested after Ferrari introduced its Singapore Grand Prix upgrade last year, which led to Vettel's first win in over 12 months (after



Leclerc had lost out to Ferrari underestimating the undercut factor). But then came the Brazilian collision with Leclerc, which ultimately has to go down as Vettel's fault.

Now that Leclerc's future at Ferrari is sorted, the team's long-time talisman's place is in the headlines. Theories about Hamilton making a shock switch to Maranello have persisted over the winter, and if such a hypothetical scenario did come to pass for 2021, there is only one seat available: Vettel's.

But Binotto has moved to reinforce the current incumbent's position, saying: "Seb is our first choice at the moment, and obviously it's something we are discussing with him and we will continue discussing, but he's certainly our first option, our preference at the moment."

This is surely an attempt to ease Vettel's concerns about his place at Ferrari and to try to ensure he's firing on all cylinders at the start of the new season. If Ferrari consistently gets the Vettel that produced a mighty lap to take pole at Suzuka last year, then the team will be that bit stronger going into 2020.

It would be easy to view Leclerc's elevation to equal number one status as something of a downgrade for Vettel, but that's not the four-time world champion's take: "I think we were [both] up last year. So, it's not like I had a different car – that's the main thing. Obviously, we both have the same car and the same chance to race well, and I never doubted

that last year. I don't think Charles did [either]. I don't see it that way, down and up. I think it doesn't change anything. Starting on equal terms or not, I think we were on equal terms all throughout last year. We are this year as well."

Arguably the biggest plot-twist of 2019 came at the start of the second test, when Mercedes turned up with a massive update package that transformed its fortunes and ultimately led to Ferrari's heavy defeat in the season opener.

That, reckons Vettel, was a valuable lesson.

"Last year I think we had a good feeling [in testing]," he explained. "We had a very good first day, very good first week of the test, but then it was quite harsh coming to Australia, finding out that we're not that strong as we expected. Despite what happens in the next couple of weeks, I think we will remain cautious and hungry to start on the right foot in Australia, and from there, to be honest, it's a very long way."

Tempering expectations is an understandable position for Ferrari to adopt ahead of the real fighting in 2020. But if it is to claim an F1 title – which it has not done since winning the 2008 constructors' championship – the team must combine all the lessons it has learned over the past few years and make sure the steps it takes are "extreme" enough to finally see off Mercedes when the curtain comes down. ❧



➔ P26 FERRARI TECH

FERRARI SF1000

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

Ferrari flattered to deceive in 2019 with a car that was a rocket on the straights but far from the best in the corners. A heavily reworked design for 2020 aims to fix that, but will the SF1000 be in the hunt for the title?

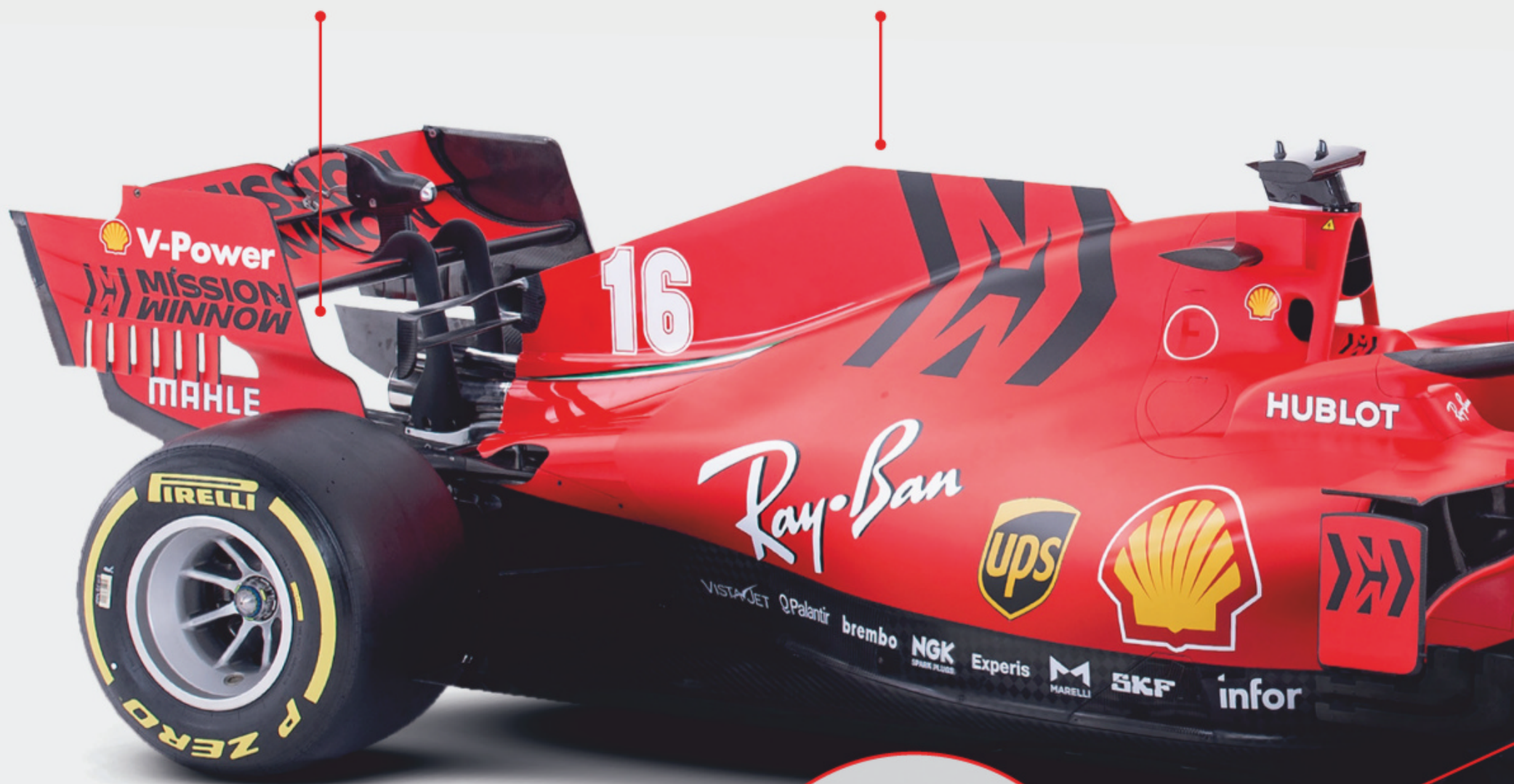
PHOTOGRAPHY **FERRARI**

POWERTRAIN

As teased by the earlier unveiling of the Haas, Ferrari has opted to showcase its new car with a larger-bore main exhaust with a smaller wastegate mounted atop, and it remains to be seen whether the split-wastegate design seen in practice for the 2019 season-closing Abu Dhabi GP will be trialled again. One of the biggest controversies over Ferrari's powertrain last season was fuel flow and, while it was never categorically proved that the team was circumventing the regulations, we'll have to wait and see whether the FIA technical directives drafted at the end of last year will inhibit Ferrari's top speed and acceleration.

ENGINE COVER AND BODYWORK

Team chief Mattia Binotto spoke at the launch of a revised powertrain design to improve overall packaging, and as a result the rear end boasts a much tighter midriff. The engine cover remains a one-piece component, designed to reduce the amount of time mechanics spend putting bodywork on, while the shark fin retains the small cut-out behind the air intake to straighten the airflow ahead of the rear wing. Most noticeable are the horns that have developed either side of the air intake, similar to those pioneered by McLaren and BMW in the mid-2000s. Ferrari seems to be taking advantage of a bounding box in the regulations to straighten the airflow around the air intake one step further.



MINOR DETAILS

The floor does not feature the fins Ferrari ended 2019 with, but it's not uncommon to see teams holding back parts in their launch specification. Other detail changes concern the mirrors, where Ferrari has revised its conventional 2019 design and opted for a Mercedes-inspired shroud to minimise drag.

Ferrari has followed example of rival Mercedes and opted for shrouded mirrors



BARGEBOARDS

One thing that caught the eye during the SF1000's launch was the increased complexity of the bargeboards. Ferrari has now expanded on the 'boomerang' package around the bargeboard area and, although the team used boomerangs last season, they were neither as large nor as pronounced as those of the teams around them. By extending the boomerangs to the sidepod turning vanes, there's more dimension to the bargeboard area, giving the airflow spilling from the front tyres more direction when faced with the labyrinthine aero appendages in front of the sidepod inlets.



FRONT WING

Ferrari's front wing was discussed at length last year. The team opted for a design that put the focus on generating downforce from the inboard portion, and swept down towards the endplates to push airflow outwards. It was a very deliberate workaround to the new front-wing regulations, and Ferrari has continued with that design.

Although team principal Mattia Binotto suggested that the team may trial new designs throughout testing, Ferrari is not expected to

drop that wing concept entirely. If anything, the inboard-loaded front-wing design has been something of a revelation, so much so that it has been explored by a number of teams seeking to find the balance between creating load at the front and pushing air outwards so that the floor can develop a greater amount of downforce too.

The nose design taken to last year's Singapore GP, which was credited with a brief resurgence in form at Ferrari, will remain for 2020 too.



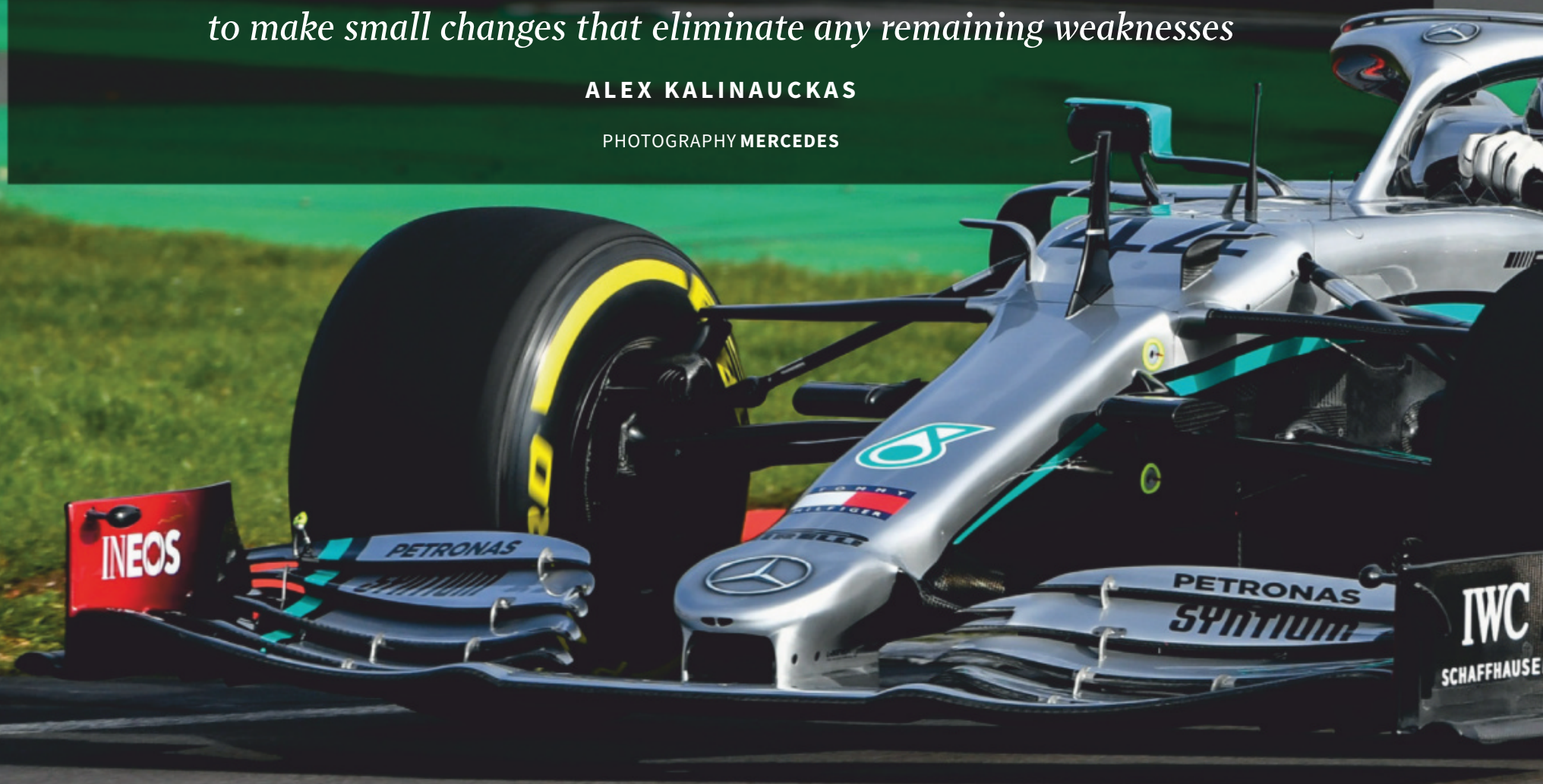
MERCEDES

Looking to the future

Ominously for its F1 rivals, Mercedes has spent the winter determined to make small changes that eliminate any remaining weaknesses

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY MERCEDES



Formula 1's all-conquering leading team returned last week: twice. First, Mercedes revealed its 2020 livery and a new tie-up with petrochemical company Ineos – recently famous for buying sports teams in cycling, sailing and football – that modified the team's colour scheme ever so slightly. Four days later, it showed off its W11 with a digital launch streamed on YouTube, before Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton took turns to shake the car down at Silverstone.

But both events revealed interesting indications about what modern F1's best team is trying to do in 2020, apart from winning everything there is to win, again. This season, it seems, is all about sealing off the minor weaknesses the team has displayed, or others have claimed it has.

At the livery launch at the Royal Automobile Club in London, the scale of Ineos's investment with Mercedes is made clear. The company has become Mercedes' "principal partner" in a deal that will run for five years. That in itself is not that enlightening, but it does offer some clues about Mercedes' on-going F1 participation.

Daimler board chairman and overarching Mercedes boss Ola Kallenius was quick to shoot down last month's report in *Autocar* that suggested Mercedes was to discuss considering quitting F1 at the end of the upcoming season. And now it's Toto Wolff's turn. After blasting "some lunatic out there that writes something on an internet page", he explains why he said before Christmas that he was seeking to make the Brackley squad "self-sufficient".

"We want to make it a no-brainer from the sheer numbers

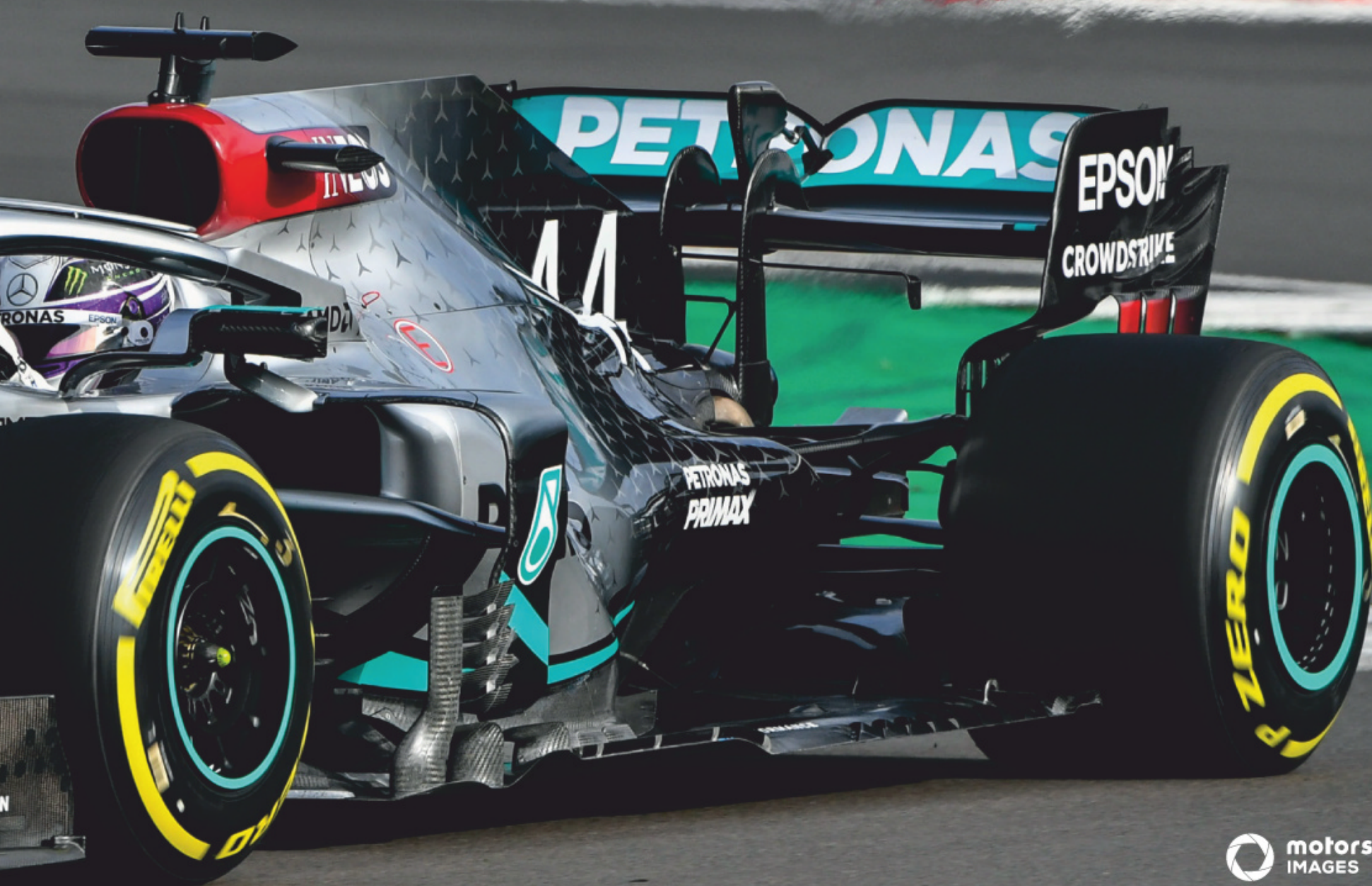
[for Mercedes to support a team that is profitable by itself]," says Wolff. "The marketing is huge. The return on investment from the marketing, should be, will be, the icing on the cake, but the Formula 1 activity will be something that will be a profitable exercise – like it should be.

"We see in the American sports leagues that most of them, the NFL or the NBA, [the teams] are profitable franchises. And this is my personal aim and my personal contribution with our partners – to turn this into such a corporate company so that, from a Mercedes standpoint, it becomes a no-brainer to participate."

The point Wolff returns to is that, to Mercedes, the return on its F1 investment from a marketing point of view given the team's on-going success is enormous. If Wolff can make the team turn a profit in the upcoming cost-cap era with more sponsorship deals such as the new arrangement with Ineos and his squad's long-term relationship with Petronas, as well as several other sponsors, then it would make even less sense for Mercedes to end its F1 participation.

"We, as Daimler today, we see the advantages and the benefits that F1 as a marketing platform provides to us and we see the data," Wolff explains. "And that is the underlying condition why we're doing it. Participating in F1 is one of the greatest return on investments within the whole Daimler group. There are numbers thrown out in the public which are simply untrue. This is an exercise that costs little in comparison to the billions of marketing value that are being generated."

All the signs, then, point to Mercedes' current F1 foray continuing.



motorsport
IMAGES

“F1 is one of the greatest return on investments in the whole Daimler group”

But it must be noted that the manufacturer is yet to officially commit beyond 2020. Then again, no one else has been able to sign the new Concorde Agreement that is due to start in 2021 either...

As has become something of a tradition for new Mercedes F1 machines, the W11 has its legs stretched for the first time at the home of the British Grand Prix, under 10 miles from the team's base.

The new car is an understandable evolution of the W10, which scored 15 wins and 10 poles in 2019, as well as taking Hamilton and Mercedes to their respective sixth milestone world titles. But it has opted to make one significant tweak, which hints at other changes across the whole car. The team has decided to finally implement the letterbox inlets for its sidepods, moving the side-impact structure down as a result, and technical director James Allison speaks of changing “aspects of the concept of the car” despite the regulations staying stable from 2019.

“For us it was all about trying to make sure that we don't run out of development steam on a package that worked pretty well for us last year,” Allison explains. “If we had continued >>



Toto Wolff is determined
to make Mercedes' F1
operation profitable



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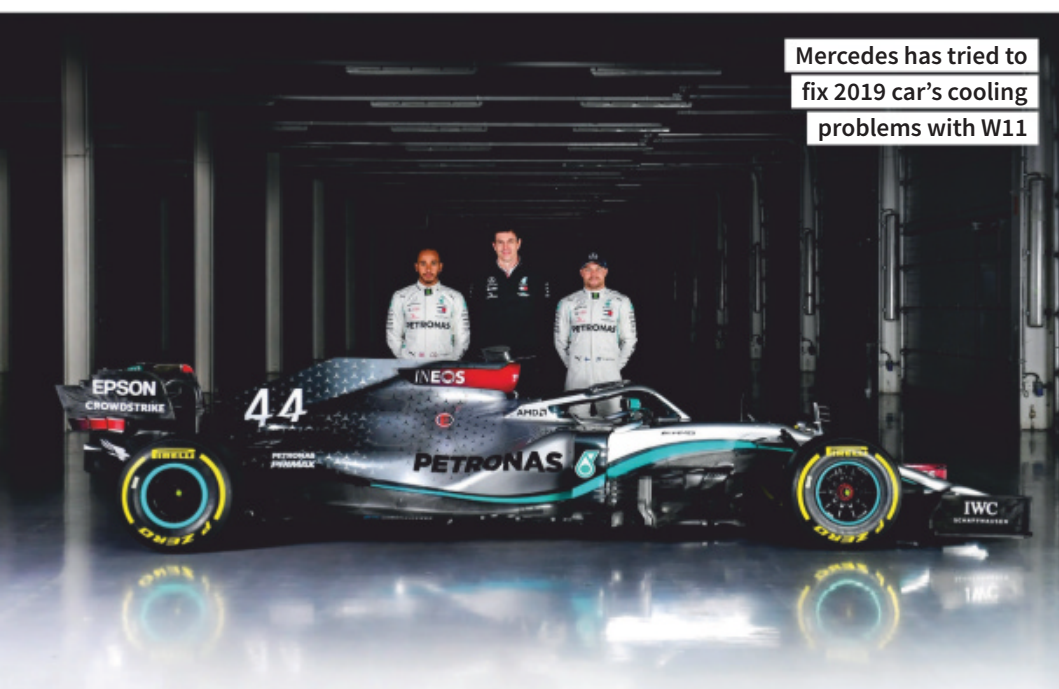
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Mercedes has tried to fix 2019 car's cooling problems with W11

merely to add flourishes to the 2019 baseline, we would have found some gains, but, in all likelihood, diminishing returns would be kicking in by now.”

What this means then is that Mercedes has tried to “make a few well-chosen architectural changes to keep the development slope strong,” per Allison, so expect the W11 to evolve throughout the 2020 campaign.

What it won't do, apparently, is change dramatically during testing as its predecessor did. Mercedes famously arrived at the second pre-season test a year ago with practically a B-spec iteration of the W10, which was a response to extra work needed to nail the front-wing rule changes that came in for 2019. But Allison insists that the stable regulations for this campaign means Mercedes “will be more conventional this year.”

“We will still have upgrades for [the season opener in] Melbourne that will come in the second week of testing, but the entire new-car approach of 2019 won't feature,” he adds.

If the W11's concept is all about seeing off the possibility of a development ceiling within the W10's, the design behind the new car's power unit is intended to fix one of Mercedes' real weaknesses from last year: cooling. Limited radiator space cost

“I find it funny seeing that. I've just known to always do my talking on the track”

Mercedes at times during 2019 – most notably in the Austrian Grand Prix – but by adding radiator area and increasing the engine's operating temperature, the team hopes this has been addressed. “[High Performance Powertrains] worked to raise the operating temperature of the engine, which eases the cooling burden on us because the hotter the fluid, the less radiator you need to cool it,” explains Allison.

During the W11's unveiling, Hamilton openly used the word “weakness”, but he wasn't talking about himself. Much has been made of the later chapters of Hamilton's career being about seeing off the challenge of emerging superstars Charles Leclerc and Max Verstappen – with the latter recently saying of Hamilton: “He is definitely one of the best, but he is not God.”

Hamilton's reply is: “I find it funny seeing that. I've just known to always do my talking on the track. Often I tend to see that as a sign of weakness.”

That is the response of a fired-up driver. If anybody feels the need to question Hamilton's motivation as he chases a record-equalling seventh world title, that should address it. This was a Mercedes-controlled event, and Hamilton opted to send a clear message.

Perhaps this was also a response to recent comments from Fernando Alonso about Hamilton supposedly having an early-season weakness no one has yet tested. If he comes out in Australia fighting as hard as his words suggest, then we will soon find out if that is indeed accurate.

Despite its F1 future – and that of Hamilton's – still not being secure, it appears Mercedes hasn't changed all that much for 2020. Given it has been the championship's benchmark for six years now, that makes sense. It seems the coming campaign is all about fixing any hints of weakness in an already mighty machine. 🏆

➔ P32 MERCEDES TECH

WHAT CAN BOTTAS DO IN 2020?

By almost every measure, Valtteri Bottas's 2019 season was his best in Formula 1 so far. He finished second in the standings, scored four wins – one more than his previous best, three from his first year with Mercedes in 2017 – and took five pole positions, which was the same as team-mate Lewis Hamilton. But he lost the one thing that ultimately matters – the title fight.

Bottas kept Hamilton honest during the first quarter of the season, with fine wins in Australia and Azerbaijan, but from Monaco onwards the gap

between the pair started to grow. Across the middle of the year, only Mercedes' cooling weakness in Austria and his tyres wilting after battling Charles Leclerc at Monza cost Hamilton points to Bottas. In the middle of that run, Germany was the biggest blot on Bottas's season, as he squandered the chance to capitalise on Hamilton's error in the wet with one of his own. Tyre management was also an issue, highlighted because it is one of Hamilton's underrated abilities.

Victories in Japan and the US meant Bottas did not display the dramatic

drop-off in form that really soured his 2018 campaign, but by then the 2019 title was out of reach. Bottas says his achievements from last year are a “good base to build on” for 2020.

“It was a really positive season,” he continues. “Lots of learning, lots of improvements and I could really feel the progress in many areas and working on my weaknesses together with the team. So, that's why it's been nice to build on that. Always in the winter it's nice to step back and really take in everything from the previous season and



process it and learn and improve. So, I'm looking forward to it [in 2020].”

Sensible words from a sensible driver but, for

all the joking about Bottas 3.0, he really does need to make another significant step if he is to overturn Hamilton's dominance.

MERCEDES W11

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

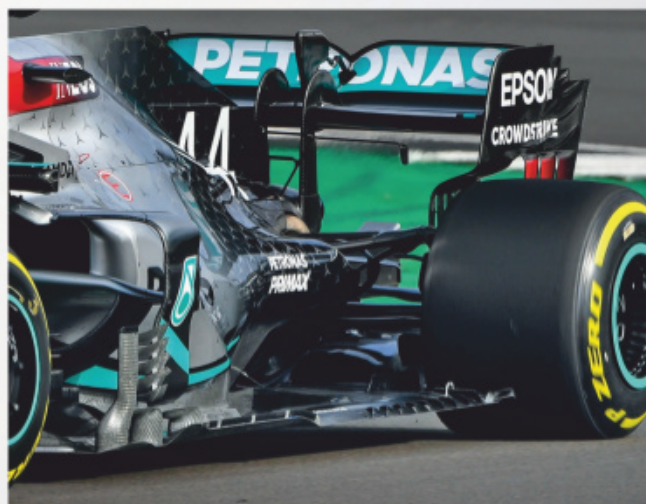
Top dog for the past six seasons, Mercedes has its sights on nothing more than keeping the status quo. But with unchanged rules and a close season expected, the team must continue its relentless approach to upgrades to stay ahead of the challenges from Ferrari and Red Bull

PHOTOGRAPHY MERCEDES

CONCEPT

For the most part, the W11 is a clear evolution of the W10. It should be remembered that Mercedes, having turned up in week one of testing last year with something that amounted to a beta-spec car, enacted an overhaul of the full aero package. Although technical chief James Allison has explained that the team won't repeat that, there will be an upgrade package in week two to help the team prepare for the season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

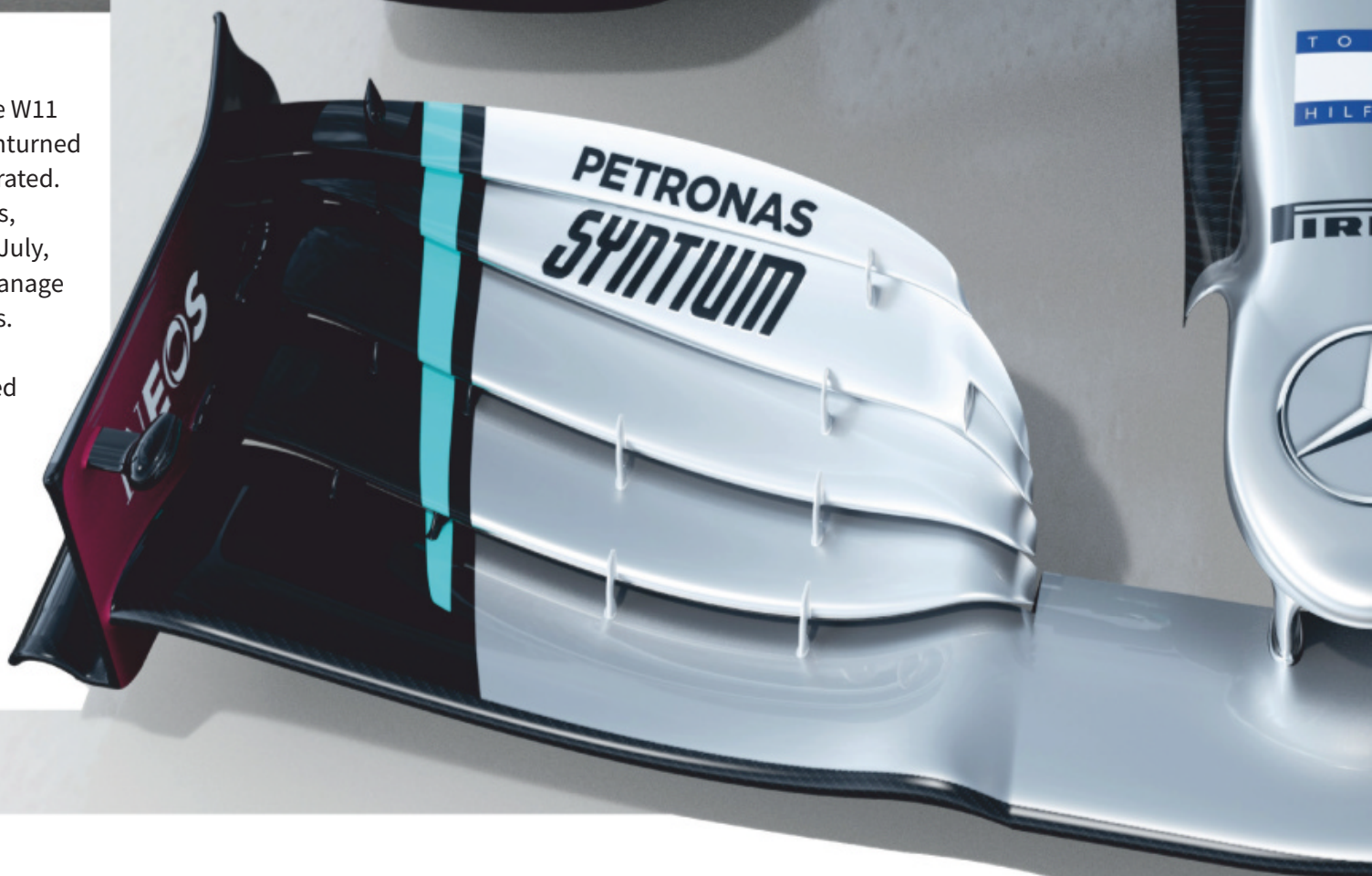
As Allison points out on page 28, the team also had to make a few architectural changes to the package to ensure that its development curve could continue.

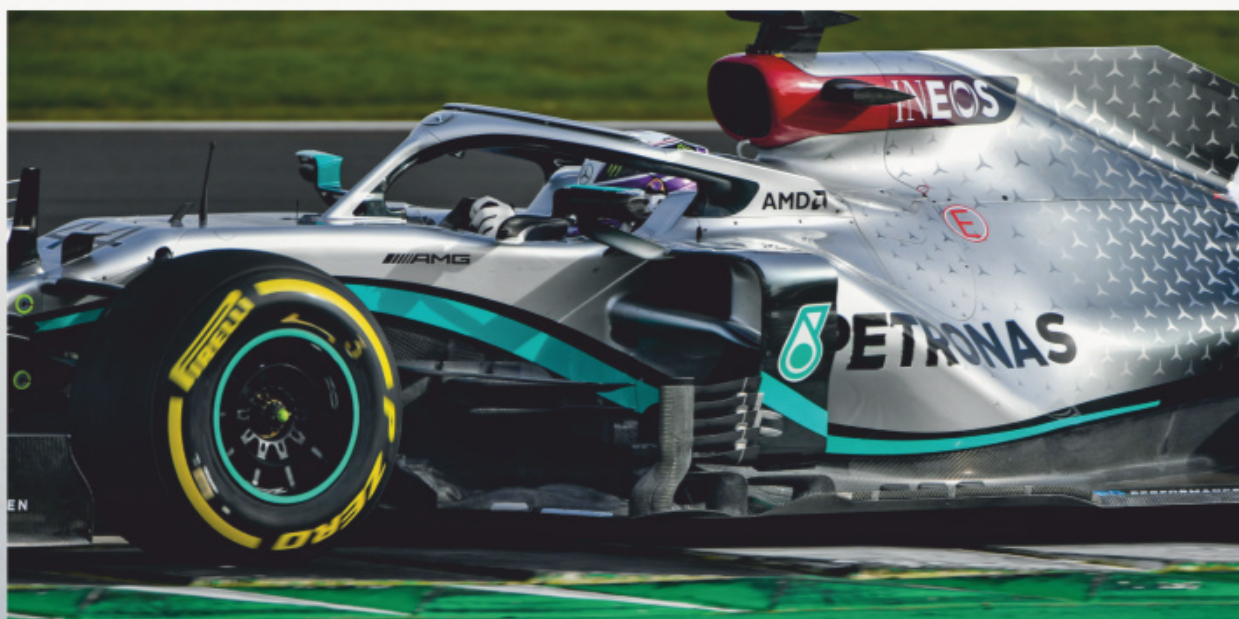


REAR END

At the rear, Mercedes has also shown the W11 with a single-element T-wing, with downturned tips to better place the tip vortices generated. The endplates are the same as last year's, introduced at the German Grand Prix in July, and feature little vortex generators to manage the flow coming off the endplate corners.

One thing that can't be seen from the renders is whether Mercedes has retained the rear-suspension duct that was spotted on the car last season. An area of consternation with other teams, it is believed that Ferrari queried the legality of the device – which offers more control over rear-tyre temperatures – with a view to developing its own version.





SIDEPODS AND TURNING VANES

The clearest difference over last season's model is at the sidepod inlets. Mercedes becomes the final team to transition to the letterbox inlets and has moved the side-impact structure lower down to accommodate the new design.

With that lowered, the inlet fits in above that and gives the

engineers a greater undercut to play with.

Around the sidepod, the turning vanes are rooted in those run towards the end of 2019, although the main part now fully loops around the inlet rather than being broken up into two parts. The shape of the sidepods and engine cover continue with last year's concept, where the airflow follows the bodylines and drops onto the floor, drifting into the Coke-bottle section at the rear. The rear end seems tighter for 2020 and so the overall airflow from sidepods to rear should be even tidier.

FRONT WING

The launch variant of the W11 features mostly late-season aero from the W10. The front wing was a particular area in which Mercedes focused a lot of its attention last season, and by the end of 2019 had gravitated from a design that had used the majority of the allowed bounding box to a design more rooted in the philosophy developed by Ferrari.

Although Mercedes' front wing was never as extreme, it still sacrificed a little downforce on the outboard section and relied more on loading up the inboard part. The small split is still in the penultimate front-wing element, owing to a shorter-span final flap, but it remains to be seen if Mercedes trials any evolutions of that layout

early on in testing. The nose from 2019 also remains for now, retaining the cape section.



Front wing retains small split in penultimate element and shorter final flap for now

F1
2020

RED BULL

The *other* driver in blue

*It's crucial that Red Bull has two competitive drivers in 2020.
Alex Albon knows the challenge he faces alongside Max Verstappen*

JONATHAN NOBLE

It's crazy to think that just 12 months ago Alex Albon had never even driven a Formula 1 car. Dropped by Red Bull's Junior programme in his early days, Albon was plucked from a contract he had to race with Nissan in Formula E when Red Bull came calling again, now convinced that the Thai-British talent had the ability to do the job for Toro Rosso in what would unexpectedly turn into a rookie F1 season.

The lateness of the decision meant there would be no chance to test Albon before committing to a contract. That meant a first outing in official pre-season testing – something that left the newcomer far from serene.

"I would say the most stressful time was before I drove the car," says Albon, as he sits down to reflect on the whirlwind year that saw him promoted to the senior Red Bull team for the final nine grands prix of 2019, before retaining that plum seat alongside Max Verstappen for 2020. "That was the big one where it felt like, OK, this is a big commitment in terms of I was supposed to be doing Formula E and now I had this opportunity to do F1. And it was that thing of I'd never driven the car and now I'm in Barcelona."

If the build-up had been bad, it was nothing compared to how he felt a few minutes after that first test got under way; a mechanical problem pitched him off the track at Turn 4 on his first lap.

"Don't remind me!" laughs Albon. "It was a wake-up call because that was when I came back from the garage and all you guys were there waiting. So I thought, 'Wow, this is F1.' What was weird about that was I did something just like that in FE. I had crashed, but again it wasn't my fault. I've had these weird experiences that have kind of made me quite relaxed. Even the whole situation of how I got into F1, all of these things have just been an addition."

Just as the FE crash helped him cope with that early Toro Rosso spin, so too the baptism of fire he had in F1 proved beneficial in helping him deal with the pressures of stepping up to Red Bull from the Belgian Grand Prix in September. "Of course I was anxious, but at the same time I was, 'I've felt this before,' and I know how I handled Toro Rosso," he admits. "I was confident in myself I could do a good job."

Albon took to Red Bull like a duck to water. While predecessor Pierre Gasly had struggled to get confident in the car, and had trouble handling the pressure, Albon instantly felt at home. A run of points finishes from the Belgian GP was exactly what Red Bull had ordered, but what hadn't been expected was the way that

Albon was so easily able to battle wheel to wheel with rivals, in contrast to Gasly over the first half of the season.

At Spa his last-lap pass on the grass of Sergio Perez was sensational. Then there was his aggressive overtake

of Sebastian Vettel after a restart at the Brazilian GP, and the subsequent battle with Lewis Hamilton.

"I feel like the battling stuff is what I can really thrive on," he says. "I think there are still areas to work on. But yeah, it was nice to be going side by side with Seb and fighting with Lewis. I can't lie, that's a very cool feeling to have."

He's able to get his elbows out, but Albon has still kept his feet on the ground. Intensely self-critical, he's never allowed himself to feel he's done enough. It's a mindset that has kept him pushing for more and has fired him up over this winter. "I'm definitely the sort of person who's always not happy and always trying to improve," adds the 23-year-old. "So even when things were going well, now I look back at it, it didn't feel like it was going that well at the time."

One area where he knows he must do better is qualifying – especially being able to extract peak performance from the tyres in Q3 runs. "It's definitely qualifying, but it's general pace," he admits. "Then it's being comfortable with all the tyre compounds

“It was nice to be going side by side with Seb and fighting with Lewis. I can't lie, that's a very cool feeling to have”

and all the track surfaces and all the circuits themselves. "Every time I finished a race weekend in 2019 it was always like, 'I wish I knew that before the start of the weekend.' And that's the kind of thing, this knowledge, I now have coming into this year."

Albon needs no reminding that he faces a supreme challenge in team-mate Verstappen. For some, the task of going up against the Dutchman has become something of an obsession. But Albon is determined not to lose focus.

"There's no secret that Max is an extremely fast driver," says Albon. "I feel like every time anyone's up against Max, the media are going to be there, aren't they? It's just having that self-awareness about it, and knowing that none of that really affects what you're doing. You've got to focus on yourself. It's only you who is in control of your performance. Looking around is important, and of course I look at Max in terms of his data, but in terms of my speed there are areas I know I need to work on."

"It's about setting goals, realistic goals – not wanting to be in the top three every race or putting these targets into your year. It's focusing on little things bit by bit and the results will come. It's almost thinking short term to get that long-term goal." ❧

ALBON'S 2019 AT RED BULL		
RACE	STARTED	FINISHED
Belgian GP	17th	5th
Italian GP	8th	6th
Singapore GP	6th	6th
Russian GP	20th	5th
Japanese GP	6th	4th
Mexican GP	5th	5th
United States GP	6th	5th
Brazilian GP	5th	14th
Abu Dhabi GP	5th	6th



RED BULL RB16

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

Red Bull ended 2019 strongly, and will feel that 2020 is its best chance yet of a title battle since Formula 1 began its turbo-hybrid era. The new RB16 certainly looks like a big step over last season's contender — and with a year with Honda power units in the team's pocket, all of the ingredients are there...

PHOTOGRAPHY RED BULL



FRONT END

Possibly one of the biggest visual changes over last year's RB15 is a thinner, more complex nose design. Taking a leaf from Mercedes' book, the team has tapered in the nose at the bulkhead to give a larger cape section. As a result, aerodynamicists have more flexibility in developing ways to generate downforce, reducing some of their reliance on the front wing to do so. This gives Red Bull the opportunity to trim back the outboard ends of its front wing to help set up the aero flow paths for the rest of the car.

There are a few further notable

changes. Either side of the main snorkel, there are additional nostrils that appear to guide airflow onto the rear section of the cape.

Red Bull used the tail end of 2019 to put some developments on the road, and now has a package that seems to have responded well to the inclusion of a Ferrari-inspired front wing. The tiny split in the middle-wing element has been removed from last year's design to let the top element extend all the way down, creating a slight change in how the tip vortices are formed.



SIDEPODS AND ENGINE COVER

The sidepods look even tighter than last year's, and Red Bull and Honda appear to have condensed the packaging demands of their internal components to an even more extreme level. The design has been rounded off to improve the way airflow passes over the top and onto the floor. To assist that effect even further, there are two tiny fins nestled between the halo attachment points and the headrest, which appear to be firing air down to the floor.

It looks as though the overall engine cover is largely in the same arrangement as last year, and this is mostly down to the restrictions of placing cooling components above the intake. Honda's powertrain seems to allow the sidepods to be packaged much more tightly, and some of the radiator and intercooler elements are instead stowed above the engine. That way, the lower half of the intake can be used to drive the compressor, and the upper half can be used to cool those components.



REAR WING

The rear wing shown at launch is not dissimilar to one of the specifications used last season, although Red Bull frequently liked to experiment with different chord lengths and positions on the DRS-activated flap. Although Red Bull has resisted the urge to break up its

endplate into multiple slots and strakes, it now features a cut in the leading edge to inhibit early separation. The leading edge of the mainplane is also raised, suggesting that the team has been able to keep the airflow attached over a greater camber – boosting the overall downforce.



Conventional wishbone replaces Red Bull's multilink front-suspension design



FRONT SUSPENSION

Red Bull appears to have eliminated the multilink-wishbone front-suspension design, opting for a conventional wishbone instead. This appears to be down to the team's greater reliance on the pivoting pushrod bracket to change the rideheight with steering lock. Further up, the ear-like deflectors remain on top of the chassis bulkhead, sandwiching a slightly redesigned S-duct outlet, with the smaller aperture that was first brought to the car for the Japanese Grand Prix last October.

F1
2020

McLAREN

The next stage of recovery

There's a real sense optimism for the coming season at McLaren, amid belief that the team has turned the corner after its positive season in 2019

LUKE SMITH



The transformation of McLaren over the past 12 months has been one of Formula 1's recent feel-good stories. A fallen giant once blindsided by delusions of grandeur, the team has now become humble and realistic, allowing its recovery to commence. The magnitude of the change was clearer than ever at the launch of the McLaren MCL35 car at its Woking base last week, one day shy of the same event the previous year.

When the 2019 car was unveiled, McLaren Racing CEO Zak Brown was joined on stage by Gil de Ferran, the team's sporting director. Neither was meant to be running the F1 team day to day, but was tasked with doing so in the absence of a team principal or technical director. New drivers Carlos Sainz and Lando Norris, while fresh-faced, were largely unproven. But all parties made clear this was the start of the process, not the end result.

This time around, Brown was flanked by his F1 team principal Andreas Seidl and technical director James Key. Ex-Porsche chief Seidl's influence in the team's charge to fourth in the constructors' championship – its best result in seven years – was widely hailed following his arrival in May. Key had linked up two months earlier after completing his Toro Rosso gardening leave, with the tighter, much-modified MCL35 chassis offering visible proof of his impact.

"It feels a lot better than this time last year," Brown said. "Now I feel like I've got my complete F1 team in place. We had a pretty good car last year that got stronger over the second part of the year and I put that down to everybody, but a lot of leadership from Andreas and James. I think, as the car got more competitive, it wasn't a coincidence, it was when they started to get stuck into things."

In designing the MCL35, Key worked hard to rectify the weaknesses of the 2019 car. "There were certain targets based on what we learned last year, where we found our weaknesses were that we really wanted to address," he explained. "We've been looking closely at those kinds of areas, and we have made some progress there. I think the medium-term target is to maintain our position and hopefully close the gap a bit and build on that."

Away from the car itself, Seidl wants to continue the organisational and structural changes he has instigated. "We have set our targets as well in terms of what we want to achieve in improvements on the team side, in terms of organisation,



(From l) Seidl, Norris, Brown and Sainz are looking forward to 2020



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motorsport
 IMAGES

infrastructure, the way we work together, and so on,” he said. “Pitstops were a big topic as well for us last year, so I’m quite happy with the progress we made there so far in the winter.” No stone is being left unturned in the recovery process.

The drivers also cut very different figures compared to last year. Now an F1 podium finisher after his breakthrough in Brazil, the more confident Sainz has embraced the role of team leader at McLaren. His charge to sixth place in the drivers’ standings last year was a mighty result, trailing only the five race winners as he became the midfield king.

Sainz conceded it would be hard to better last year’s results given the gulf to the top three teams, but spoke with real excitement for 2020: “I like what I’ve seen. I like the car, how tight it looks, and hopefully it’s faster than last year and a bit closer to the top teams.

“I don’t know what I’m going to fight for. If there’s a podium opportunity, I’m going to try and take it. If there’s an opportunity to finish higher than seventh in the championship, I’m going to try. But to improve on what we did last year in terms of only positions is not going to be easy.”

Sainz cited the stability of a two-year contract – a rarity while he was under the Red Bull umbrella – as a big factor in his success in 2019. “It just meant I could focus on myself, on how to be a better racing driver, on how to help my team be a better team for next year,” he said. Sainz is out of contract at the end of 2020 and, while he said there is “no rush” to agree a new McLaren deal, he admitted there were “some things going on in the background”. All the signs are that Sainz is at McLaren for the long haul.

The same impression is given by team-mate Norris, whose rookie

“I like the car. Hopefully it’s faster than last year and a bit closer to the top teams”

campaign more than justified McLaren’s decision to promote him into a race seat after just one year in Formula 2.

Norris accrued 49 points to Sainz’s 96 last year, but did not dwell on the gap. “I think once you take into account how everything could have and should have gone, it’s not as bad as it looks,” Norris said. “This is a new season, we’ve got different ambitions and new things to work on. But at the end, the same goals. I don’t think it’ll affect how we work or how we go about things as a team.”

The team mentality and spirit is something McLaren has worked hard to foster over the past 12 months, with no greater symbol of that than how over 90 team members crammed onto the Interlagos podium to celebrate Sainz’s promotion to third position. They are all on this journey together.

While it will take more than momentum to bridge the gap to the top three teams, McLaren will enter 2020 knowing a convincing, comfortable run to fourth is the minimum expectation. Execute that, and the possibility of bringing greater glories back to Woking in the future will only grow stronger. *W*

➔ **P40 MCLAREN TECH**

McLAREN MCL35

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

McLaren was by far the most improved team of 2019, ascending from struggling also-ran to best of the rest. Continuing with its youthful pairing of Carlos Sainz Jr and Lando Norris, the Woking team aims to slash the gap between it and the Big Three – if that's possible

PHOTOGRAPHY **McLAREN**



FRONT END

McLaren ran a tapered nose as far back as an upgrade at the 2018 Spanish Grand Prix. It has now gravitated even further towards the Mercedes design, and it's even thinner than before. The nose has been tightened up, with a far less cluttered arrangement around the crash structure. In the previous two years, this was home to a central snorkel and two surrounding nostrils, but McLaren has elected to discard these. Instead, the reduced nose size opens up more of the frontal bounding box to a

larger cape section.

The front wing seems to be distinctly similar to, if not the same as, last year's design – and perhaps there's more to come from McLaren in that area. The hint is that the team will retain the same inboard-loaded philosophy that it successfully transitioned to last year, and there will certainly be further development in this area.

FRONT SUSPENSION

McLaren has pulled a design out of its back catalogue and seemingly included it in the MCL35 package for 2020. The top wishbone is mounted to an extended 'horn' attached to the upright, which was first explored last August in practice at Spa.

Suspension wishbones today are developed for aerodynamic purposes along with their usual

kinematic obligations and have become increasingly complex. Raising them means that McLaren's vehicle dynamicists can work with the right load paths while simultaneously developing an aero-friendly solution.





REAR

There's not a great deal of difference at the rear wing, with the endplates in a similar form to last year's final designs. The car has been launched without a distinct Gurney flap or any kind of T-wing geometry, but these are all flexible changes that can be added from round to round. It's also hard to draw conclusions about the diffuser geometry at this stage, given that it's almost certainly last season's design, but the number of serrations within certainly served to illustrate how aggressively the aerodynamicists are working the airflow under the car.

BARGEBOARDS

The bargeboard geometry is another area distinctly similar to last year's package. Opting to show 2019 parts in the front wing and bargeboard areas suggests that McLaren is holding a little something back from its launch package. Those are expected to be two of the biggest areas for development in 2020 before the regulations completely change, and so it's no surprise to see teams reluctant to show their hands at this stage. Once the cars all hit the circuit in testing, we'll have much more of an idea how the teams have been able to make their packages more sophisticated.

SIDEPODS AND ENGINE COVER

Although McLaren placed some of its cooling components below the engine cover last year, it appears as though a few more parts have been pulled out of the sidepod area and placed above the intake in the MCL35. As a result the sidepods are even tighter than last year's spec while the engine cover is just a little larger. One visually striking element is the air intake, which has lost its oval shape and instead looks somewhat more freeform, with an additional inlet below the top three to give each aperture a different direction in which to draw air. Some of those divisions will be for cooling, while others will be used for the engine/compressor intake.



Thinner nose loses snorkel and surrounding nostrils; cape section is larger



ALPHATAURI AT01

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

A new year, a new livery and a new name. Toro Rosso morphs into AlphaTauri for 2020, but it's still the same team under the skin. After grabbing two podiums in 2019 to clinch its joint-highest placing of sixth in the constructors' standings, AlphaTauri will hope to reach for the stars this time

PHOTOGRAPHY RED BULL



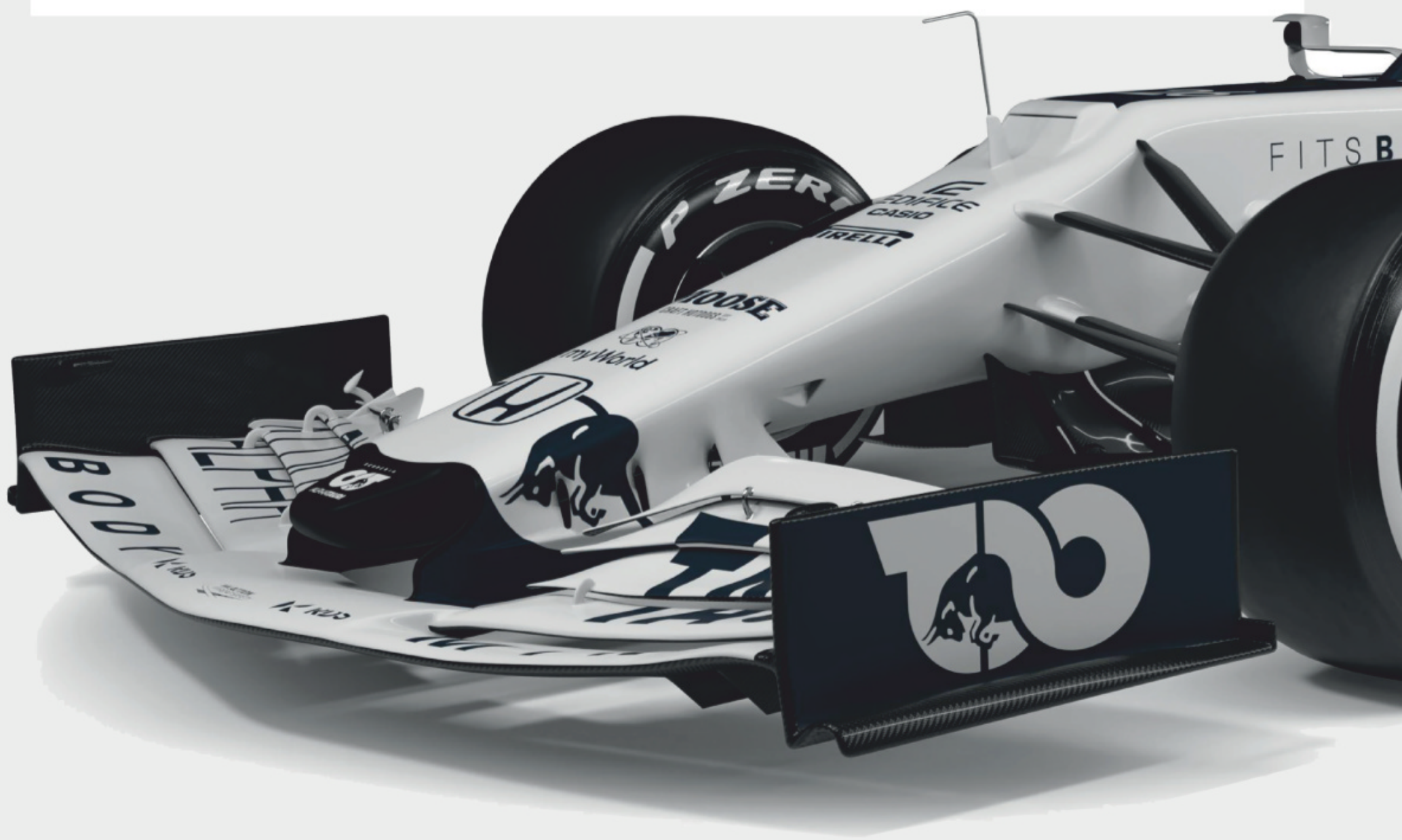
CONCEPT

The AlphaTauri AT01 is not wildly different to the STR14. The car, perhaps, has been slightly Red Bullified, but that's a legacy of its arrangement to use components designed for the lead team. Using old-spec designs – albeit built as new – AlphaTauri has a tried-and-tested frontrunning set of components that it doesn't have to

expend resources developing itself. That extends from the gearbox and engine intake systems to the brakes and suspension – including the multilink front suspension from last season.

Since Jody Egginton took over as technical director, Toro Rosso/AlphaTauri has pushed that B-team approach to almost Haas levels, allowing

the team to boost its reliability by putting the freed-up resources into other areas of the team. It also opens up greater design crossover between AlphaTauri and Red Bull; and while the budget is smaller and the team can't develop designs to the same level of sophistication, it can still pick the fruits of Red Bull's labour.



BARGEBOARDS

The turning vanes around the sidepod are no doubt influenced by those seen at Ferrari, where the horizontal element turns upwards – and AlphaTauri has used this to connect it to the ‘boomerang’, which attaches to the front face of the bargeboards.

Those bargeboards look somewhat similar to last year’s design, and are quite compact and nestle neatly within the bounding box – while other teams take more liberties to smartly place components outside of the restrictions. Like last year, the main bargeboard components are made up of three panels broken up, but featuring all of the trimmings to get the aero working harder.

There’s also a selection of small vortex generators nestled on the top of the sidepods, sat next to the repositioned mirrors – featuring, like many, the shroud around the top to trim some of the drag from the mirror assembly.

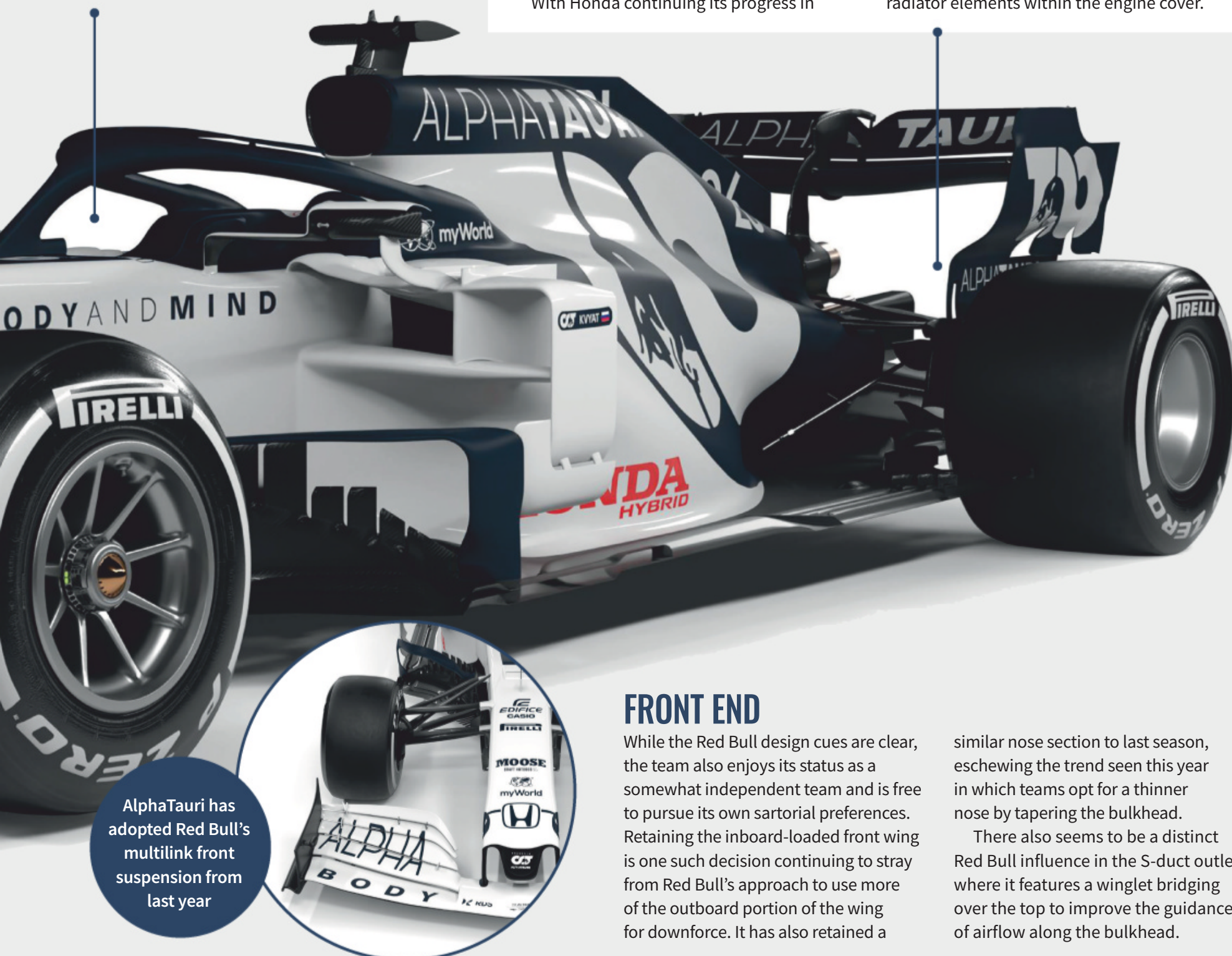


BODYWORK

Further Red Bull design cues are evident in the new air intake, which strays from the style used last season where the opening was divided into three distinct inlets, and moves towards the Red Bull horizontal split. This channels airflow into both the compressor intake system and the cooling positioned above the intake.

With Honda continuing its progress in

the powertrain stakes, AlphaTauri continues to showcase some incredibly slender bodywork, giving the airflow a clear path towards the Coke-bottle section and the diffuser. The ease of packaging the Honda power unit has been helped by sharing a consistent set of components with Red Bull, and the two teams have once again packaged numerous radiator elements within the engine cover.



AlphaTauri has adopted Red Bull’s multilink front suspension from last year

FRONT END

While the Red Bull design cues are clear, the team also enjoys its status as a somewhat independent team and is free to pursue its own sartorial preferences. Retaining the inboard-loaded front wing is one such decision continuing to stray from Red Bull’s approach to use more of the outboard portion of the wing for downforce. It has also retained a

similar nose section to last season, eschewing the trend seen this year in which teams opt for a thinner nose by tapering the bulkhead.

There also seems to be a distinct Red Bull influence in the S-duct outlet, where it features a winglet bridging over the top to improve the guidance of airflow along the bulkhead.

ALFA ROMEO C39

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

Alfa Romeo gave a surprise revealing of its new C39 on Valentine's Day, and the team will hope the car will be 2020's surprise package. Although Alfa's performances tailed off at the end of 2019, driver and management continuity should help the team continue to mix it in the midfield – but can it rise any higher?

PHOTOGRAPHY **MOTORSPORT IMAGES/BASILE**

FRONT END

There's a tiny detail that earns a few brownie points: Alfa Romeo has shaped the front snorkel to match the grille design typically seen on its road-going vehicles. Ultimately, it probably has no real aerodynamic effect, but it's quite a cool little feature.

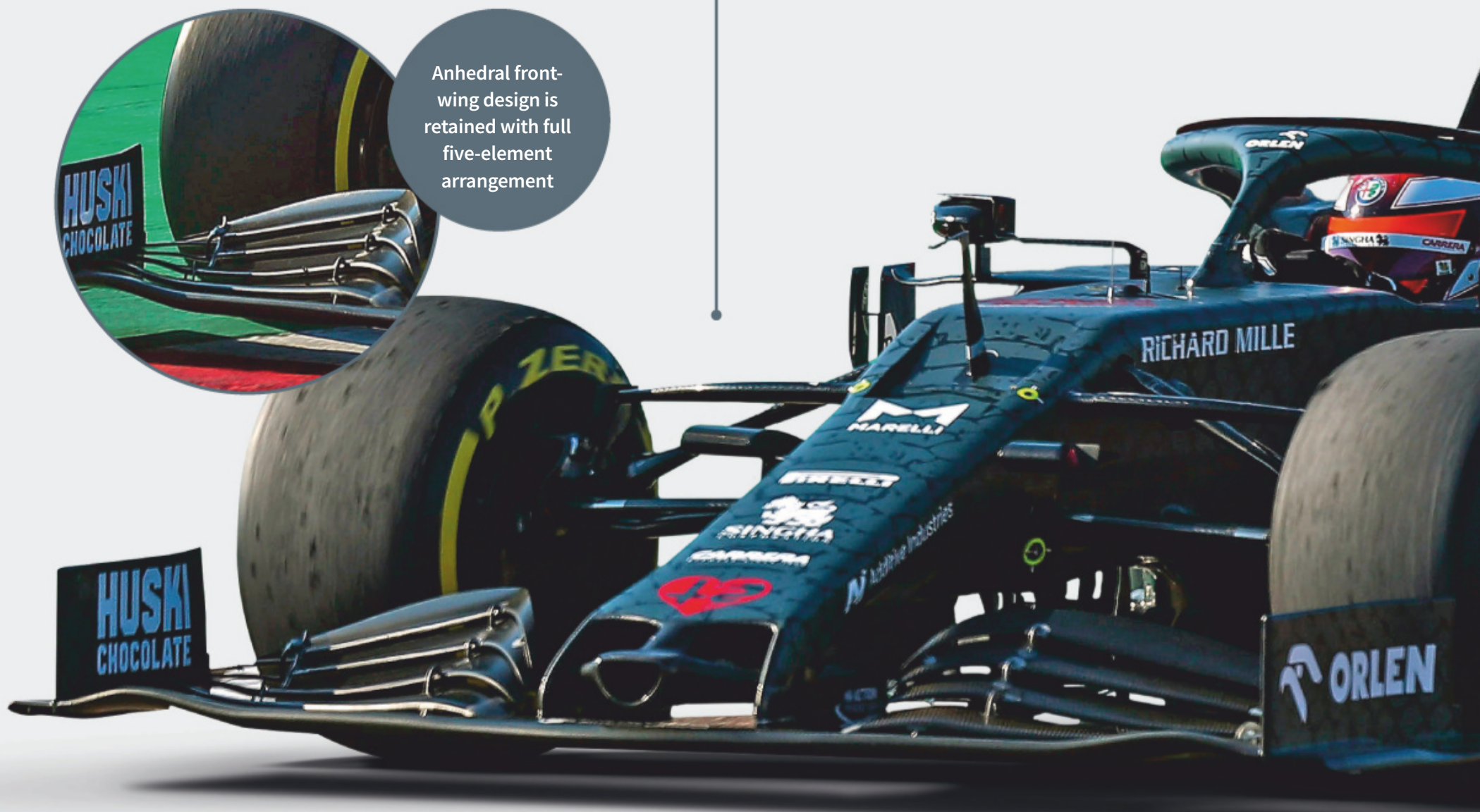
The nose nostrils are retained, and the resulting pathway on to a small cape – something Alfa added midway through last year – should add to the overall front-end downforce. The team has also stuck to its guns with the anhedral front-wing design, although the car was shaken down with a

full five-element arrangement, similar to the concept used at the end of last season.

For most of 2019, the car ran with the top two flaps fused together, but Alfa opted for a more conventional arrangement to its unconventional concept. The footplate developed partway through last year also remains, with the central seam down the middle to induce a further vortex, working the front wing even harder. While the S-duct stays on top of the chassis bulkhead, the quartet of fins seen there on last year's C38 have not carried over.



Anhedral front-wing design is retained with full five-element arrangement



BARGEBOARDS

There have been quite a few changes in this area as Alfa aims to improve the strength of its package. Last year, a smaller bargeboard preceded the main panel, with the 'boomerang' almost mounted straight to the car's flanks, but the C39 has a marginally more conventional arrangement – if there's such a thing as a conventional bargeboard package these days. The pre-bargeboard is broken up into a handful of different elements, while the main panel and upper serrations draw cues from the Mercedes bargeboard design.

The team retains its boomerang wings for 2020, and these are mounted to a new set of turning vanes, which adds horizontally mounted elements into the mix to provide further dimensions to the way the airflow shed from the tyres is cleaned up. The main vane is split into two, and like last year is broken away from the horizontal vane over the top of the inlet.

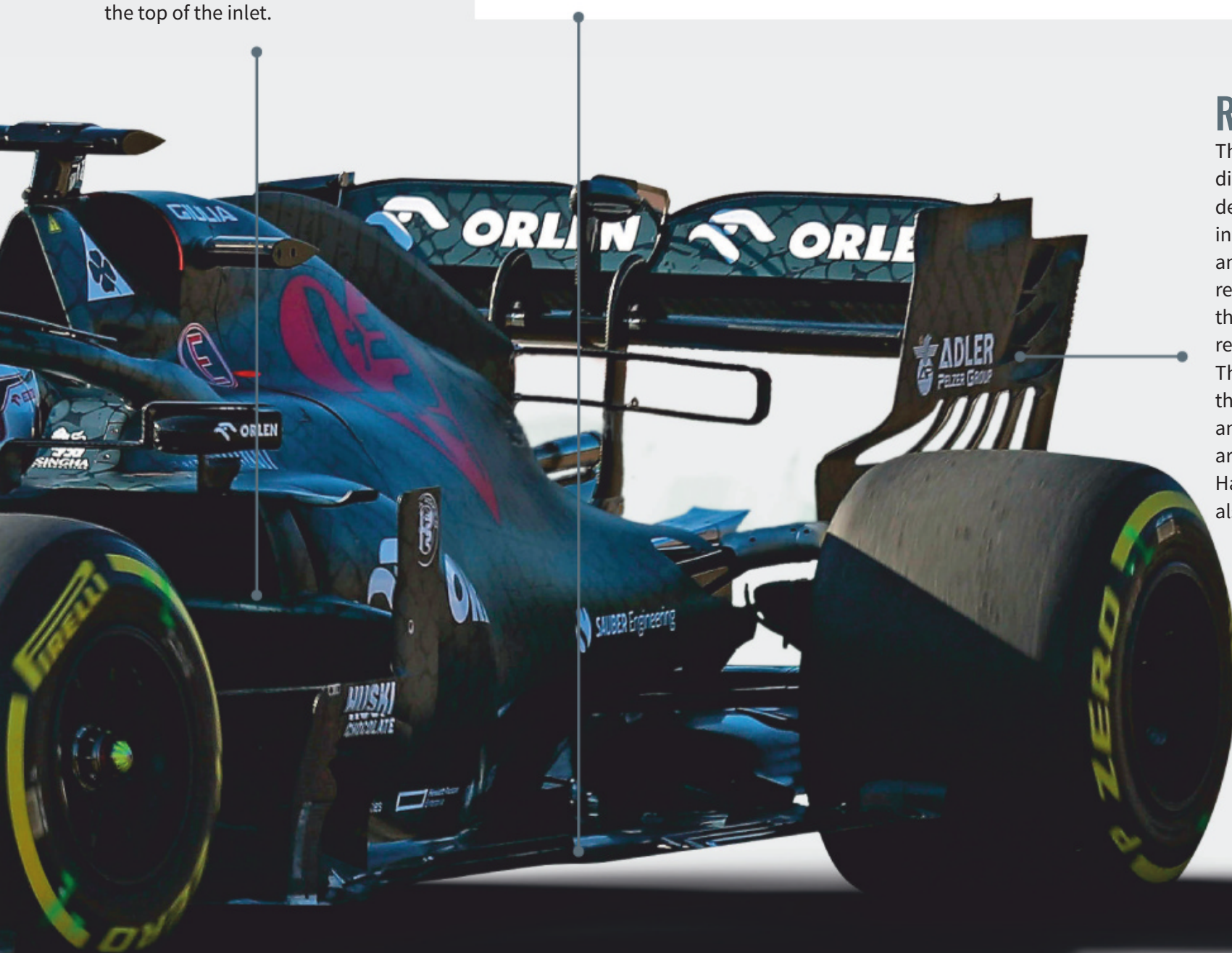


BODYWORK AND FLOOR

At the floor, the numerous fins seen last year on the rear corners are kept in the C39's package to drive airflow around the rear tyres. Whether the team adds further complexities in this area remains to be seen; it has experimented with floor additions previously, and they're becoming increasingly common in F1.

Alfa has once again created a tight sidepod

design and, unlike its other Ferrari-powered counterparts, the team likes to package some of its cooling components inside the engine cover. It's not quite as bulbous as last year's, and Alfa has been able to create a slightly larger fin at the back. The split intake design has been abandoned, the team opting now for a triangular central inlet while retaining the rounder inlet further back.



REAR WING

The rear wing is not dissimilar to last year's design, retaining the inward-dangling strakes and the small flicks at the rear face to control how the vortices coming off the rear wing are produced. The T-wing used towards the end of 2019 remains, and the exhaust arrangement seen on the Haas and Ferrari cars is also included on the Alfa.

WILLIAMS FW43

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

After 2019 proved to be Williams's annus horribilis, the team has refocused and reworked its existing concept to try and stop the rot. With a refreshed driver line-up and an even fresher livery, Williams enters 2020 looking in much better shape than last season

PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAMS

SUSPENSION AND BARGEBOARDS

The front-suspension components have received some attention, and last year's rather ungainly top wishbone mounting to the upright has been tightened up significantly. Williams continues to make use of the pushrod bracket to steady the rideheight under cornering.

Although the bargeboards and turning vanes are largely similar to last year's car's, there are some interesting additional details. On top of the 'boomerang', there are six flow conditioners that fire air at the sidepod undercut, aiming to improve the flow to the rear of the car.

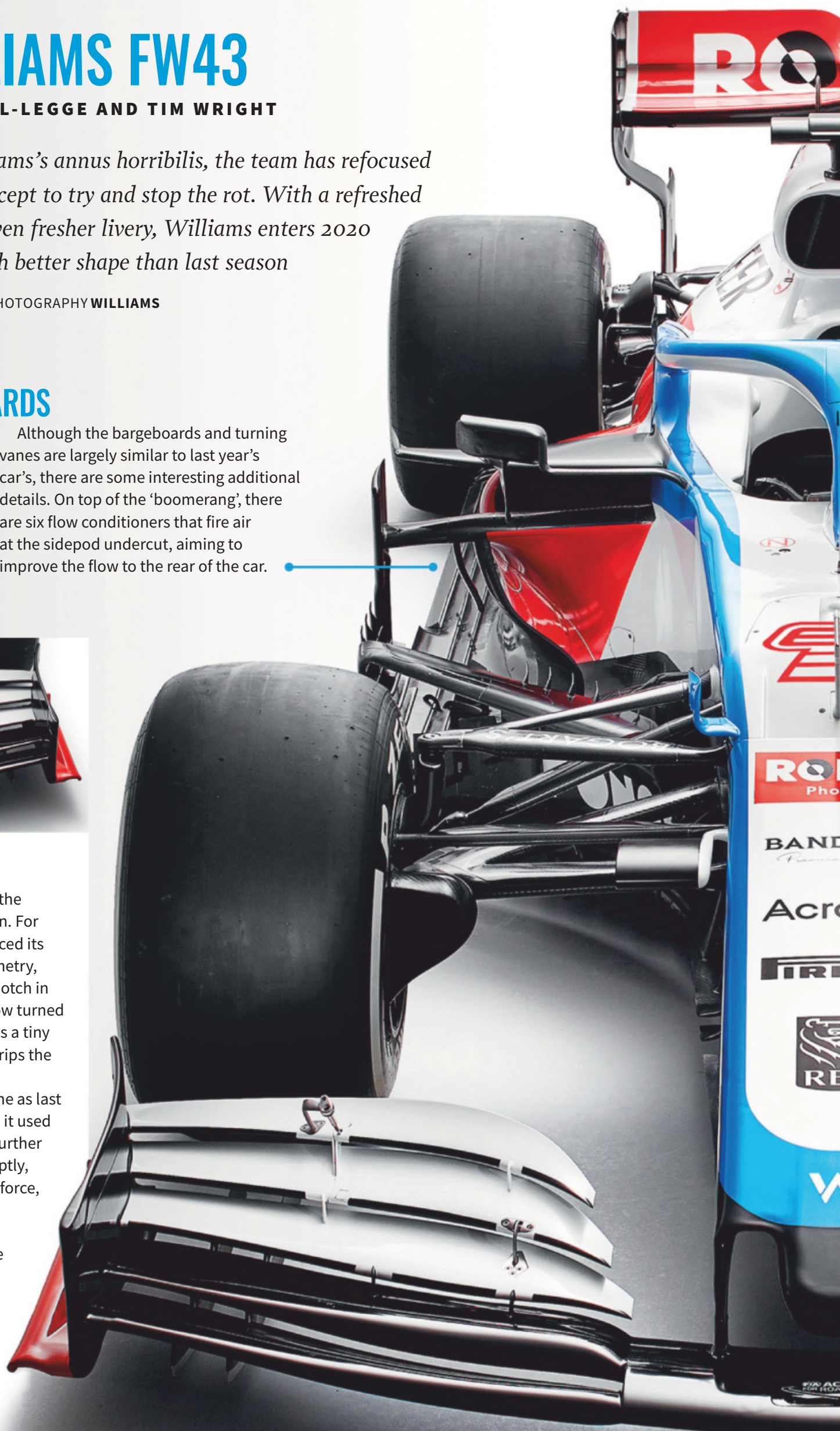


FRONT END

The FW43's front wing is largely the same as the design with which Williams ended last season. For those final flyaway rounds, the team introduced its own version of an inboard-loaded wing geometry, mounting the outboard sections below the notch in the endplate to improve the amount of airflow turned around the front of the car. That also includes a tiny little flick at the end of the footplate, which trips the air upwards and outwards.

Although the nose remains largely the same as last year, Williams has extended the cape section it used at the end of the season. The turning vanes further back also seem to integrate with it more adeptly, which should not only boost front-end downforce, but also help the bargeboards by keeping energised airflow within a certain zone.

Further details at the front end include the redesigned camera-pod mountings, with the addition of the small horns at the front of the chassis bulkhead, which make use of a small box in the regulations intended for the chassis-to-nose transition. These horns are noticeably cambered to turn airflow outwards.





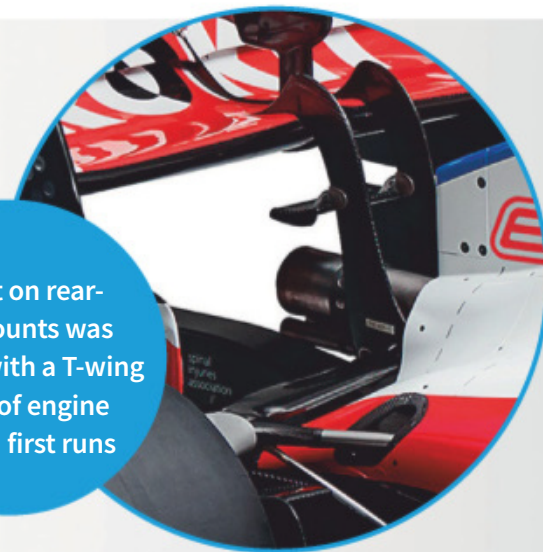
BODYWORK

The sidepods, particularly at the leading edge, have been tightened up to give the aerodynamicists more area to play with down the flanks. With a distinct channel over the top, airflow is sent to the floor and energises the air passing through the Coke-bottle section to improve the diffuser performance.

With a much larger shark fin on the engine cover, it suggests that Williams has been able to address its packaging for the benefit of improving its aero. Although the midriff does look more bulbous than

that of some of its counterparts, the car still seems a lot tighter than last season's. Looking at the serrations and cuts in the floor, there also appear to be a number of extra slots to help drive airflow out and protect the diffuser.

"There has been a healthy development rate in the windtunnel," said design director Doug McKiernan, "and we have found reasonable improvements in the cooling efficiency. The team has addressed the mechanical issues that affected it in 2019 – these include the brakes and the overall weight of the car. We have made some good progress across these areas and will continue to focus on them during the season."



Winglet on rear-wing mounts was replaced with a T-wing at base of engine cover on first runs

REAR WING

Although the launch renders showed the FW43 with a small winglet between the rear-wing mounts, George Russell turned in his first laps with a squared-off T-wing attached to the base of the engine cover. The rear wing itself doesn't look distinctly different to last year's, although the endplates feature a Red Bull-style single strake rather than the trio used by Williams last season. That said, there are plenty of additional cuts at the bottom of the endplate to control the airflow at the rear of the car more readily.

RACE CENTRE

RALLY SWEDEN • FORMULA E MEXICO CITY • WORLD OF SPORT

EVANS PROVES HE CAN BEAT THE BEST

Toyota has lost Ott Tanak, and now has Sebastien Ogier on its books. But it was the modest Welshman who dominated a truncated Rally Sweden

PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN



osing isn't all bad if you're Elfyn Evans. Having let his shot at Monte Carlo Rally glory "slip away" on the final morning last month, it was a "more determined" Welshman who arrived in Sweden for an event that was truncated by the unseasonable weather, and starved of a meaningful battle for victory once Evans got into his dominant stride.

The sprint-style format (there were a mere 92.30 competitive miles compared to the planned 186.93), allied with a performance that his Toyota team boss, three-time Sweden Rally winner Tommi Makinen, admitted had left him stunned, meant Evans pretty much had the rally won after he edged world champion Ott Tanak by 1.1 seconds on the first stage. Granted, Evans had another eight stages to go and was 0.9s slower than his Estonian rival on the very next run. But that defeat didn't cost him the overall lead and he was in front heading back into Sweden from Norway – where the rally ventured for two stages on Friday and Saturday.

Despite losing out on the Torsby Sprint stage win to Tanak by 0.2s, Evans completed day one 8.5s in front of the Hyundai driver. "Obviously, the feeling with the car has been really good and you can't complain with a day like that," Evans said on Friday afternoon. "Overall it's good but obviously we have to do it again tomorrow, and who knows what the conditions will be like? We have to adapt to whatever gets put in front of us."

In front of Evans and co-driver Scott Martin on leg two was a repeat of the four stages that had been run on Friday, only this time they'd go from third on the road to ninth in their Yaris WRC under the reverse-seeding rule. With the organisers delaying the reruns of Hof-Finnskog, Finnskogen and Nyckelvattnet by 24 hours due to serious concerns that they might not withstand another pounding – and removing everything else from the itinerary apart from a return to the Torsby Sprint – a higher road position might have been advantageous.

But it seemed to matter little. Although Evans reported mixed grip on Hof-Finnskog, he was in the ascendant from the off. He beat Tanak by 3.2s on the 13.21-miler, then made it a Norwegian double, this time with an effort in Finnskogen that was 3.6s quicker than the world champion could manage. The Briton's smooth and controlled style was exemplary and it reflected in his growing margin out front. By the time the rally had arrived back over the border into Sweden for Saturday's third stage, Evans was leading by 15.3s.

To underline his supremacy, Evans was quickest on the return to Nyckelvattnet, one of only three full-length stages in Sweden to remain on the shortened schedule, going 1.0s faster than his 19-year-old team-mate Kalle Rovanpera. But it was in Nyckelvattnet >>



where the only real threat to Evans's dominance occurred, thanks to a half-spin on a left-hander. "I was just caught out near the end," he said. "The sumpguard just touched and it threw the car into an understeer at the wrong place."

Evans was quick to brush off the moment which, on reflection, only added around one second to his total time. It meant his lead stood at 16.9s with just the repeat of the 1.7-mile Torsby Sprint to go ahead of the Saturday halt. With no need to take any risks through the all-gravel spectator-friendly stage, Evans was fourth fastest, yet he still managed to grow his advantage to 17.2s with just one Sunday stage remaining.

"I've been happy with the balance and the confidence the car is giving me," Evans said after Saturday's running. "In changeable conditions like we've had here, that's really worth a lot. The first two stages this morning were really good. The third one was quite tricky, a bit softer with more loose ice and snow, and the last stage was quite rough, but we got through it."

With limited ice on the ground, organisers announced on Saturday morning that the first run of Likenas would be cancelled to ensure its live-on-TV, points-paying Powerstage repeat would go ahead later in the day. But even the version of Likenas that did survive the cull was a shadow of its normal wintry self, thanks to rising temperatures and rain creating a muddy and slushy finale. So, step forward 31-year-old Evans, who would become the first British winner in Sweden, provided he could hold it together through the deciding 13.16 miles.

Ignoring the temptation to push for Powerstage bonus points, Evans's only focus was Tanak. And although Tanak was quicker, it was by no means enough to affect the overall ranking. "I was half of the



mindset to find a good rhythm and then think about some [Powerstage] points, but I gave that up straight away," said Evans, who was sixth quickest. "To take points would mean taking some risk. There was a section of soft stuff near the beginning – this was quite tricky for the tyres and the puncture risk was quite big. I felt like I should just drive like I needed to do to get the win."

And that's just what he and Scott Martin

did, coming home 12.7s in front of Tanak and Martin Jarveoja to top the title standings on the same points as Monte winners Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul. Evans's second win at World Rally Championship level was Martin's first, and came in their 13th start together, two events into their Toyota tenure.

As well as thanking his new-for-2020 employer, Evans was quick to praise his co-driver, with whom he joined forces last season: "Scott has been very good since he's been alongside me and I'm very happy to finally be with him for his first win too."

Evans may have arrived in Sweden still kicking himself for his Monte fail – he was third, but such are his high standards following Toyota's decision to pick him for this season – but he left on top of the world.

Tanak, meanwhile, dismissed a suggestion that his capture of second place served as a confidence boost following his massive Monte Carlo crash, but the points – and time spent in his Hyundai following his winter switch from Toyota – could yet prove significant. He was the only driver to pose a serious threat to Evans, and heads to Mexico well-placed to score more points, thanks to what will be a favourable road position of sixth for the loose-gravel stages.

"I'm happy to finally finish a rally this year," Tanak said. "After Monte, it's been nice to come back in the car. It's been really limited seat time. It was quite a rush at the start of the year. I'm sure this week

"EVANS MAY HAVE ARRIVED KICKING HIMSELF FOR HIS MONTE FAIL BUT HE LEFT ON TOP OF THE WORLD"



Martin (l) and Evans
enjoy the co-driver's
first WRC win



definitely gave us some more. At least we have some understanding of what's happening and now things are a lot more interesting."

The fight for third was the ultimate generation clash between six-time world champion Sebastien Ogier and his teenage Toyota understudy Rovannerpa. Making his second WRC start in a World Rally Car, Rovannerpa was exceptional from the outset. He was 0.9s faster than Ogier on the first stage and quicker by 2s on the next, despite a trip through a ditch. While Ogier's higher running order wasn't ideal – although snow was very much in short supply, there had been a light powdering in some sections of the Norwegian stages on Thursday night – Rovannerpa's pace was remarkable and confirmation of a coming-of-age. That was even more in evidence on the first visit to Nyckelvattnet, when the young Finn outpaced his French team leader by 5.6s and moved ahead of Tanak into second overall, 7.9s shy of Evans.

But, having mastered the mixed grip and swathes of gravel throughout the day, Rovannerpa undid all his good work when he stalled in the Torsby Sprint's first left-hander. From being in relative touching distance of Evans, Rovannerpa slipped back to third, 14.3s behind the rally leader.

"It was the second time I stalled today, but on this one I lost a lot of time," said Rovannerpa, whose father Harri claimed his one and only WRC victory in Sweden »

LATVALA MAKES ALL-TOO-BRIEF COMEBACK



While Kalle Rovannerpa shone, another Finn was gone – before the opening leg was done. After losing his factory seat with Toyota for 2020, Jari-Matti Latvala couldn't imagine life without a World Rally Car drive. Rather than sit the year out while he waited for an opportunity, the 34-year-old found the backing to drive a privateer Toyota Yaris WRC on an event he's won four times in the past, including in 2008 when he became the championship's youngest winner, aged 22.

Although Latvala insisted this wasn't a win-or-bust outing, he certainly hoped for a lot more alongside new co-driver Juho Hanninen, who'd switched seats for the occasion. He was ninth fastest on Friday's first stage – his first competitive outing in a World Rally Car since Rally Spain last October – but things weren't right.

"I was too aggressive at the beginning, using too much tyres, and I was struggling at the end of the stage," he explained. "Then I was going to Finnskog and Juho said to me, 'Just be more straight, it's better for the tyres'. But after seven kilometres, suddenly the engine died, it came back but did it again. Then in a long right-hand corner, when I was on full acceleration, the engine stopped and I spun because I lost drive. I tried to reboot after the stage, did all the work the engineer said, but after 500 metres

"ALTHOUGH LATVALA INSISTED THIS WASN'T A WIN-OR-BUST OUTING, HE CERTAINLY HOPED FOR A LOT MORE"

[of the next stage] it was stalling and restarting, stalling and restarting. There was nothing more we could do."

Latvala had the option of restarting on Saturday, but chose to save his funds for an extra event, with Rally Italy in June now the target.

"The only opportunity was to go out there and do stage times, but those stage times don't take me anywhere," he said. "I needed a result to go somewhere. There is no point to go out there if I can save the budget for another rally."

It was a frustrating early end for Latvala, but at least Toyota main man Akio Toyoda accepted that the level of service provided to his former factory pilot hadn't been good enough.

"We will prepare the Yaris WRC perfectly for them to fight," he pledged.

back in 2001. “It was a really stupid mistake and I need to learn these situations with the car, but I don’t have so much experience yet. Being third is a good position, but we could be second also, so it’s not so good.”

It took Rovanger until Saturday’s third stage to find his early Friday form again – he was 1s slower than fastest driver Evans to move back ahead of Ogier into third by 1.3s. Although Rovanger was error-free in the second Torsby Sprint stage, he was slower than Ogier and 0.5s behind him in the overall classification with just Lienen left.

“I was a bit too hard on the tyres and not managing them well, so we were losing time at the end of the stages as we were losing the studs,” Rovanger said of his early Saturday struggles. “We made some small set-up changes so it was not understeering and not loading the front tyres so much. The third stage went well. But the last stage was in a really rough condition and this was new for me.”

While Evans was winning the rally, Rovanger was busy winning the Powerstage and more besides. He was a whole 3.7s quicker than Neuville and, crucially, 3.9s faster than Ogier for his first WRC podium after “the best stage I have done”.

“I felt I was quite clean on the gravel section so then I pushed on the snow – it paid off,” said Rovanger, the WRC’s youngest podium finisher. “It’s a really nice feeling [beating Ogier]. I didn’t expect to feel so good in the car. Talking to Jonne [Halttunen, co-driver], he said it was maybe not enough. But it was and I was happy.”

Having spoken pre-event of his plans to convince Ogier to delay his retirement and stay with Toyota for a second season, team boss Mäkinen may not need to bother based on what Evans and Rovanger produced and what they can go on to deliver.

“We have a new crew in Elfyn and Scott who have the potential to win the title, and we have Kalle and Jonne following behind,” said Mäkinen, who is overseeing an all-new driver line-up in 2020 following the exit of Tanak, Jari-Matti Latvala and Kris Meeke. “We cannot be happier – we give them maximum support to continue. There are many good ideas to support them and



“MAKING HIS SECOND WRC START IN A WORLD RALLY CAR, ROVANGER WAS EXCEPTIONAL FROM THE OUTSET”

let them do even better.”

Ogier may be embarking on what is set to be his final WRC season, but he’s firmly in the title mix, five points behind Evans and Neuville and set to start behind them both in Mexico, where he’s won five times. As for his Toyota future, he appears untroubled.

“It’s always better to have these strong guys in your team rather than in the

opposition,” he said. “Toyota has a very strong line-up. For us we focus on the next rally, to fight for the win.”

Esapekka Lappi was fifth on his second start for M-Sport Ford, admitting afterwards that the pace isn’t there right now to do any better, although set-up changes for Saturday helped him to keep Neuville behind.

Neuville’s challenge for back-to-back 2020 wins quickly unravelled. Opening the road on Friday left the Belgian 23.6s off the lead down in sixth, where he remained to the finish. Second fastest time on Lienen means he has the same points as Evans, however.

Called up as Sebastien Loeb’s replacement at Hyundai, Craig Breen was under orders to provide a supporting role to Neuville and Tanak, which he did with typical professionalism. Pushing harder would have satisfied his desire to make a strong impression, but going off would have been folly and the Irishman wisely kept his ambitions in check in seventh.

Teemu Suninen led in Sweden 12 months ago, but never got into his stride after





Rovanpera drives past a very Swedish-looking house en route to third



Lappi finished fifth on second start for M-Sport

RESULTS ROUND 2/13, RALLY SWEDEN, 13-16 FEBRUARY

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Elfyn Evans (GBR) Scott Martin (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	1h11m43.1s
2	Ott Tanak (EST) Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+12.7s
3	Kalle Rovanpera (FIN) Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+20.2s
4	Sebastien Ogier (FRA) Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+23.6s
5	Esapekka Lappi (FIN) Janne Ferm (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+32.4s
6	Thierry Neuville (BEL) Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+33.8s
7	Craig Breen (IRL) Paul Nagle (IRL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m00.9s
8	Teemu Suninen (FIN) Jarmo Lehtinen (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m24.5s
9	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN) Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m59.6s
10	Jari Huttunen (FIN) Mikko Lukka (FIN)	Jari Huttunen / Hyundai i20 R5	+4m03.0s
OTHERS			
R	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN) Juho Hanninen (FIN)	Latvala Motorsport / Toyota Yaris WRC	

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 SSS Karlstad 1 (1.18 miles)	Stage cancelled		
SS2 Hof-Finnskog 1 (13.21 miles)	Evans 9m43.9s	Evans	Tanak +1.1s
SS3 Finnskogen 1 (12.85 miles)	Tanak 10m13.4s	Evans	Tanak +0.2s
SS4 Nyckelvattnet 1 (11.77 miles)	Evans 9m02.9s	Evans	Rovanpera +7.9s
SS5 Torsby Sprint 1 (1.74 miles)	Tanak 1m42.4s	Evans	Tanak +8.5s
SS6 Hof-Finnskog 2 (13.21 miles)	Evans 9m25.2s	Evans	Tanak +11.7s
SS7 Finnskogen 2 (12.85 miles)	Evans 9m53.7s	Evans	Tanak +15.3s
SS8 Nyckelvattnet 2 (11.77 miles)	Evans 8m53.1s	Evans	Tanak +16.9s
SS9 Torsby Sprint 2 (1.74 miles)	Neuville 1m42.4s	Evans	Tanak +17.2s
SS10 Likenas 1 (13.17 miles)	Stage cancelled		
SS11 Likenas 2 (Powerstage) (8.30 miles)	Rovanpera 10m55.1s	Evans	Tanak +12.7s

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Evans 42; 2 Neuville 42; 3 Ogier 37; 4 Rovanpera 30; 5 Lappi 24; 6 Tanak 20; 7 Suninen 11; 8 Sebastien Loeb 8; 9 Katsuta 8; 10 Breen 6.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 73; 2 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 63; 3 M-Sport Ford WRT 40.



Huttunen took honours in WRC3

NEXT EVENT

RALLY MEXICO 19 MARCH ISSUE

From chilly to chili. They won't be worrying about snow (or lack of it) on this one – we hope. But will the WRC field be concerned about Evans again?

spinning at high speed on Thursday shakedown. Eighth place wasn't what the Finn nor his M-Sport team had in mind. An improvement is required in Mexico.

After Jari-Matti Latvala parked his recalcitrant Yaris on Friday afternoon, Toyota development driver Takamoto Katsuta, the WRC 2 winner in Sweden two years ago, was the final World Rally Car finisher in ninth, the Japanese driver's progress not helped by having to run first on the road on Saturday.

Jari Huttunen won the all-Finnish battle for the WRC 3 victory in his Hyundai, beating the Skoda of Emil Lindholm to 10th overall by 5.0s. Mads Ostberg, who was 2.0s behind Lindholm in 12th, overcame brake issues on his Citroen to win WRC 2 from fellow Norwegian Ole Christian Veiby (Hyundai). Double World Rallycross champion Johan Kristoffersson took his Volkswagen Golf to third in WRC 3 in 14th overall as he looks to secure more employment following VW's exit from the World Touring Car Cup, where he was set for a second season.

Tom Kristensson repeated his 2019 triumph by winning his home round of the Ford Fiesta R2-based Junior WRC ahead of Martins Sesks. Lauri Joona was on course for a debut podium when he picked up a puncture nearing the finish, dropping from third to ninth and promoting Ken Torn in the process. ❄️



Panasonic
JAGUAR

Jaguar learns its lessons

Mitch Evans and Jaguar looked in control in Mexico City, and a lot was down to addressing what went wrong in the previous race in Santiago

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
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itch Evans looked totally at ease on his way to a four-second victory in Mexico City. But this comprehensive triumph was not one founded upon some kind of magic bullet. What he and his Jaguar team did was inherently straightforward:

they learned from their mistakes. That notion is hardly a revelation, but it was an open goal missed by their rivals – their championship-winning rivals at that – and in turn it propelled Evans to the top of the standings.

Last time out in Santiago, Evans had been comfortable up front again. The polesitter followed a premeditated strategy to use both of the higher-power attack-mode boosts early on and he duly carved out a gap. But a software issue sapped his pace and left him as prey at the halfway stage. He eventually fell to fourth, inheriting a fortunate podium after a penalty was handed to Nyck de Vries.

On his cooldown lap in the Chilean capital, Evans was tough over the radio. “We’ve got some serious work to do, guys,” he said. “That was an extremely poor performance.” Jaguar obliged, diagnosed the problem and found a fix.

“After Santiago we were all scratching our heads and had our tail between our legs but [the win in Mexico is] just a huge testament to the team,” Evans said. “They found all the issues we had in Santiago, which was quite a lot. It was nice to also show that we can resolve issues and show the pace that we do have.”

Understeer through the fabulous Peralta final corner at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez meant Evans missed out on back-to-back poles by only 0.063s to Andre Lotterer. The German bagged Porsche’s maiden FE front-row start in only the marque’s fourth event, but would lose first place within yards. Excessive wheelspin off the line for Lotterer, attributed by the team to a driver error rather than a calibration issue, gave Evans the only chance he needed on the run to the first corner. He drew alongside Lotterer, locked the brakes on the approach and then bashed his way through into the lead.

With the danger of a repeat electrical issue all but eradicated, Evans pulled out a staggering 1.7s cushion by the end of the first lap. He was partially aided by Lotterer rejoining from running wide over the grass at Turn 1, which delayed the chasing pack, but the opening gambit from Evans was a clear statement of intent.

Nico Muller did present a potential threat of sorts. The Dragon Racing Penske driver was overzealous picking his braking point into Turn 1. He missed the corner and instead smacked into the barrier to retire on the spot and bring out the safety car. Evans had his lead nullified, but controlled the restart and began building another sizeable gap.

At his most domineering, he was 7.6s to the good. That eventually fell to 4.3s, but intentionally so. Sam Bird had crashed out in the dying minutes on his way into the sold-out Foro Sol stadium, and was instructed by race director Scot Elkins to >>



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remain in the Virgin Audi, which meant a late safety car might well have been called. Evans decided to back off and conserve his remaining energy should he face a challenge at the restart. In the end, he needn't have worried as green-flag conditions remained.

In the most recent two rounds, Evans has now scored a pole and a second in qualifying, a podium and a race win. That run of form establishes the 2019-20 Jaguar I-type 4 as a genuine title-contending package. That machine has proven it can – at times – be a match for the Mercedes, BMW and DS Techeetah offerings.

“I think over one lap we’re one of the benchmarks, for sure,” Evans said. “The last two events, I think, have proved that. Both tracks are very different so it was nice to be competitive over one lap. In the race, today we showed our true race pace, but we were still behind the DS.”

That said, if Jaguar is to mount a title charge, it appears it’ll be one side of the garage doing the legwork. An area where the team hasn’t learned from its mistakes is the feverish chopping and



Vergne leads da Costa,
but tactical errors cost
the DS Techeetah team

SBLOXHAM



changing of Evans's team-mate. In its four seasons in FE, Jaguar has called upon five drivers. Current recruit James Calado has so far recorded two top-10 finishes in his four races, but was disqualified in Mexico for exceeding energy limits.

Adapting to FE is no mean feat, especially for a driver whose recent CV is heavily weighted towards endurance racing. Calado's bread-and-butter is in sharing a car and preserving it to the end of a stint – not the robust cut-and-thrust of FE battle. Given how strong the car has looked this season, Jaguar will need Calado to acclimatise faster and climb the order to at least play rear-gunner for Evans and consolidate points.

By comparison, the new-look pairing of Antonio Felix da Costa and reigning champion Jean-Eric Vergne at DS Techeetah is much more evenly matched. But that's brought its own problems. Both have struggled in qualifying. Eighth-fastest Vergne blamed unease with the brakes in Mexico, an issue that has carried over since Valencia testing, and da Costa cited unfamiliarity with his new wheels as the reason he qualified down in ninth. It's meant they have had to rely on the car's searing race pace to undo the damage, which in turn has led to them tripping over each other on track.

Twice the team instructed its drivers to swap position in Mexico. Vergne asked permission to pass da Costa, who had just activated his attack mode. That meant, once the positions were swapped, Vergne held up the faster da Costa, who was radioing to say "we've made a big mistake".

The bigger impact was that Sebastien Buemi, ahead in third place, extended his lead over the DS Techeetahs by 1.7s during the switcharound. Granted, when da Costa again overtook Vergne he needed all but a lap to latch on to the Nissan and then only a corner to pass. But if DS Techeetah fails to retain the teams' title by just a handful of points – during a season in which its driver line-up appears to have improved – it'll have to look back at cumbersome strategy calls as critical in that defeat.

Given that the duo had tripped over each other in Santiago, which went some way to denying da Costa victory there, this was >>

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Vandoorne drives back to the pits, dragging an advertising banner after contact with wall

PORTLOCK

DS Techeetah's mistake to learn from. But, unlike Jaguar, it looks like that hasn't been the case just yet.

"It was clear that the team waited too long for a solution and [da Costa] gained a lot more energy than me," Vergne said after finishing fourth, unable to overhaul Buemi. "At least he scored some good points for the team, but for me it was clearly not the best strategy."

Fortunately for the team, da Costa did go on to bag the runner-up spot for the second time in a row. Finally running in clear air with more useable energy, he soon put pressure on Bird. The Envision Virgin Racing pilot – who had impressively progressed through to superpole despite running in group one on a green track in qualifying – responded by driving off line to activate attack mode. That in turn compromised his apex at the following corner and allowed da Costa to run side-by-side with him. Bird narrowly held on through the final corner but, under the pressure, he ran too deep into Turn 3 and tagged the wall. Bird – whose car uses a customer Audi powertrain – was able to rejoin, but another shunt in the stadium section was to be his final movement.

In truth, it was a bad day to be powered by any one of the German automotive titans, with only Alexander Sims and Lucas di Grassi scoring points out of any of the BMW, Audi, Mercedes or Porsche factory drivers.

After the highs of his qualifying achievement, and soon losing out to Evans in the race, the experienced Lotterer should have

consolidated a top-five position. Instead, he found himself embroiled in contact as he tried to fight his way back into podium contention in a car that doesn't possess the ultimate race pace.

Lotterer was forced into an early bath when the front-right wheel fairing, weakened after myriad collisions, dropped onto the tyre. Instead of stopping off line, Lotterer left a plume of smoke down the main straight as the rubber cried mercy and flames flickered from the front of the car. He made it back to the pits for repairs but was retired from the race. Team-mate Neel Jani fared little better. He was close to a full second off Lotterer's benchmark in qualifying and then finished last of the runners in 14th as Porsche's hopes fell apart.

It was Stoffel Vandoorne who left Mexico City as the most disappointed Mercedes driver. In the week when he was revealed as the Formula 1 team's new reserve, he entered the race at the top of the standings. Tenth in qualifying was underwhelming, but he profited in the race to hold fifth place.

With BMW man Sims storming from a poor 18th on the grid, owing to a sudden loss of car balance between practice and qualifying, the top two in the points went toe-to-toe on track. Vandoorne promptly binned it on the last of 36 laps, however. He picked up damage on the front-right and at Turn 3 ran wide at the exit and whacked the wall. No score.

Team-mate de Vries also failed to pick up the baton for the Silver Arrows as he had retired in the second of two bizarre fanboost-related crashes over the weekend. The reigning Formula 2 champion didn't require a helicopter ride to hospital, unlike Daniel Abt after his practice shunt. In both instances, when the drivers initiated a fanboost run they suffered from the rear axle continuing to propel the car under braking. They didn't decelerate fully, leading to Abt's 20g impact and de Vries wiping out Robin Frijns at Turn 1. As concerning as both incidents were, Autosport understands they were isolated individual team software errors and not the result of a faulty component part.

Evans at no point needed the extra power of fanboost on his way to the spoils – just as well, considering he wasn't awarded it in the public vote. But his win affirms his team's pace at the front.

That might just manifest itself in a title battle between Jaguar and DS Techeetah, offering two contrasting ways to skin a big cat. Will Jaguar ultimately win out by putting everything behind Evans and banking on him to score the vast majority of its points, or is DS Techeetah better off with two more evenly matched drivers, but who cost results by falling over one another on track? ❄



Sims in BMW drove well to rise from 18th on grid to finish fifth

SBLOXHAM

JAGUAR I-PACE ETROPHY

The Jaguar I-PACE eTrophy was dealt a tough hand in Mexico City. Qualifying was first delayed by 25 minutes owing to the extensive track repairs needed after Daniel Abt's shunt in Formula E free practice. Then the shootout for pole was canned altogether and the grid for the one-make series was decided on the results of practice.

Biblical rain arrived on Friday night, again playing havoc with the timetable. With worries that the bulk of the 11-car grid might chew up the sodden asphalt, the race was delayed until after the main FE event. Last to run on a well-used and degrading surface, the contest itself was blighted by punctures.

The entire field made an even launch. That stopped second-starting Simon Evans from replicating his brother Mitch's moves in the main event and lunging up the inside of polesitter Sergio Jimenez into Turn 1.

Instead, Evans bided his time until the last four laps. He activated the new-for-this-season attack mode, increasing his available power by 20%. That was enough to take him past erstwhile leader Jimenez on the run down the back straight. But Jimenez repeated the tactic on the next tour for a near-carbon-copy move to retake the lead.

Victory for Jimenez (below) takes the reigning champion six points clear of Evans at the top. Had running not been truncated, Evans might have been able to use his superior underlying pace to nick the spoils.

"It was a real bummer we didn't get to qualify today," he said. "I feel like we've been the fastest car every race this year. The Evans brothers were probably the fastest in Mexico all weekend."

On his debut, former Champ Car winner Mario Dominguez was the first guest driver in the championship to bag a podium.

But the true feel-good story was Takuma Aoki. The ex-Grand Prix motorcycle rider was left paralysed from the waist down in a 1998 bike crash. Aided by the high rate of attrition, the Japanese took his specially adapted car from 11th and last to fifth overall and third in his Pro class.



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DS Techeetah's da Costa scored second runner-up spot in two races

RESULTS ROUND 3/12, MEXICO CITY (MEX), 15 FEBRUARY (36 LAPS – 58.295 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar/ Jaguar I-type 4	46m42.093s
2	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	DS Techeetah/ DSE-Tense FE20	+4.271s
3	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Nissan e.Dams/ Nissan IM02	+6.181s
4	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah/ DSE-Tense FE20	+14.331s
5	Alexander Sims (GBR)	BMW/ BMW iFE.20	+19.244s
6	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi Sport Abt/ Audi e-tron FE06	+28.346s
7	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan e.Dams/ Nissan IM02	+29.750s
8	Edoardo Mortara (ITA)	Venturi/ Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	+30.204s
9	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Mahindra Racing/ Mahindra M6Electro	+31.132s
10	Jerome d'Ambrosio (BEL)	Mahindra Racing/ Mahindra M6Electro	+32.818s
11	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	BMW/ BMW iFE.20	+35.512s
12	Brendon Hartley (NZL)	Dragon Racing/ Penske EV-4	+36.399s
13	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO/ NIO FE-005	+50.888s
14	Neel Jani (CHE)	Porsche/ Porsche 99X Electric	+1m04.891s
EX	James Calado (GBR)	Jaguar/ Jaguar I-type 4	+30.796s-exceeded energy limit
EX	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Virgin Racing/ Audi e-tron FE06	+33.665s-exceeded max power
NC	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	Mercedes/ Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	35 laps-accident damage
R	Sam Bird (GBR)	Virgin Racing/ Audi e-tron FE06	31 laps-accident damage
R	Daniel Abt (DEU)	Audi Sport Abt/ Audi e-tron FE06	30 laps-withdrew
R	Ma Qinghua (CHN)	NIO/ NIO FE-005	25 laps-accident damage
R	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mercedes/ Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	18 laps-accident damage
R	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche/ Porsche 99X Electric	11 laps-accident damage
R	Felipe Massa (BRA)	Venturi/ Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	6 laps-accident damage/suspension
R	Nico Muller (CHE)	Dragon Racing/ Penske EV-4	2 laps/accident damage

Winner's average speed 74.894mph. **Fastest lap** Sims 1m10.520s, 82.663mph.

SUPERPOLE

1 Lotterer 1m07.922s; 2 Evans 1m07.985s; 3 de Vries 1m08.214s; 4 Buemi 1m08.364s; 5 Bird 1m08.444s; 24 Wehrlein 1m08.200s*.

QUALIFYING

Evans 1m08.174s; de Vries 1m08.294s; Lotterer 1m08.346s; Wehrlein 1m08.362s; Buemi 1m08.363s; Bird 1m08.394s; 6 Frijns 1m08.435s; 7 Muller 1m08.479s; 8 Vergne 1m08.496s; 9 da Costa 1m08.540s; 10 Vandoorne 1m08.636s; 11 Mortara 1m08.661s; 12 Rowland 1m08.726s; 13 Hartley 1m08.878s; 14 Jani 1m08.880s; 15 di Grassi 1m08.998s; 16 Guenther 1m09.098s; 17 Calado 1m09.331s; 18 Sims 1m09.376s; 19 Massa 1m09.450s; 20 Ma 1m10.176s; 21 Turvey 2m10.061s; 22 Abt no time; 23 d'Ambrosio 1m08.788s*. * grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Evans 47; 2 Sims 46; 3 da Costa 39; 4 Vandoorne 38; 5 di Grassi 32; 6 Bird 28; 7 Rowland 28; 8 Guenther 25; 9 Mortara 22; 10 Lotterer 21.

NEXT RACE

MARRAKECH
5 MARCH
ISSUE

Can Evans and Jaguar continue their form?

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Fraga wins New Zealand GP – and TRS title

TOYOTA RACING SERIES

MANFEILD (NZL)

15-16 FEBRUARY

ROUND 5/5

Igor Fraga snatched the title from under the nose of M2 Competition team-mate Liam Lawson with victory in the final stanza of the 15-race season – the historic New Zealand Grand Prix at the circuit named after late Kiwi hero Chris Amon.

Brazilian Fraga, who like Lawson will race in FIA Formula 3 this year, had already won Saturday's opening race. Poleman Franco Colapinto made a sluggish start, allowing Fraga and 2019 TRS champion Lawson ahead. While Fraga led all the way, Lawson had to focus on defending second from the Kiwi Motorsport car of Colapinto. Caio Collet was fourth, while American Spike Kohlbecker – who raced FF1600 in the UK in 2019 – made a big step forward in form on the series' final weekend to take fifth.



JOHN COWPLAND

Fraga was on top form at Manfeild

When Fraga beat Lawson to fourth place after a ferocious battle in Sunday morning's reversed-grid race – which Tijmen van der Helm won from Colapinto and Petr Ptacek – he narrowed the deficit to just two points in the hunt for the title. What's more, he had already beaten Collet to pole, with Lawson third, in the NZ GP qualifying session, shortened because of an off for 78-year-old Ken Smith, who was contesting the race for the 49th time.

In a race interrupted by no fewer than three safety car periods, Lawson made a

great pass on Collet early on to move up to second, and the frequent neutralisations gave him opportunities to attack Fraga. But when Lawson buzzed his engine on the rev limiter, that not only allowed Fraga to escape but Colapinto – who had charged up from an early fifth – to take second place.

Collet took his MTEC Motorsport car to fourth, while Ptacek held off Yuki Tsunoda – up from 17th on the grid – for fifth.

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ASIAN FORMULA 3

SEPANG (MYS)

14-15 FEBRUARY

ROUND 4/5

Red Bull Junior Jack Doohan won all three races to slash the points gap to long-time leader Joey Alders to 15.

Pinnacle Motorsport driver Doohan led the first race, which took place on a damp track with most of the field on rain tyres, all the way from pole. Alders had qualified seventh, but stormed his BlackArts Racing machine up to second. Another driver on the move was Jamie Chadwick, who passed Nikita Mazepin to claim the final podium spot.

After morning downpours, the track

dried enough for slicks for race two. In the rush, Alders had what he reckoned was a duff set of tyres he'd used in Q1 fitted. Within a few laps his left-rear was disintegrating, and he slumped from an early lead to finish eighth. Doohan took over in front, while Hitech GP pair Mazepin and Ukyo Sasahara both got the better of Chadwick for second and third.

Doohan led home BlackArts duo Alders and Yu Kanamaru in the finale, while Mazepin recovered from a lowly grid position to take fourth.

With some dropping out for this round – including Devlin DeFrancesco, who claimed that a poor immune system from his premature birth raised coronavirus concerns – some more drivers were drafted in. Under the rules for FIA F1 superlicence points, a minimum 16 cars have to start the opening race of each race weekend for there not to be a reduction of points. The additional drivers at Sepang boosted the field to 16, but four retired within four laps, and were not seen for the remaining two races. A similar 12-car field for the opener would have led to a 40% reduction in superlicence points.



Doohan won all three races at Sepang

ASIAN F3

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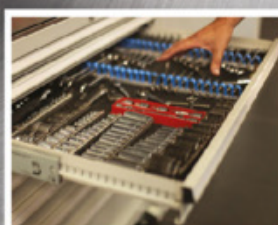
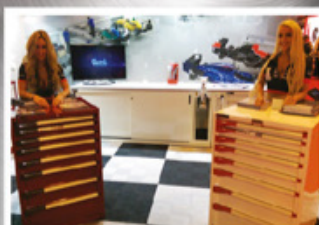
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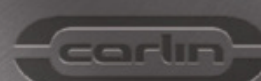


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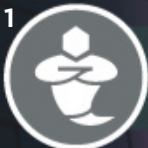
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Professional drivers could be banned from competing in Masters Historic Racing



MASTERS CLAMPS DOWN ON PRO DRIVING STANDARDS

HISTORICS

Masters Historic Racing wants to crack down on driving standards and is prepared to ban professional drivers who step out of line.

FIA Historic Formula 1, FIA Historic Sports Cars and the Pre-1966 Touring Cars series are among those under the Masters umbrella, and the club's membership rules have been amended to give it the option to reject entries.

Masters founder Ron Maydon said: "Pro drivers are a problem and it's a problem we have to deal with head-on. It's little known that last year we declined entries from four drivers because I thought their driving was either too aggressive or they had the wrong spirit. I didn't want to name and shame but maybe we're going to have to start down that route."

"If we're not happy with a driver, we go to our grid representatives and put our case to them. If they agree, we can decline the entry. We've already changed the regulations and the membership rules of the club to keep them away. We can decline entries from anyone. Before, it was very difficult."

"We're not going to accept pure pro drivers who step into our world, take the big prizes and we never see them again. They are either put in cars by owners who want to win, or for specific reasons. They are usually very young, very talented and aspire to be a pro driver. Sharing with a non-pro is quite crucial."

Maydon made it clear that many professional drivers do compete with the right attitude and welcomed their involvement. "We've no problem with drivers like Martin Stretton, Simon Hadfield, Nick Padmore, Andy Wolfe and so on," added Maydon. "They are elite drivers, but they give something to our series and they share cars with others. That has never been an overwhelming problem and they understand what it is about. Jake Hill is another fabulous driver who has really got the right spirit."

A number of historic racers have been left slightly confused by the statements, pointing out that standards should be applied across the board, irrespective of the driver's status (see page 77).

Aston Martin factory driver Darren Turner, who won one of the two Mini Celebration Trophy races at last year's Silverstone Classic singled out for criticism



WALKER



by Maydon, said: “It’s more likely to be the regulars because it’s their game. My view is that you are there as a guest and you need to be mindful of that.

“There were a number of times in that race where I’d have kept my nose in [in a contemporary event], but I backed out. It isn’t going to change our careers. It was a little bit boisterous at times, but I think it’s more the regulars — they want to get stuck in and get a result. Pros that own their own cars are probably a bit more feisty.

“Now and again, pros have gone a little too far, but nothing more than anyone else.”

Turner also pointed out that established pros also have to make sure they don’t jeopardise their careers with injury. “We’re all aware of the significance of not being race fit on Monday morning,” added the 45-year-old.

KEVIN TURNER AND PAUL LAWRENCE



FIA Portuguese hillclimb to attract large British entry

HISTORIC HILLCLIMB

Great Britain is to have a record representation in the prestigious FIA Hill Climb Masters event at Rampa da Falperra in Portugal, which is set to attract competitors from more than 20 nations over the weekend of 10-11 October.

Run in alternate years, the fourth edition will use part of the European Championship hill.

“Most of the top 10 Motorsport UK British championship contenders are planning to enter the end-of-season shootout,” said five-time national champion David Grace, vice-president of the FIA Hill Climb Commission.

“It’s a spectacular course, very

fast but flowing, on the bottom half of the FIA European Championship Hill, and the locals are behind it. In recent years Italians Christian Merli [Osella-Zytek FA30] and Simone Faggioli [Norma-Zytek M20] have made it their own. The challenge for the Brits is to see how close they can get to the mountain kings.”

This year, a country beyond Europe will be represented for the first time. Winners in South Africa’s Simola Hillclimb, to be run for the 11th time on a closed road above the town of Knysna on its Western Cape from 7-10 May, will be invited to the FIA event through Motorsport SA.

MARCUS PYE

New Classic Era Challenge for AMOC categories

CMMC

A new racing series has been launched by the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club and will incorporate several Aston Martin Owners Club categories.

The Classic Era Challenge will include the CMMC’s Pre ’64 series, as well as the Jack Fairman Trophy and Innes Ireland Cup.

The Jaguar Enthusiasts’ Club’s XK Challenge and Hawthorn Trophy will also contest the Classic Era Challenge races, which will be held at up to 10 meetings throughout the year.

The majority will be 30-minute races for one driver, with the

Cadwell Park meeting on 26 July scheduled to be a 45-minute race for two drivers.

AMOC made the decision to only host one meeting this year — Silverstone on 3 October — after struggles over the winter.

“It’s come about mainly because of the AMOC,” said CMMC founder Richard Culverhouse. “Their series are coming over, the JEC are over the moon and have been really supportive, and the first event at Castle Combe [13 April] has great support. We could be getting nearly oversubscribed on some tracks.”

STEFAN MACKLEY

New British F3 modifications hit the track with Carlin



BRDC BRITISH FORMULA 3

Carlin has become the first team to test the new-for-2020 modifications that will be used in the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship this season.

A number of revisions have been incorporated into the Tatuus car – first

introduced in 2016 – that include upgraded front and rear wings to generate more downforce, bargeboards to help channel airflow under the car, and a slimmer engine cover featuring a fin.

An Advanced Frontal Protection (AFP) fin has also been integrated in front of the driver, which will help deflect debris away

from the cockpit opening.

Mountune has taken over the engine tuning from Cosworth and all cars have been fitted with updated electrical equipment.

Carlin was the first team to run with the changes at Oulton Park earlier this month and Brands Hatch last week (pictured).

“Different teams will have a few different ideas to make it effective,” said Carlin F3 manager Sam Waple. “At the moment I would say it’s so hard to tell [if there is a substantial increase in performance]. I think once we get on track with a few other people and a bit more consistent weather we will see whether we have an increase in performance.”

“It will certainly be no less, it’s just a case of trying to maximise the package. It’s definitely a change and there is a lot more head-scratching than last year.”

• Ulysse de Pauw will remain with Douglas Motorsport for the upcoming British F3 season. The 18-year-old Belgian took two podiums and finished seventh in the standings last season. “After signing with the team quite late in 2019, I wasn’t fully ready for the start of the season,” he said. “However, I felt I improved a lot during the year, thanks to the team, and our speed was very good by the end.”

STEFAN MACKLEY

Drivers revealed for Academy’s GT4 Mustangs

BRITISH GT

Academy Motorsport owner Matt Nicoll-Jones will return to racing in British GT this year, sharing with team regular Will Moore in one of the squad’s newly acquired Ford Mustang GT4s.

Nicoll-Jones, the 2008 GT4 champion, last raced alongside Moore in 2018, when they managed a run of four straight podium finishes before two retirements derailed their title aspirations.

After a difficult season with the new Aston Martin Vantage GT4 last year, Academy has committed to run the Multimatic-built Mustangs that narrowly missed out on last year’s title with Seb Priaulx and Scott Maxwell. The team has also been appointed as a European agent for the cars.

“We’re only doing it to try and win it, that’s the goal,” said Nicoll-Jones, who will also contest the European GT4 series with Moore. “Now we’ve partnered

up with Multimatic, personally, I feel like we’ve got everything there to be able to do it.”

Meanwhile, Jordan Albert has been signed to race a second car, as the 23-year-old prepares to embark on a first full British GT season since 2018.

Albert, who made his GT4 bow in 2016 with Beechdean AMR, only raced once last year after departing McLaren’s Driver Development Programme at the end of 2018.

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BRSCC category has
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Maximum Motorsport adds Civic Cup to racing roster

CIVIC CUP

Maximum Motorsport will operate a third series this season after taking over the management of the successful Civic Cup category.

The company already runs the Touring Car Trophy and Volkswagen Racing Cup classes but wanted to be involved with a less expensive club-level championship.

Maximum boss Stewart Lines believes the British Racing and Sports Car Club-permitted Civic Cup is the perfect fit alongside its existing categories.

"It's a very popular series and we're expecting a 25-car grid," said Lines. "We needed a series that was cheap for people to come and have a go at. The VW Cup and Touring Car Trophy are competitively

priced but we needed something that people can come and race on treaded tyres. There's a lot of people out there who haven't got the budget to run on slicks. It's a good series and we're going to try and just tweak it a little bit."

One of those tweaks will be a switch from MRF tyres to Dunlops, in line with Maximum's other categories. Additional alterations will be revealed over the coming weeks.

In driver news, novice racer Jamie Tonks will join the championship this year in a newly built EP3 model. Karting graduate George Alp-Williams returns for a first full season of car racing after making his debut at the end of last year and will drive Lee Deegan's 2019 title-winning machine.

STEPHEN LICKORISH AND MARK PAULSON

Clios to support French GP again

RENAULT CLIO CUP

Renault Sport Racing will again run a Clio Cup Open competition in support of the French Grand Prix this year.

Last year's event was dominated by Renault UK Clio Cup champion Jack Young as he won both races at Paul Ricard by over 20 seconds. Alongside a handful

of drivers from the UK series, competitors from six other Clio Cup championships around the world also took part.

That same format will continue this year, except the 26-28 June event will now feature the new fifth-generation Clio.

"Following the indisputable success we had in 2019, when

nearly 50 competitors competed on the track, it was logical for Renault to repeat the operation in 2020," said Renault Sport Racing commercial racing director Benoit Nogier. "This Clio Cup Open is a reminder of Renault's motor racing versatility in bringing together the Clio Cup and Formula 1 at the same event."

IN THE HEADLINES

FIVE CARS FOR R RACING

Ginetta Junior squad R Racing has revealed a five-car line-up for this season. The team was new to the category in 2019 and began the season running just one car, but by the end of the year had expanded to four with eventual runner-up Zak O'Sullivan joining mid-season. Josh Rattican and Joel Pearson – who finished ninth and 10th respectively in last year's standings – head the 2020 line-up. They will be joined by second-year drivers Bailey Voisin and Freddie Tomlinson, and Winter Series rookie champion Aston Millar.

INVICTUS JAGS FOR SALE

Two Jaguar F-type SVR GT4s that competed in British GT under the Invictus Games Racing banner will be auctioned this weekend as part of the Silverstone Auctions Race Retro Show. Built by Jaguar's Special Vehicle Operations department, the cars were commissioned by Superdry co-founder James Holder with support from the Invictus organisation that offers opportunities to wounded, injured and sick ex-service personnel.

FOSTER WINS ON MRF DEBUT

Brit Louis Foster took a victory on his maiden outing in the MRF Challenge last weekend. Foster, who will move up to the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship this season with Double R after finishing third overall in British F4 last year, took a win in the penultimate race of the season at the Madras Motor Race Track in Chennai. Michelangelo Amendola took two wins during the six-race meeting to secure the title.

RARE ALFA IN POMEROY

Star turn among the entry for the Vintage Sports-Car Club's Pomeroy Trophy season opener at Silverstone last Saturday was Ellie Mann's ultra-rare 1954 Alfa Romeo 1900C SSZ (Super Sprint Zagato, below) coupe in the hands of husband Chris, a long time marque aficionado. John Felstead in a Subaru Impreza was declared the provisional winner.



Van der Watt
impressed in 2018
Walter Hayes
Trophy event

South African FF1600 ace in National bid

NATIONAL FORMULA FORD 1600

Julian van der Watt, the runaway 2017 South African Formula Ford champion, will contest the 2020 National Formula Ford 1600 season in the UK at the wheel of a Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum.

Van der Watt has raced in the UK's FFord end-of-year events in recent seasons, and started the 2018 Walter Hayes Trophy final from pole position in a Mills-run car.

The 22-year-old took 13 wins out of 14 races in his home country's FFord series in 2017, before moving to the IndyCar-

supporting USF2000 Championship in 2018, finishing seventh in the standings.

"One of my sponsors has been communicating with Kevin Mills and together they thought this would be a great programme to get me introduced into motorsport in the UK and in Europe," van der Watt said.

"I really enjoyed driving the Spectrum. I had a great relationship with Kevin; it's just great synergy between myself and him. The number one goal is try and go for the championship. Together, it'll be a pretty tough package to beat."

He is also hopeful of competing in some TCR rounds in the US later this year.

Van der Watt will be joined at the team for the National campaign by 17-year-old ex-F1000 driver Reece Lycett. Lycett became the F1000 category's youngest ever podium finisher when in 2018 he finished third at Croft on his car-racing debut, having turned 16 that day.

Also, 2019 FFord Festival winner Jonathan Browne has been confirmed as remaining in National FF1600 this season for another year in a Cliff Dempsey Racing Ray.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

Gronkowski's Scottish title defence in doubt

SCOTTISH FF1600

Scottish Formula Ford 1600 champion Jordan Gronkowski says he is in "a race against time" to secure the budget to go for a second title after suffering a major engine failure in testing.

Gronkowski, who won the crown for the first time in 2019, managed just four installation laps in his family-run Van Diemen JLo12K before stopping on his way out of the pits at Knockhill.

The setback leaves Gronkowski fighting to

secure enough funding to complete the full season, putting his title defence at risk, although he is

confident of making it out at least for the pre-season test at Knockhill in March and the opening round at the

same circuit in April.

"It's not the ideal start to the season," he said. "I had done a handful of warm-up laps and was just heading out to finish the session when the engine failed. There's a hole the size of a golf ball in the block and you can see the crankshaft coming out."

"That's pretty much our entire budget for the season gone up in smoke, so it'll be touch and go whether we are able to do the full season."

"That's racing, isn't it? And we just need to see what we can do."

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



MOIR



Right idea, wrong target?

Clubs and organisers understandably need to control driving standards in their events, but the Masters' recent crackdown on its 'pro' racers could be counterproductive

KEVIN TURNER

Driving standards and how to police them often come up in motorsport. Incidents will always happen, and every now and again an organising club or championship will decide a clampdown is needed.

Safety is an ever-present issue, and if a series gets a reputation for being too lax on rough driving some competitors can be put off, so an organiser's attempt to improve things is usually welcome. But the recent Masters Historic Racing stance is slightly baffling (see page 72).

One of the leading organisers of historic series, it has specifically picked out 'pro' drivers as a problem, by which it seems to chiefly mean young drivers, some of them probably better described as aspiring professionals.

Some pros do step out of line — I can recall one Le Mans 24 Hours winner (albeit not a recent one) being particularly aggressive in a very expensive Ferrari at the Silverstone Classic a few years ago — but do they represent the whole problem?

There have been several incidents in the past, involving both pro and amateur drivers, that have not resulted in any action from stewards or organisers. Often it is difficult to apportion blame, but there have been instances when obvious perpetrators have not been punished. And the cause is just as likely to be a 'non-pro' making a mistake or overdriving as it is a professional being too aggressive. Policing this is surely more important than the odd stray pro.

“There have been instances when obvious perpetrators have not been punished”

“You clamp down on driving standards, period, regardless of who the person is,” says historic ace and preparer Martin Stretton, one of the pros singled out for praise by Masters boss Ron Maydon. “Driving standards should apply across the board. It's not who you are, it's what you do.”

Some clubs do deliberately discourage 'pro' drivers (which in some scenarios really just means drivers who are particularly quick), but that is for competitive reasons. The Fifties Sports Car Racing Club, for example, has an unwritten rule essentially excluding top drivers because it doesn't want to deter amateur club racers, which it regards as its core. It's not a driving standards issue, it's a philosophical one, and clearly the level and size of Masters events shows that this is not the approach it is taking. There are a lot of very quick drivers in the various

Masters series, some of whom have FIA status, and Maydon has stressed that many of them are welcome.

Maydon singled out the Mini Celebration Trophy races at last year's Silverstone Classic for poor driving standards, saying the “amount of contact was totally unacceptable”. So Autosport revisited the two contests, on the Classic's own YouTube videos.

There was some contact, most dramatically at the start of the second encounter, but most of it seemed to be the sort that could be put down to the close competition that is to be expected from over 50 competitively driven tin-tops battling it out around Silverstone. It was hard to single out any particular pro who was spoiling it for the rest of the field.

There's another potential negative by-product from singling out the pros. It's probably true to say that some wealthy amateur racers don't like the increasing numbers of 'career' drivers coming into historics because they are quick. It's now all but impossible for true amateurs to win some of the biggest events and they do need to be looked after. As Aston Martin driver Darren Turner, who has contested a number of historic races in recent years, says, “the grids wouldn't be what they are without them”. But, as well as packed entries, most enthusiasts also want to see the cars driven at or near the limit. And that's what you get with the pros, whether they be young newcomers or established aces.

One of the appeals of historic racing, particularly for pre-slicks-and-wings machines, is that the cars move around. You can see a lot more of the drivers' efforts than in contemporary competition — watching top drivers drift around Goodwood bumper-to-bumper or doorhandle-to-doorhandle, for example, is spectacular.

Many pros, such as Sam Hancock, go on to become part of the historic racing scene, bringing fresh blood to the sport. This is surely a plus. Masters' move is not aimed at discouraging new drivers, but it could be an unfortunate consequence.

“There are some brilliant young drivers coming in and I relish the challenge,” adds Stretton. “The future of the sport is an evolving process — we need to encourage people in. It's not going to help if we ban the drivers who could be future [regular] competitors. We don't want to put people off.”

The increasing professionalism at the top of historic motorsport has its pluses and minuses. The quality of the front improves and it can help attract more fans, but it increases costs (some of the pros are paid very handsomely for their historic race outings) and can bring an extra edge to the competition. Addressing those issues is sensible, even if you can't turn the clock back in some areas.

But having a holistic approach, treating everyone the same way irrespective of their background, seems a better and fairer way of doing that than trying to single out a handful of pros who can also be inconveniently rapid. ❧



The 2012 supergrid now accounts for 22 world titles

FITTING TRIBUTE TO ALL OF F1'S



BOOK REVIEW FORMULA ONE: THE CHAMPIONS: 70 YEARS OF LEGENDARY F1 DRIVERS

Few would dispute long-serving Formula 1 correspondent Maurice Hamilton when he describes the F1 World

Championship as “the ultimate accolade in motorsport”. Those who have achieved it are an elite group — just 33 people from the championship’s 70 years and out of the 600-plus drivers who have competed.

Hamilton’s latest book, *Formula One: The Champions* — due for release on 3 March — is a fitting tribute to the select band. It is a stylishly presented and sizeable 240-page hardback containing written and photographic portrayals of every one of those champions, from Giuseppe Farina through to Nico Rosberg. All of them are brought to life in Hamilton’s concise-yet-illuminating prose, and richly illustrated with high-quality and varied images — some not published before — from The Cahier Archive.

Hamilton’s words allied with the noted photographic work of father-and-son Bernard and Paul-Henri Cahier is the same combination as pooled for the 2017 title *The Pursuit of Speed*, and so the trio is suited to pay tribute to F1’s champions. Hamilton combines his decades of F1 reporting and a passion for its history, while The Cahier Archive stretches to the championship’s beginnings.

“Every world champion has been unified by a spectacular determination to maximise a very special skill,” Hamilton writes, a point reiterated by none other than Bernie Ecclestone in the foreword. Hamilton notes

also that F1’s champions are in many ways “widely differing”, plus since 1950 the pursuit has changed across various aspects to the point of being “barely recognisable today”. With this Hamilton sensibly avoids debate over who is best, describing that as “impossible to say”. He also doesn’t offer statistical comparisons. Instead he lays out each champion’s story positively, although without pulling punches, and leaves it up to the reader to decide.

Each champion’s chapter extends over six to eight pages (aside from Michael Schumacher’s, which gets 10), and in every case Hamilton seeks to paint the personality and approach as well as the achievements, adding a few words of the driver’s own too. He also has clearly researched assiduously the champions from before his time, meaning the level of depth across eras is broadly consistent.

The format means that Hamilton’s portraits are brief, but the more committed F1 history enthusiast should not be disappointed as Hamilton rarely scrimps on detail. For example, Juan Manuel Fangio’s early racing days in an old converted Ford taxi are cited, as is Alberto Ascari’s steadfast superstition — to the point of turning his car in the road to drive away from black cats. There’s also Jody Scheckter’s unorthodox means of impressing Enzo Ferrari, setting him up for his Maranello seat from which he would win the title in 1979.

Indeed there is plenty included that is little known. A young Alain Prost, who was then minded to be a footballer, only got involved in motor racing as he attended a kart track purely to keep his brother company on a family holiday. He then won an impromptu race one-handed with his arm in plaster. Drivers’ rises to the top as well as post-F1 activities, within and outside of motorsport, are covered too.



[autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast)



FORMULA 1 LAUNCH SEASON



Catch up with Autosport's extensive podcast coverage of the Formula 1 launch season. We discuss whether the 2020 Mercedes W11 is the car to take Lewis Hamilton to a seventh championship, we give our verdict on Ferrari's new challenger and cast our eye over the latest offerings from McLaren, Haas, Alfa Romeo, AlphaTauri and Williams.

CHAMPIONS



Perhaps, though, in the only point of criticism, two or three of the champions' sections are a touch too whistle-stop, such as that on Mike Hawthorn.

The Cahier photos add insight and sometimes intimacy, capturing the driver in and out of the car. Highlights here include a typically self-satisfied Farina, trophy in hand, glancing over his shoulder to smirk down the camera lens, Jack Brabham powersliding his BT19 as well as a shot of him poring typically over his Repco V8, and a bloodied Jochen Rindt in his Lotus 49 after a major smash at Montjuic in 1969 following a wing failure.

Given this book's content and elegance, its £35 price tag does not feel excessive. The title will sit well in any F1 history enthusiast's collection.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

World Endurance Championship

Round 5/8

Circuit of The Americas, USA

23 February

TV Live Eurosport 2, Sun 2300

Livestream Motorsport.tv,

Sat 2330, Sun 1730

Australian Supercars

Round 1/14

Adelaide, Australia

22-23 February

TV Live BT Sport 3, Sat 0530,

BT Sport 3, Sun 0430

NASCAR Cup

Round 2/36

Las Vegas, USA

23 February

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sun 2000

Asian Le Mans Series

Round 4/4

Buriram, Thailand

23 February

Livestream Motorsport.tv,

Sat 0855, Sun 0415

Asian Formula 3

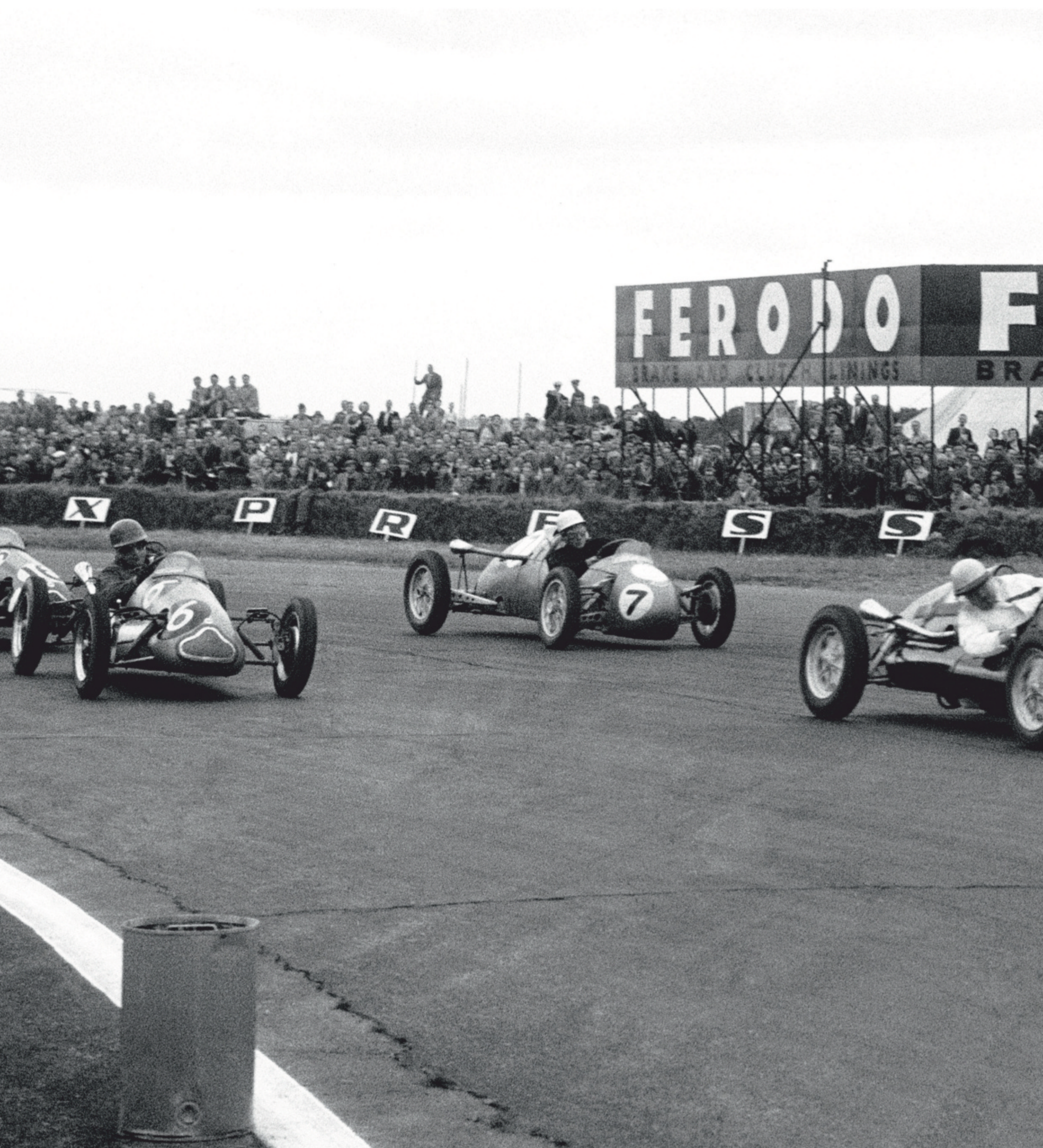
Round 5/5

Buriram, Thailand

22-23 February



FINISHING STRAIGHT



FROM THE ARCHIVE

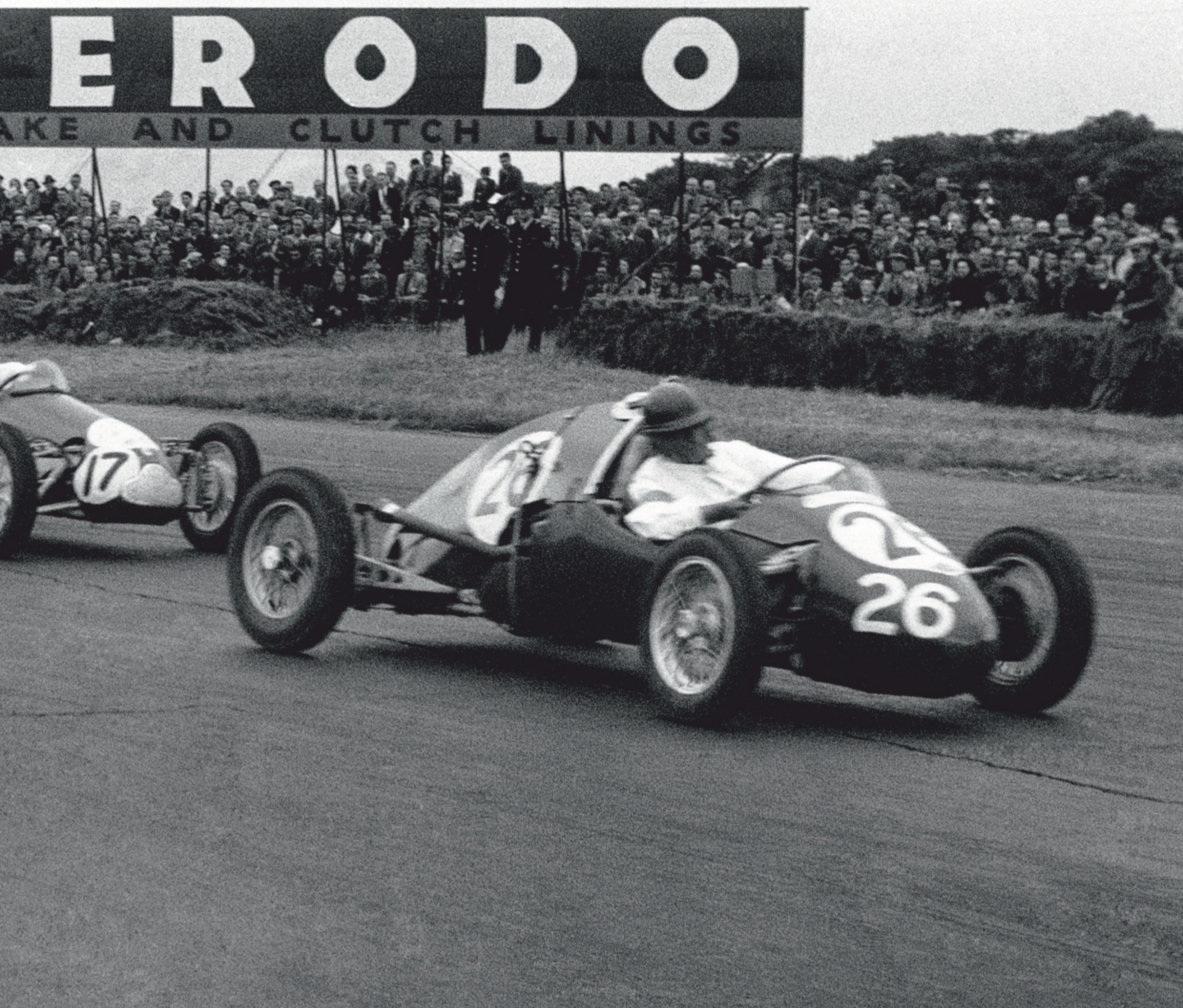
Stirling Moss (#7) works his Kieft-Norton through the field on his way to victory in the 15-lap 500cc Formula 3 support race for the 1952 British Grand Prix

at Silverstone. In the previous year's encounter Moss had been untouchable, coming home 50 seconds ahead of the pack. Now he had a proper scrap on his hands, getting into the lead, dropping

to fourth place, fighting back, then being demoted to second place by Don Parker's Kieft. Moss had no answer, but luck was on his side when the leader's primary chain broke on the last lap.



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Blomqvist completes Swedish hat-trick in style

22 February 1973

The warm weather that troubled last weekend's Rally Sweden wasn't a problem 47 years ago. Instead, studded snow tyres would definitely have come in handy for the 1973 Swedish Rally – the first as part of the newly created World Rally Championship – only for them to be controversially banned for the event. It was Saab's Stig Blomqvist and Arne Hertz who conquered the Scandinavian snow, despite a lengthy stoppage for a faulty fuel pump.

From the start in Karlstad, Blomqvist opened up a healthy lead over Lancia's Ove Andersson in the opening stages. Per Eklund (Saab), Harry Kallstrom (Lancia) and Hakan Lindberg (Fiat) looked set to be the biggest threats, especially as Blomqvist's stranglehold on the top of the timings ended on stage eight as his pump issue started to impact his performance.

The Saab lost a dozen minutes between stages nine and 10 as a

makeshift fix was put in place, before a full repair could be made at Torsby with a camshaft change. That left Eklund in front with a strong advantage, while Alpine's Jean-Luc Therier started to become a top-three threat.

But from there, Blomqvist topped all bar four of the remaining 17 stages to slash into Eklund's advantage and retake the lead. Therier took two stage wins on his way to third, while Eklund did not go down without a fight by taking the other two late into the rally. Blomqvist finished a comfortable 1m18s ahead of his compatriot, securing his third consecutive Swedish Rally success.

Elsewhere, in sunny Florida Richard Petty came back from a lap down in his Dodge to win the Daytona 500 for the fourth time (of seven) after denying Buddy Baker, who led three quarters of the 200-lap contest before suffering from engine trouble.

CRAIG WOOLLARD



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