

F1 Ex-Ferrari boss Domenicali takes charge

AUTOSPORT

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1 OCTOBER 2020

Why Bottas would have won even without Hamilton's Sochi penalties

Lewis fury over censure, but had the Russian GP already been lost?

'They're trying to stop me, aren't they?'

LEWIS HAMILTON

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The rights and wrongs of F1's Russian penalties

Formula 1 does sometimes get itself into a pickle. Last weekend's Russian Grand Prix was actually one of the more interesting contests at the Sochi circuit, but two different penalty issues became the talking points, overshadowing a fine performance by Valtteri Bottas.

Firstly, were the two Lewis Hamilton practice starts simply a Mercedes mistake or were the rules a tad vague? There's probably an element of both and it would be a surprise if race director Michael Masi's notes weren't tightened up pretty soon.

The incident played into the hands of both the pro-Hamilton and anti-Lewis camps. The fact he got penalised and was briefly within two points of a ban made for a good storyline for those who think the stewards are out to get him. Those who think he gets an easy ride then pointed to the subsequent removal of those points.

Conspiracy theories are among the most tedious of humanity's ways of wasting time and, in truth, both moves made sense. Yes, the time penalty was a bit harsh – though, as our report on page 18 says, Hamilton would likely have lost the race anyway – but that's the way the stewards (and many others, it has to be said) read the rules. And there is plenty of precedent for fines rather than penalty points when it comes to transgressions involving team input. Does any objective observer really think Hamilton deserves to be that close to a ban?

Then we had the issues about track limits. Needing to put measures in place to prevent runoff areas being used for advantage is a natural consequence of having them to improve safety, but having a 'chicane' so close to a wall, which can spit a smashed car back onto the circuit doesn't seem like the safest way to do it...



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Editor

kevin.turner@autosport.com

**NEXT WEEK
8 OCTOBER**

Lotus 72 at 50

We celebrate one of the
greatest Formula 1 cars
in a special issue



COVER IMAGES

Hone, Etherington/Motorsport Images

PIT & Paddock

- 4 Domenicali becomes F1 president
- 6 DTM's new GT formula
- 8 Rossi's new SRT Yamaha deal
- 10 Le Mans winners to go GT racing
- 13 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
- 15 Opinion: Nick Garton
- 17 Feedback: your letters

RACE CENTRE

- 18 Russian GP report and analysis
- 34 BTCC: Cammish by a bumper
- 40 World of Sport: FIA Formula 2;
Nurburgring 24 Hours; WTCR;
Australian Supercars; Super Formula;
IMSA Sportcar; NASCAR Cup; MotoGP

INSIGHT

- 52 Tony Kanaan's IndyCar farewell?

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 68 Kristensen-Pirro in Goodwood shootout
- 70 Allard name set to return
- 72 Obituary: Mike Thompson
- 73 Opinion: Stephen Lickorish
- 74 National reports: Silverstone;
Snetterton; Kirkistown; Mondello Park;
Brands Hatch; Donington Park

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 86 What's on this week
- 88 From the archive: 1991 Meadowlands GP
- 90 Autosport 70: Ascari and Moss star

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

- 44 Special deals for Autosport

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NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT



Castle Combe is 70 years old and we look at the circuit's best moments, leading driver and its Hot Hatch series in this month's free issue.

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Autosport editorial
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EX-FERRARI CHIEF DOMENICALI

FORMULA 1

Ex-Ferrari team principal Stefano Domenicali will become the new CEO and president of Formula 1 in January, taking over from existing chief Chase Carey. The Italian was formally announced by F1 as Carey's replacement at last weekend's Russian Grand Prix.

"I am thrilled to join the Formula 1 organisation, a sport that has always been part of my life," said Domenicali. "I've remained connected to the sport through my work with the Single Seater Commission at the FIA and I look forward to connecting with the teams, promoters, sponsors and many partners in Formula 1 as we continue to drive the business ahead."

Domenicali spent more than 20 years with Ferrari, serving as its F1 sporting director during Michael Schumacher's domination in the early 2000s before stepping up as team principal in 2008. He resigned three races into the 2014 season, taking responsibility for Ferrari's poor start to the year and struggles with the new turbocharged V6 hybrid power units.

Domenicali was not out of work for long. He took up a role at Audi in November 2014, and became its vice-president of new business initiatives. He later moved to sister VW Group company Lamborghini in 2016 as CEO, and helped turn around the fortunes of the Italian marque, which delivered record sales last year.

In tandem with his roles outside of motorsport, Domenicali has served as the president of the FIA's Single Seater Commission since 2014. In this role, he oversaw a restructuring of the junior ladder in motorsport. The F1-supporting GP2 Series was

rebranded as FIA Formula 2, while the old FIA Formula 3 European Championship was axed, with the FIA F3 name attached to what was formerly GP3. He was also responsible for the introduction of the FIA's superlicence points system.

The announcement of Domenicali won widespread praise throughout the F1 paddock, with many citing his success both on the track and in the boardroom during his career, as well as his friendly character and management style.

"He's one of the good guys, having competed against him when he was the team principal of Ferrari," said Red Bull team principal Christian Horner. "He had a lot of integrity, he was a racer, a competitor, he understands the business. Obviously he spent life in the commercial world outside F1 the last few years. He's done a great job at Lamborghini, and I think he will be a great asset to F1."

Haas F1 chief Gunther Steiner said the team would not even exist had it not been for Domenicali's input and influence during the early talks to get the American squad on the grid. "Without Stefano, Haas F1 wouldn't be here," said Steiner. "In the beginning when I tried to put this together, the main person I spoke to [at Ferrari] was Stefano, and he was the guy that believed that this was doable. He helped a lot and he believed in the model we created, and he supported it. So I think he understands the sport very well."

Following a recent battle against using reversed-grid formats, Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff hopes that Domenicali will stick to F1's traditions and avoid any gimmicks during his tenure. "I think sport comes first," said Wolff. "He's going to stay away from,

GPDA WRITES TO FIA TO DISCUSS MUGELLO PILE-UP

FORMULA 1

The Grand Prix Drivers' Association wrote to the FIA ahead of last weekend's Russian Grand Prix to discuss the safety car restart that led to a crash and red flag in the preceding Tuscan GP at Mugello.

Many drivers were left unhappy about the restart in the opening stages at the Italian circuit, where the field did not get up to speed until it was close to the start-finish line, causing a multi-car crash lower down the order.

It led to questions from drivers about potential changes to the safety car restart rules, with those at the front of the pack believing the lights on the safety car went out too late in a bid to make the race more interesting.

GPDA director Romain Grosjean (below) confirmed that he had written to FIA race director Michael Masi along with fellow director Sebastian Vettel and chairman Alexander Wurz to discuss the matter.

"We wrote a letter to Michael Masi and tried to find out what we can do better," said Grosjean. "I don't think there was anything standing out in Mugello in terms of restarts. It was a lot of small things that led to a big crash at the end, but maybe a few tweaks in some of the rules could possibly help."

"And that's what we want to discuss, to avoid such a scary moment. And I guess we were kind of lucky with everything, that we didn't end up with someone being hurt."

LUKE SMITH



Domenicali's friendship with Schumacher outlasted the German's time at Ferrari

BECOMES F1 PRESIDENT



Steiner says Haas would not be in F1 without Domenicali

in my opinion, artificial things. He's a purist, but equally understands that you need to keep your spectators and your audiences interested. That balance is really complicated to have right, and I think he will get that right."

Six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton called Domenicali's appointment "amazing", believing he is the perfect replacement for Carey. "I know Stefano really well – he's one of the nicest guys I know," said Hamilton. "I don't think they could have really chosen someone better to replace some big shoes with Chase, who has done an amazing job and has always had such a great approach. I think Stefano has got a great heart, good family and good morals, so the future is positive."

Carey will stay on as CEO until the end of this year to assist the transition to Domenicali, who officially starts in his new role on 1 January. Carey will remain part of F1's senior management, taking up the role of non-executive chairman in 2021. He leaves the role fresh off completing talks with teams over the new Concorde Agreement that will come into force from 2021, with the final signatures being secured in August.

"I'm proud of the team that's not only navigated through an immensely challenging 2020 but returned with added purpose and determination in the areas of sustainability, diversity and inclusion," said Carey. "I'm confident that we've built the strong foundation for the business to grow over the long term. It's been an adventure and I've enjoyed working with the teams, the FIA and all of our partners. I look forward to staying involved and supporting Stefano as he takes the wheel."

LUKE SMITH



DTM pushes ahead into a new future with GT3 cars

DTM

The DTM is set to undergo a major overhaul in 2021, when it will ditch its 'Class 1' silhouette cars run by manufacturer teams in favour of a privateer-led, GT3-based formula.

Gerhard Berger, chairman of the ITR that runs the series, announced at the recent Nurburgring round that the DTM would continue to exist in 2021, and that current DTM manufacturers Audi and BMW have voted in favour of the new regulations and will support their customers in the category. This comes after Mercedes pulled out at the end of 2018, the Aston Martin project lasted just one year in 2019, and Audi announced that 2020 would be its last season, leaving only BMW standing.

The new formula will be christened GT Pro and Berger plans to have the regulations finalised by the 2020 title decider at Hockenheim in early November. Although the details are sparse at the moment, the modifications will be minimal to keep costs under control.

Berger said the upgrades would be aimed at improving the spectacle and aligning GT3 cars to a sprint racing format. It is understood that this could include bumping up the engines to produce 600bhp, although this has yet to be confirmed by the series. A system of Balance of Performance will be used to ensure equitable performance, with Berger feeling it is a necessary evil in GT racing.

While BMW and Audi have pledged support for the new GT3-based DTM, this is likely to be limited to technical knowledge and spare parts, although

Berger has not ruled out the possibility of manufacturers financially assisting their customer teams. He said that several other manufacturers have shown interest in racing in the DTM, but he insists he has not entered into any "substantial discussions" with them.

It remains unclear if manufacturers will have to bear the cost of upgrading the cars, with BMW sporting chief Jens Marquardt in particular ruling out making changes to its outgoing M6 for 2021, especially when the new M4-based GT3 car will be ready in time for the 2022 season. Mercedes appears to have a similar stance.

All three current Audi teams — Abt, Phoenix and Rosberg — have shown initial interest in competing in a GT3-based DTM, but none want to commit to the category before the regulations are finalised and the budget can be ascertained.

As part of sweeping changes for 2021, all teams will be required to secure a budget of their own in a bid to reduce reliance on manufacturers.

"For sure we have rough calculations, but detailed figures we still don't have because we don't know tyre regulations," said Abt team boss Thomas Biermaier. "To make a budget, we need to know if we are limited with staff, tyres and the sporting and technical rules. If we know these rules, I can give you a rough estimation, but currently it's too early to be honest."

The possibility of BMW teams RMG and RBM remaining in the DTM could well depend on whether or not a BMW car will be ready for the new ruleset.

RACHIT THUKRAL

WEC boss to stand down

WEC

Gerard Neveu is stepping down from the helm of the World Endurance Championship. The Frenchman will vacate his position as CEO of the series on 31 December after the end of the current campaign in Bahrain next month.

The 55-year-old will relinquish his position at Le Mans Endurance Management, the organisation owned by WEC promoter the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, after nine years. He was recruited from the Paul Ricard circuit to run the series ahead of the rebirth of the WEC for the 2012 season.

"After nine years at the head of this superb motorsport programme, I think it is time for me to hand over the baton and allow new life to be breathed into the organisation under the leadership of Pierre Fillon [president of the ACO]," said Neveu. "Great pages in endurance racing's history books will open in a few months, in particular with the arrival of LM Hypercar and LMDh, and I have no doubt about the successes to come."

Neveu explained that the challenges faced by the WEC since 2016 with the withdrawal of first Audi and then Porsche, followed by the world health crisis, had forced him to spend too much time away from his family, something he now wanted to address. He stressed that he did not have a new job lined up and wasn't sure if he will remain in motorsport.

Names linked to the vacancy at LMEM, which also runs the European Le Mans Series, include former McLaren and Lotus Formula 1 team boss Eric Boullier. The Frenchman, 46, has strong links with Le Mans: from 2003-09 he was managing director of the DAMS team, which is based at the circuit.

GARY WATKINS





NURBURGRING 24 HOURS The Aston Martin Vantage GT8R finished its Nurburgring 24 Hours debut last weekend, driven by Darren Turner, Jonny Adam, Chris Goodwin and Alexander West and run by the Garage 59 squad. The GT8R is based on the same chassis as Aston uses in GTE, GT3 and GT4, and is positioned halfway between GT3 and GT4. It is aimed at those who wish to compete in the SP8T class in the 24 Hours and the Nurburgring-based NLS.

Castroneves returns – with McLaren SP squad

INDYCAR SERIES

Three-time Indy 500 winner Helio Castroneves will return to the IndyCar grid in this weekend's Harvest Grand Prix double-header on the Indianapolis road course with Arrow McLaren SP.

Castroneves's opportunity arises as a result of rookie Oliver Askew having to stand down on medical grounds. The American, who scored a podium finish at Iowa Speedway in July, reported a "balance and coordination issue" following the recent Mid-Ohio double-header, and the IndyCar Medical Team has not cleared him to race.

The problem is believed to be a lingering concussion from a heavy shunt in August's Indy 500, although Askew has raced at Gateway and Mid-Ohio since then.

Castroneves will race an IndyCar for a team other than Penske for the first time since 1999 in what he may consider an audition ahead of his hoped-for return to IndyCar in 2021. With the Acura Team Penske IMSA partnership dissolving at season's end, the 45-year-old Brazilian was informed by management that this year's

Indy 500 was his last race for the squad and he was free to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Asked for an update, Castroneves (right) told Autosport: "I've been talking to four teams that showed interest. One told me to wait until next month [October]; another is waiting to see if his driver will retire or not; another is about to get the funds but nothing yet; and the last one wants to do Indy 500 only and I am trying to get the full season. The good news is that there are opportunities but we have to be patient. In IMSA I did speak with one team as well and they look very interested."

Meanwhile, James Hinchcliffe (right) will return to Andretti Autosport at Indy and the season finale at St Petersburg, following Zach Vech's decision to stand down from the line-up before his three-year deal was quite finished. Vech, whose best results have been two fourth places, brought Gainbridge backing to Andretti Autosport but, as the contract renewal date approaches, it is not yet clear whether the sponsor will continue to align itself with Vech or continue with Michael Andretti's team.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ



Rossi secures MotoGP future with Petronas SRT Yamaha

MOTOGP

Valentino Rossi's 2021 deal to join his protege Franco Morbidelli at Petronas SRT in MotoGP and remain a Yamaha rider was made official at last weekend's Catalan Grand Prix following months of discussions.

The nine-time grand prix motorcycle world champion found out at the start of this year that he would lose his place at the factory Yamaha squad, because the Japanese marque was forced to act to stave off Ducati's interest in Fabio Quartararo and Maverick Vinales while Rossi decided to wait six or seven races to assess his performances before making a decision on his future.

But the coronavirus pandemic forced Rossi to change his plans, and he confirmed in July that he was "99%" likely to join SRT in 2021. The delay in signing the contract was thought to revolve around who he would be able to take with him to SRT, with Rossi confirming ahead of signing the deal last week that he would only be taking crew chief David Munoz, data analyst Matteo Flamigni and rider coach Idalio Gavira with him.

Rossi will receive full factory support from Yamaha, and will have machine parity with works riders Vinales and Quartararo.

Although Rossi originally wanted a



one-plus-one deal, he was only offered a straight single-year contract. Yamaha boss Lin Jarvis explained that this was because of a "technicality" as the marque is yet to sign a new agreement with series organiser Dorna Sports for 2022-26 – although this is fully

expected to happen – so does not have a satellite deal in place with SRT beyond 2021.

Should all parties be happy come the middle of next year, discussions will be held about extending Rossi's contract into 2022.

LEWIS DUNCAN

ART links up with 'visionary' Newey and Vergne

EXTREME E

When ART Grand Prix withdrew its bid to enter the 2011 Formula 1 season, the chances of Lewis Hamilton ever sparring against the team that had taken him to the 2006 GP2 Series title spoils took a blow. But now they will do battle, of sorts.

The French single-seater giant will now compete in Extreme E as a technical partner to the Veloce Racing concern backed by Jean-Eric Vergne and Adrian Newey.

That means ART GP, which also runs Robert Kubica in a privateer BMW M4 in the DTM, will go up against Hamilton's X44 squad in the inaugural

season of the all-electric off-road SUV series.

Newey, who is listed as Veloce Racing's 'lead visionary', said: "To work with an extremely successful and solid 'pair of hands' like ART Grand Prix – who have competed and won in so many series as well as helped develop some of the world's best drivers and engineers – gives Veloce Racing a great head start."

Meanwhile, reigning World Rallycross champion Timmy Hansen (left) and Junior World Rally driver Catie Munnings have been named for the Andretti United Autosports XE team.

MATT KEW



MARIA/DPPI

P45 WTCR REPORT



Hyundai boycotts Nordschleife

WORLD TOURING CAR CUP

Hyundai pulled its teams out of last weekend's World Touring Car Cup round at the Nurburgring Nordschleife, saying it is "not made to feel welcome" in the series.

In a short statement released just prior to first practice, the South Korean manufacturer said that it believes it has been unfairly treated by the WTCR. It came after the opening round at Zolder, where Hyundai's reigning champion Norbert Michelisz scored the marque's best finish of eighth in his BRC-run i30 N.

It is understood that Hyundai's grievance has its roots in BoP rules and a new ECU system, which it believes has made the i30 N package uncompetitive.

"Hyundai Motorsport has the feeling that

neither the company nor our customer teams are given equal treatment in the series to other competitors and are not made to feel welcome," read a statement.

Following Hyundai's withdrawal, the FIA issued a statement saying it would speak to the marque's customer teams – BRC and Team Engstler – and reiterated that its aim is to ensure fairness in motorsport.

"All the three parties [FIA, WSC and promoter Eurosport Events] are united in their mission to deliver a fair competition for all entrants, from a sporting, technical and promotional point of view, providing a platform to compete on an equal basis. EEL, FIA and WSC look forward to continued and constructive dialogue with Hyundai Motorsport's customer teams."

RACHIT THUKRAL AND MARCUS SIMMONS

REMEMBER WHEN...

Alfa Romeo boycotted the fifth round of the 1994 British Touring Car Championship at Oulton Park amid an eligibility row over the aerodynamics of its 155 TS. Instead it went testing at Pembrey, revised aero rules were written, and Gabriele Tarquini went on to win the title. Autosport debates the greatest touring car of all time as part of our 70th birthday podcast series. [Go to bit.ly/GreatestTintop](https://bit.ly/GreatestTintop)



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IN THE HEADLINES

CONSTABLE ON BTCC BEAT

Ex-Ginetta GT4 and Radical Challenge ace Jac Constable will become the latest to drive the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra in next week's British Touring Car Championship round at Croft. The 22-year-old has already tested the car at Donington Park. Series debutante Jade Edwards raced the Vauxhall at Silverstone, the ex-Clio contender scoring a best result of 21st. She was pushed wide by Thruxton bad boy Andy Neate in race one, returned the favour in race two, and the two collided again in the finale before Edwards retired with power-steering problems.

BATHURST 12H DOUBTS

The Bathurst 12 Hour is unlikely to go ahead as an international event in February due to the continuing coronavirus border restrictions in Australia making it difficult for overseas teams to attend. The race could be replaced for 2021 by an Australian Supercars sprint round.

RENAULT FIGHT CONTINUES

Victor Martins and Caio Collet dominated last weekend's Formula Renault Eurocup round at Zandvoort to continue their battle for the title. ART Grand Prix driver Martins won the opening from R-ace-run Renault F1 Junior Collet, before the result was reversed in race two. David Vidales and Franco Colapinto each scored a third. Martins continues to lead Collet in the standings by two points. Meanwhile, Renault Sport has confirmed its mooted support slot to the Emilia Romagna GP at Imola.

PIASTRI BACK IN OLD SEAT

Reigning Renault Eurocup champion Oscar Piastri returned to the series for the pre-weekend Zandvoort test. The Australian, winner of this year's FIA F3 title, rejoined the R-ace GP squad, but could not race due to rules prohibiting ex-champions competing. He will likely race at Zandvoort in 2021 should he secure his intended F2 graduation.

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Le Mans winners return to GT

GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES

The United Autosports squad is dominating the LMP2 division in both the World Endurance Championship and the European Le Mans Series at the moment. Not content with seven wins on the trot across the two series – including the recent Le Mans 24 Hours – it is now heading back to the GT ranks for the first time since 2015 and has aspirations to compete at the very top of the GT3 arena.

The British-based squad, co-owned by McLaren Racing boss Zak Brown and Richard Dean, has announced an assault on next year's GT4 European Series with a pair of McLarens. It has its sights set on the GT World Challenge Europe and the Intercontinental GT Challenge in 2022.

"We are really happy with everything we are doing in the WEC and ELMS, and we thought the time was right to get back into GT racing as an incremental programme and start with GT4 and see where it leads," said

Brown (right). "GT3 is the desired goal, maybe as early as 2022.

Dean explained that United is targeting "the top series" for GT3 machinery. "If the IGTC is still up and running, that is where we'd like to be with a pro line-up and a semi-factory-type effort," he said. "We want to do all the big GT3 races – Bathurst, Spa, Kyalami [which are all on the IGTC calendar]."

Dean described the GT4 assault in 2021 as a necessary step in order to build a new team separate to its prototype operations. "We want to go in there and try to win, and we thought it would be a big step to go straight into GT3 and compete at the very front," he said.

It makes sense for the team to run McLaren's 570S GT4 car, according to Brown, who went on to stress that he keeps his role with the British marque separate to his interests in United. "The 570S [above] was the obvious choice, though I would have also been comfortable running Mercedes



HONE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

because of the Formula 1 relationship [via McLaren next year]," he said.

"To have the team running around with Ferraris or Lamborghinis might have been a bit awkward."

Dean suggested that the projected move into GT3 would most likely be with the McLaren 720S, but didn't rule out running the Mercedes-AMG GT3s it acquired when it bought the assets of the Strakka Racing team last month. The deal with the Silverstone-based operation was made to help facilitate its GT expansion.

GARY WATKINS

Acura revved up for new LMDh future

IMSA

Acura has given the firmest commitment yet of any manufacturer that it will develop an LMDh prototype. The "Honda marque says it is "intending to go forward" into the new category when it comes on stream in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in 2022 or 2023.

The reigning Daytona Prototype international champion marque isn't quite saying that it will definitely develop an LMDh hybrid out of one of the new breed of LMP2 cars. It has stressed that it can't do that until it has had time to fully digest new rules that were released to the manufacturers last week.



"We are not confirming an LMDh programme today, though clearly that is our desire," said Ted Klaus, president of Honda Performance Development, which masterminds the Acura Motorsports programmes. He described the opportunity to race hybrid machinery in the IMSA series for the first time as "super-exciting".

"As long as everyone keeps all the commitments we've been talking about with DPi 2.0 [the working title for the

new category] and LMDh, it is our intention to go forward," he explained. "We are technical people, we are racers, so we want to see the details first."

Klaus also revealed that HPD has agreed multi-year contracts with Wayne Taylor Racing and Meyer Shank Racing, which will each run a single Acura ARX-05 DPi next season after the manufacturer and Penske opted not to continue their relationship in IMSA's top class.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

'FLU' RULES FRIJNS OUT

Robin Frijns was forced to stand down from Audi's Nurburgring 24 Hours attack last weekend due to what the German manufacturer called a 'flu-like infection'. Frijns was due to share a Car Collection Motorsport R8 LMS with Mirko Bortolotti, Christopher Haase and Markus Winkelhock before the decision was made after second qualifying. He was tested for COVID-19, with a negative result. The car went on to finish second.

AUDI SPORT TV CHANNEL

Audi has become the latest make to launch a dedicated channel on Autosport sister platform Motorsport.tv. The Audi Sport channel kicked off last weekend with action and behind-the-scenes footage from the Nurburgring 24 Hours, and will also include Formula E, the DTM and Audi's remaining customer racing activities.

YE DENIED BY DUNNER

Runaway Euroformula Open points leader Yifei Ye won only one of the three races at Monza last weekend. While the Chinese took victory on Saturday, CryptoTower team-mate Lukas Dunner – who hasn't contested a full EFO season due to his FIA F3 commitments – scored in both races on Sunday. British F3 ace Ayrton Simmons took a best finish of fifth, while reigning British F4 champion Zane Maloney peaked with a fourth.

LLOYD STILL LEADS THE WAY

Ex-BTCC racer Daniel Lloyd continues to lead the TCR Europe standings, despite a puncture forcing him out of last weekend's second race at Monza after contact with Mehdi Bennani. Lloyd, driving a Brutal Fish Racing Honda Civic, was second in the opener behind the JSB Peugeot 308 of Julien Briche, and Briche came close to winning the reversed-grid sequel, only to be denied by Lloyd's team-mate Pepe Oriola. A Fiat Tipo made its debut in the hands of ex-Formula 3000 racer Luca Rangoni.



IndyCar focusing on US growth

INDYCAR

IndyCar CEO Mark Miles says that the series will focus on its growth in North America instead of trying to expand on the international stage as it moves into a new era under the ownership of US motorsport giant Roger Penske.

Speaking in the latest of Autosport's series of #thinkingforward podcasts with motorsport leaders around the world, Miles said: "We're still very focused, frankly, on North America. We've had opportunities to consider racing abroad. For now, the answer to those inquiries is, 'No, we're going to focus on the US'. So let's drill down and really accomplish everything we can in the US market. With all due respect to Formula 1, I think in the States we're the dominant open-wheel series and what more can we do with that?"

IndyCar has most recently added a new street race in Nashville to its schedule for 2021, and Miles says that the series wants to keep the split between ovals, road courses and street circuits at one-third each.

"We don't have a quota, but the balance is important to us," he said. "And so we just very deliberately think about how to maintain the balance, and it isn't precise,

but it's been more or less a third, a third, a third. Ovals are never in the middle of a city – Indianapolis is maybe the exception. To attract fans to go maybe 30 or 60 minutes from a city is increasingly a challenge because there's so much competition in sports and entertainment. So we have to work really hard on that.

"Street tracks I love because to me, like in Nashville's case, when we put it right in the middle of the city, as we do in St Petersburg [above], Long Beach, Detroit and Toronto, it takes over the city. But they're hard to do – you have to find the right combination of elements that will accept some disruption and really embrace it.

"And then road courses are easier, you know that somebody has already made the investment. And we know where those tracks are. And it's really a matter of embracing them in a way that balances with the other two formats."

Miles also believes that the series can attract a third manufacturer to join Honda and Chevrolet, despite the setback of coronavirus. "That's a challenge, but it's something that Roger Penske is maybe uniquely in the world able to be successful in," he said. "We've been working on it for a while."

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The peril of the undeserved ban

The fact that one of motorsport's cleanest racers could have faced the prospect of being forced to miss a grand prix shines a light on the difficulties of policing F1

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

He sees the puff of dust rising from the gravel trap. He sees the car away in the distance to his left. He is on a critical final run in qualifying. He needs to hit back against a resurgent team-mate. He doesn't see the waved double-yellow flags. He's in trouble.

He gets the inevitable penalty. He misses the next race.

In another universe in two weeks' time, this could have been Lewis Hamilton. That's the six-time world champion with none of the driving controversies that dogged the careers of his hero Ayrton Senna and the driver he is surely soon set to equal as statistically the greatest of all time: Michael Schumacher.

This figurative portrait is not too far off a travesty. And yet this was very nearly reality. When the 2020 Russian Grand Prix stewards handed Hamilton his pair of penalties for his pre-race practice start violations, they added a point to his superlicence for each infraction. This took him to 10 points, as he had come into the weekend with eight. Two were from his collision with Alex Albon in Brazil last year, two more for the scenario outlined above in the season opener's qualifying session, two more for colliding with Albon again the next day at the Red Bull Ring, and two more for entering the closed pitlane during the Italian GP. Two more would have sent him to 12 and the race-ban rule introduced in 2014 (where points come off after 12 months, with none elapsing for Hamilton until after the Turkish GP in November).

“Sporting penalties were enough. The points felt heavy handed – and this is a problem”

Thankfully, three hours after Valtteri Bottas crossed the line to win in Sochi, these two additional points were rescinded.

“The stewards have just now rescinded the penalty points on both those decisions, because they thought it was inappropriate – and as a result, have fined the team €25,000 for that instruction,” said Formula 1 race director Michael Masi.

Sense prevailed. But last Sunday's saga has again highlighted the difficulties of policing modern F1. This is a problem that is exacerbated by the cesspool of social media, where pointless pontificating and anonymous cowardice combine with tribalism (here's looking at you, Twitter). Because here's the thing. F1 has evolved into a high-tech world where teams and drivers will push to the limit in every area to gain an advantage. This has always been the case, but as teams can no longer find seconds' worth of

performance with single innovations, they will push the boundaries elsewhere. And they're doing their jobs.

Returning to the case of Hamilton's practice start violations – by his own reasoning, he wanted to complete these in a different place to the rest of the pack because “it's not representative of what it's like on the grid”. Good thinking. But nevertheless, an attempt to gain an advantage, which is why he was given a sporting penalty.

A fair cop, as the place for practice starts was defined in Masi's event notes. Mercedes questioned the penalty post-race – Toto Wolff called it “far-fetched” – but the sporting damage was already done. The team itself said “we hadn't realised quite how far he was going to go”, and the squad clearly wasn't setting out to gain an advantage because Bottas was not told to copy his team-mate. But it is right to query the nuance of Masi's notes to avoid a repeat.

So, Hamilton must take his share of the blame, given the race director's notes are distributed to all competitors, as must the team for telling him it was OK. But the sporting penalties were enough. The points felt heavy-handed – and this is a problem.

Let's consider the Sochi track's second-corner complex and the controversial runoff area that was in the headlines last weekend. This is modern F1's evolution issue in microcosm: solutions, such as asphalt runoffs, beget additional problems – track-limits violations – and the next solution, the boarded lane to negotiate before rejoining, led to Carlos Sainz Jr's crash.

Back to the penalty points. Obvious dangerous driving should be punished. But situations where it's not just a driver's actions involved are less clear cut. For example, Esteban Ocon got a three-place grid drop and a penalty point for impeding George Russell in qualifying for the second Silverstone race, when the team had not warned him about Russell's imminent arrival until very late. The team factor cannot be ignored.

So, should the bar for penalty points be raised to create wriggle room? Should the penalty points be split into smaller sanctions? Where does it end? Far ranging, complex and binding F1 rules have caused uproar before – notably at the 2019 Canadian GP, where Sebastian Vettel squeezed Hamilton towards a wall after running off the track. The Canada frustration concerned the letter of the law, whereas the Sochi scenario is contentious for the extent of the punishment that was initially handed out. Thankfully, sense prevailed in the most recent case.

Of course, a driver's existing penalty points total shouldn't be taken into account in an individual decision, but to have one of F1's cleanest racers on the verge of a ban because of points accrued without including a single outwardly dirty move? It just wouldn't have felt right. ❧

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When two becomes one

Number one drivers normally have that status for very good reasons, but sometimes in the World Rally Championship things take a different turn

NICK GARTON

In every discipline of motorsport, a successful team needs a star performer around whom everyone flits like pilot fish accompanying a great white shark – and that includes their team-mates. Sporting purity is a lofty ambition, but drivers who take points off each other are bad for business. Michael Schumacher needed an Eddie Irvine or Rubens Barrichello alongside him in Ferrari's F1 pomp, just as Sebastien Loeb's World Rally domination for Citroen owed much to the work of Dani Sordo.

When Toyota team boss Tommi Makinen assembled his all-new squad for 2020, six-time world champion Sebastien Ogier was drafted in as the natural leader for as long as it took the mindbending talent of Kalle Rovanpera to mature.

A British driver is also of high importance at Toyota, as that is where large numbers of its cars are assembled and sold. With only Elfyn Evans or Kris Meeke to choose from, Makinen played play safe with Evans, who had given Ogier valuable support at M-Sport. The Welshman now stands atop the points table with two rounds to go, holding a healthy 18-point cushion to Ogier in second.

Both of Hyundai's drivers, Ott Tanak and Thierry Neuville, are also in with a shout. So too is Rovanpera, and there is a hair's breadth between Toyota and Hyundai in the manufacturers' battle.

This begs the intriguing question of whether Ogier will now be asked to take the role of understudy. We seldom get the chance to

who had won the Swedish Rally and since then dominated regional Scandinavian events. His Quattro was fitted with Michelin tyres that proved superior to the Klebers fitted to the works cars.

Indeed, some of this much-improved rubber was 'inadvertently' fitted by the works team – but, in a clear case of Audi shooting itself in the foot, the Michelins went onto Mikkola's car. An enraged Mouton went flat-out through Finland, matching Blomqvist's stage times until she pushed things a little too far on the third day. Her Quattro only suffered light damage, but Mouton stalked off into the woods with a 'sod-the-lot-of-you' air about her. Blomqvist was then ordered to slow for Mikkola to win unchallenged.

Sanremo came next and Audi brought a fleet of six cars, which proved a logistical nightmare from which Mouton emerged in fourth place (behind Rohrl) while Blomqvist took the win.

Most histories will tell you that the 1982 world championship was lost when Mouton crashed out within sight of victory on the penultimate round, the Ivory Coast. In reality her team had dropped the ball long before, and henceforth Audi would dictate number one and number two drivers for the season.

The Quattro's dominance was laid waste by the Peugeot 205 Turbo 16. Team leader Ari Vatanen won five times in a row through late 1984 and early 1985, by which time he was supported by Timo Salonen, a reliable veteran of marathon events.

The chain-smoking Salonen was initially some way off his more athletic team-mate's pace. Yet with a change in the geometry and a whiff of power-steering available in Portugal, Salonen took off and Vatanen crashed out in his pursuit. On the Safari, Salonen coaxed his disintegrating 205 to the finish and got four more points than Vatanen. In Corsica, Vatanen crashed out in truly terrifying style, but Salonen was also waylaid by electrical problems.

Next came the Acropolis and another Salonen victory, while Vatanen's steering broke. Salonen led home a Peugeot 1-2 in New Zealand by 77 seconds, building a 33-point cushion over his notional leader with five rallies remaining.

Their battle ended violently in Argentina, where Vatanen's luck ran out entirely in a life-threatening crash. The mantle of team leader passed wholly to Salonen, who would duly deliver Jean Todt's team its first clean sweep of world championship titles.

Since then we have seen Juha Kankkunen defy Lancia's preference for an Italian world champion in 1987, and Colin McRae memorably usurp Carlos Sainz to claim the 1995 title. Since then, the status quo has been maintained, until now.

Evans's softly-softly approach has netted only 11 stage wins to Ogier's 15 (and Neuville's 26) but that is still enough to bring two victories and with them an enviable championship lead. The question now is how Toyota and Ogier will respond – and whether they can endure the oncoming storm from Hyundai. 🌩️

“An enraged Mouton went flat-out through Finland until she pushed things too far”

see how teams react in this situation, but it is always memorable.

One such occasion came in 1982, when it seemed that Audi's revolutionary Quattro, after a year of development, gave team leader Hannu Mikkola one hand on the title before turning a wheel. As it turned out, Mikkola scored just one second place in the first eight rallies of the season, crashing out four times, suffering two mechanical retirements and not starting the Safari.

Meanwhile the team's number two, Michele Mouton, won in Portugal, Greece and Brazil, salvaged fifth in Sweden after crashing into Mikkola's stranded car, and salvaged four points in Corsica, the Quattro's bogey event. With four rounds remaining, only Mouton could hope to catch Opel's points leader Walter Rohrl and the 1000 Lakes came next – perfect Audi territory.

To cement its advantage, Audi welcomed back Stig Blomqvist,



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YOUR SAY

The penalty for Lewis Hamilton at Sochi was clearly wrong. What he did may be against the spirit of the regulation, but not the letter

COLIN SCRIVENER

Wrong to penalise Lewis Hamilton

The penalty for Lewis Hamilton at Sochi was clearly wrong, and based on flawed logic. Regulation 19.1 states that “practice starts may only be carried out on the right-hand side after the pit exit lights”. Lewis was not before the lights nor level with the lights, thus by definition he was after the lights.

Nor does it state “not at the pit exit”. Consequently he did not infringe the instructions. What Lewis did may be against the spirit of the regulation, but not the letter. Moreover what was done by Lewis/Mercedes is similar to the approach taken by all drivers at Sao Paulo.

Articles have pointed out (in mistaken justification) that the job of the steward is to apply the regulations “to the letter”. This they certainly did not do in this particular case.

Incidentally, I cannot avoid the observation that the actions of Carlos Sainz Jr and Max Verstappen at Turn 2 on the first lap while being within the letter of the regulations/instructions were far more dangerous than the actions of Hamilton.

Colin Scrivener

By email

Let down by those in charge

We are living in a world where we are *all* being let down by those in charge. Nice to see the FIA joining in this trend... Lewis Hamilton two points away from a race ban? I'd laugh if it wasn't so soul-destroyingly stupid.

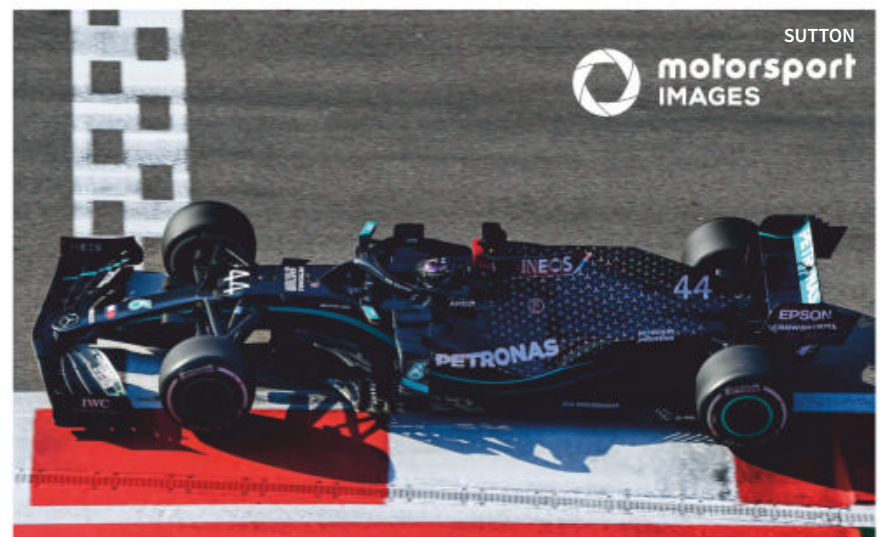
Alan Neale

By email

Race ruined by the stewards

The Russian GP should have been a race where we saw whether Lewis Hamilton could still win even though he was on the wrong tyres, combined with a real midfield challenge between Renault, McLaren and Racing Point. Instead the stewards stepped in and ruined it.

First, Lewis gets a 10-second penalty for a pre-race incident, which as Toto Wolff pointed out was down to a badly worded race director's note. Of course they gave him his points back on



his licence, but ruined the race in the process. Let's not forget in the past they have slapped wrists for speeding in the pitlane on the way to the grid – was what Lewis did more dangerous?

I could nearly forgive it if it wasn't for the farce of the Turn 2 penalties. Carlos Sainz Jr destroyed his car by trying to follow the race director's instructions – why did he bother? Sergio Perez and Pierre Gasly both cut the same corner on lap one and received no penalty and went on to score good points.

What made it more farcical was that later Daniel Ricciardo gets a five-second penalty even though he didn't gain an advantage, he just overshot the braking when his team-mate was letting him past.

Susan Duthie

By email

Is Pirelli due a pat on the back?

Until recently grands prix were limited to a single racing line, deviation from this groove precluded by the marbles; we now see spectacular overtakes, with drivers 'chucking it around the outside'. Has Pirelli, so often Formula 1's whipping boy, been given due credit for this?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone

Elland, West Yorks


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Bottas has now won nine
F1 races, matching Mark
Webber and Max
Verstappen



WHY BOTTAS WAS DESTINED TO WIN THE RUSSIAN GP

Penalties for Lewis Hamilton prevented an intriguing Mercedes battle from playing out — one Valtteri Bottas probably would have won

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
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HONEY

Unusually for a Russian Grand Prix, this was set to be one to watch closely. How events transpired in the 2020 Sochi race will indeed mean it lives long in Formula 1's collective memory, but for very different reasons than had been expected when the field woke up last Sunday morning.

Lewis Hamilton was starting from his 96th F1 career pole, but he wasn't exactly happy about it.

Two things had rather irked Mercedes' world champion. For a start, he would be heading off the line on the red-walled soft tyres. Immediately behind him, Max Verstappen's Red Bull and the Mercedes of eventual race winner Valtteri Bottas were on the significantly more durable medium tyres.

Then there was the very long run from the grid to the race's first braking point – the ever-tricky Turn 2. As has been seen in the past at Sochi, being in front through such a lengthy acceleration zone into the right-hander puts the leader at a big disadvantage, as the cars behind have a healthy slipstream.

"I did plead to have the medium tyre but they weren't having it," Hamilton had said after qualifying. "[Pole is] not a good place to start at all and I think this year you're seeing our cars are more draggy, and there's more tow this year than we've seen in other years. I generally

expect one of these two to come flying by at some point."

So far, so simple, if perplexing for Hamilton, who said he would have to "sit down to try to figure out if there's a different kind of race I can do to keep my position".

But whatever plan he may have drawn up to overcome his rubber and tow problems suddenly became of much less interest minutes before the start. After he had brought his W11 to the grid for the pre-race procedures, it emerged that Hamilton was under investigation for completing his reconnaissance laps practice starts in an incorrect place.

Hamilton does not like to conduct his pre-race launch practices at the same place as the other drivers, as he feels the rubbery surface in the designated areas here – "on the right-hand side after the pit exit lights", per the Sochi event notes of F1 race director Michael Masi – isn't representative of the grid surface. So he asked Mercedes if he could complete his practice starts further down the pitlane, and was told this was allowed.

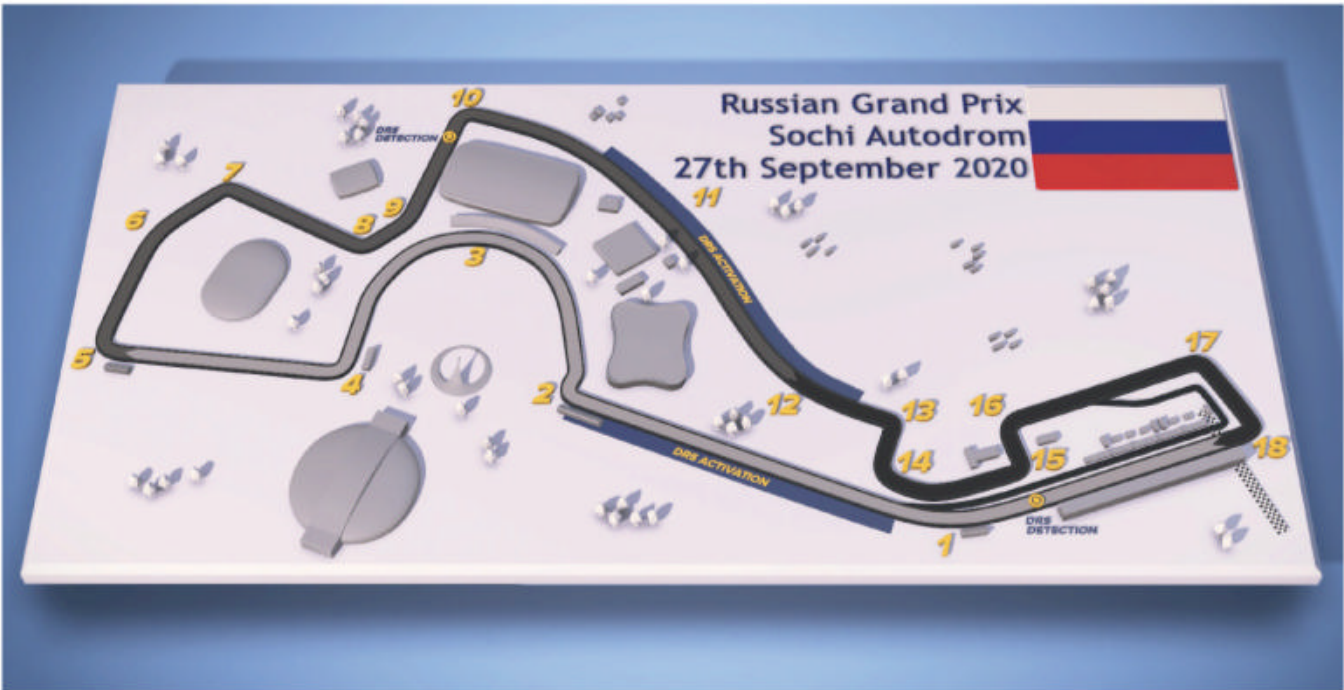
But the stewards felt this contravened two rules, the first concerning the event-notes-mandated practice start area, and also Article 36.1 of F1's sporting rules, which requires the drivers to use constant throttle and speed in the pit exit, apart from at the defined practice start area.

When the lights went out, the investigation was still looming over Hamilton, but no decision had been forthcoming. And so the run to Turn 2 commenced as normal, but things didn't go quite as >>

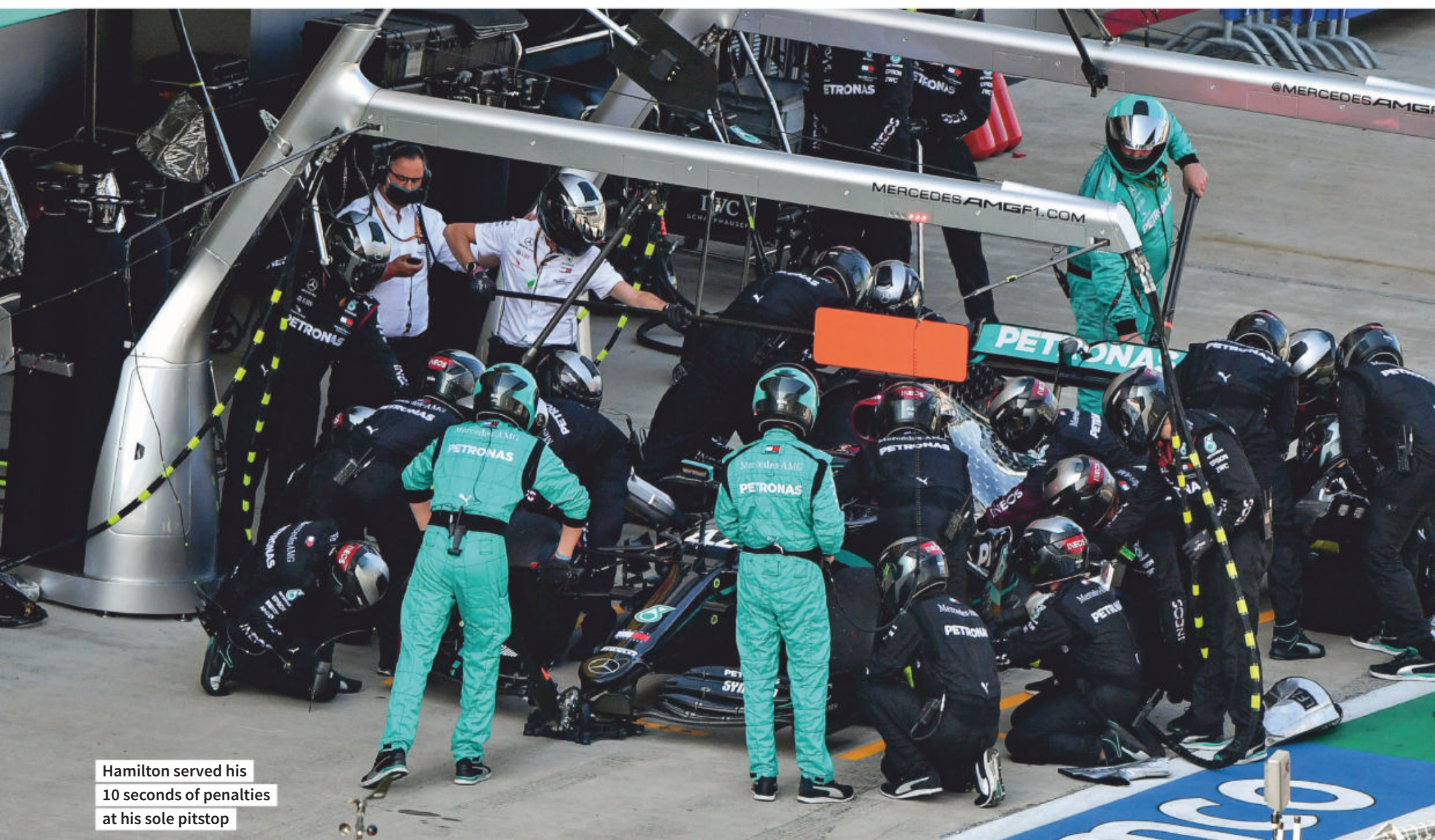


Hamilton just holds off Bottas, who has already stormed by Verstappen

SOCHI TRACK LAYOUT



ETHERINGTON



badly as Hamilton had feared. In fact it was Verstappen who immediately conceded a position. The Red Bull driver appeared to react well enough, but “as soon as I dropped the clutch you could just feel there was no grip”.

“I thought initially I just had a bad start, but then I looked in the mirror and I could see the whole line behind me had a poor start as well,” he added.

So Bottas’s path to victory was made that bit easier, and it nearly became two cars in two corners (if we can call the Turn 1 kink a corner), as he used the tow to surge in on Hamilton and attack to the outside of Turn 2. For a moment he was leading. But Bottas carried in too much speed and had to check up, careful, yet frantic, in avoiding fully cutting the kerbs at the second apex leading into the long left-hand Turn 3.

But this opening sequence had three stings in its tail. “There was like a massive bee or something that hit my visor just before braking,” Bottas later explained. “I couldn’t really see when I should brake, so that’s why I went too deep.”

The other two stings concerned the violent race endings for Carlos Sainz Jr and Lance Stroll, which diverted attention from the Hamilton investigation and the intra-Mercedes battle as they led to the race being suspended further around the first lap.

Sainz had slid off after braking late for Turn 2, and he followed Verstappen around the marker boards Masi’s ever-more-often-quoted notes required the drivers to negotiate before rejoining from the runoff in Turn 3. But whereas Verstappen was tighter to the wall, having gone off deeper under attack from the surging Daniel Ricciardo, the McLaren driver was approaching the bollards from a much narrower angle, and the speed at which he tried to turn around them was simply too great. He smashed into the wall, ripped his left-front wheel off and bounced back into the path of the pack, causing, among others, team-mate Lando Norris to slow to avoid the wreckage.

At the next braking point, Turn 4, Stroll and Charles Leclerc were fighting over seventh and, as the Racing Point swung back ahead on the outside line at the exit of the right-hander, the Ferrari’s

left-front caught its right-rear and Stroll was pitched into the barriers. The safety car was called out and the race neutralised as the cars and scattered parts were removed.

The race resumed at the start of lap six, a thankfully tame affair after the crash-filled danger of the Mugello safety car restart, with Hamilton immediately stalking away to a 1.469-second lead as he led the pack back to racing speed. But on the following tour the verdict was handed down. Twice. Hamilton was given a pair of five-second penalties to serve at his pitstop for the practice start violations.

He fumed over the radio and his team interrogated the interpretation of the rules in question. “I’m not happy with the penalty because it’s

“I WILL ALWAYS RESPECT THE STEWARDS, BUT ON THAT ONE WE JUST AGREED TO DISAGREE”



SUTTON



far-fetched," Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said after the race, while Hamilton explained he had acted as he had "done it for years" concerning a practice start further down pit exits, citing Interlagos as a specific example.

Wolff added: "I will always respect the stewards in their job, but on that one we just agreed to disagree."

Effectively, Mercedes contended that Masi's event notes did not lay out exactly how far away from the pit exit lights practice starts could be carried out. "And that's what happened," said Wolff. "It doesn't say where, it doesn't specify."

But after the event it was too late, Hamilton had to remain stationary at his stop for an extra 10s. Before he got there, he had completed 16 laps on the softs — 11 since the safety car had come in.

And here was another moment of contention for Hamilton. After Mercedes had told him to increase his pace in anticipation of his pitstop, he was soon back on the radio requesting to be left out. He duly set a pair of laps that then stood as the fastest of the race before coming in on lap 16, but remained unhappy about the timing of his service.

"It ultimately didn't make a huge difference but my goal was to offset, to minimise the loss with the [soft] tyres," Hamilton said when asked about this phase of the race. "So, the original stop was supposed to be lap 16. Luckily, we had a safety car, which took us to lap six, or something like that. So, I thought, 'That's bonus points, it means I can go six laps longer'. I think they stopped me still on lap 16, but I thought I could at least do another five laps, which would have just made it a little easier on that second stint."

And this is the crux of the question: was Hamilton destined to lose the 2020 Russian GP even without his practice start penalties saga? Because, at this point, we can see that the killer blow to his hopes of victory had surely already been struck.

As soon as Hamilton peeled off into the pitlane, with a 2.757s lead at the end of lap 15, Bottas reeled off a string of personal best laps. He immediately matched Hamilton's quickest lap to that point and then dipped under it, heading towards the low 1m39s, »

QUALIFYING



Mercedes ended qualifying in Sochi with its 10th straight pole of 2020, but it was an unusually fraught session for Formula 1's dominant squad.

When the 3.634-mile track on the shores of the Black Sea joined the calendar in 2014, its famously smooth asphalt created a headache regarding tyre warm-up, but the rubber could be run almost outrageously long in the race. Now older, bumpier and more abrasive (Autosport sympathises), the track is starting to lose these characteristics, but it still requires careful tyre preparation ahead of flying efforts. Critically, the drivers must not take too much life out of their rubber otherwise they will suffer in the final corners, where there is much time to be gained. Plus, with only F1 and F2 running last weekend, and the track generally unused apart from the annual grand prix event, the lack of rubber made for a low-grip surface that led to plenty of mistakes.

And a slide off the road in qualifying, where the wind had turned around from FP3, with a new tailwind into Turn 2, nearly cost Lewis Hamilton dearly. Mercedes wanted to get through Q2 on the mediums to avoid the unfavoured soft tyres at the race start. But Hamilton had his first effort in the middle segment deleted for going too wide out of the final corner, while Valtteri Bottas's initial time was deemed not good enough given the track evolution factor.

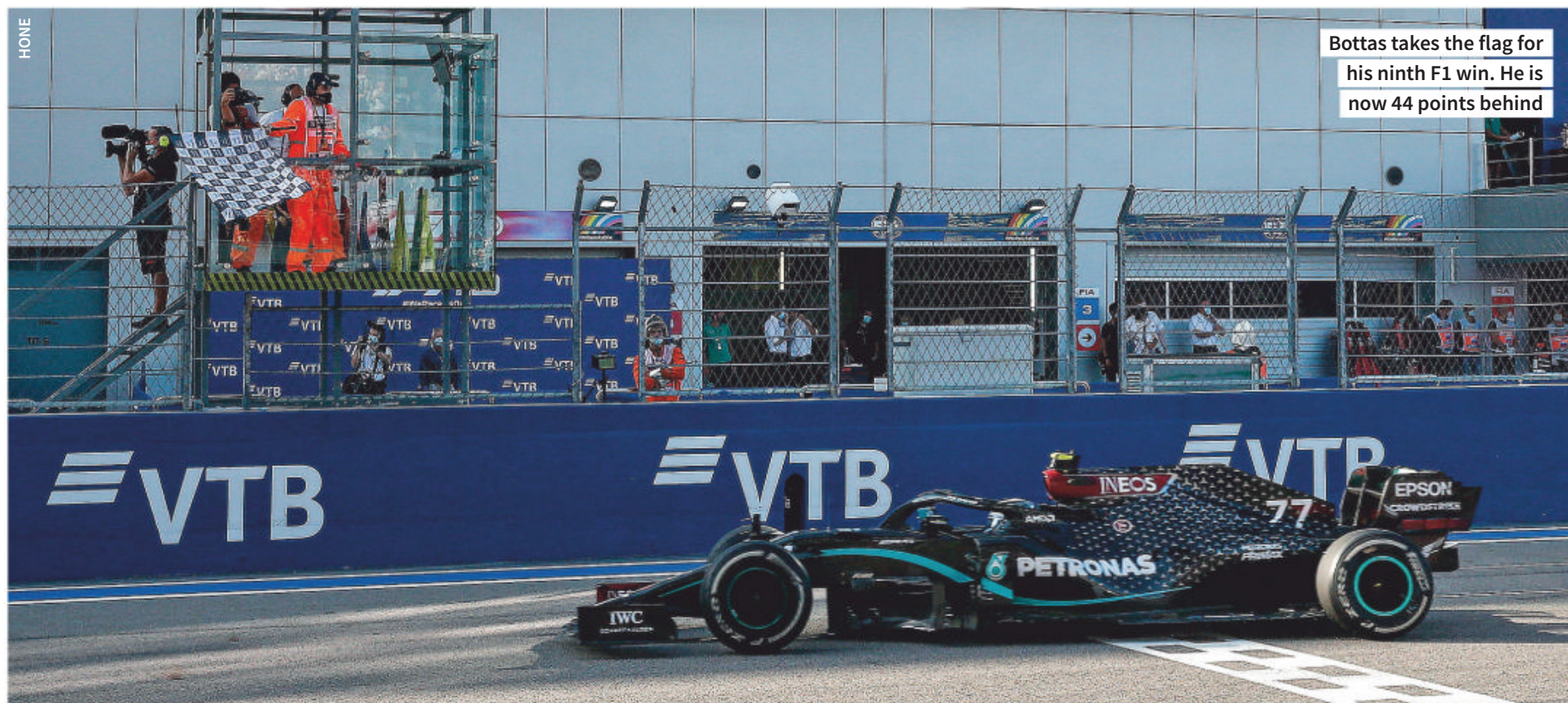
So they had to go again, with Hamilton's car not having enough fuel to stay out on his first set of mediums despite his desire to remain on the track at that stage. Bottas duly improved, but Hamilton was just a few corners from home when Sebastian Vettel crashed his Ferrari after clipping the Turn 4 apex kerb and the session was stopped.

Hamilton "did plead" to be allowed a third go on the mediums, but Mercedes felt that would leave him too vulnerable and he was sent out on the softs, which meant a strategy disadvantage for the race. Mercedes also couldn't send him to the ensuing pitlane queue ahead of the Q2 restart because its power unit cannot start up independently using the MGU-K.

An out-lap slip across Turn 2 and backing off to give himself space meant Hamilton nearly ran out of time to set a Q2 lap, but he was through, going on to "calm my heart down" and dominate Q3 for his 96th F1 pole.

Bottas ended up being pushed off the front row by Max Verstappen, which made it the second time the Black Arrows have not been 1-2 in qualifying in 2020.

"HAMILTON 'DID PLEAD' TO BE ALLOWED ON THE MEDIUMS, BUT MERCEDES FELT HE WAS VULNERABLE"



Bottas takes the flag for his ninth F1 win. He is now 44 points behind

having been exchanging times in the low 1m41s and high 1m40s with Hamilton over the opening 15 laps.

This was the advantage of the medium tyres. Not only could Bottas match and then exceed Hamilton's pace in clean air, but he could run much deeper into the race before coming in to take his own set of hard tyres. In fact, with Mercedes telling him every lap he could do before pitting would minimise his risk of losing out under a second safety car, he stayed out for a further 10 laps compared to his team-mate.

At this point we should also consider the impact of Verstappen starting on the mediums. Red Bull had fitted soft tyres to his car at the end of that thrilling Q2 session, but ordered him to abort the lap within sight of the line to preserve that critical race strategy advantage when it became clear that his Q3 place was safe.

"We might have held position off the line [with Verstappen on the softs] but we would have conceded it at the end of the first

"PEOPLE TELL ME THAT I SHOULD NOT BOTHER, I SHOULD GIVE UP. BUT I WILL NEVER DO THAT"



Verstappen ponders another race in which he split the Merics

stint," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. "We wouldn't have had the longevity. So the reality is I don't think it made a great deal of difference. [But] it certainly gave us a better race against Hamilton with his penalty."

While the penalties surely did ease Verstappen's race against Hamilton in the second stint, his opening stint on the medium was also a problem for the Briton, as it gave Verstappen the same advantage that Bottas possessed in terms of pace and opening-stint length.

In the eight laps between Hamilton's stop and Verstappen coming in on the 25th tour, Bottas effectively won the race. He was 0.77s per lap on average faster than the Red Bull on the same compound, opening the gap between them from 3.048s to 9.209s. "When I was in clean air it really felt pretty good and the pace was strong," Bottas explained. "Same with the hard tyre [in the second stint]. I could really feel that I could control the race."

And there was another gain for Bottas after making his stop. Even without his 10s of additional race time, Hamilton still had 37 laps to complete to get to the end. He did so at an average lap time of 1m39.214s, which compares to the 1m38.651s Bottas was able to do over his 27 laps on the hard tyres. (The average in both cases doesn't include the slow lap under the brief virtual safety car, caused by Romain Grosjean destroying some of the Turn 2 marker boards after going off battling Sebastian Vettel late on, or the final tour as Hamilton slowed considerably to the line).

Verstappen's average came in at 1m38.654s.

Returning to those extra laps Hamilton wanted to complete before his stop, it should be noted that Mercedes would have been aware of the risk of an undercut from the Renaults, which had also started on the softs and had come in on laps 15 (Ricciardo) and 18 (Esteban Ocon). But Hamilton conceded that this had no impact on the result of the second stint.

The ultimate answer to the question posed cannot be completely clear-cut. Hamilton was indeed slower across his second stint compared to Bottas, as is to be expected given his tyre-life deficit. He even admitted on his team radio he was having to manage his tyres to the finish from early in the second stint, just in case.

The missing five laps he wanted to stay out in his opening stint could be considered a factor in his defeat, as the Renaults were only a threat because of his penalty, but Hamilton dismisses this, and in any case he would still have had a five-lap tyre-life gap to Bottas.

But if we apply the inexact science of removing that controversial 10s from Hamilton's race time, and the 3.004s he gave up to Verstappen on the final lap, he may have come home 1.996s behind the Red Bull — and well adrift of Bottas.

And yet, without the penalties, Hamilton would have emerged



Not one of Hamilton's happiest post-race celebrations with Mercedes

ahead of Verstappen after their stops. As it was, the Mercedes was just 5.155s behind after the Red Bull's out-lap on lap 26.

So, assuming their relative pace would have been the same after that — Verstappen was 0.56s per lap quicker across his shorter second stint compared to Hamilton — the duo could have been together in the final third of the race. Verstappen would then have had to pass Hamilton to secure second.

But the fact that he would probably have been fighting Verstappen for second, well adrift of Bottas with the penalty time removed, appears to demonstrate that the damage really was done when Hamilton was obliged to start on the softs.

We must also consider that, taken in isolation from what was a pretty devastating qualifying defeat to Hamilton — and Verstappen for good measure — this was a fine race performance from Bottas.

After his out-lap he was 15.401s ahead of Hamilton, indicating that he would have grabbed the lead without the #44 Mercedes having to serve the extra time in the pits. And the Finn's pace after that suggests he would not have come under threat from Hamilton, unless you argue that Hamilton would have found something extra with a sniff of victory in the air.

In the 27 laps between Bottas's sole stop and the finish, where he claimed his ninth F1 career win and second in Sochi, his lead (over Verstappen) grew to 13.437s by the end of the 35th tour, shrank to 5.513s as he managed his pace and dealt with backmarkers after lap 50, and was back up to 7.729s at the flag. He never had to be incredibly quick late on, apart from in his successful quest to take the fastest lap, because he'd done enough earlier in the race — much as Hamilton has done so many times this season.

In a sense, this was a victory overshadowed by the attention on Hamilton's pre-race actions, and especially the later-rescinded superlicence points he had initially been handed, which briefly put him perilously close to a one-race ban.

But what cannot be denied is that Bottas finally struck a blow back in the title hunt. The Sochi race makes it three events in a row where Hamilton has let a crack of opportunity shine through to his team-mate and, whereas he failed to capitalise on two occasions in Italy, this time Bottas made no mistake last Sunday. The Q2 shenanigans showed this was an unusually scrappy weekend for Hamilton, and it ended with his points lead cut from 55 to 44.

"It was a strong race and really I feel that it can give me a confidence boost and good momentum for the next races," Bottas concluded, having revived his "to whom it may concern, f*** you" celebratory message from Australia 2019 on the cooldown lap.

Considering those comments later, he said: "There's been people telling me that I should not bother, I should give up. But, how I am, I will never do that."

Bottas certainly bounced back with his Sochi triumph — if it was inevitable ahead of the start or not — but the world title battle still needs him to land further blows. 🏆

NEXT F1 REPORT

EIFEL GRAND PRIX 15 OCTOBER ISSUE

Can Bottas maintain his form as F1 returns to the Nurburgring for the first time since 2013 and we enter the closing stages of the European season?

Perez stars in Racing Point vs Renault contest

After impressing with a slightly surprising run to fourth in qualifying at Sochi, where he outpaced the rapid Renaults, Sergio Perez managed to convert his starting berth into a fourth-place finish for Racing Point.

He had to work for it too, after being engulfed by the Renaults at the start of the race as Daniel Ricciardo and Esteban Ocon made excellent getaways, while Perez struggled on the less-grippy side of the grid.

Perez remained on their tails, keeping within a second of Ricciardo before the Australian pitted. Perez stayed out longer than Ocon too, characteristically keeping the life in his soft tyres until lap 20 and finding some extra pace in clean air. This helped Perez assume the overcut and he returned to the field ahead of both Ocon and Ricciardo, who were trying to get past Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari.

Vettel's defence helped Perez build a break over the Renaults, and he emerged not too far behind Lewis Hamilton. Challenging the six-time champion for third wasn't possible, but by the end Perez had managed to cement fourth with a significant buffer over Ricciardo.

Racing Point had arrived in Sochi with a new rear-suspension package, and Perez seemed comfortable with the upgrade. Arguably, this was his most issue-free race so far in 2020.



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COATES

Leclerc on form again as AlphaTauris score

Charles Leclerc scored Ferrari's best result in five races after getting the overcut on Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly to finish sixth in the Russian Grand Prix thanks to his long first stint.

Running some minor updates for the Ferrari SF1000 in Sochi (see p29), Leclerc started 10th (up a spot as a result of Alex Albon's gearbox penalty) before moving to eighth on the opening lap after a clash with Lance Stroll left the Racing Point driver in the wall (see below). The stewards deemed that no action was necessary.

Leclerc completed his opening stint on the medium-compound tyre, which lifted him artificially as high as second before he pitted at the end of lap 28 and took a set of hards. He was able to emerge from the pits ahead of both Ocon and Gasly, who had lost time in traffic after pitting earlier thanks to starting on softs.

Leclerc then kept Ocon at arm's length to claim sixth, marking Ferrari's best result since his run to fourth at Silverstone in August's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix.

"We did a better job with the balance of the car," Leclerc said. "The balance was pretty nice throughout the race, which helped me to perform at my best."

Behind Leclerc, AlphaTauri scooped a double points finish in Sochi led by home hero Daniil Kvyat, who finished eighth, also thanks to a long first stint on the hards.

Kvyat passed Haas drivers Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen, who had jumped him in the first-lap chaos, in the opening stint. He was able to emerge from the pits ahead of team-mate Gasly, who had got stuck behind Alex Albon and Kimi Raikkonen after his first pitstop.

Gasly ultimately pitted a second time when the virtual safety car was called for debris left by Grosjean's strangely unpenalised run through the boards at Turn 2, only for the quick resumption to negate the benefit. He was nevertheless able to use his fresher tyres to pass Albon and Lando Norris in the closing stages, and the Italian Grand Prix winner grabbed a point for 10th.

"RIDICULOUS HE DIDN'T GET A PENALTY"

Lance Stroll expresses his incredulity over the fact that Ferrari's Charles Leclerc faced no sanction after the Racing Point driver was punted into the barriers on the opening lap.



MAUGER

Renaults peak early

Renault enjoyed a good start to the Russian GP, very briefly running as high as third and fifth after Red Bull's Max Verstappen ran wide at Turn 2. But Verstappen was back ahead of Daniel Ricciardo by Turn 5, and the Australian lost fourth to team-mate Esteban Ocon later in the opening lap.

Ricciardo pitted for hard tyres on lap 15, Ocon following suit three laps later, but the two were overcut by Sergio Perez after getting

stuck behind Sebastian Vettel. Ocon struggled to pass, prompting Renault to order a position swap, but it was poorly done and Ricciardo copped a five-second penalty for a track-limits infringement as he went deep at Turn 2.

Ricciardo did clear Vettel and shuffled out ahead of late-stopper Charles Leclerc, building enough of a gap to cement fifth. Ocon, having fallen behind Leclerc, just kept Daniil Kvyat at bay for seventh.



More struggles for Albon

Alex Albon's Russian Grand Prix was made more difficult ahead of the start when he had to take a new gearbox and was shuffled back five spots from his qualifying result of 10th, which he said had left him with a "bit of head-scratching going on" given his team-mate got on the front row.

He was brought in immediately under the lap-one safety car and then eventually triumphed in an entertaining early battle with his former Formula 2 title rivals George Russell and Lando Norris.

Albon made steady progress back towards the top 10 before he was brought in again to take fresh mediums to the finish, which he used to get back to 10th, getting involved in another entertaining scrap with Norris and Pierre Gasly.

The Red Bull driver couldn't live with the AlphaTauri's younger-tyre advantage and finished 8.094 seconds adrift at the flag. This included a 5s penalty he picked up with a slip off the road at Turn 2 on lap 50.

"Alex is particularly sensitive to some of the characteristics of the car and he's struggling with that, and they're accentuated at this type of circuit with short corners and big braking zones," Red Bull team boss Christian Horner explained. "His second half of the race he recovered reasonably well, but obviously it's been a tough weekend for him. Probably one of the hardest of the year for him."

Q & A

ANDREAS SEIDL McLAREN TEAM PRINCIPAL



How is Carlos Sainz Jr after his first-lap crash?

The good thing is that Carlos reported he is fine. I think his foot is a bit bruised, but it doesn't look like anything major. Carlos said it himself, with the angle he was approaching this slot, he misjudged. And that was the reason why he touched the barrier. Our race was affected for both cars, unfortunately, in Turn 2 of a long race, because Lando [Norris] had to back out and was last after the first lap. And then there was nothing left to lose so we boxed through safety onto the hard, trying to simply survive and hope for something else happening like another safety car, which didn't work out.

Could you have pitted Norris earlier for his second stop?

We were [behind] before Alex Albon pitted for new mediums [on lap 27]. He was in front of Lando. So, if

[Lando] would have done the same he would have ended up [behind anyway] because the Red Bull is simply the quicker car. We would have ended up in P11 – that was our calculation – and P11 doesn't bring us anything so we had to gamble and that's why we stayed out.

Where do you think you are on pace with Renault

and Racing Point?

I think in terms of pure car potential the Racing Point is similar to how it has been on average, since Barcelona testing – it is clearly the fastest car in this battle. Renault, it is also clear, made a good step forward since Spa. At the same time, we were always close battling them in the races, either in front of them or in the mix in qualifying sessions. But we obviously acknowledge that they made a good step forward and it's simply down to us now to make sure that we also progress with our car, and find the next step in terms of pace if we want to keep this battle alive.



TRACKDAYS AND RACING UNDER THE SUN WITH GEDLICH RACING'S ENDLESS SUMMER® ASCARI

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



Drivers and teams will be able to test at some of Europe's most famous and challenging circuits through renowned track day organiser Gedlich Racing during the 2020/21 off-season.

A total of 26 days at seven venues - including circuits in France, Spain and Portugal - have been made available for teams and drivers to get some miles under their belts during the winter months as part of Gedlich Racing's annual "Endless Summer" programme.



Markus Gedlich, managing director of Gedlich Racing, said: "We are now running our very successful trackday series "Endless Summer" for the eleventh season.

"This season it includes a total of 26 trackdays on seven tracks. We have particularly many central European teams from the endurance and GT series who test their cars, but also pilots with fast road cars with semi-slicks of the calibre of a Porsche GT3 RS that are very welcome and from the speed point of view they fit well into the series of racing cars".

The Ascari race resort in Spain - which Gedlich Racing uses as its headquarters - will host 10 days across 19-20 December, 16-17 January, 30-31 January, 13-14 February and 27-28 February.

Ex-Formula 1 venue Estoril in Portugal will hold two days (20-21 January), as will the 5.6-mile Circuito De Almeria (2-3 February) in Spain, which although relatively new has become a favourite amongst track day enthusiasts due to its similar profile to the Nordschleife.

Motorland Aragon - famous for holding MotoGP encounters - will be used on 3-4 March, while six days will take place at the Algarve International Circuit in Portimao - which will be hosting Formula 1 this season.

Six days will take place at the Portuguese venue including 23-24 January and 16-17 February, with the 25-26 January event exclusive to race cars which must be fitted with slick tyres and there will be a limit of 26 cars to ensure as much clean running as possible.

Two further dates at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya and Paul Ricard will be announced in the coming weeks and bookings are currently being accepted. Dates can either be booked individually or be combined.

Drivers without their own race machine will be able to rent one from a selection of nearly 50 cars from Gedlich Racing, who will also organise the transport of your own car which will be parked at the Ascari Circuit over the winter.

For more information or to make a booking, visit gedlich-racing.com



19th / 20th December
Ascari

16th / 17th January
Ascari

20th / 21st January
Circuito do Estoril

23rd / 24th January
Autodromo Portimao

25th / 26th January
Autodromo Portimao

30th / 31st January
Ascari

2nd / 3rd February
Circuito Iberia 9km

13th / 14th February
Ascari

16th / 17th February
Autodromo Portimao

27th / 28th February
Ascari

3rd / 4th March
Motorland Aragon

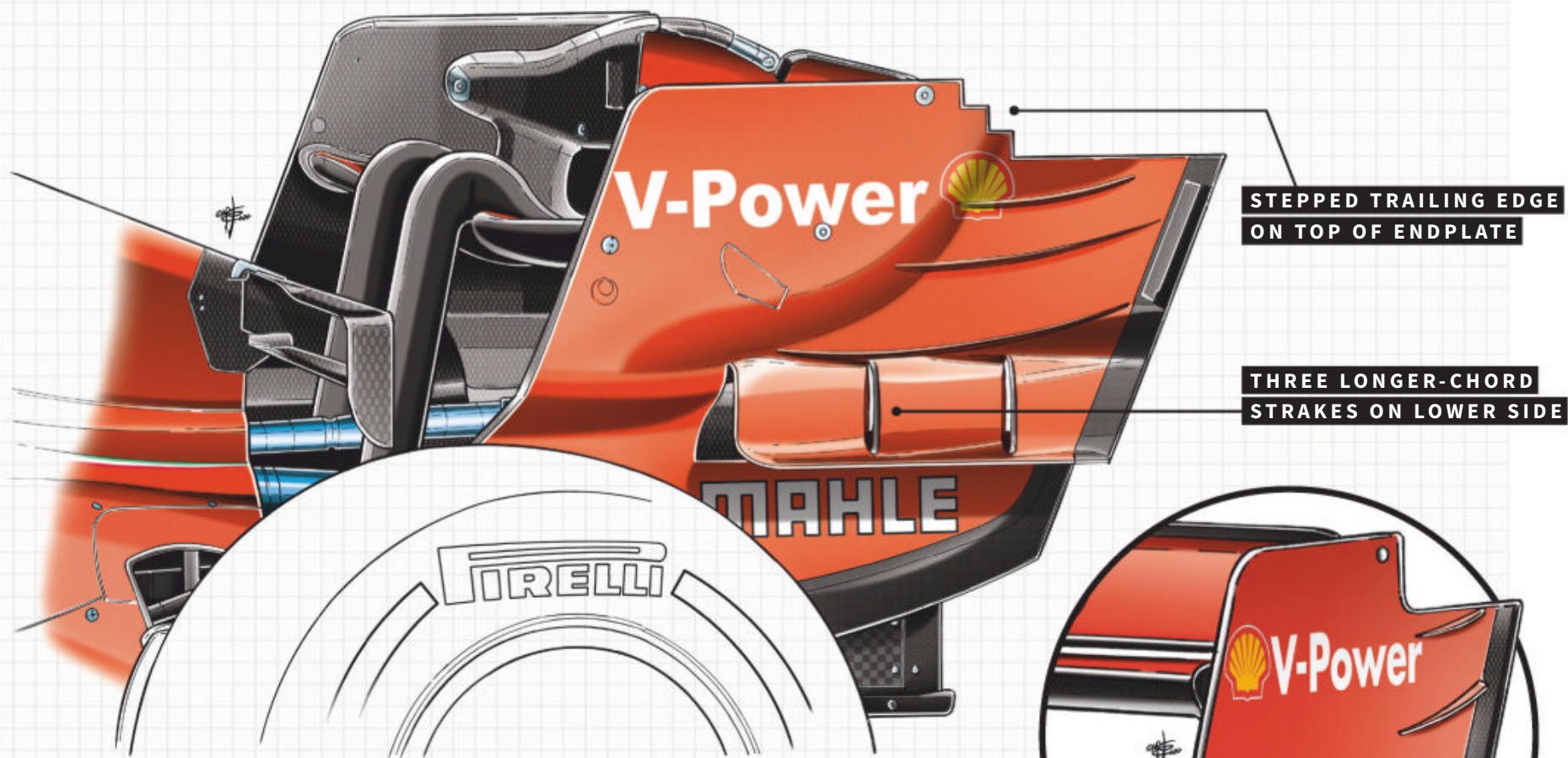


GIORGIO
PIOLA 

RUSSIAN GP **TECH**

DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



FERRARI'S NEW CLOTHES TACKLE BIG ISSUE

Returning to its normal red livery, having shrugged off the burgundy robes run last time out at Mugello, Ferrari also arrived in Sochi with a smattering of updates. At the front, the SF1000 sported new turning vanes mounted to the nose, with a reprofiled cape to redirect airflow around the wheels.

The team also added new rear-wing endplates, reprofiling the overhanging strakes in a

manner similar to a design Mercedes developed earlier in the season. Ferrari had seven strakes previously, but the new endplates now have three longer-chord strakes all attached to a ridge on the lower side. The top of the endplate also has the stepped trailing edge. All of these additions change the way that the air rolls off the back of the rear wing, and it appears to be part of Ferrari's

efforts to reduce the overall drag produced by the 2020 car.

One of the biggest bugbears of this year's car is its lack of straightline performance and, although a large portion of that is down to the powertrain deficiencies, the attempt to add downforce over the off-season dialled in a large amount of drag. Ferrari looked more competitive in practice compared

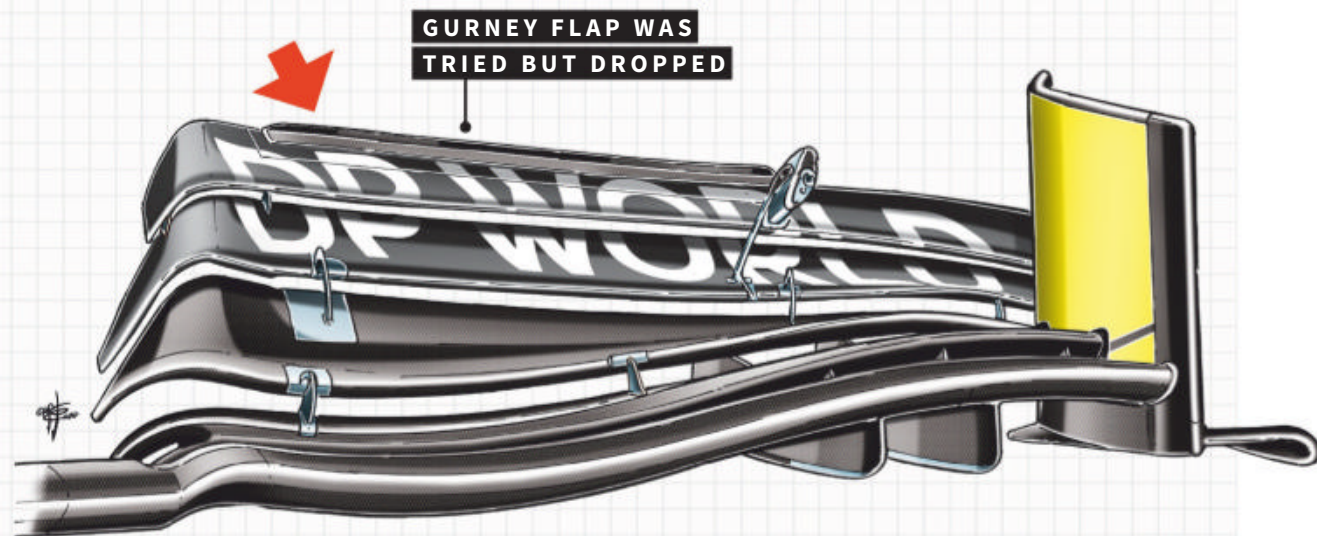
to its poorer showings in the previous triple-header and, although qualifying was stymied by Sebastian Vettel's crash, Charles Leclerc's race performance seemed to be a step in the right direction.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

RENAULT CONTINUES 2020 PROGRESS

Renault's impressive rate of progress continues to accelerate, and the team made a few tweaks to its front end to find a little more downforce. The team, like Ferrari, made a few amendments to the cape underneath the nose, and has also experimented with an added Gurney flap to the upper element of the front wing.

The Renault front wing is unusual compared to the others on the grid, with two straightened upper elements of equal chord length. The central element is larger than the rear, presumably generating most of the downforce before using the upper elements to keep the airflow attached over a greater camber. Although the changes were small, and Renault elected to remove the Gurney flaps to trim off for qualifying and the race, Daniel Ricciardo praised his new set-up direction after qualifying. "[We



did] a fair bit of data stuff, looking over last year and looking at onboards," he said. "Normally if you're not particularly strong at a circuit, there's a bit of a reason as far as the set-up you normally like – maybe it doesn't work for this circuit. [We pushed ourselves] to do something

that maybe doesn't work on other tracks but it might work here. I think last year the car looked a little too good to drive and in the end it was slow, and so it was just trying to find comfortable in the uncomfortable."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

20 Latifi #6
1m35.066s

18 Magnussen #20
1m34.681s

16 Grosjean #8
1m34.592s

14 Vettel #5
1m33.609s

12 Stroll #18
1m33.364s

19 Raikkonen #7
1m35.267s

17 Giovinazzi #99
1m34.594s

15 Albon #23
1m33.008s

13 Russell #63
1m33.583s

11 Kvyat #26
1m33.249s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m34.923s	1	Bottas	1m33.519s	1	Hamilton	1m33.279s
2	Ricciardo	1m35.430s	2	Hamilton	1m33.786s	2	Bottas	1m34.055s
3	Verstappen	1m35.577s	3	Ricciardo	1m34.577s	3	Sainz	1m34.096s
4	Perez	1m35.796s	4	Sainz	1m34.723s	4	Ocon	1m34.239s
5	Stroll	1m35.965s	5	Norris	1m34.847s	5	Perez	1m34.252s
6	Ocon	1m36.061s	6	Perez	1m34.890s	6	Verstappen	1m34.306s
7	Kvyat	1m36.230s	7	Verstappen	1m35.048s	7	Vettel	1m34.594s
8	Albon	1m36.254s	8	Leclerc	1m35.052s	8	Stroll	1m34.732s
9	Vettel	1m36.323s	9	Ocon	1m35.139s	9	Kvyat	1m34.768s
10	Gasly	1m36.706s	10	Vettel	1m35.183s	10	Ricciardo	1m34.787s
11	Leclerc	1m36.896s	11	Gasly	1m35.210s	11	Gasly	1m34.792s
12	Sainz	1m36.970s	12	Albon	1m35.242s	12	Leclerc	1m34.806s
13	Norris	1m37.110s	13	Kvyat	1m35.461s	13	Russell	1m34.979s
14	Giovinazzi	1m37.201s	14	Raikkonen	1m35.516s	14	Grosjean	1m35.257s
15	Raikkonen	1m37.230s	15	Latifi	1m35.563s	15	Latifi	1m35.292s
16	Magnussen	1m37.430s	16	Russell	1m35.575s	16	Magnussen	1m35.451s
17	Russell	1m37.595s	17	Stroll	1m35.627s	17	Giovinazzi	1m35.590s
18	Grosjean	1m37.649s	18	Magnussen	1m35.729s	18	Raikkonen	1m35.599s
19	Hamilton	1m37.716s	19	Giovinazzi	1m36.053s	19	Albon	1m35.603s
20	Latifi	1m37.784s	20	Grosjean	1m36.858s	20	Norris	1m35.981s

WEATHER Sunny, air 27-28C track 24-36C

WEATHER Sunny, air 27-29C track 33-38C

WEATHER Overcast, air 26-27C track 37-41C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m32.656s	1	Ricciardo	1m32.218s	1	Hamilton	1m31.304s
2	Hamilton	1m32.983s	2	Bottas	1m32.405s	2	Verstappen	1m31.867s
3	Kvyat	1m33.511s	3	Sainz	1m32.757s	3	Bottas	1m31.956s
4	Ocon	1m33.557s	4	Hamilton	1m32.835s	4	Perez	1m32.317s
5	Verstappen	1m33.630s	5	Perez	1m33.038s	5	Ricciardo	1m32.364s
6	Ricciardo	1m33.650s	6	Norris	1m33.081s	6	Sainz	1m32.550s
7	Perez	1m33.704s	7	Gasly	1m33.139s	7	Ocon	1m32.624s
8	Gasly	1m33.734s	8	Albon	1m33.153s	8	Norris	1m32.847s
9	Norris	1m33.804s	9	Verstappen	1m33.157s	9	Gasly	1m33.000s
10	Stroll	1m33.852s	10	Ocon	1m33.196s	10	Albon	1m33.008s
11	Albon	1m33.919s	11	Leclerc	1m33.239s			
12	Sainz	1m33.967s	12	Kvyat	1m33.249s			
13	Russell	1m34.020s	13	Stroll	1m33.364s			
14	Leclerc	1m34.071s	14	Russell	1m33.583s			
15	Vettel	1m34.134s	15	Vettel	1m33.609s			
16	Grosjean	1m34.592s						
17	Giovinazzi	1m34.594s						
18	Magnussen	1m34.681s						
19	Latifi	1m35.066s						
20	Raikkonen	1m35.267s						

WEATHER Overcast, air 25-26C track 31-34C

NEXT RACE

11 OCTOBER

EIFEL GP

Nurburgring

SEASON STATS				
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP		PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1	Hamilton	205	1	1
2	Bottas	161	1	1
3	Verstappen	128	1	2
4	Norris	65	3	4
5	Albon	64	3	4
6	Ricciardo	63	4	4
7	Leclerc	57	2	4
8	Stroll	57	3	3
9	Perez	56	4	4
10	Gasly	45	1	7
11	Sainz	41	2	3
12	Ocon	36	5	5
13	Vettel	17	6	5
14	Kvyat	14	7	11
15	Hulkenberg	6	7	3
16	Raikkonen	2	9	13
17	Giovinazzi	2	9	17
18	Magnussen	1	10	15
19	Latifi	0	11	15
20	Russell	0	11	12
21	Grosjean	0	12	14

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
1	Mercedes	366
2	Red Bull	192
3	McLaren	106
4	Racing Point	104
5	Renault	99
6	Ferrari	74
7	AlphaTauri	59
8	Alfa Romeo	4
9	Haas	1
10	Williams	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE				
Hamilton	8	2	Bottas	
Vettel	2	8	Leclerc	
Albon	0	10	Verstappen	
Norris	4	6	Sainz	
Ricciardo	9	1	Ocon	
Gasly	8	2	Kvyat	
Perez	6	2	Stroll	
Stroll	1	1	Hulkenberg	
Raikkonen	5	5	Giovinazzi	
Grosjean	5	5	Magnussen	
Latifi	0	10	Russell	
Scores ignore sessions if a driver didn't participate in qualifying or had a serious technical problem				

WINS		FASTEST LAPS	
Hamilton	6	Hamilton	4
Bottas	2	Bottas	2
Gasly	1	Norris	1
Verstappen	1	Ricciardo	1
		Sainz	1

POLE POSITIONS		Verstappen	1
Hamilton	8		
Bottas	2		

STARTING GRID

10 Leclerc #16 1m33.239s	8 Norris #4 1m32.847s	6 Sainz #55 1m32.550s	4 Perez #11 1m32.317s	2 Verstappen #33 1m31.867s
9 Gasly #10 1m33.000s	7 Ocon #31 1m32.624s	5 Ricciardo #3 1m32.364s	3 Bottas #77 1m31.956s	1 Hamilton #44 1m31.304s

RACE RESULTS ROUND 10 (53 LAPS – 192.48 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	1h34m00.364s	38	Mu, Hn
2	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	+7.729s		Mu, Hn
3	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+22.729s	15	Su, Hn
4	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Racing Point-Mercedes	+30.558s		Su, Hn
5	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Renault	+52.065s		Su, Hn
6	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+1m02.186s		Mn, Hn
7	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Renault	+1m08.006s		Su, Hn
8	Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	AlphaTauri-Honda	+1m08.740s		Hn, Mn
9	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	+1m29.766s		Su, Hn, Mn
10	Alexander Albon (THA)	Red Bull-Honda	+1m37.860s		Su, Hn, Mn
11	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
12	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
13	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
14	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Hn, Mn
15	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		Su, Hn, Mn
16	Nicholas Latifi (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
17	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn, Mn
18	George Russell (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn, Mu, Sn
R	Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP)	McLaren-Renault	0 laps-accident		Su
R	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Racing Point-Mercedes	0 laps-accident		Mn

FASTEST LAPS

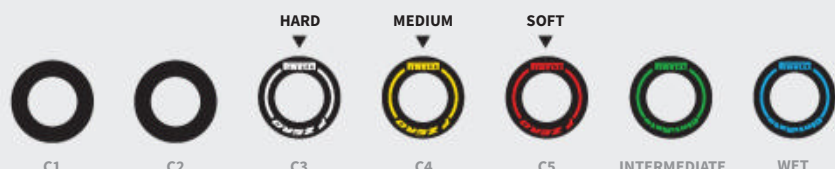
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Bottas	1m37.030s	-	51
2	Gasly	1m37.231s	+0.201s	50
3	Verstappen	1m37.332s	+0.302s	53
4	Russell	1m37.352s	+0.322s	52
5	Norris	1m37.377s	+0.347s	50
6	Ricciardo	1m37.886s	+0.856s	53
7	Hamilton	1m38.075s	+1.045s	48
8	Perez	1m38.141s	+1.111s	52
9	Albon	1m38.377s	+1.347s	51
10	Raikkonen	1m38.858s	+1.828s	37
11	Leclerc	1m39.053s	+2.023s	47
12	Kvyat	1m39.133s	+2.103s	48
13	Ocon	1m39.216s	+2.186s	48
14	Vettel	1m39.588s	+2.558s	46
15	Grosjean	1m39.614s	+2.584s	44
16	Giovinazzi	1m39.766s	+2.736s	44
17	Magnussen	1m40.380s	+3.350s	52
18	Latifi	1m41.044s	+4.014s	47
19	Stroll	no time	-	-
20	Sainz	no time	-	-

WEATHER Dry, sunny, air 28-31C track 38-41C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 122.85mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 134.83mph

TYRES

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



RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

ALBON and LATIFI
Five-place grid penalty each for replacement gearbox
ALBON and RICCIARDO
Five-second penalty and one licence point each for failing to follow the

instructions concerning Turn 2

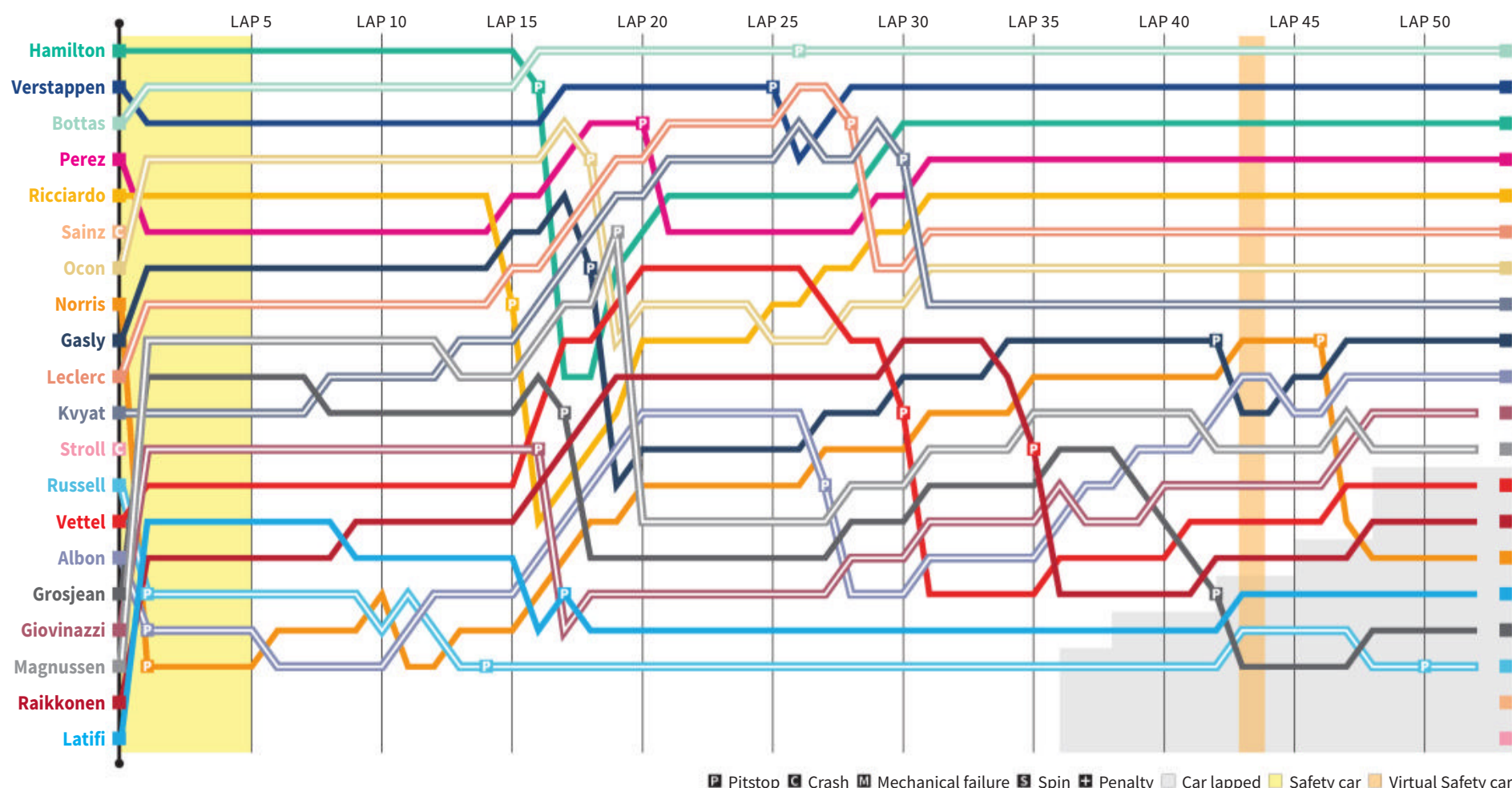
RACE PENALTIES

HAMILTON Two 5s penalties for twice failing to follow the instructions concerning practice starts

STAT
150

Hamilton has now started
150 GPs for Mercedes.
He has won 68 of them

LAP CHART What happened, when



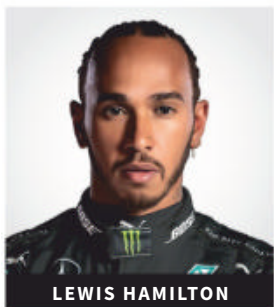
P Pitstop C Crash M Mechanical failure S Spin + Penalty Car lapped Safety car Virtual Safety car

NOBODY'S PERFECT IN SOCHI – BUT SOME GET CLOSE

Three drivers fall a single point short of a perfect score, although one of them might be considered to have got a whisker closer than the others – even the race winner

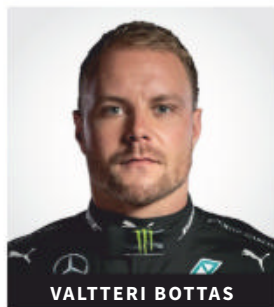
ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

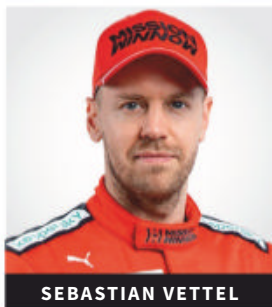
8 Gets a point back for composure shown in Q3 to produce a brilliant pole-winning lap. But Q2 contained the first of two key errors – the other being the practice start decision – when he slid off on his first medium-shod lap. Pre-race issue should *mainly* be blamed on Mercedes' instructions.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

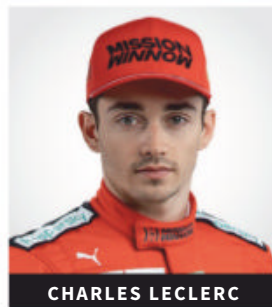
9 Earns a point back on the strength of his race performance – his Q3 defeat was devastating in isolation, but was overcome on Sunday. Deserves credit for his Turn 2 attack and did well to not go fully off the kerbs. Bided his time in the first stint, then pressed his advantage from there.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

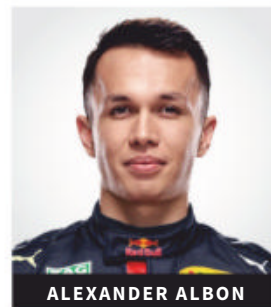
4 Another tough weekend. His Q2 crash cost him a better grid spot and happened when he couldn't catch the rear at Turn 4. In the race he too lost momentum on the disadvantageous side of the grid, but didn't really show much at all – especially compared to Leclerc – on the long first stint.



CHARLES LECLERC

8 Another driver whose race performance boosts them from a disappointing showing in qualifying. Mastered a long first stint on the mediums, which was key to gaining four spots, but is lucky contact with Stroll wasn't penalised, as it brought to mind Hamilton's similar move in Austria.

RED BULL



ALEXANDER ALBON

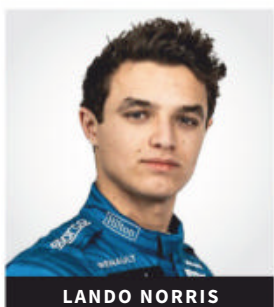
6 He can't score higher, because Verstappen showed the result to be had by extracting the most from the RB16. After being outpaced in qualifying, Albon did battle well in the race after his safety-car stop, but picked up a needless penalty for cutting Turn 2 incorrectly late on.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

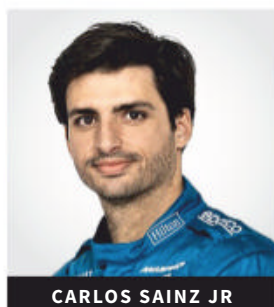
9 A performance so close to a maximum score. Was mighty in Q3, and did well enough to scrape through Q2 on the better race rubber, splitting the two Mercedes. Was gripless at the start off the racing line, and so needed Hamilton's penalties to get back to second.

MCLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

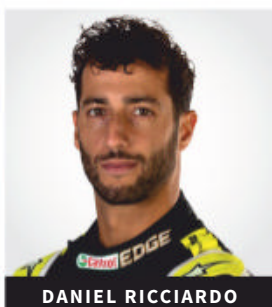
5 Outpaced by Sainz in qualifying and then paid the price for not being as committed as others at Turn 2, yet still went off track, which meant he had to dodge his team-mate's wreckage. Showed nicely in battle, despite going off late at Turn 13 while fighting Albon.



CARLOS SAINZ JR

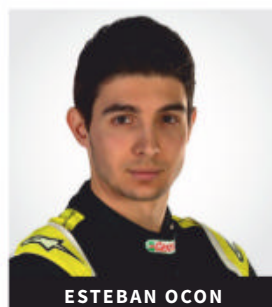
4 We've given a mark back for his decent showing in Q3, but it cannot be escaped that his crash was a massive error. Tried to follow Turn 2 marker-board requirements, which he noted others did not and were not penalised for, but took too much speed for the narrow angle and had a big shunt.

RENAULT



DANIEL RICCIARDO

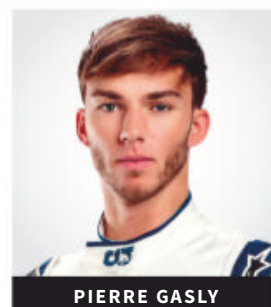
7 Several factors combine to cost a mark. Had he replicated his Q2 time in Q3 he would have been fourth on the grid. He slid wide at Turn 7 on lap one to lose a spot to Ocon, and was later waved past by his team-mate, then got a penalty for cutting Turn 2. Attitude after being penalised was pleasing.



ESTEBAN OCON

6 Like his team-mate, his weekend was a little inconsistent. Was 0.26s adrift of Ricciardo in qualifying, but aced the start and was strong on the softs in fourth after the sister Renault slid wide. Felt the balance was off on the hards, which meant he had to cede position to Ricciardo.

ALPHATAURI



PIERRE GASLY

8 It's hard to fault Gasly given he was undone by getting through to Q3 for the sixth time in 2020, restricting his strategy. Lost time scrapping with Albon and Raikkonen after his first stop, then tried to take advantage of the VSC, which was shorter than the team expected. Battled back well to finish ninth.

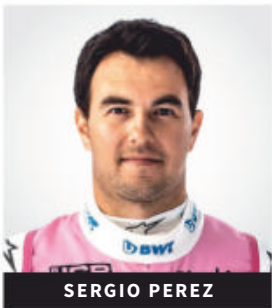


DANIIL KVYAT

8 Can't score higher because of his Q2 result, where he might have been further down if not for Stroll's and Vettel's misfortune. But his race was brilliant – he was fast in clean air after dispatching the Haas pair as he completed a 30-lap opening stint, which was key to his rise.



RACING POINT



SERGIO PEREZ

9 A fine weekend for Perez. Put the car right where it deserves to be in fourth in qualifying, then recovered that spot after losing out on the disadvantageous side of the grid to Ricciardo and Ocon. Put a fine pass on Ricciardo into Turn 4, and the longest soft stint kept him away from traffic.



LANCE STROLL

6 A tough weekend to assess, because both his qualifying exit and race retirement involved misfortune. But had he done a better time on his first Q2 run before the red flag, he might not have been forced to queue in the pitlane where his engine overheated. Was unlucky against Leclerc in the race.

ALFA ROMEO



KIMI RAIKKONEN

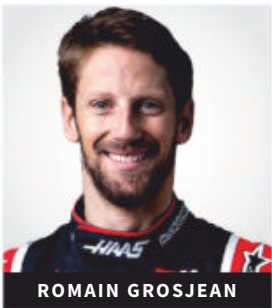
6 Loses a mark because late Q1 spin confined him to last in qualifying. Satisfied with end result, which was aided by running longest of all in the first stint. Reckoned a long stop with a slow left-front change didn't make much difference, but he was just 0.872s behind Vettel at the flag.



ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

8 Another driver with a fine race performance after a sparkle-free qualifying. Made good progress at the start and was happy with his pace on the mediums in a relatively short stint. Charged in the closing laps to demote Magnussen with a clever pass around the inside of Turn 3.

HAAS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

6 Is down a mark compared to his team-mate because of the way he slid further down the order after their sensational starts. His was all the more remarkable because of a touch he had with Magnussen that he complained about, all the while passing crashing and slowing cars.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

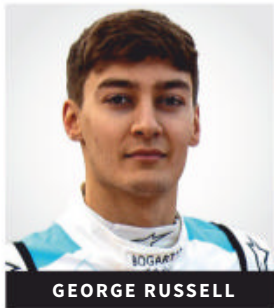
7 Only just misses out on going up a mark because of his qualifying defeat to Grosjean, but had a great Sunday. Gained nine spots on lap one as he stole to the inside of Turn 2. Faded from there as the faster AlphaTauris and Red Bull came back past, but beat a Ferrari on merit.

WILLIAMS



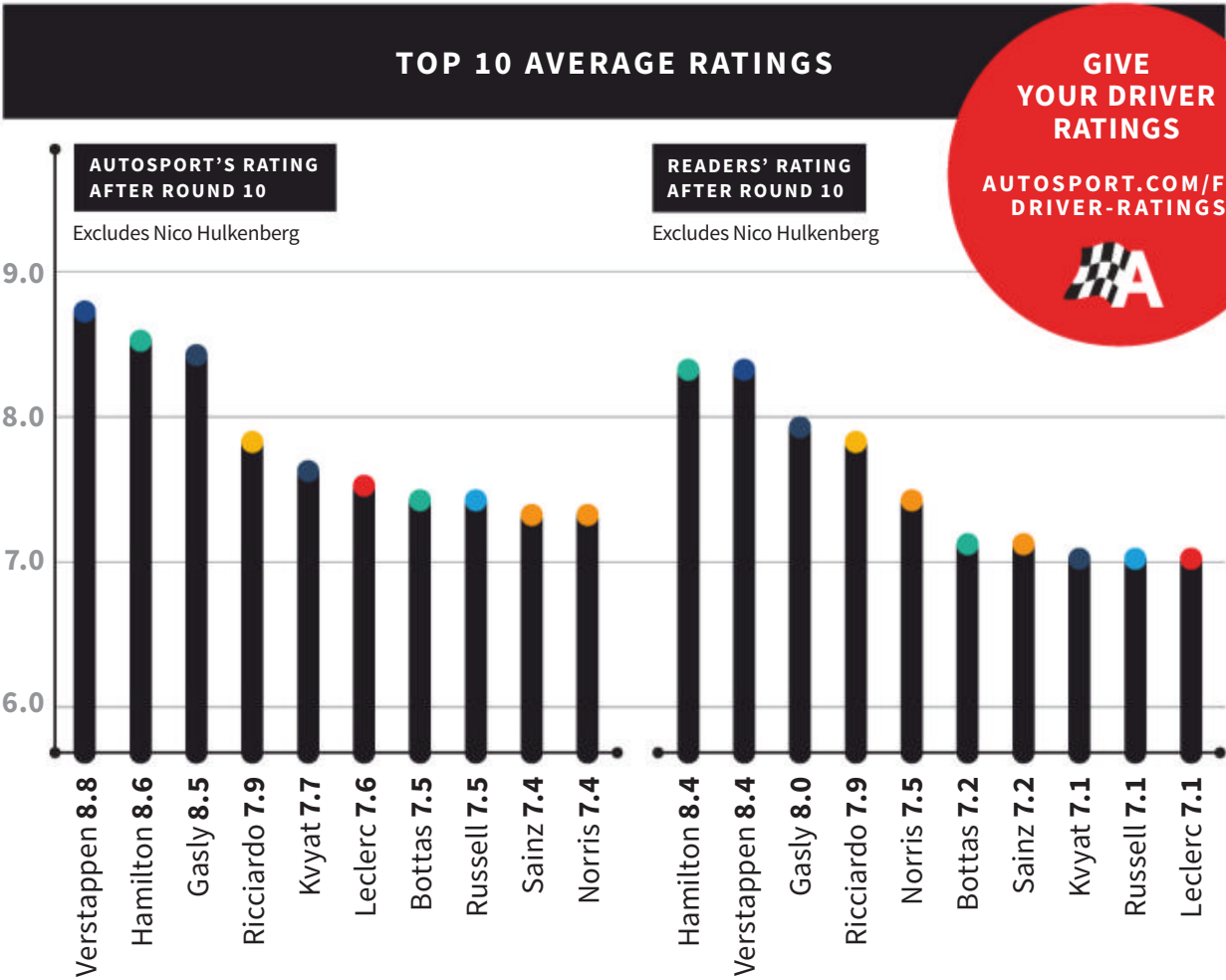
NICHOLAS LATIFI

7 Yet another who turned things around after a disappointing qualifying, compared to his team-mate, which meant a five-place difference between them. Had a good launch from last on the grid after his gearbox penalty, and the team was pleased with his pace and how he held off Grosjean.



GEORGE RUSSELL

7 Gets a mark back because again he delivered brilliantly in qualifying. But unlike many others, his race drive let him down. The big flatspot he picked up fighting Albon and Norris meant he had to come off the hards early, and also struggled to get the tyres in the right windows.





Cammish gets his bumper in front as rivals trip up

The Honda man got the verdict on video replays, then scored heavily as Turkington and Sutton starred, and Butcher escaped a scary shunt

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



Cammish leads from pole in the first race, having banished startline demon

Dan Cammish lost last year's British Touring Car Championship crown in the final five miles of the season. The way things are going in 2020, it could be seven thousandths of a second that prove decisive in his favour when the points are added up.

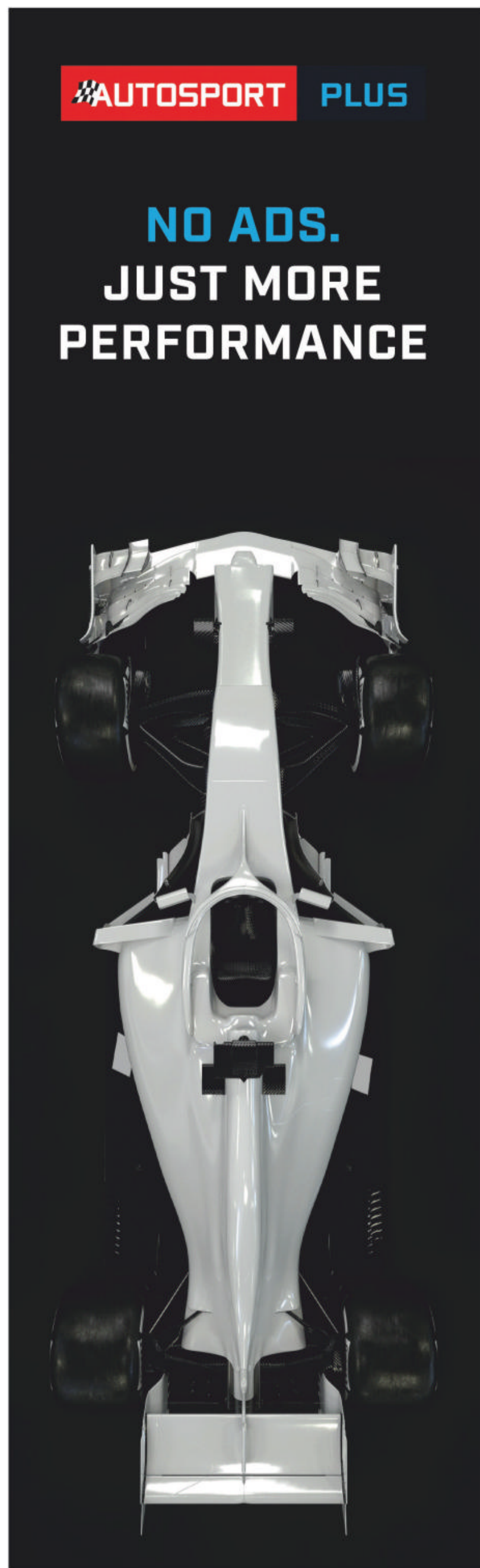
Cold weather arrived in the BTCC last weekend at Silverstone, theoretically disadvantageous to success-ballast-carrying rear-wheel-drive machinery, and, with October events at Croft and Snetterton and the November finale at Silverstone to come, we're unlikely to be basking in anything over 10C until the 2021 campaign kicks off. So front-driven cars such as Cammish's Honda, quicker at getting the heat into their driven axles, are likely to come into their element. At Silverstone, he took a win, a second and a plucky reversed-grid fourth to end as comfortably the day's top points scorer and, going into those shortening autumn days, he's just 17 points adrift of table-topper Ash Sutton, 13 behind Colin Turkington.

But it was a freak occurrence on Cammish's route to that win that could prove decisive. He had led the opening four laps from pole, but the Team Dynamics-run Civic Type R didn't look comfortable. That's because right behind was its nemesis from Thruxton the previous weekend: the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla of the ever-feisty Tom Ingram. The safety car boards appeared on the fifth lap and, because the order under caution wouldn't be set until the field had raced to the start/finish line, Ingram saw his opportunity: "I thought, 'Bingo, that's a chance to pass Dan that he might not be thinking about.'"

Ingram chiselled an opening on the inside of the long Luffield right-hander, the final turn, and the two sprinted to the line. The timing screens showed Ingram to be 0.009 seconds ahead. He'd done it; he'd be leading the restart. But then the TV replays began to zero in on the pair crossing the line, with the Honda about half a bumper ahead. Ingram let Cammish through under caution and, when the results were issued after the race, the timing data had the Toyota 0.007s behind at the crucial moment...

"It was obviously the right thing to do to be safe, rather than take a penalty after the race," Ingram said of his moving aside. From then on, he harried Cammish once again, but with several laps to go the Honda had pulled the margin out to over a second. "On punch out of corners we couldn't quite match Dan," added Ingram, "and I had such a large gap behind me, and I'd used my track-limits allocation up." With worries that he might get a penalty for overstepping the mark too often, he backed the Toyota off.

For his part, Cammish had at least banished a demon from the previous weekend at Thruxton: his starts. "I was obviously very conscious of the start," he admitted. "Going to bed I was thinking about it. I got off the line well, but once we were up and running >>



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Tom had a load of traction to begin with. Thankfully the safety car saved me a little bit. After that, Tom's traction advantage went away and I was able to stretch my legs a bit."

The Cammish victory was a result that had looked on the cards from free practice, which he topped from Dynamics team-mate Matt Neal. Many in the paddock pointed to the Hondas being quick in a straight line, and this was borne out by them topping the speed traps in each session. (Some advice to Dynamics here: the erroneous greengrocer's apostrophe in the Civic's Halfords MOT's [sic] signwriting probably costs a bit on weight.) A blistering qualifying time, with the Honda carrying 36kg of success ballast, put Cammish on pole by 0.198 seconds – a huge margin for this circuit – from Ingram. And, while some such as BMW team-mates Turkington and Tom Oliphant worked on towing each other, Cammish did this without a slipstream. Ingram, showing great speed on 48kg of ballast, didn't have a towing partner, but a delve into the timing data showed that his last-ditch effort had come via passing Adam Morgan's Mercedes on the Wellington Straight.

Speedworks, said Ingram, had "made loads of set-up changes" after free practice, and the Toyota was looking pretty much as strong as it had at Thruxton. Now on 54kg of ballast compared to the 60kg of Cammish, he was swarming over the Honda on the opening lap of race two, before he went around the outside of the Brooklands left-hander to claim the inside at Luffield. But with that weight it was tough. Cammish and Turkington were tucked in behind him, before the four-time champion pulled a well-worked move on the Honda just past half-distance.

Turkington had emerged atop a fight with Sutton for fourth in the opening race, and now the West Surrey Racing-run BMW 330i M Sport was down from 54kg of ballast to 42kg. But the heightened





starting-boost restrictions on rear-wheel-drive cars have slashed their advantage off the line. Forget passing third-placed Rory Butcher's Motorbase Performance Ford Focus; Turkington couldn't even keep fellow RWD runner Sutton behind. But then Turkington was gifted two spots when Sutton locked up into Becketts, and inadvertently tapped Butcher into a spin. "It was a combination of lateral loads and a locking front-left," explained a sheepish Sutton, referencing the fact that the braking point is through the Maggotts left-hander. "I was always going to hit Rory. I want to apologise to him because he was on the receiving end of my lock-up."

Once past Cammish, Turkington zeroed in on Ingram and, with four and a half laps to go, there was heartbreak in the Speedworks pit as the Toyota slowed with a left-front puncture. "There's not enough left of the tyre to know whether we were too aggressive on set-up or it was a kerbstrike," grimaced team boss Christian Dick.

Turkington was now clear to head home Cammish and the venerable Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes A-Class of Morgan, going great guns again in his old warhorse. From an initial fifth place, this was a classic act of Turkington stealth to put himself back into the championship lead. "It was all about being patient," he said of what was his 150th BTCC podium, and is probably a phrase Turkington has assigned to about 149 of those. "I knew I had good pace. I had to wait on Dan and Tom coming back to me, wait until their front axles dropped off a bit, and then I did a nice move on Dan. I benefited from the misfortunes of others. It's a delicate balancing act between you've got to look after your left-front but you've got to be quick."

Sutton, meanwhile, got a taste of his own inadvertent medicine on the second lap when Stephen Jelley bumped him wide at Becketts. But the Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50 was already stricken from the incident with Butcher: a flat-spot on his front-left tyre got increasingly severe and eventually – just like Ingram – the rubber delaminated and he went to the pits. Also like Ingram, Sutton returned to the fray, and the Infiniti grabbed fastest lap on the very last tour. In doing so he nicked a point from Cammish, which could prove critical at the end of the season.

But that made no difference to his grid position for race three, which Sutton would start from 26th. Once again, this was a weekend of extreme highs and lows for the man who is one of the greatest touring car racers of his generation. Strong pace in free practice – he topped the opening session – went missing in qualifying. He would have started from the front row with his FP1 time, but gridded seventh instead. "We've had brake issues and we thought we'd got to the bottom of why we had them at Thruxton," he explained. "We put new brakes in for qualifying, and it was back to where we were at Thruxton..." >>

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DESPAIR AND JOY IN ONE RACE FOR MOTORBASE

As the sky darkened over Silverstone, the BTCC's newest race winner was helping his team load a mangled Ford Focus into a trailer. Rory Butcher's accident had been scary to watch, but team-mate Ollie Jackson ensured there wasn't a dry eye in the Kent house of Motorbase Performance with his maiden win.

Butcher's shunt was precipitated by contact with the Team Dynamics Honda of Matt Neal but, however many replays you watched, it was difficult to conclude that it was anything other than one of those things. "I just don't think he saw me there," said Neal. "He got a good run, got half a car in front and moved across to defend, but I was there."

Even Motorbase boss Dave Bartrum reckoned the same, although he hadn't initially. "It's the nearest thing to a racing incident I've seen for a while," he agreed. "I went to Dynamics when I was upset, but I'm man enough to apologise when I'm wrong."

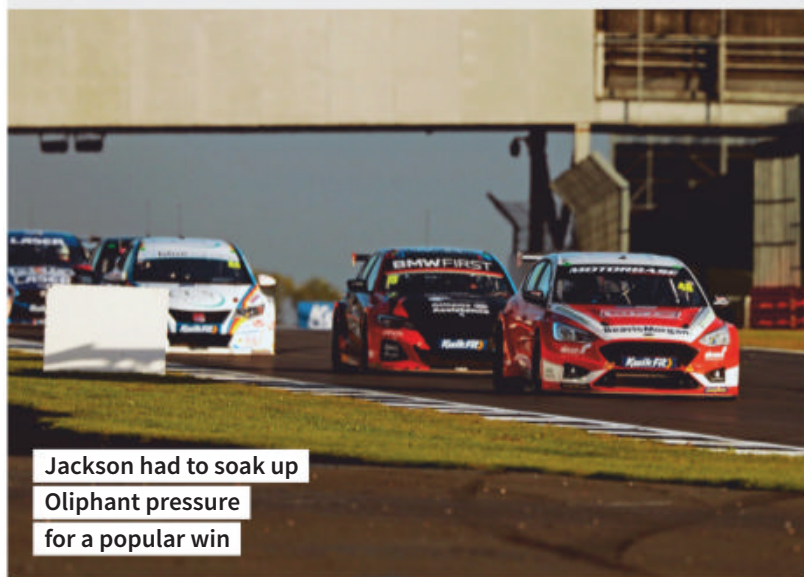
And there was a warm glow surrounding the initial fears and bitterness, thanks to the victory of the popular Jackson, who has been in the BTCC for nine years now, but had only scored one podium before his fine third place at Brands in August. "Being a touring car driver was my dream," said a man who arrived there via Caterhams and a stint in the Porsche Carrera Cup's Pro-Am class, "and winning one has been my dream as a touring car driver. It's long overdue."

Regardless of it being a reversed-grid race, Jackson looked good at Silverstone anyway. He qualified 11th and made a terrific start to run seventh in the opener, but got a knock to the suspension while battling with Adam Morgan and tumbled to 13th. Had it not been for that, he'd likely have finished higher than the eighth he recorded in race two, so would never have been on the front row for the finale – and would probably still be waiting for his maiden win.

He had to earn it though. His race-long rival Tom Oliphant acknowledged that "Ollie's one of the more difficult drivers to pass. I got knocked back a couple of times." But there was nothing outside the book of BTCC etiquette. "The goal now is to do it on a not-reversed grid," beamed Jackson. "I've had a bit of a dip the last couple of rounds, but I've gone away and worked on my driving and it seems to have paid off."

MARCUS SIMMONS

**"I WENT TO
DYNAMICS WHEN
I WAS UPSET, BUT
I'M MAN ENOUGH
TO APOLOGISE
WHEN I'M WRONG"**



Jackson had to soak up
Oliphant pressure
for a popular win

Coming through! Sutton
catches a bunch under
setting Silverstone sun



Carrying the full 60kg of ballast, Sutton raced well to fifth in the opener, but then came his error in race two. Surely the best he could hope for was a top-10 in the finale...

This turned into the most thrilling BTCC race of the season. Tom Oliphant started it on pole in his WSR BMW, having recovered well from a suspension problem in the first race to carve his way through to ninth in the sequel. But that rear-driven 330i couldn't keep the Motorbase Ford of Ollie Jackson behind into Copse Corner, and Jackson was defending well from Oliphant when Butcher had a terrifying accident on lap six.

Butcher was side by side with Neal when there was contact between the pair at Maggotts. It sent the out-of-control Ford careering across the grass, before it spun round and smashed rearwards into the barrier. That launched Butcher into a barrel-roll, and the car finally landed on its wheels in the middle of Becketts, where there were some spectacular avoidances. To the relief of everyone, Butcher clambered out with nothing but a shaking.

The race was red-flagged, and would be restarted over 12 laps from the order at the end of lap five. From an initial 26th, Sutton this time lined up 14th, and within eight laps he was third! That included knife-through-butter progress through a gaggle of warring Hondas on a track made slippery by oil from the expiring engine in the Civic of Michael Crees. "Everyone got caught out by it, but it seems we were the only ones that didn't," grinned Sutton, revelling in driving an Infiniti with no success ballast.

Sutton latched onto the leading pair of Jackson and Oliphant but, just as he did at Brands Hatch in August for victory, Oliphant defended well, while simultaneously trying to attack the leading Ford. Finally Sutton prised an opening, but had to run off track at Copse on the final lap to claim the inside line and second place at Maggotts. With Sutton having already received a written reprimand for the Butcher incident in race two, this time he was penalised 0.3s to push him back down to third behind Oliphant, but it had been a stunning drive. "I'm emotionally exhausted if I'm honest," sighed Sutton. "Having no weight on the car is the reason we've come forward, but not for one moment did I feel a podium was possible."

Oliphant, meanwhile, was grumbling about the boost restrictions, and purists would say he's quite right – why should the BMWs and Infinitis be penalised because 75% of the field have chosen cars with the wrong driven axle? "It's gone too far really," he said. "We need to have a little bit of a halfway house on this. I got a good start, but it's the second phase that allowed him [Jackson] to get back in front."

Team-mate Turkington could do no better than 10th in this epic BTCC dust-up; fellow title rival Ingram was eliminated on the opening lap in a three-way collision at Luffield. So Cammish made the most ground in the title race on the day, picking his way through the battling hordes for fourth from Morgan. But it was Sutton, back into the championship lead, who was at his scintillating best. "That one race topped my whole career," he smiled. "It's by the far the best moment of my life. I gave it everything I had." ❧

RESULTS ROUND 6/9, SILVERSTONE (GBR), 27 SEPTEMBER RACE 1 (25 LAPS – 41.010 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R (36kg)	25m43.206s
2	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GT (48kg)	+1.081s
3	Rory Butcher (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST (42kg)	+4.468s
4	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330i M Sport (54kg)	+4.815s
5	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50 (60kg)	+5.049s
6	Adam Morgan (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class (18kg)	+7.516s
7	Jake Hill (GBR)	MB Motorsport (AmD) / Honda Civic Type R (6kg)	+8.957s
8	Matt Neal (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R (12kg)	+9.368s
9	Stephen Jelley (GBR)	Team Parker Racing / BMW 125i M Sport	+10.856s
10	Josh Cook (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+14.030s
11	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	+17.706s
12	Carl Boardley (GBR)	Team Hard / BMW 125i M Sport	+18.898s
13	Ollie Jackson (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+18.915s
14	Senna Proctor (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (6kg)	+19.500s
15	Tom Chilton (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R (24kg)	+19.713s
16	Chris Smiley (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+20.870s
17	Sam Osborne (GBR)	MB Motorsport (AmD) / Honda Civic Type R	+22.368s
18	Bobby Thompson (GBR)	Trade Price Cars Racing (AmD) / Audi S3	+22.812s
19	Tom Onslow-Cole (GBR)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+23.639s
20	Jack Butel (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class	+24.784s
21	Andy Neate (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+25.131s
22	James Gornall (GBR)	Trade Price Cars Racing (AmD) / Audi S3	+25.412s
23	Jade Edwards (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (45kg)	+27.430s
24	Nicolas Hamilton (GBR)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+29.812s
R	Tom Oliphant (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330i M Sport (30kg)	12 laps-suspension
R	Michael Crees (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	4 laps-off
R	Jack Goff (GBR)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	2 laps-misfire

Winner's average speed 95.67mph. **Fastest lap** Cammish 57.750s, 102.26mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Cammish 57.349s; 2 Ingram 57.547s; 3 Butcher 57.550s; 4 Turkington 57.552s; 5 Oliphant 57.557s; 6 Neal 57.603s; 7 Sutton 57.663s; 8 Morgan 57.673s; 9 Chilton 57.694s; 10 Hill 57.719s; 11 Jackson 57.737s; 12 Cook 57.815s; 13 Boardley 57.874s; 14 Jelley 57.877s; 15 Moffat 57.895s; 16 Proctor 57.918s; 17 Osborne 57.923s; 18 Goff 58.009s; 19 Thompson 58.072s; 20 Butel 58.087s; 21 Onslow-Cole 58.185s; 22 Smiley 58.192s; 23 Crees 58.232s; 24 Neate 58.271s; 25 Hamilton 58.413s; 26 Edwards 58.631s; 27 Gornall no time.



Chilton, Morgan
and Neal abreast in
scintillating third race



Turkington climbed
from fifth to win
the second race

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 2 (22 LAPS – 36.089 MILES)

1 Turkington (42kg) 21m26.293s; 2 Cammish (60kg) +1.245s; 3 Morgan (30kg) +3.172s; 4 Neal (18kg) +7.876s; 5 Moffat +12.576s; 6 Cook (6kg) +13.804s; 7 Hill (24kg) +14.500s; 8 Jackson +14.910s; 9 Oliphant +15.102s; 10 Proctor +16.911s; 11 Chilton +17.115s; 12 Osborne +17.831s; 13 Thompson +18.380s; 14 Butcher (48kg) +18.559s; 15 Smiley +20.016s; 16 Gornall +20.404s; 17 Butel +21.098s; 18 Onslow-Cole +21.446s; 19 Goff +21.913s; 20 Jelley (12kg) +22.858s; 21 Edwards +25.507s; 22 Neate +26.205s; 23 Boardley +43.244s; 24 Hamilton -1 lap; 25 Ingram (54kg) -1 lap; 26 Sutton (36kg) -2 laps; R Crees 13 laps-engine. **Winner's average speed 101.00mph. **Fastest lap** Sutton 57.687s, 102.37mph.**

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

RACE 3 (12 LAPS – 19.685 MILES)

1 Jackson (18kg) 11m48.038s; 2 Oliphant (12kg) +0.576s; 3 Sutton +0.612s; 4 Cammish (54kg) +1.130s; 5 Morgan (48kg) +3.827s; 6 Proctor (6kg) +3.947s; 7 Cook (30kg) +4.238s; 8 Moffat (36kg) +4.472s; 9 Chilton +4.599s; 10 Turkington (60kg) +4.911s; 11 Neal (42kg) +5.453s; 12 Thompson +6.191s; 13 Smiley +7.178s; 14 Boardley +7.241s; 15 Hill (24kg) +10.661s; 16 Goff +10.838s; 17 Butel +11.030s; 18 Jelley +11.328s; 19 Onslow-Cole +12.921s; 20 Osborne +14.645s; 21 Hamilton +23.487s; R Edwards 6 laps-power-steering; R Gornall 4 laps-engine; R Butcher 0 laps-accident; R Neate 0 laps-accident damage; R Ingram 0 laps-accident; R Crees 0 laps-engine.

Winner's average speed 100.09mph. **Fastest lap** Sutton 58.015s, 101.79mph. **Fastest lap before red flag** Sutton 57.894s, 102.00mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Sutton 237; 2 Turkington 233; 3 Cammish 220; 4 Ingram 195; 5 Butcher 192; 6 Oliphant 183; 7 Chilton 139; 8 Morgan 134; 9 Neal 120; 10 Hill 104.

NEXT REPORT

CROFT
15 OCTOBER ISSUE

North Yorkshire is often BMW territory, but can those rear-driven cars get their tyres switched on in likely even-colder-than-usual conditions?



Accomplished Sochi win lays claim for Schumacher's F1 graduation

FIA FORMULA 2
SOCHI (RUS)
26-27 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 10/12

Mick Schumacher bolstered his claim for a 2021 Formula 1 seat with arguably his most complete weekend in FIA Formula 2 so far.

The Ferrari junior qualified his Prema Racing machine third for the Sochi feature race, and that soon became second when he overhauled Carlin's Jehan Daruvala with his characteristic storming launch. Schumacher challenged Daruvala's polesitting team-mate Yuki Tsunoda on the outside of Turn 2, but settled in behind the Red Bull and Honda protege as chaos ensued behind.

A crash eliminated four cars on the spot, including Renault junior Christian Lundgaard, who had vaulted into title contention after starring in the previous round at Mugello with a sprint-race win. Also involved was Red Bull youngster Juri Vips on his final outing at DAMS deputising for the injured Sean Gelael.

The subsequent safety-car period allayed fears that the supersoft-tyred runners – including the leading duo of Tsunoda and Schumacher – would struggle to make the mandated minimum of six laps before switching to medium rubber.

Tsunoda headed for the pits at the end of lap eight, and Schumacher made the critical last-minute call to follow him in. The initial plan was for Schumacher to go longer but, when he felt his rear tyres fading in the final

sector, he peeled into the pits, much to the surprise of his Prema mechanics. Team boss Rene Rosin frantically gesticulated to the crew, who were expecting to service the sister car of Robert Schwartzman. They swiftly readied Schumacher's tyres and his pitstop went without issue, while his Ferrari stablemate Schwartzman wasn't so lucky with a slow rear-right tyre change.

With 10 laps remaining, Schumacher pressured Tsunoda into Turn 2 and swept around the outside on the corner exit to take the race lead. Main championship rival Callum Iott passed Tsunoda later in the lap, but ended up cooking his tyres while chasing after Schumacher. He lost second position to Tsunoda on the final lap and

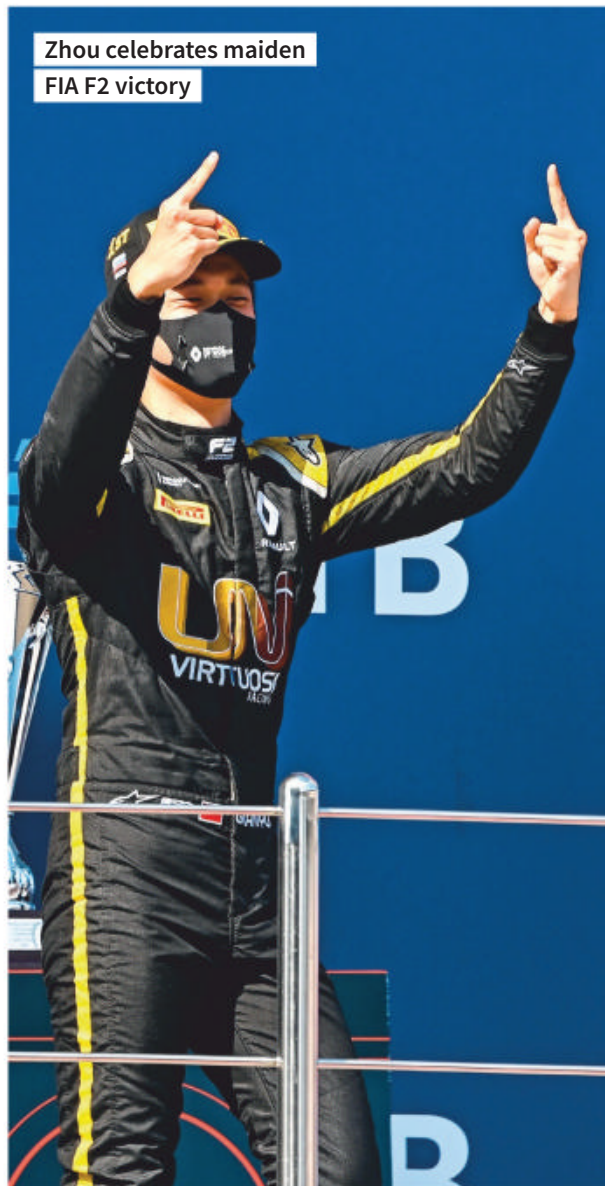
just held off Luca Ghiotto for the final place on the podium by 0.025 seconds.

Schumacher faced no such problems at the front, serenely securing his second feature-race win of the year and extending his lead at the top of the drivers' table.

Rosin's pitlane antics earned a €10,000 fine in a confusing partial breaking of a rule that left four teams considering a protest, as they believed a sporting penalty was warranted. Schumacher's car was also investigated for a "superseded version of the DRS crank", the device introduced last year to remedy the DRS failures that marred the 2019 season opener in Bahrain.

Following a lengthy stewards' report, Schumacher kept his win and headed into





Zhou celebrates maiden
FIA F2 victory

Sunday's sprint race with an 18-point advantage over Ilott in the standings.

The partially reversed-grid sprint race was prematurely ended after just seven laps when F2 veterans Ghiotto and Jack Aitken — fresh from battling all race long the day before — collided at high speed in the middle of the sweeping Turn 3 left-hander and were sent flying into the Tecpro barriers. Ghiotto's Hitech Grand Prix car burst into flames, but both drivers fortunately escaped relatively unscathed.

The race was red-flagged and unsurprisingly, given the damage to the barriers, was not restarted, meaning Ilott's Virtuosi team-mate Guanyu Zhou was declared the winner, albeit with half points awarded. It represents Renault junior Zhou's first F2 win and ends a near two-year absence for him from the top step of any podium.

Food poisoning raised doubts that Nikita Mazepin would be fit to race last weekend, but he did and indeed excelled on Sunday — the Hitech man would have challenged Zhou for the win without the red flag.

Schumacher completed the podium, his seventh top-three finish in the past nine races. As a result of the race being counted from the end of lap five, Aitken and Ghiotto completed the top five ahead of Tsunoda, Ilott and Dan Ticktum. Daruvala was unfortunate to drop out of the points-paying positions courtesy of a five-second time penalty that he picked up for not following the race director's instructions.

JOSH SUTTILL

RESULTS ROUND 10/12, SOCHI (RUS), 26-27 SEPTEMBER RACE 1 (28 LAPS - 101.622 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Mick Schumacher (DEU)	Prema Racing	55m02.871s
2	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	Carlin	+6.358s
3	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Virtuosi Racing	+9.482s
4	Luca Ghiotto (ITA)	Hitech GP	+9.507s
5	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Carlin	+15.225s
6	Jack Aitken (GBR)	Campos Racing	+22.183s
7	Nikita Mazepin (RUS)	Hitech GP	+23.129s
8	Guanyu Zhou (CHN)	Virtuosi Racing	+25.392s
9	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	ART Grand Prix	+26.940s
10	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	DAMS	+29.525s
11	Robert Schwartzman (RUS)	Prema Racing	+35.582s
12	Jake Hughes (GBR)	HWA Racelab	+37.535s
13	Marino Sato (JPN)	Trident	+46.326s
14	Giuliano Alesi (FRA)	MP Motorsport	+48.045s
15	Artem Markelov (RUS)	HWA Racelab	+52.107s
16	Guilherme Samaia (BRA)	Campos Racing	+1m07.006s
17	Pedro Piquet (BRA)	Charouz Racing	+1m08.704s
18	Louis Deletraz (CHE)	Charouz Racing	+1m34.307s
R	Roy Nissany (ISR)	Trident	1 lap-accident
R	Felipe Drugovich (BRA)	MP Motorsport	1 lap-accident
R	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	ART Grand Prix	0 laps-accident
R	Juri Vips (EST)	DAMS	0 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 110.764mph. **Fastest lap** Deletraz 1m51.009s, 117.842mph.

RACE 2 (5 LAPS - 18.045 MILES)

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

1 Zhou 10m01.184s; 2 Mazepin +0.818s; 3 Schumacher +4.816s; 4 Aitken +6.459s; 5 Ghiotto +7.670s; 6 Tsunoda +8.282s; 7 Ilott +9.141s; 8 Ticktum +9.769s; 9 Piquet +10.506s; 10 Schwartzman +11.244s; 11 Daruvala +11.988s; 12 Markelov +12.438s; 13 Lundgaard +13.536s; 14 Armstrong +14.053s; 15 Sato +14.611s; 16 Alesi +15.032s; 17 Deletraz +15.717s; 18 Vips +17.100s; 19 Nissany +17.757s; 20 Drugovich +38.002s; R Hughes 0 laps-accident; R Samaia 0 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 108.058mph. **Fastest lap** Mazepin 1m51.873s, 116.932mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Schumacher 191; 2 Ilott 169; 3 Tsunoda 147; 4 Lundgaard 145; 5 Schwartzman 140; 6 Mazepin 140; 7 Deletraz 122; 8 Zhou 119.5; 9 Ghiotto 104; 10 Ticktum 80.5.



QUALIFYING

1 Tsunoda 1m48.688s
(above)
2 Daruvala 1m48.694s
3 Schumacher 1m48.883s
4 Ilott 1m49.047s
5 Ghiotto 1m49.230s
6 Lundgaard 1m49.252s
7 Schwartzman 1m49.284s
8 Aitken 1m49.306s
9 Zhou 1m49.311s
10 Mazepin 1m49.474s
11 Vips 1m49.639s
12 Piquet 1m49.680s
13 Deletraz 1m49.699s
14 Armstrong 1m49.869s
15 Hughes 1m49.962s
16 Drugovich 1m49.976s
17 Ticktum 1m50.214s
18 Sato 1m50.349s
19 Nissany 1m50.456s
20 Markelov 1m50.488s
21 Alesi 1m50.943s
22 Samaia 1m51.375s.





BMW ends decade-long drought to win truncated, drenched Nordschleife enduro

NURBURGRING 24 HOURS
NURBURGRING (DEU)
26-27 SEPTEMBER

In Germany, they call it *Eifelwetter*: the unforeseeable weather that encircles the Nurburgring-Nordschleife. And once more, the local climate decided the outcome on the Green Hell. This time it was Audi who got caught out; one lap too many on slicks enough for Car Collection Motorsport to lose a race that seemed to be falling its way.

Just as the rain started pouring down in the Eifel mountains, it was the Rowe Racing team that reacted swiftly, taking on wet tyres to send the #99 BMW M6 GT3 of Nick Yelloly/Alexander Sims/Nicky Catsburg

back out and to the top. At the same time, Christopher Haase was struggling to keep the #3 Car Collection Audi he shared with Mirko Bortolotti and Markus Winkelhock on the slippery track. Almost a minute was lost as he crept to the pits for treaded tyres.

Rowe team principal Hans-Peter Naundorf described the 2020 edition as one of the most difficult races he had ever been involved in. Heavy rainfall caused a 9.5-hour interruption during the night, with the race being decided in a 7.5-hour ‘dash’ to the end under wet/dry conditions starting at 0800.

There was heavy pressure on Catsburg during the final laps, but the Dutch racer didn’t put a foot wrong, despite admitting he “almost shit my pants” when informed

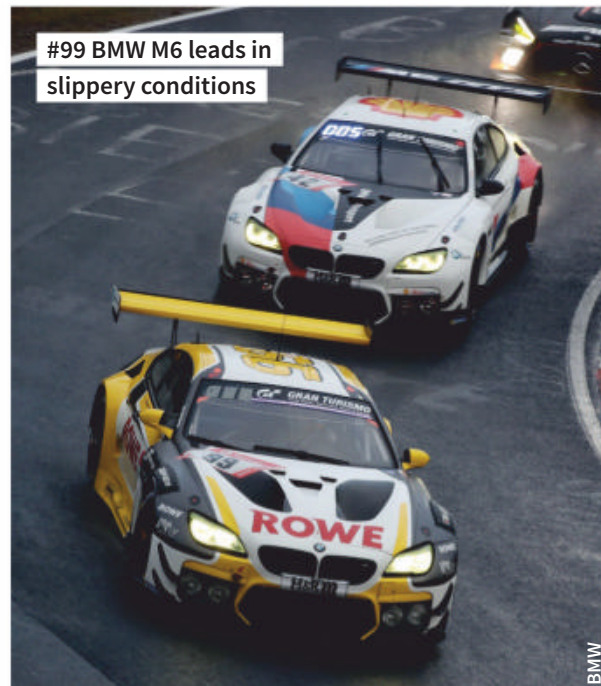
that Haase was catching quickly. In the end, just 15.5s separated the victorious BMW from the Audi, providing BMW’s elusive first N24 victory in 10 years. The #42 Schnitzer and #98 Rowe Racing BMWs took third and fourth, making the Munich manufacturer’s day even sweeter.

On raw pace, none of these cars should have clinched victory, but they managed to survive the rainy conditions, unlike the dominant #4 Haupt Racing Team and #9 GetSpeed Mercedes-AMGs. Both Manuel Metzger and Raffaele Marciello crashed out from the lead on Saturday evening before the race was red flagged. With the Mercs clearly the fastest cars in heavy rainfall, it was a bitter blow.

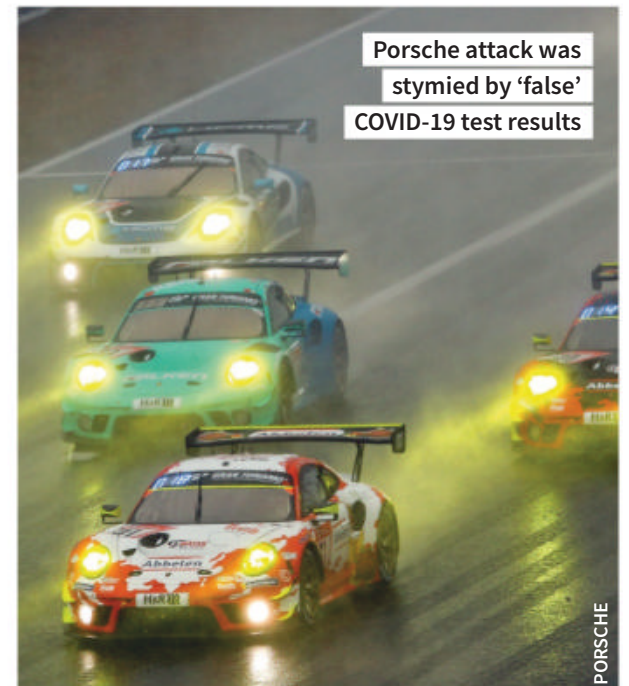
TOP 10 RESULTS NURBURGRING 24 HOURS (DEU), 26-27 SEPTEMBER (85 LAPS – 1340.38 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	CAR	TIME
1	Alexander Sims/Nicky Catsburg/Nick Yelloly	BMW M6 GT3	24h01m05.424s
2	Mirko Bortolotti/Christopher Haase/Markus Winkelhock	Audi R8 LMS GT3	+15.452s
3	Augusto Farfus/Jens Klingmann/Martin Tomczyk/Sheldon van der Linde	BMW M6 GT3	+1m45.562s
4	Marco Wittmann/Lucas Auer/Tom Blomqvist/Philipp Eng	BMW M6 GT3	+2m59.072s
5	Nico Muller/Dries Vanthoor/Frederic Vervisch/Frank Stippler	Audi R8 LMS GT3	+3m00.766s
6	Mattia Drudi/Christopher Mies/Rene Rast/Kelvin van der Linde	Audi R8 LMS GT3	+4m56.197s
7	Lars Kern/Mathieu Jaminet/Maxime Martin/Lance David Arnold	Porsche 911 GT3-R	+5m47.290s
8	Patrick Assenheimer/Dominik Baumann/Dirk Muller/Maro Engel	Mercedes-AMG GT3	+8m30.321s
9	Hubert Haupt/Yelmer Buurman/Nico Bastian/Philip Ellis	Mercedes-AMG GT3	-1 lap
10	Klaus Bachler/Sven Muller/Martin Ragginger/Peter Dumbreck	Porsche 911 GT3-R	-1 lap





#99 BMW M6 leads in slippery conditions



Porsche attack was stymied by 'false' COVID-19 test results



AutoArenA machine overcame losing a wheel to top Merc entries



One lap too many on slicks cost #3 Audi a likely triumph

The second string of Mercedes failed to hit the front, with the #6 AutoArenA car losing a wheel on Sunday morning but still managing eighth as best of the Silver Arrows. The crew was followed by the #2 Haupt Racing Team entry in ninth, which had endured a 16-hour repair job on Friday after Yelmer Buurman crashed heavily at Schwedenkreuz in Thursday night's practice session.

The events preventing Porsche from taking victory were even more dramatic. With the N24 – delayed by four months by the COVID-19 pandemic – taking place just one week after the Le Mans 24 Hours, there had always been a risk of the Manthey squad missing their home race. And this is exactly what happened: three people from the outfit tested positive for coronavirus on Sunday evening at Le Mans, causing the team to not only withdraw its popular 'Grello' 911, but also for the manufacturer to pull all its factory drivers. On an ad hoc basis, all Porsche driver pairings were reshuffled, making use of their 'retired'

veterans Jorg Bergmeister and Timo Bernhard. Incidentally, those tests proved to be "falsely positive"...

The #31 Frikadelli-entered 911 GT3-R proved to be Porsche's greatest hope for a podium, after both KCMG cars made contact with backmarkers. However, the machine was penalised in controversial fashion owing to Mathieu Jaminet's hard-fought battle with Philipp Eng in the #98 Rowe BMW. Both cars tagged several times, but neither suffered a disadvantage, so there was some sympathy for the team.

The two Falken Porsches couldn't manage better than 10th and 11th. This was down to Michelin's total domination in cold and rainy conditions. With track temperatures dropping to as little as 4C during the night, there was no opposition to the French giant. Falken managed best of the rest, with both the Yokohama- and Goodyear-shod cars never in contention, most notably robbing Walkenhorst's #34 BMW any chance of victory.

The tyre disadvantage was shown in most dramatic fashion by the Goodyear-shod #26 Octane 126 Ferrari that started from the front row. Jonathan Hirschi managed to lead on the Grand Prix circuit, only to drop like a stone once the pack reached the Nordschleife, finishing a distant 20th and six laps down. Worse, the 488 was later disqualified as Simon Trummer failed to reach the minimum driving time of 15 laps.

The 2020 N24 will be remembered for being the one held without countless fans lining the Nordschleife. Only a few hundred came to watch, all sitting in the grandstands around the GP circuit. The absent campfires and barbecues created a surreal atmosphere, which was matched by the smallest entry in decades – only 89 cars started. Hopefully these aspects will revert to type in 2021, meaning the *Eifelwetter* won't be the only regular feature.

HEIKO STRITZKE

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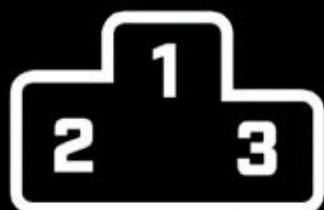
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Ehrlacher nails ‘best win’

WTCR
NURBURGRING (DEU)
25-26 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 2/6

Yann Ehrlacher took a major step towards his first international title with a podium and a victory, as the World Touring Car Cup made its annual visit to a wet Nurburgring Nordschleife.

The weekend was overshadowed by a Balance of Performance row that led Hyundai to withdraw its four cars from the meeting before first practice began on Thursday, the South Korean manufacturer stating that “neither the company nor our customer teams are given equal treatment in the series to other competitors and are not made to feel welcome”. The shock decision left reigning champion Norbert Michelisz and 2018 title winner Gabriele Tarquini on the sidelines, although all four i30 N TCRs are expected to be back for the next round on the Slovakiaring across 10-11 October.

Ehrlacher’s WTCR points lead was extended after a weekend to forget for his

main rival Nestor Girolami. The Munnich Motorsport Honda driver began race two on Saturday morning from pole, only to be docked 30 seconds for running through the pitlane twice during his reconnaissance laps before the safety car start. Even without the penalty he’d have had no answer to Ehrlacher’s Cyan Racing Lynk & Co, which slipstreamed past him the long Dottinger Hohe straight at the end of lap one.

“It’s such an amazing feeling to win a race on the greatest track in the world,” said an overjoyed Ehrlacher, who put in a storming second lap to secure the win. “I can’t believe we won on the Nordschleife in those conditions. It’s the best win of my career, absolutely insane.”

Swede Thed Bjork completed a 1-2 for the Chinese manufacturer after demoting Attila Tassi’s Munnich Honda to third on the Grand Prix loop, then sweeping past a weaving Girolami on the long straight on lap two of three. Once the penalty was applied, Girolami found himself classified 11th after finishing third on the road ahead of Tassi.

The reversed-grid race one on Friday offered the highlight of the weekend, when Esteban Guerrieri pulled an inspired move on Ehrlacher’s uncle, Yvan Muller, to score his first victory of the season. The Munnich Honda driver pressured polesitter Muller on the GP circuit, then outbraked him on the outside line into the Aremberg right-hander. The pair rubbed doors, but Muller admitted he was powerless to stop Guerrieri.

“I had an idea from last year where the grip might be and where I could attack a bit more,” said the Argentinian. “I saw Yvan braking on the inside a bit early so I tried



GOODEN/DPPI

WEEKEND WINNERS

WTCR
NURBURGRING (DEU)
Race 1 Esteban Guerrieri
Munnich Motorsport
(Honda Civic Type R TCR)
Race 2 Yann Ehrlacher
Cyan Racing (Lynk & Co 03 TCR)

SUPER TC2000
BUENOS AIRES (ARG)
Facundo Ardusso (below)
Renault Sport (Renault Fluence GT)



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around the outside. I didn’t know what was going to happen. We went side-by-side out of the corner, it was very fair going down the hill, then Yvan lifted.”

Bjork gifted Ehrlacher third place along Dottinger Hohe on the last lap, underlining that the Frenchman appears to be Lynk & Co’s anointed one this year, a third of the way through the season. Girolami finished sixth, behind Tom Coronel’s Comtoyou Racing Audi. Ehrlacher now holds a 31-point lead over both Bjork and Girolami, with Muller a point further back in fourth.

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McLaughlin lands third crown in a row

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
THE BEND (AUS)
26-27 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 10/11

Scott McLaughlin sealed the 2020 Australian Supercars championship title with a round to spare thanks to a pair of wins and a second place at The Bend.

The DJR Penske Ford ace needed to stretch his lead over Jamie Whincup to 300 points to avoid a title showdown in the Bathurst 1000, which meant outscoring the Holden driver by 85 points across the three races.

He went a long way to doing that in Saturday's opener, McLaughlin holding off Shane van Gisbergen in a tense battle at the front as Whincup could manage just 10th from his relatively poor 14th grid spot.

McLaughlin then put one hand firmly on the trophy in the first of two Sunday races, adding a second win after being gifted the



lead by team-mate Fabian Coulthard in the early stages. Again Whincup struggled, a seventh place leaving him 299 points behind McLaughlin heading into the final heat.

While Whincup finally found some form in race three it was too little, too late. McLaughlin finished second, with Whincup third, to seal a third consecutive title.

It's the first time a driver has won the title with a round to spare since Mark Skaife

in 2001/2002, and sets up an epic Bathurst battle with no championship considerations.

Cameron Waters, meanwhile, used the title fight to help grab a first solo Supercars race victory, winning a game of chicken with McLaughlin at Turn 1 in the final heat. After sweeping ahead, he was free to cruise to his first triumph since he and Richie Stanaway won the Sandown 500 in 2017.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

Strategy master Tsuboi scores maiden Super Formula win

SUPER FORMULA
OKAYAMA (JPN)
27 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 2/6

Toyota-backed Cerumo/Inging driver Sho Tsuboi came through for his maiden Super Formula victory at Okayama in a race enlivened by the return of mandatory pitstops.

In only his ninth start in the series, Tsuboi passed his two-time champion team-mate Hiroaki Ishiura shortly after Ishiura had made his stop by using his



warmer tyres to go around the outside at the long right-hander of Turn 6.


Tsuboi had got his pitstop out of the way on lap 11 of 50, jumping polesitter and Motegi winner Ryo Hirakawa (Team Impul) shortly after the points leader had come out of the pits. Once Tsuboi had repeated the trick on Ishiura on lap 31, he never looked like losing the advantage.

Nick Cassidy injected some tension into proceedings by leaving his stop until the penultimate lap, and he rejoined behind the two Inging cars to score third for TOM'S.

The Kiwi's path from 10th on the grid had been eased by a three-way collision at Turn 1, triggered by Toshiki Oyu, which eliminated both Sacha Fenestraz and Tadasuke Makino. That incident left Tsuboi second, up from eighth, and Cassidy fourth.

Hirakawa was fourth at the flag but maintains his championship lead, while Impul team-mate Yuhi Sekiguchi was fifth ahead of top Honda-powered finisher Naoki Yamamoto (Dandelion).

JAMIE KLEIN

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WEEKEND WINNERS

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
THE BEND (AUS)
Races 1 Scott McLaughlin
DJR Team Penske
(Ford Mustang)
Races 2 Scott McLaughlin
DJR Team Penske
(Ford Mustang)
Race 3 Cameron Waters
Tickford Racing
(Ford Mustang)

SUPER FORMULA
OKAYAMA (JPN)
Sho Tsuboi
Cerumo/Inging (Dallara-Toyota)

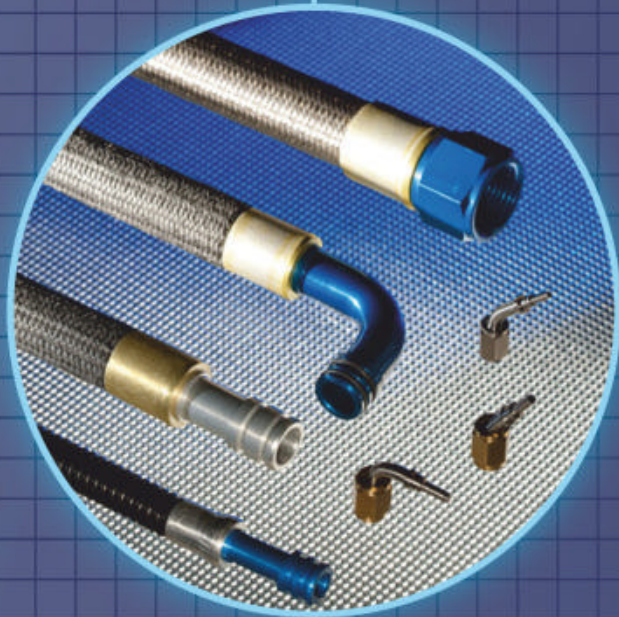
EUROFORMULA OPEN
MONZA (ITA)
Race 1 Yifei Ye
CryptoTower (Dallara-Spiess)
Race 2 Lukas Dummer
CryptoTower (Dallara-Spiess)
Race 3 Lukas Dummer
CryptoTower (Dallara-Spiess)

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
Race 1 Victor Martins
ART Grand Prix
Race 2 Caio Collet
R-ace GP

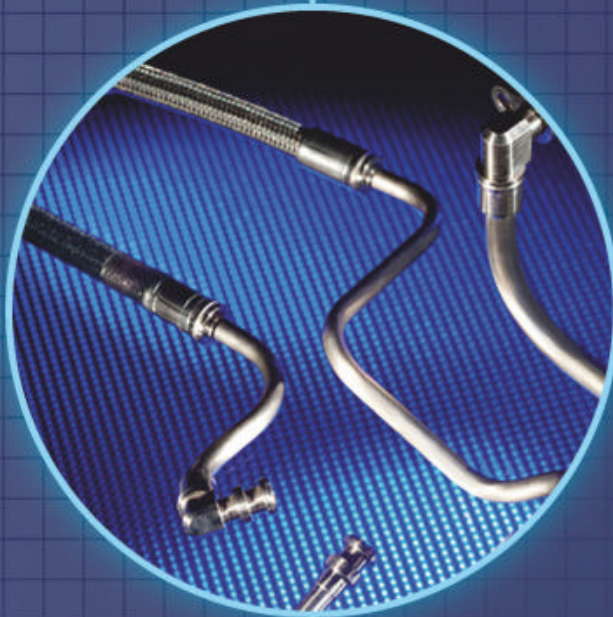
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The #7 Acura leads Derani/Nasr Cadillac
for third victory in a row



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Castroneves/Taylor bag treble as Montoya runs out of road

IMSA SPORTSCAR
MID-OHIO (USA)
27 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 7/11

The Team Penske duo of Helio Castroneves and Ricky Taylor clinched their third straight IMSA Sportscar win aboard the #7 Acura ARX-05, catapulting into the heart of the championship battle, although that looked an unlikely situation at the start of the race at Mid-Ohio.

Their team-mate Dane Cameron had narrowly beaten Castroneves to pole position by 0.016 seconds and at the start he retained the advantage, while the Brazilian was jumped by the Action Express Racing Cadillac of Pipo Derani and the Mazda of Jonathan Bomarito.

However, soon after taking over the #6 Acura from Cameron, just past the one-hour mark of this 2h40m race, Juan Pablo Montoya drove off the circuit at

Turn 6 while lapping a GT Daytona car and then pitted off-strategy as a precautionary measure, falling to the back of the class.

Castroneves, who had jumped ahead of Bomarito at the first round of pitstops, kept up the pressure on Derani. The latter handed over to Felipe Nasr on lap 62 of 115, but Castroneves stayed out two tours longer. When he handed over to Taylor, the #7 Acura emerged comfortably ahead.

Montoya relinquished the lead to Taylor soon after a restart, and once he made his final scheduled stop, carved his way past Harry Tincknell who had taken over from Bomarito in the #55 Mazda (which twice suffered penalties) and then passed Wayne Taylor Racing's Cadillac to grab third before spinning at Turn 1 and down to last in class. Renger van der Zande then successfully held off Tincknell to the checkered flag to claim the final podium spot and retain a narrow three-point standings lead.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR
MID-OHIO (USA)

- DPI** Helio Castroneves/Ricky Taylor
Team Penske (Acura ARX-05)
- GTL** Antonio Garcia/Jordan Taylor
Corvette Racing
(Chevrolet Corvette C8.R)
- GTD** Jack Hawksworth/Aaron Telitz
AIM Vasser Sullivan (Lexus RC F GT3)

NASCAR CUP
LAS VEGAS (USA)

Kurt Busch
Chip Ganassi Racing
(Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
LAS VEGAS (USA)

Chase Briscoe
Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford Mustang)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
LAS VEGAS (USA)

Austin Hill
Hattori Racing Enterprises (Toyota Tundra)

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Deflated Johnson revives Busch's hopes

NASCAR CUP
LAS VEGAS (USA)
27 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 30/36

A brace of midfield finishes in stages one and two of last Sunday's NASCAR Cup race at his home circuit of Las Vegas was nothing for Kurt Busch to get excited about.

Five points below the cut-off for the 'Round of 8', and with Talladega and the Charlotte 'Roval' to come in the 'Round of 12', Busch's

hopes of advancing were slim midway through the final 107-lap segment, as the leaders took their final green-flag pitstops.

That was until Jimmie Johnson's right-rear Goodyear tyre cried enough and picked the perfect moment (for Busch) to delaminate and neutralise the race. Busch opted not to follow the leading gaggle into the pits and benefited as the likes of Alex Bowman, Denny Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr all became stranded a lap down.



Chevrolet Camaro racer
Busch leads at Las Vegas

Busch's Chip Ganassi crew were afforded the luxury of a relatively stress-free visit from their driver three tours later, who took fresh rubber for the remaining 25 laps.

Busch quickly passed Matt DiBenedetto on the restart of a 268-lap encounter, before two quick cautions sent the

race to overtime, as Hamlin bore down on Busch, shod with 15-lap fresher tyres.

Busch held on for his first win of 2020, first at Las Vegas, 32nd of his career, and ensured a spot in the next round of the playoffs, ahead of DiBenedetto and Hamlin's Toyota Camry.

JAKE NICHOL



Quartararo strikes back in Spain

Emotional Quartararo knows third win of 2020 could mark title challenge turning point

MOTOGP
BARCELONA (ESP)
27 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/14

The first two parts of the latest MotoGP triple-header couldn't have gone much better for Yamaha, with Franco Morbidelli winning the San Marino Grand Prix at Misano for Petronas SRT, and Maverick Vinales returning to the top step a week later at the same track on his works M1.

For Fabio Quartararo, they couldn't have gone much worse. A crash in the San Marino race lost him the championship lead for the first time in 2020, and a post-race penalty for a track-limits violation dropped him off the podium in the Emilia Romagna GP. His dominance of July at Jerez seemed a very long time ago.

In the week leading up to the Catalan GP at Barcelona, injured world champion Marc Marquez said he expected "much more" of the Frenchman. It was time

for 'El Diablo' to step up.

Yamaha's speed deficit wasn't as brutal as it had been at previous tracks, despite Catalunya's 1km main straight. But it's almost impossible to overtake on the Yamaha, and so the front row was imperative for Quartararo. Though it wasn't pole, that honour going to team-mate Morbidelli for the first time, second was job done.

Jumped by the Pramac Ducati of Jack Miller off the line and Valentino Rossi in his 350th MotoGP start, Quartararo's afternoon looked complicated at Turn 1. A mistake for Miller at Turn 10 on the opening lap was the golden opportunity he couldn't waste, and he duly relieved the Australian of third.

On lap six, Quartararo claimed Rossi and began the hunt of Morbidelli, whose lack of power on his 2019 M1 even relative to the other Yamahas meant he had no choice but to simply suck it and see. It took Quartararo just two more laps to reel him in, and the lead was his at the start of lap nine.

This would be the crucial point of the

race, and where it almost went wrong.

Quartararo fired in the fastest lap of the race on lap nine with a 1m40.142s, followed by six further mid-to-high 1m40s efforts. Morbidelli made a mistake into Turn 1 on lap 14 while pushing to keep up, dropping him behind Rossi. When Rossi crashed two laps later, dashing his hopes of a 200th podium the day after his 2021 future with SRT and Yamaha was secured, Quartararo's lead was 2.9s and would rise as high as 3.5s as Morbidelli's rear tyre began to fade.

But that pace surge between laps nine and 15 proved to be "maybe too fast", as Quartararo's tyre dropped off a cliff. By the penultimate lap he was lapping in the 1m43s and "not because I was in control". Having been as far off as 4.4s at one stage, Suzuki's Joan Mir carved through from another costly eighth in qualifying to put Quartararo under serious pressure in the last laps.

Ultimately, the SRT rider took the chequered flag first to re-establish his championship lead, but only 0.928s





Poleman Morbidelli
leads at the start



Runner-up Mir is now
Quartararo's closest
title challenger

clear of Mir, who now stands as his nearest title rival eight points behind.

Rossi claims his championship hopes are “closed” as his crash drops him 50 points back. Andrea Dovizioso’s chances also took a serious knock. A crash with Johann Zarco on lap one — a consequence of the works Ducati rider having qualified 17th as his braking woes on the 2020 Michelin rear tyre persist — means he’s 24 points adrift.

Vinales on the other factory Yamaha got mired in traffic on the run off the line from fifth on the grid, and he just had to bide his time before riders ahead began to suffer tyre wear. He ended lap one 15th, and was ninth at the flag having “lost the way” with bike set-up during the weekend. Was the Misano ‘breakthrough’ a false dawn?

Alex Rins completed the podium to mark Suzuki’s first double since 2007, with Morbidelli clinging to fourth ahead of the Pramac pair of Miller and Francesco Bagnaia. LCR’s Takaaki Nakagami felt he had a “great chance” to win on his 2019 Honda, but got stuck behind the Ducatis and had to settle for seventh. His returning team-mate Cal Crutchlow completed the top 10 behind Vinales and Ducati’s Danilo Petrucci, whose moment at Turn 2 inadvertently triggered the Zarco/Dovizioso collision.

Quartararo insists that Marquez’s comments didn’t play on his mind, but his animated post-race celebrations revealed just what his third win of 2020 meant to him. The Catalan GP could prove to be the turning point in this year’s title race.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 8/14, BARCELONA (ESP), 27 SEPTEMBER (24 LAPS – 69.002 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Petronas Yamaha	40m33.176s
2	Joan Mir (ESP)	Suzuki	+0.928s
3	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	+1.898s
4	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	+2.846s
5	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+3.391s
6	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+3.518s
7	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+3.671s
8	Danilo Petrucci (ITA)	Ducati	+6.117s
9	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Yamaha	+13.607s
10	Cal Crutchlow (GBR)	LCR Honda	+14.483s
11	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+14.927s
12	Alex Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+15.647s
13	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Honda	+17.327s
14	Iker Lecuona (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+27.066s
15	Tito Rabat (ESP)	Avintia Ducati	+27.282s
16	Bradley Smith (GBR)	Aprilia	+28.736s
17	Stefan Bradl (DEU)	Honda	+32.643s
R	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Tech3 KTM	18 laps-accident
R	Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Yamaha	15 laps-accident
R	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	KTM	12 laps-accident
R	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Avintia Ducati	0 laps-accident
R	Andrea Dovizioso (ITA)	Ducati	0 laps-accident

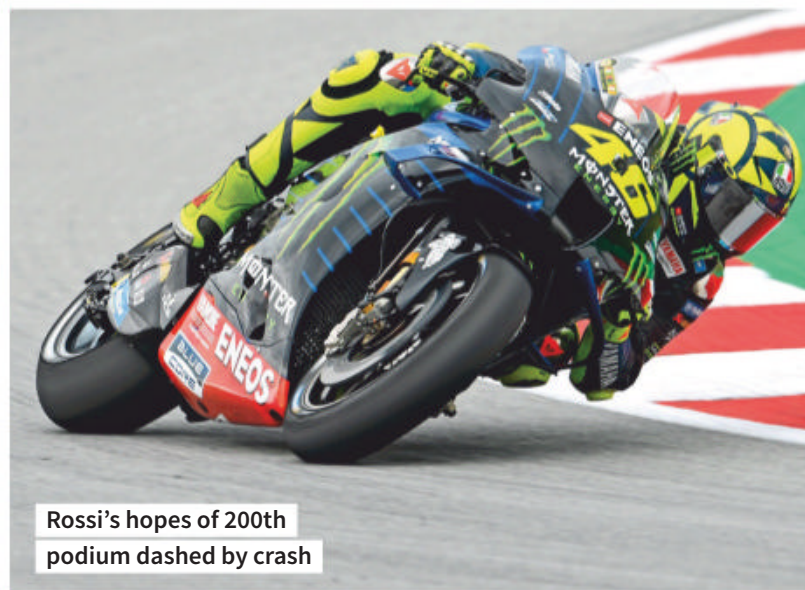
Winner’s average speed 102.091mph. **Fastest lap** Quartararo 1m40.142s, 103.356mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Morbidelli 1m38.798s; 2 Quartararo 1m39.008s; 3 Rossi 1m39.129s; 4 Miller 1m39.225s; 5 Vinales 1m39.371s; 6 Zarco 1m39.378s; 7 P Espargaro 1m39.495s; 8 Mir 1m39.628s; 9 Petrucci 1m39.641s; 10 Binder 1m39.659s; 11 Nakagami 1m39.713s; 12 Oliveira 1m40.188s.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Miller 1m39.399s; 2 Nakagami 1m39.547s; 3 Rins 1m39.751s; 4 Bagnaia 1m39.777s; 5 A Espargaro 1m39.973s; 6 Crutchlow 1m39.988s; 7 Dovizioso 1m40.109s; 8 Marquez 1m40.164s; 9 Lecuona 1m40.490s; 10 Bradl 1m40.721s; 11 Smith 1m40.838s; 12 Rabat 1m41.013s.

RIDERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Quartararo 108; 2 Mir 100; 3 Vinales 90; 4 Dovizioso 84; 5 Morbidelli 77; 6 Miller 75; 7 Nakagami 72; 8 Rins 60; 9 Oliveira 59; 10 Binder 58; 11 Rossi 58; 12 P Espargaro 57; 13 Bagnaia 39; 14 Petrucci 39; 15 Zarco 36; 16 Marquez 27; 17 A Espargaro 22; 18 Lecuona 17; 19 Crutchlow 13; 20 Smith 11; 21 Rabat 8; 22 Michele Pirro 4; 23 Bradl 0.

MANUFACTURERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Yamaha 163; 2 Ducati 126; 3 Suzuki 113; 4 KTM 109; 5 Honda 72; 6 Aprilia 30.



Rossi’s hopes of 200th
podium dashed by crash

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

BARCELONA (ESP)

Luca Marini
Team VR46
(Kalex)

MOTO3

BARCELONA (ESP)

Darryn Binder (below)
Green Power
(KTM)



NEXT REPORT

FRENCH GRAND PRIX 15 OCTOBER ISSUE

Can Quartararo continue asserting himself in the absence of Marquez or can one of the other challengers win at Le Mans?

A FIGHTER AND A PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

KANAAN

Tony Kanaan is an IndyCar champion and an Indy 500 winner, but there's more to his legacy than that, say some of his key rivals, team-mates and friends

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

“I tell you, it's been a crazy-busy last couple of days,” chuckles Tony Kanaan on the Tuesday after his ‘final’ IndyCar race. “All of a sudden people want to talk to me, just as I said I was gonna slow down. There will be opportunities, I know, but what they’ll be I don’t know.

“Truthfully, when I made my announcement in February, I expected this year to be all the ovals, and then next year probably just the Indy 500. But because of how strange this year has been, without fans at most tracks, I want to do all the ovals again next year. And if the right opportunity comes up then for sure, that’s what I will try to do. But as I said about a thousand times over the weekend in Gateway, it doesn’t matter what I want. What I want is not going to control what happens.

“We have to be realistic. I need to find a sponsor and a team, and so I need to get talking to partners I’ve been with for ages like Bryant and 7-Eleven and Big Machine, and see if we can go put something together for the five ovals, or just Indy and another couple of races, or just Indy... And the uncertainty in the world right now makes it even more difficult, because no one is sure what kind of budget they might have. The timing is... not good.”

Ex-team-mates and friends of Kanaan are far more positive about his prospects than he is, the consensus being that the double-header at Gateway on the last weekend of August, which included an encouraging ninth and a dispiriting 19th, were *not* TK’s final IndyCar races.

“Let me go on record as saying I don’t believe Tony’s written his last chapter in open-wheel, the whole ‘#TKLastLap’ thing notwithstanding,” says Bryan Herta, whose first connection with Kanaan came in 2000 when he subbed for the injured Brazilian at Mo Nunn Racing for three CART Indycar races. Three years later, they became team-mates for four seasons at what was then called Andretti Green Racing in the Indy Racing League; by default, Herta took on the professorial role in the Gang of Four that comprised himself, Kanaan, Dario Franchitti and Dan Wheldon.

“He really captured the fans’ imagination and rose to become one of the most popular drivers in US open-wheel for the last 25 years,” >>



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MACHINE

continues Herta. “That will be his legacy – his talent, yes, but also his popularity, his enthusiasm, his infectious personality and connection with the fans.”

Kanaan’s regular bad luck at Indianapolis Motor Speedway – he was constantly a factor there and led well over 200 laps of IMS before he finally nailed a win on his 12th attempt – was part of Kanaan’s allure to the fans. But there was more to it than that. Whereas Marco Andretti – who replaced Ganassi-bound Wheldon in 2006 – emulated his father in being almost painfully shy, and Franchitti and Herta were quite happy flying under the radar and would look surprised if approached for an autograph, Kanaan revelled in the recognition. He was gregarious, spontaneous, made fans chuckle, and he’d sign anything and everything that was shoved under his distinctive nose.

“Bad luck at the Speedway was definitely part of Tony’s appeal to fans,” says Herta, “but it was also how he handled it. He spent eight years in one of the best teams and regularly looked like he was going to win the 500 and then something would go wrong. And however frustrating it must have been for him, he managed to keep a smile on his face in the down times, didn’t let his head drop, and people appreciated that. Then, when he won it, he stayed popular. And that’s why I don’t think he’s done yet. I think he’ll do everything he can to say goodbye to the fans in person.”

Franchitti agrees. “When I talked [in 2013] about my plans, I was going to do one more year, and I had already planned my exit,” says the



With Herta in their
Andretti Green days

“I HONESTLY FELT HE WAS A THREAT ON ANY KIND OF TRACK. AND LOOK AT HOW GOOD HE WAS IN SPORTSCARS”

four-time champion and three-time Indy 500 winner whose career was brought to an abrupt halt by a shunt at Houston in 2013. “I don’t think Tony – or Helio [Castroneves], for that matter – are at that stage yet. They still feel they have more to achieve in IndyCar, and I hope they get the opportunities.”

Kanaan acknowledges that Franchitti was part of the reason he got the gig at Andretti Green in 2003, and they made a strong team. Franchitti’s polished, smooth Al Unser Jr-style steering and throttle inputs on road courses gave Kanaan a gold standard to aim for in order to improve his technique, while TK’s natural aggression and bravery informed Dario just what would be required to succeed in the formation-flying-on-the-ground IRL IndyCar era.

Such was Franchitti’s regard for Kanaan in their five years at AGR, you can bet he had a word in Chip Ganassi’s ear about employing Kanaan as his replacement for 2014. He, and others, aren’t comfortable with the fact that Kanaan got branded with the ‘oval specialist’ tag.

“He learned his skills in Europe, on road courses, and he made himself good at ovals,” says Franchitti. “I think over the years the tyres changed and that went against Tony’s driving style by the time he came

to Ganassi. But while I was driving, I honestly felt he was a threat on any kind of track. You always had to look out for him, just as you do still now on ovals. And if you’re talking about non-ovals, just look at how good he was in sportscars. He was blindingly fast. Look at the Sebring 12 Hours win [AGR Acura LMP2, with Franchitti and Herta in 2007]; he held up his corner, and he was obviously rapid in Ganassi’s sportscar too.

“He and I always raced each other with respect whether we were team-mates or not; we always had each other’s back. But as team-mates we worked so well together because we had a very good offset in the Andretti Green team as it was called then. If one guy liked this set-up, we knew what the other three would need to do to adopt it and then adapt it a little to their taste. As a unit, we worked very, very efficiently, which is one of the reasons we were so successful at the time. And even when Bryan retired and Dan went to Ganassi, Tony and I continued to bounce ideas off each other.”

Kanaan also became renowned for his starts and restarts that escaped censure, but weren’t always... by the book, let’s say. “Yeah, there were times when I’d say to him afterward, ‘Tony, you jumped that restart didn’t you?’” recalls Franchitti, “and he’d be saying, ‘Noooo, no I didn’t,’ all innocent. Like I remember Indianapolis 2012, me and [Scott] Dixon were up front and Tony was restarting seventh, and when he came past me I reckon he was already in fifth gear! I was thinking, ‘Oh, come on! No way!’”

Franchitti observes that Kanaan was a tough competitor in the other sense, too. “One year at Indy, he had a huuuuuge shunt,” he says. “He hit the wall twice and by the time he made the second impact, the



He’s also an ace in sportscars,
here in Acura at Sebring 12 Hours



deformable structure of the car had gone and so it was big. I went to visit him at his bus, and he was so bruised. He was joking about it, but he had one of those sleep-lumbar beds and he had to set it on zero, the softest setting, before he could even attempt to lie down... I thought he was unbelievably brave."

Franchitti also lays to rest the conspiracy theory that he deliberately shunted at Indy in 2013 with three laps to go once he saw Kanaan's KV Racing Dallara-Chevrolet was in front, thereby causing a caution period that would last until the twin-chequers. "No, I didn't crash on purpose!" he laughs. "For one thing, I didn't know Tony was leading and secondly, Chip would have killed me! Also, if I was going to crash, I would pick a slower track and have a much softer impact than Turn 1 at Indy. That one hurt!"

Considering he spent eight years at Andretti Autosport and four at Ganassi, it seems odd to reflect that Kanaan achieved his Indy 500 triumph in between those two stints, driving for the much smaller Kevin Kalkhoven/Jimmy Vasser-owned KV Racing. But then it was surprising to many that Michael Andretti had let him go. Ryan Hunter-Reay had joined the team in 2010 and had shown greater proficiency on most road and street courses, but still TK had won at Iowa Speedway and scored enough points elsewhere to end the season sixth in the championship, the highest non-Penske/Ganassi driver.

Hunter-Reay recalls that season with some affection. "It was a pleasure and we hit it off right away," says the 2012 champion and 2014 Indy 500 winner. "We drove very similar set-ups and had very similar needs from the car, so we got along both personally and professionally. We both need a car that has a very strong front end, handles on the nose because we're both super-late brakers, and late turn-in.

"It was an interesting transitional time at Andretti Autosport, 2010, in terms of structure — that was the first year of Michael being sole owner — and also in terms of set-up philosophy. We spent countless days at Sebring reworking the road course set-ups, and I got on well with my other team-mates [Marco Andretti and Danica Patrick], but with Tony it was even more productive because we were working toward the same goal handling-wise. I think we could feel we were taking steps forward."

But when Andretti's team lost the 7-Eleven funding for car #11, Kanaan was out of a ride and he arrived at KV in 2011 somewhat shellshocked and grateful. It had been a late signing, as had been that of Michael Cannon as his race engineer. By mid-season, however, the gratitude was on hold, and Kanaan was recognising the KV team's flaws compared with Andretti Autosport. His seniority, his several wins and his 13 years of experience meant he was given free rein by Vasser and

Kalkhoven to start trying to lure the people he wanted. Cannon would be one of the victims — replaced by TK's long-time friend and favourite race engineer Eric Cowdin — but the former won't let that affect his judgement of TK, the driver. "In a good car, he's one of the best ever at Indy," says Cannon. "That he only won there once belies his prowess around that place. And actually the same could be said about TK and any oval or superspeedway."

It's a pity it didn't work out for Kanaan and Cannon because they provided the team with a much-needed and dependable baseline, and TK would end up fifth in the championship — yes, higher than he had finished the previous year with Andretti Autosport.

"One thing to know about Tony is that he's a very self-driven individual and in that regard he was very good for the team," says Kalkhoven, who eventually shuttered KV Racing at the conclusion of the 2016 season. "He's an interesting character, and he was very demanding of the team, but so he should have been. That's how you win the 500, that's how you win a championship, and Tony did both in his career. I thought of him as very professional, and very determined.

"Now, was he out there to help his team-mates? No, definitely not. With the exception of Rubens Barrichello, I wouldn't say Tony had the same relationship with his team-mates on our team [Takuma Sato, EJ Viso, Simona de Silvestro] that he'd had at Andretti. But they were much less experienced than him and so they stood to benefit because he was trying to make the team better, and I think he did. He gave us a consistency that we hadn't seen for a few years. He was an emotional Brazilian and a strong-headed driver who wants to win, and I'd say it was a pleasure to work with him. And he won us the 500."

With his stock that much higher — as well as the Indy triumph, he scored nine podiums with KV over three years — and with Chip Ganassi having forgiven Kanaan for spurning a contract offer in 2008, the two united when Franchitti got hurt. Kanaan won the 2014 finale at Fontana and over four seasons with the squad he was usually Dixon's equal on ovals, and was unlucky not to score a couple more wins. But he was usually overshadowed by the Kiwi and never finished higher than seventh in the championship. That said, if you consider Dixon as one of Indycar racing's all-time greats (surely not a matter for dispute any more), actually TK did rather well.

Dixon has always credited his three years as team-mate to Wheldon for upping his oval game, and his five seasons alongside Franchitti as hammering home how much data study and verbal mulling was needed over a race weekend to improve the car. So what did Dixon absorb from his four years working with Kanaan?

"You know, no matter who your team-mates are, you always learn >>

from them,” he says. “I think of TK and I think of his aggression and his restarts. He was also very open with his feedback, although that is kind of expected at Ganassi anyway. But as far as driving is concerned, there were definitely tracks or circumstances where I might find the car undriveable because of too much understeer and he could just deal with it. We had quite different techniques, which explains some of the difference, but I was definitely shocked at how quick he could be in a situation where I know for sure I wasn’t able to give my best because I couldn’t get my head around how to deal with a car that pushed so much.”

This seems at odds with Hunter-Reay’s description of what he and Kanaan sought from a car’s handling... “Oh, I’m not saying Tony *liked* major understeer,” Dixon clarifies. “I’m just saying he was impressive at being able to adapt to it. He could somehow still get the car to rotate and keep up a strong pace. I think that also explains why he was so good in the Ford GT when he went to Spa and Le Mans. He just immediately adapted and was bloody fast.

“To be honest, the unfortunate thing for TK when he was with us was that in the races where he was really strong, some crazy dumb things would happen. Like I remember him missing out on wins at Iowa and Pocono because of badly timed yellows, stuff outside of his or the team’s control. But I enjoyed him as a team-mate. He’s very motivated, positive and uplifting, and we had a really good time. There’s no doubt Eric Cowdin [race engineer] took a lot of crap from him, but he had worked with TK from way back and knew how to deal with it, so TK having a go at him almost became an inside joke among the team. And to be honest, I’m probably too laid back, maybe not confrontational enough, whereas if Tony saw something that he didn’t like or thought was wrong he would speak up. I respected that.”

Cowdin is now at Dale Coyne Racing, race-engineering for rookie Alex Palou, but he probably knows Kanaan better than anyone in the paddock, having engineered him for 16 of the past 24 years and in six different teams. Cowdin first encountered Kanaan in late 1995, when Tasman Motorsports, where he was chief engineer, auditioned eight drivers for the Marlboro-backed programme in Indy Lights. Kanaan made himself indispensable by being fastest on both days of the two-day test, and Tasman owner Steve Horne picked Castroneves for the second seat since he was second fastest, despite broken ribs restricting him to just one day of running.

Kanaan would finish second in his rookie season of Indy Lights in 1996, then won it in 1997. He graduated to CART Indycars in 1998 while Cowdin hung back in the Lights team to guide Cristiano da Matta to the title, but he and TK would be reunited in the ‘big cars’ in 1999. Their bromance has continued over the past 20-plus years, which is remarkable given that Kanaan is a hard taskmaster renowned for chewing up and spitting out engineers.

“Yeah, it’s the longest relationship I’ve had outside of my family,” says Cowdin. “He even outlasted my first wife! I’m not sure why we worked together so well. All I can say is that we came from diametrically opposed worlds and backgrounds — nothing about our upbringings was even similar, other than from an early age we loved racing. And what I respect about Tony to this day is that I never, ever, ever had any doubts that he was driving anything less than at ten-tenths. I always knew exactly where the car was performance-wise because he was absolutely putting everything he could into it. And that was true at Tasman, Mo Nunn, Andretti Green as it was known then, KV, Ganassi and most recently at AJ Foyt Racing.

“For Tony, I guess he recognised I was always giving 100% for him. It wasn’t engineering by committee where all engineers try and get every driver on the team up to a certain level. He knew I was always thinking



in terms of, ‘What can I do to make *this* car good enough where my guy can go fast?’ And I think that’s where his trust in me came from. I had no other agenda. I never hid anything from him, I never lied to him. Also, if there was something that needed to be said to him specifically, then I did it in private. So I was 100% behind him in front of others, and if

I needed to be critical, I made sure it was just he and I in the room.

“With Tony, it’s very black and white. If you burn him once, you are dead to him — there’s no coming back from that. And I appreciate that. Loyalty is a big thing to him.”

Although Dixon is impressed at how adaptable Kanaan was when confronted with an evolving handling balance, the vast differences between Kanaan’s driving technique and, say, Franchitti’s initially presented quite a challenge for the AGR team, when Cowdin engineered Kanaan and Allen McDonald ran Franchitti. Experience brought a solution.

“As in everything with Tony, his driving style is aggressive,” recalls Cowdin, “but working side by side with Allen and Dario, we developed an offset whereby we could manipulate something that worked for Tony to work for Dario, and vice versa. So if TK found something he liked and that made his car quicker, we knew to do the same thing for Dario but change X and Y to suit his driving style, and vice versa.”

And that applied way beyond the oval tracks. Cowdin, like anyone who has a memory that extends longer than a dozen years, knows that Kanaan could also excel on street courses. “I think Tony was just fantastic at grabbing a car by the scruff of the neck and dragging it around!” he observes. “When I talked earlier about the frank conversations he and I would have in private, that would work both ways. If I missed something while trying to get the car right for him,



“THE KEY TO DEALING WITH TONY WAS KNOWING WHEN TO IGNORE HIM! HE CAN BE A PRESSURE COOKER”

I would sometimes have to tell him, ‘I know this is a shitbox, I’ve failed miserably; now you’re going to have to make up the difference,’ and his simple response would be, ‘All right!’ There’d be no recrimination.

“People say he was emotional and they’re right, but he could also be very pragmatic. After Dan’s accident at Vegas [in 2011], Tony and I agreed we were both done with racing, it’s not worth it, and so on. I’d just done three years at Penske running Ryan [Briscoe], and Tony had just done his first year with KV. But after talking every day on the phone for a week or more, we both realised that neither of us could come up with anything else to do! That’s when we decided if we’re gonna move forward, we’ll do it as a unit, and so I joined him at KV in 2012.”

Nor have they found a fulfilling alternative since, so when Ganassi cut his car count from four cars to two for 2018, Cowdin met with Kanaan at the exit door and together they headed to AJ Foyt Racing. For road and street course races, it was a switch from one end of the grid to the other, and most upsetting of all was watching Kanaan and team-mate Matheus Leist also struggle on some of the ovals. It wasn’t that the #14 car was that far off the pace in real terms, but in the compressed world of spec racing, you don’t have to miss by much to miss by a mile.

Cowdin doesn’t wish to go into details since he has too much respect for many of the people still digging the team out of its hole — with a modicum of success too, it must be said. What he will say is that, “Nothing we could do was going to change the situation there. Tony and I went there with the best intentions and I can also guarantee I worked the hardest I have ever worked in racing those two years and Tony, as ever, gave it everything. Unfortunately we didn’t have much to show for it.”



While Cowdin loves working for Dale Coyne and with Palou, you can’t rule out the idea of him joining forces with TK again some day, given their 16 shared seasons. In the course of a long conversation, Cowdin finally nails down what made him Kanaan’s race engineer of choice: a high tolerance threshold and selective hearing.

“I guess if he is retiring, I can say what I want,” he chuckles. “The key to dealing with Tony was knowing when to ignore him! He can be a pressure cooker after a practice session, or qualifying or a race. The pressure builds, the pressure builds, then the steam comes flying out and makes a bunch of noise, and then things goes back to normal. Well, over time, you learn not to take the sound of the steam too seriously. It’s what comes afterward that is going to help make progress with the car. And you know when that point is when he finally starts a sentence that’s actually constructive or informative — that’s when you turn your hearing back on and say, ‘Ah, that’s good. Keep going along those lines.’”

“It’s something I learned from Steve Horne back in the 1990s. He’d say, ‘You’re paid to make more right decisions than wrong decisions in this business, and in order to do that, emotion is your enemy.’ And I think Tony recognised that as being true, but he still struggled to control his anger outside the cockpit if things weren’t going well, so he looked to me to be the calm one for both of us!”

However much steam he was blowing off in the seclusion of the team trailers, Kanaan was very respectful to the fans and so many of them in turn loved him. Says Hunter-Reay: “Tony is the iron man of IndyCar racing. He’s had a long, very successful career and he’s impacted a lot of people along the way and in a very positive manner. I think he’ll be greatly missed by the fans... but like I said, I’m 100% certain we’ll see him back and he’ll get the send-off he deserves.”

“On his day, TK was mighty,” concludes Herta. “He had some very stout team-mates over the years, and he stacked up very well. He won a lot of races, including the Indy 500. He won a championship. And he became the people’s champion. So, I think it’s fair to say he achieved a lot more than most of us can even dream of!”

“But I think he’s going to achieve even more. He’s not done yet.” ❦

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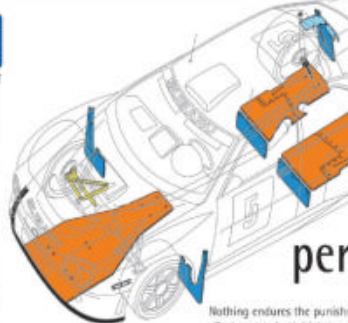
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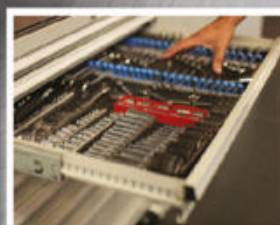


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Kristensen won the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1997 with a TWR Porsche WSC95



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IMAGES

KRISTENSEN AND PIRRO TO DRIVE LE MANS WINNERS

GOODWOOD SPEEDWEEK

Sportscar aces Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro will go head-to-head in Le Mans-winning cars during the Goodwood SpeedWeek.

The racing legends are due to compete in the timed shootout on the Goodwood circuit as part of the 16-18 October event.

Kristensen will be at the wheel of the Porsche-engined, TWR-bodied WSC95 LMP car, the exact car in which he won the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1997 – the first of his nine wins in the classic French race.

Meanwhile, Goodwood favourite Pirro will be at the wheel of an Audi R8 (below), the same type of car as the one in which he took the first of his five victories at Le Mans in 2000, when sharing with Kristensen.

As the SpeedWeek event will be held behind closed doors, organisers will be able to bring faster cars than

ever before onto the Goodwood track for the shootout.

Cars from most significant global series will be in action, including Formula 1, NASCAR, V8 Supercars, DTM, European Touring Cars, British Touring Cars, Trans-Am and many more, and it is expected to lead to the fastest ever laps of the Sussex track.

Alongside Kristensen and Pirro, bringing the total Le Mans victories up to 16, will be Goodwood Hill record holder Romain Dumas with the all-electric Volkswagen I.D. R. This will be the first time the I.D. R has run in anger since it sealed a trio of records in 2019.

As well as the shootout, there is due to be a full weekend of historic racing, a rally super special, the inaugural 'Goodwood Gymkhana', and celebrations of 70 years of F1 and Porsche at Le Mans.

Other motorsport stars also set to make an appearance are Andre Lotterer and Dario Franchitti. Three-time Le Mans winner Lotterer won the TT Celebration race in an AC Cobra with Chris Wilson at last year's Revival, while four-time IndyCar champion Franchitti made his return to competition at the event.

It was recently announced that SpeedWeek will feature a special tribute to Sir Stirling Moss, who passed away earlier this year. The Kinrara Trophy race for pre-1963 GT cars will be renamed the Stirling Moss Revival Trophy in his honour.

Although spectators will not be admitted, the whole SpeedWeek will be streamed live and for free on a specially-created Goodwood homepage as well as across all of Goodwood's social media channels.

PAUL LAWRENCE



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Albert to miss Snetterton after sponsor woes

BRITISH GT

British GT4 title challenger Jordan Albert will be replaced in the Academy Motorsport Ford Mustang for this weekend's Snetterton double-header by Will Moore after a sponsor withdrew.

Albert and Matt Cowley sit 1.5 points off the summit after following up their victory at Brands Hatch with second in the three-hour endurance race at Donington Park 11 days ago.

But Cowley will now be joined by team regular Moore, who was set to share a second Mustang in British GT with Academy boss Matt Nicoll-Jones until the coronavirus pandemic struck. His only running in the car since the media day came at a pre-season test at Paul Ricard.

"It's a real shame for Jordan, unfortunately his sponsors have not been able to continue and it's as simple as that," Nicoll-Jones said. "We found out the day after Donington. It's nobody's fault, it's just circumstance."

"We would have all preferred to have continued to the end of the year with



Albert was in fight for British GT4 title

Jordan, but I know what Will is capable of and there would be nobody else I would put in that car to go out there and do the job. I've got every confidence in Will, I think he's going to do a damn good job."

Meanwhile, Ben Tuck will make his British GT return with Century Motorsport, the team with which he and Ben Green finished as GT4 runners-up in 2018.

Tuck has spent this season racing in the GT4-based DTM Trophy series in a Walkenhorst BMW M4, and currently sits third in the standings. The 23-year-old will team up with Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke, who missed the last round at Donington.

JAMES NEWBOLD



Twenty cars the target for F1 support

REVOLUTION

Revolution creator Phil Abbott is aiming for a 20-car grid for two Revolution Trophy support races at the Portuguese Grand Prix.

Although the Revolution A-One was only raced for the first time last season, the new prototype machine has become increasingly popular and will feature alongside Formula 1 later this month at the Algarve Circuit.

"We will have every car we have built so far there except one, as that's in New York," said Abbott.

Two drivers planning to take part in the race

made their Revolution debuts at Snetterton last month. Sir Chris Hoy climbed to fifth in race one, before the throttle stuck open and he went off on the entry to the Bentley Straight. He finished second in race two with a new car.

"I am looking forward to racing in Portugal if they let me back in it after crashing," he joked.

Richard Wells, better known for rallying his Ford Fiesta R5 in the Motorsport News/MSVR Circuit Rally Championship, is also due to make the trip. He only started racing this year, with a Radical SR3 in Bikesports, but was third in both races at Snetterton in his Revolution.

PETER SCHERER

IN THE HEADLINES

MOTORSPORT UK GIVES PPE

Motorsport UK has issued more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to clubs and volunteers to help combat the spread of COVID-19. A total of 20,000 face masks will be sent out following the announcement last month that face coverings must be worn by everyone at all Motorsport UK sanctioned events for the foreseeable future.

NEW GINETTA SERIES

Ginetta has announced a new GT Academy series, which will replace the Ginetta Racing Drivers Club category as what the manufacturer describes as "the entry point to Ginetta racing". The series will feature a new car based around the G55 with a 3.6-litre engine. The series will appear at British GT events next year and is open to both rookies and drivers with racing experience.

CAPOZZOLI MOVES INTO CARS

Karter Louie Capozzoli made his Mini Challenge debut at Snetterton last weekend, with two top-10 finishes in the Cooper class. "I had done seven years in karting up to National level and my dad had always wanted me to race cars, after he did a few Legends races some years ago," said the 17-year-old. "Testing before this race was my first time in the car on my own and, even after the races, I still haven't driven in the dry yet." He took a best result of sixth.

SINGLE-SEATER FOR CORBETT

Experienced Radical and European Le Mans racer John Corbett made his single-seater debut at Snetterton in the F3 Cup last weekend. "It was my first race ever in a single-seater and I just fancied a go," said the London-based Australian. "In qualifying, I was uncomfortable, sitting too high in the car and it was too cold." However, the weather did nothing to diminish his enthusiasm and, despite the odd spin, he was fifth in the first race and third in the second, having led the latter for a few laps.



Allard name back as JR is recreated

HISTORICS

The Allard name is set to make a return to motorsport for the first time in more than 60 years as one of the British marque's famous cars has been recreated.

The Allard JR, which was designed by company founder Sydney Allard in 1953, has been recreated by his son Alan and grandsons Lloyd and Gavin, using original drawings and parts and traditional materials, to the original racing specification – the new car being dubbed the 'Allard JR continuation'.

Just seven JRs were produced between



Only seven Allard JRs were produced between 1953 and 1955

1953 and 1955 by Allard – prior to the company ceasing trading in 1958 – having previously produced the J2 and J2X models, which were extensively raced in the USA in the early 1950s and competed against marques such as Ferrari and Jaguar.

Alan Allard said: "Watching my father build these cars in period is a memory that will always stay with me.

"The skills he's passed on to me are now with my son, Lloyd, who has engineered and built the continuation you see today. Over 84 years on since the first Allard car was built, car number eight [after seven original JRs] continues my father's legacy and, if he saw what we were doing today as a family, I know he'd be proud – and desperate to see how it performs on track."

The newer JR models will feature a re-engineered version of the original-specification Cadillac 331ci (5.4-litre)

overhead valve V8 – producing 300bhp at 4500rpm – and will be fitted with either a three or four-speed gearbox.

Lloyd Allard said: "As a family, we have been passionate in reviving and continuing the legacy of what Sydney Allard created over eight decades ago. Since we're all [the current Allard family members involved in the project] passionate drivers, engineers and archivists, it's been important to stay true to our roots and passion.

"We see this car as a tribute and we'd love to see the JR continuation model car follow in the footsteps of my grandfather's legacy and get back to Le Mans. Likewise, it would be a pleasure to see our creation on the historic and competition car circuit."

The first JR continuation – chassis eight – will be put up for auction by RM Sotheby's on 31 October for a value estimated between £180,000-£240,000.

Mother and son share front row at Combe

MIGHTY MINIS

A rare motorsport occurrence took place at Castle Combe at the end of last month as a mother and son shared the front row of a grid.

Circuit racing debutant Josh Ogborn and his mother Lisette were drawn on the front row of the partially reversed Mighty Minis grid for the second race in Wiltshire.

While Josh dropped back to eighth by the flag and Lisette

fifth, it was a third member of the family who emerged triumphant as Lisette's husband Paul won the race, having started eighth after also winning the opener.

"It was very exciting and one of those moments that's never going to happen again," said Lisette, who admitted she was a little disappointed not to be able to join her husband on the podium.

"This is my fourth season and my husband's fifth. The idea had



Debutant Josh Ogborn leads mum Lisette

been if Josh wanted to have a go he could share my car. I did quite well in the first meeting at Croft, I was right up there at the top of the table and was leading the ladies' championship. I wasn't sure I could really give up my car, so Josh rented one!

"We had a lot of fun – I took a screenshot of the TSL timing because I thought that's one to keep! It was a very, very special day and we all did well in our own ways and all came home very happy."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

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Donington Park CSCC meeting draws in nearly 500 entries

CSCC

The Classic Sports Car Club fielded almost 500 competitors for its Donington Park race meeting at the weekend.

A total of 492 entries were included on the final entry list, with many categories boasting several reserves.

“At one point we were up to 540 entries, but we were having to turn people away,” said CSCC director David Smitheram. “We have had to do some combining of qualifying sessions to accommodate everyone, which has required some understanding on behalf of the drivers. We have to thank the marshals and officials because we have gone to the limit of the curfew, and the circuit have been understanding too.”

Smitheram believes that the effect of a

compressed season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a trickle down effect from other series, explains the club’s entries.

“There are the people who can’t race their car abroad at the moment – they can fit in here; and there are the people who paid off their credit card over the winter and were all set and have still got the money to do some more,” he said.

The club lost the first half of its domestic season plus overseas races at Spa and Le Mans due to the coronavirus outbreak. It plans to announce a 2021 calendar in around a month, but still has two back-to-back one-day race meetings at Castle Combe and Mallory Park scheduled to round off the shortened 2020 season.

IAN SOWMAN

➔ P82 DONINGTON REPORT

No 30th anniversary celebrations

PEMBREY

Pembrey will end its 30th anniversary year without having hosted a single circuit racing event after the final meeting still on its schedule was cancelled last week.

Welsh venues Pembrey and Anglesey have suffered far more as a result of the coronavirus pandemic because the devolved Welsh government has taken a more cautious approach to holding outdoor events, restricting motorsport to just a single trial 750 Motor Club event at Anglesey last month.

With coronavirus cases on the rise, and more restrictions being introduced, Pembrey has taken the decision to cancel its last remaining event – a British Automobile Racing Club Trucks and Legends meeting – which was due to be held this weekend, and instead is now set to run at Thruxton at the end of the month.

“It’s just a shame that the government didn’t open things up when they could’ve when cases were really low,” said circuit manager Phil Davies.

“In my opinion, it just goes to show when you’re

in a crisis, like we are now, you need to be doing the same thing [across the UK].

“Financially, it’s tough but, because we have quite a small staff, we run it as a family business so we don’t waste any money, we do a lot of work ourselves and don’t use too many contractors.

“We’re good at keeping costs quite tight and hopefully we can start afresh next year. We’re still doing our mid-week private testing with professional teams so that will keep us ticking over.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

IN THE HEADLINES

BOOST FOR MG TROPHY

The top class of the MG Trophy is set to be boosted to six cars at Oulton Park this weekend for the season finale, after just three ZR 190 drivers took part in the previous event at Snetterton. Last year’s class runner-up Doug Cole is due to race in the series for the first time this year in Cheshire, while 2019 race winner Robin Walker and double Donington Park victor Sam Kirkpatrick are also set to return.

MUTCH FAMILY’S NEW CAR

Stewart and Sylvia Mutch are set to debut a new MEV MX150R ‘Exocet’ in next year’s Sport Specials series, having tested the car recently. The new evolution of the Mazda-based kit car is built around an Mk3 MX-5. The current Exocet is based on a Mk2. Stewart describes the MX150R as being “about half the weight” of a roadgoing MX-5 and having increased grip and cornering ability.

ELKMANN’S ASSEN HAT-TRICK

Only 26 Superkarts from the original entry of 60, and only six UK drivers from the anticipated 34, took part in the Superkart races at Assen last weekend due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The three races, which formed part of the Gamma Racing Weekend, were easy wins for reigning European champion Peter Elkmann. Jason Dredge was third in Saturday’s race while Samantha Hempshall picked up a pair of F250 National class wins on Sunday.

NEW 750MC INITIATIVE

The 750 Motor Club has launched the Type R Trophy Foundation Programme for 2021, which will help novice drivers and trackday enthusiasts make the jump into racing. A complete package including Honda Civic Type R car, ARDS test, entry to all races next year and a discount on mechanical support will cost £11,995, while those already with a licence can pay £10,495 for the package.



Mike Thompson 1946-2020

OBITUARY

The sudden death of long-time racer and chassis constructor Mike Thompson last month, aged 73, has shocked the Formula Ford 1600 fraternity. One of its own, Thompson suffered a heart attack while dining with his son Michael.

A successful businessman, Thompson enjoyed building and developing racing cars as much as competing in them. 'Works driver' of Carl Rostron's eponymous FFords at Brands Hatch and Lydden in the 1970s, he designed the first Quest in 1980.

The futuristic prototype – with its inboard suspension and distinctive shrink-wrapped body – broke cover at a low-key Formula Ford Show at Goodwood. Thompson evolved "the blue canoe" over the next four seasons.

But he needed a young hotshoe to take on mighty Van Diemen and a host of other constructors in a golden era. Enter Johnny Herbert... "I'd had a big crash in the Sperton at Oulton Park in early '84 – which put a wishbone through my leg – so missed a bit of the season," Herbert recalled. "Mike approached me to do the Brands Winter Series. The short-wheelbase Quest suited my driving style."



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Herbert won a couple of races in 1985 against top opposition, but then

came the Festival at Brands. He crashed on his first flying lap in qualifying, but worked his way from the back of his heat to ace the final. "Mike and [the late] Ian Blackman were great to work with – winning the Festival helped them and put my career on course," said Herbert.

A few cars were sold on the back of its glory weekend, but Quest's subsequent FF2000 version did not suit the chassis's concept. Reconstituted Chevron subsequently bought the FF1600 project.

After Herbert's massive F3000 accident at Brands in 1988, Thompson was among those who came to his financial aid. "I

didn't have insurance, but Mike, Adrian Reynard and others helped," said Herbert, who landed his F1 break while recovering from the severe leg injuries.

"Mike managed me until 1991 when we had a falling-out. We didn't speak again, but I was racing an F1 Ensign [in August] and somebody came up and said, 'Mike Thompson says hi', which was nice."

Thompson's son – who raced a Quest for two seasons in the 2010s – said his dad "never bore grudges. He wished Johnny well, and read his book, which he wouldn't have done had he not liked him. He also had an incredible sense of humour."

Away from racing, Thompson built his market research company Sample Surveys over 30 years. An experienced helicopter pilot, he designed a manned drone for the aerial surveying company run by his son. "He was very proud of that," said Michael.

MARCUS PYE

Martin is latest driver to sign up to race Praga R1

BRITCAR ENDURANCE

Former Ginetta GT5 Challenge racer and hillclimb competitor Charlie Martin is the latest driver to sign up to race with Czech manufacturer Praga for next season.

Martin, who finished

fourth in the KI Cup class of the Nurburgring 24 Hours last weekend with Adrenalin Motorsport in a BMW M240i, will compete in the recently announced Praga R1 series that will form part of the Britcar Endurance Championship next year.

"I first tested both versions of the R1 at MotorsportDays Live in 2019 and was really impressed by how the car offers the best of GT and prototype driving in one package," said Martin. "I have been impressed by Praga's long-term vision for the

brand and I'm excited to make a real contribution."

Other drivers to have already been announced as racing a Praga next year include ex-serviceman Jay Morton, who has appeared on the TV series SAS: *Who Dares Wins*.





The uncertainties continue

A bumper entry for the Classic Sports Car Club last weekend shows interest in racing remains high, but next year's picture – especially in Wales – is far less clear

STEPHEN LICKORISH

October is normally the time when many in national motorsport really switch focus to looking at next year. It's the point where drivers with aspirations of climbing the ladder begin to seriously consider their next moves and it's also when clubs and series organisers start finalising their calendars for the new season. But, as with so many aspects of this most unusual of years, it is not quite so straightforward in 2020.

The delayed start to the racing season due to the coronavirus pandemic has meant drivers, for the time being, are still engrossed in title fights rather than thinking too far ahead. Organisers are having to deal with additional hurdles in the remaining two scheduled months of this year's campaign while juggling planning for 2021 – four clubs have recently added new events in the final weeks of October in place of others cancelled by COVID-19.

And all of this comes against a backdrop of varying levels of interest. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it's the higher profile, more expensive categories that have featured the greatest dip in entries this year – British GT lost around a third of its grid, while Ginetta's GT5 Challenge series has also had fewer cars compared to its usual sold-out entries. At the other end of the spectrum, some of the more grassroots series have thrived, and the Classic Sports Car Club deserves particular praise. Attracting around 540 entries initially – which then had to be cut back to

“National motorsport may not have yet borne the full brunt of the coronavirus pandemic”

just below 500 – for its Donington Park meeting last weekend (see page 82) is quite simply a phenomenal achievement and once again proves the popularity of the club's 40-minute one- or two-driver, low-cost race formats.

Given the nature of this year, the club running its categories as series rather than championships has really come into its own and has meant drivers can dip in and out, as finances, health and local restrictions allow. And that gigantic entry clearly demonstrates there is still an enormous appetite from people to go racing, which has also been boosted by fewer drivers heading overseas to compete amid the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

However, there is a feeling that national motorsport may not have yet borne the full brunt of the coronavirus pandemic and that could come next year. After all, the virus outbreak intensified in

the UK in March, by which time many drivers' budgets were already in place for the season ahead. Further down the tree, there has been a group of people whose disposable incomes have actually increased, if they remained in work or were furloughed, as they no longer had significant commuting costs and were unable to visit pubs, bars and restaurants or go on holiday.

However, that may not continue to be the case in 2021. By all expectations, it seems like the UK is in for a tough winter amid the resurgence of coronavirus and tighter restrictions. The government's generous furlough scheme is ending and an increase in unemployment seems inevitable. Sponsors who may have honoured pre-existing agreements for this year might not be in a position to renew these for next. And there is uncertainty over whether this season will even be completed, let alone whether the following one is able to start on time in mid-March.

All of these problems are being felt particularly intensely in Wales. Autosport has already reported on how the devolved Welsh government's more cautious approach to the pandemic has had a significant impact. Rallying has been virtually suspended across the UK since March and nowhere has that been felt more strongly than in the Welsh forests. And the news of Pembrey cancelling its final remaining circuit racing event (see News) means it's increasingly likely that just one race event will have taken place at the two Welsh tracks in the whole of the year.

That sounds financially disastrous, but Pembrey has been sustained by regular mid-week private test bookings that have at least ensured some income has been received. But circuit manager Phil Davies is a little more worried about next year. “Because we haven't run anything at all this year, people are concerned about booking for next year,” he says. “That's understandable – if I was England-based, I would be thinking, ‘Should we book next year at any Welsh circuit because they've not done anything this year?’”

It does make sense for clubs to be a little hesitant before booking track time at Pembrey and Anglesey. After all, it's unlikely the Welsh government will deviate from its more cautious outlook and that could mean restrictions last longer into next year – therefore making it a brave move to book any Welsh track time for March and April.

Davies says that regular visitors to the circuit are still likely to sign up, but he fears those that only book meetings every few years will give the venue a wide berth in 2021. He adds: “We will survive, we've got good staff and we will work hard to make sure everything is ready to go in the new year.”

This is just one example of the uncertainties that motorsport, like so many other industries, faces looking to 2021. And just because some areas have emerged relatively unscathed from this season's difficulties, does not mean they will next year, too. ❧

TOCA SUPPORTS SILVERSTONE 26-27 SEPTEMBER



Voisin surges from 13th to first in event of changing fortunes

GINETTA JUNIOR

When he ended the first lap of the opening Silverstone race in 13th place, it looked like Bailey Voisin would be the Ginetta Junior title contender having a weekend to forget. That he stormed through to win a chaotic race, while main rival Tom Lebbon was penalised down to 11th, was the perfect demonstration of how quickly fortunes can change.

Georgi Dimitrov grabbed the lead from fellow front-row starter Voisin into Copse, while Voisin and Lebbon were both delayed as they battled into Becketts. This allowed Joel Pearson through to challenge Dimitrov but Pearson's lead, in turn, was shortlived as he was sent wide at Brooklands by Lebbon.

William Vincent as a result shot from sixth to first and looked set for a maiden win when he overcooked it into Becketts on the penultimate tour. That seemed to

have handed Lebbon the win but a post-race penalty for the move on Pearson handed his arch-rival Voisin the spoils, after he dispatched Vincent and Josh Rattican on the final lap.

"It's not the same winning under the circumstances of a penalty, but it's still amazing to win!" said R Racing driver Voisin. "You've got to have a bit of luck as well as talent."

Race two was even more dramatic and was twice red-flagged. Dimitrov again seized the early lead as Voisin and Lebbon tussled behind. A whole bunch of cars were then close together for second, with a tap from Vincent sending Freddie Tomlinson into the path of Pearson, who careered into the wall out of Copse at high-speed, destroying his car.

"I had no time to brake, so it was a sixth gear, 100mph crash," said Pearson, who avoided serious injury. "It ruined what could've been a good result."

The restart only lasted one lap before another red flag as Lebbon – who was also involved in the earlier incident – was sent into the Luffield gravel and rolled over when trying to avoid the sideways James Higgins, meaning Dimitrov was declared the winner from Voisin and Rattican.

Dimitrov briefly led the finale too, before Voisin got ahead. He then had to resist the charging Tom Edgar, who applied bucketloads of pressure but could not quite take the place, meaning Voisin's lead is now 30 points over Rattican and he is 74 ahead of Lebbon after the most dramatic reversals of fortune.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

King once again reigns supreme in Carrera Cup

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Harry King got back on the right track in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB at Silverstone by finishing both races without Thruxton-style spectacular punctures. And of course, because he finished, he won.

King's domination appeared to come under threat when, with his Team Parker Racing machine sitting in the pits in the closing moments of qualifying, his time was beaten by Lorcan Hanafin. But Hanafin's time was deleted for breaching track limits, so King took up his customary pole.

Ex-Formula 3 racer Sam MacLeod, who started from the front row, led the increasingly distant chase of King until the very last lap of the first race. That was when Will Martin, fresh from his maiden win, smoked his way down the inside at Becketts with an audacious lunge. Josh Webster also



took advantage to grab third, but a 5s track limits penalty relegated him to ninth.

King started the reversed-grid race fifth, and got through to second within seven laps. He did close the gap to leader Matthew Graham, but it appeared the Redline Racing man was fairly closely matched on pace, and he was certainly no sitting duck. Then, with nine laps to go, he locked up at Becketts and



ran wide, and could not stop King passing at Brooklands. Martin completed a good weekend with third place from Webster.

"That's redemption from the gutting weekend we had at Thruxton," said King. "I learned so much in the week working with Michelin – I didn't want to make the same mistakes again."

MARCUS SIMMONS

Whorton-Eales grabs points lead

MINI CHALLENGE

The sight of 13 Minis running line astern in the second Mini Challenge contest at Silverstone last weekend was spectacular – and it was a deliberate ploy from 2018 champion Ant Whorton-Eales.

The Jamsport racer jumped front-row starters Nathan Harrison and Dan Zelos into Copse and was happy to back the pack up for the rest of the race, as he took the win and grabbed the points lead.

“I knew if I could get to the front, I could just cause a train – and I like doing that!” Whorton-Eales said. “You don’t have to go flat out, as long as you don’t miss any

apexes, as it’s very difficult to pass. But if you do make a mistake you end up 15th!”

Whorton-Eales’ tactics worked perfectly as Zelos attempted a move to get ahead, but instead was bundled out of the way at Luffield by Isaac Smith and into retirement with a puncture, as Smith and Harrison completed the podium.

The other two contests followed a similar pattern as the leading pack was close, albeit with little action. Harrison led the opener throughout from Zelos and Whorton-Eales, while Tom Rawlings grabbed the lead from reversed-grid polesitter Callum Newsham into Copse at the start of the finale.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Whorton-Eales enjoyed creating 13-car train in second Mini race



The start proved crucial to Rawlings’ reversed-grid win

Masterful Malin takes two wins

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

The top four in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge standings had been separated by just 12 points prior to the series’ latest appearance on the British Touring Car support bill at Silverstone. But two further wins for Josh Malin – who was third of that quartet – mean he now has a seven-point advantage ahead of the final planned 2020 event.

Malin’s opening triumph was all about the start as the Richardson Racing driver leapt into the lead at Copse. And he stayed out front for the remainder, scampering clear from a close fight for second. This went the way of pre-event points leader James Taylor, while John

Bennett took third after polesitter Jonny Wilkinson was spun at Luffield.

It took former MaX5 star Malin until lap seven of the 19-lap second race before he hit the front, passing Wilkinson at Becketts. However, Wilkinson was not prepared to give up without a fight, and this brought Taylor into contention as he snuck ahead of Wilkinson at Copse.

Wilkinson later fought back around the outside at Brooklands, but contact with Taylor dropped Wilkinson to fifth again as Bennett grabbed third from Gordie Mutch on the final lap.

Further back, two podiums for Fox Motorsport driver Ian Duggan meant he was provisionally crowned Am champion.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



The driver to beat at Silverstone was Malin as he took his seventh 2020 win

WEEKEND WINNERS

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 (11 laps) 1 Bailey Voisin;

2 Josh Rattican +0.477s; 3 William Vincent; 4 Seb Hopkins; 5 Zak Taylor; 6 Josh Miller.

Fastest lap Voisin 1m11.585s (82.50mph).

Pole Voisin. **Starters** 20.

Race 2 (1 lap) 1 Georgi Dimitrov;

2 Voisin +0.243s; 3 Rattican; 4 Vincent; 5 Tom Edgar; 6 Hopkins. **FL** Dimitrov

1m15.116s (78.62mph). **P** Voisin. **S** 20.

Race 3 (14 laps) 1 Voisin; 2 Edgar +0.118s;

3 Dimitrov; 4 Rattican; 5 Vincent; 6 Aston Millar.

FL Edgar 1m11.560s (82.52mph).

P Dimitrov. **S** 19.

Points 1 Voisin 379; 2 Rattican 349; 3 Tom Lebbon 305; 4 Dimitrov 285; 5 Taylor 199; 6 Hopkins 189.

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Race 1 (both 27 laps) 1 Harry King; 2 Will

Martin +7.138s; 3 Sam MacLeod; 4 Lorcan Hanafin; 5 Matthew Graham; 6 Scott McKenna.

FL King 55.098s (107.18mph). **P** King. **S** 21.

Race 2 1 King; 2 Graham +2.459s; 3 Martin;

4 Josh Webster; 5 Hanafin; 6 Mark Kimber.

FL King 55.148s (107.08mph). **P** Graham. **S** 20.

Points 1 King 118; 2 Webster 90; 3 Graham 61;

4 Hanafin 60; 5 McKenna 50; 6 Martin 44.

MINI CHALLENGE JCW

Race 1 (16 laps) 1 Nathan Harrison;

2 Dan Zelos +0.265s; 3 Ant Whorton-Eales;

4 Isaac Smith; 5 Jason Lockwood; 6 Max Bird.

FL Zelos 1m01.849s (95.48mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 28.

Race 2 (20 laps) 1 Whorton-Eales; 2 Smith

+0.188s; 3 Harrison; 4 Bird; 5 Max Coates;

6 Lockwood. **FL** Callum Newsham 1m01.869s

(95.45mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 27.

Race 3 (20 laps) 1 Tom Rawlings; 2 Newsham

+2.259s; 3 Ronan Pearson; 4 Coates; 5 Harrison;

6 Lockwood. **FL** Smith 1m01.674s (95.75mph).

P Newsham. **S** 25.

Points 1 Whorton-Eales 328; 2 Harrison 297;

3 Zelos 295; 4 Bird 278; 5 Coates 263;

6 Rawlings 261.

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Race 1 (both 19 laps) 1 Josh Malin;

2 James Taylor +4.837s; 3 John Bennett; 4 Magnus Kriklywi;

5 Jonny Wilkinson; 6 Rory McKean.

FL Malin 1m05.006s (90.84mph). **P** Taylor. **S** 20.

Race 2 1 Malin; 2 Taylor +2.271s; 3 Bennett;

4 Gordie Mutch; 5 Wilkinson; 6 Blake Angliss.

FL Malin 1m04.815s (91.11mph).

P Wilkinson. **S** 20.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (all 21 laps) 1 Alex Connor; 2 Zak

O’Sullivan +0.199s; 3 Casper Stevenson; 4 Luke

Browning; 5 James Hedley; 6 Matias Zagazeta.

FL Connor 56.746s (104.07mph). **P** Connor. **S** 11.

Race 2 1 O’Sullivan; 2 Hedley +0.293s;

3 Stevenson; 4 Roman Bilinski; 5 Browning;

6 Connor. **FL** Hedley 56.527s (104.47mph).

P Browning. **S** 11.

Race 3 1 Stevenson; 2 Connor +0.852s;

3 O’Sullivan; 4 Browning; 5 Bilinski; 6 Christian

Mansell. **FL** Stevenson 56.471s (104.57mph).

P Connor. **S** 11.

Points 1 Browning 291; 2 O’Sullivan 258;

3 Stevenson 238; 4 Connor 209; 5 Hedley 206;

6 Bilinski 111.

TOCA SUPPORTS SILVERSTONE 26-27 SEPTEMBER



Browning loses win as title rivals close in at Silverstone

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Thruxton was not the greatest event of Luke Browning's British Formula 4 season but, despite that, he still managed to extend his points advantage. However, he was unable to repeat that feat for a second weekend on the bounce as this time, Zak O'Sullivan almost halved Browning's lead to 33 points.

Browning did actually win the second Silverstone race – the pick of the three contests – on the road but was later penalised for exceeding track limits

and was demoted to fifth.

The reversed-grid polesitter had led away as O'Sullivan quickly reclaimed third having briefly lost out to Alex Connor off the line. The top five were soon running right together and, shortly after James Hedley passed Connor at Luffield, Casper Stevenson, O'Sullivan and Hedley went three abreast into Brooklands, with O'Sullivan emerging ahead through Woodcote. As he began putting Browning under pressure, Hedley spectacularly passed Stevenson around the outside of Becketts.

It stayed that way to the flag with inches

separating the cars at times – only for Browning to be penalised after the race, meaning O'Sullivan inherited the win from Hedley and Stevenson.

"The ending was a surprise because I was P3 in no man's land [mid-race]," said O'Sullivan, who hadn't expected to close right in on the squabbling Browning and Stevenson. Hedley added: "It was a great race – probably as close racing you can get without contact."

The same could not be said about the scrappy opener, which featured a number of incidents. Browning had contact at the start that limited him to fourth place, while Hedley got too close for comfort with JHR team-mate Abbi Pulling (the pair also colliding in race three).

Up at the front, Connor won the race from pole, although he had a scare on the greasy track at the final corner as O'Sullivan took to the grass and almost stole the win, having passed Stevenson at Becketts late on.

The finale was all about Stevenson as he secured his maiden car racing win. He snatched the lead from Connor off the line and looked in control before a mid-race safety car period, much to his annoyance. But he controlled the restart perfectly and was again able to pull clear of Connor and O'Sullivan.

Browning ended up fourth – and faced another track limits investigation, but avoided a penalty this time – as his rivals seized the momentum in the title fight.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

MEADOWS ADDS 'RACE-WINNING TEAM BOSS' TO HIS CV

Michael Meadows knows a thing or two about winning British Touring Car Championship support races. The two-time Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion notched up 26 victories in the series over the years and is now a winner as a team boss, too.

Having stepped back from regular racing at the end of last season, he has followed his father Ron – the Mercedes Formula 1 team's sporting director – down the management route. His Argenti Motorsport operation entered British F4 this year, receiving support from former top squad Double R, and signed scholarship winner Casper Stevenson as its lead driver. Despite flashes of speed, and 10 podiums, that first victory remained elusive until the third race at Silverstone last weekend.

"I'm really happy – it's all down to Casper, he had a great start and a great restart," said Meadows. "It's been coming for him for the past three or four races. For us as a team, it gives everyone confidence."

The result – along with two thirds in the other Northamptonshire races – means Stevenson is 53 points away from leader Luke Browning and retains an outside chance of taking the title.

For Meadows, the delayed start to the season because of the coronavirus pandemic has produced additional challenges as he gets used to his new role.

"When we planned to start, it would've been a race then two weeks and another race, but we had four race weekends in a month and I was thinking, 'This is tough!'" said Meadows, who added the fact that "no one had experienced this before" meant his fledgling squad was not at such a disadvantage.

As for the toughest part of team management, Meadows feels it's keeping on top of all the different aspects of a race weekend.

"I think just being responsible [is the hardest part] – everything comes down to you whether it's good or bad, you have to be aware of everyone," he said. "They're young drivers and there are lots of different things to manage. There's a lot of hard



work but when you go racing you love it."

Considering Meadows' past success in both the Carrera Cup and being crowned Blancpain GT Series Sprint Cup champion in 2018, he clearly has a winning mentality installed in the team. And, given that Stevenson's confidence will be high after his maiden triumph, this is set to be just the start for Argenti.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Wheatley won in the wet, wild and cold conditions at Snetterton, before Hilley triumphed in race two

Wheatley and Hillery share spoils

SNETTERTON
MSVR
26 SEPTEMBER

It was wet, it was cold and it was windy at Snetterton last weekend, but none of that bothered Dominic Wheatley and James Hillery as they shared the Mini Challenge Cooper class wins.

Wheatley got clear from the start of the first race, as Lydia Walmsley emerged from a huge battle in second as they exited Agostini. While Josh Porter settled himself in third, Hillery and Charlie Mann duelled for fourth, running side-by-side, before Harry Nunn escaped from the chasers and split them into Riches on the penultimate lap.

Alex Nevill was able to stretch his first-lap lead in race two, despite a trip across the grass at Hamilton, after second-placed Lee Pearce went off at Oggies. Hillery was left heading the chase and grabbed the lead when Nevill suddenly slowed exiting Oggies a lap later.

Archie O'Brien then joined Hillery and, as they squabbled, the recovering Nevill caught them, allowing Hillery to briefly escape. Nevill's fightback continued and left him just 0.44 seconds shy of stealing Hillery's win, while O'Brien completed the podium.

Daniel Butcher-Lord won both concurrent S class races. He edged ahead of Rob Austin

exiting Riches on the opening lap in race one, as Sami Bowler held off James Goodall for third. It took until the exit of Oggies on lap two for Butcher-Lord to take charge in the second race, with Austin and Bowler completing the podium again.

Alex Fores beat Stefano Leaney off the line in the first F3 Cup race, but both ran wide onto the grass at Oggies. Leaney recovered first, before third-placed Robbie Watts slid off at Nelson and out came the safety car. There was only one lap before another caution – Tony Bishop was off at Oggies – before a two-lap sprint to the flag.

With Fores spinning at Wilson, Leaney survived to take the win, from Stuart Wiltshire, with Malcolm Scott third after Watts and John Corbett had late slides.

The track was drying for the second race and initially Fores got away as Leaney and Corbett went side-by-side for second. After a quick safety car intervention, all four of the leading contenders suffered spins or offs at various points, but it was Fores who finally emerged to take the win from Leaney, Corbett and Watts.

Matthias Radestock had the lead in the first Elise Trophy race from Agostini on the opening lap, after John Lamaster grabbed the initial advantage. Danny Winstanley stormed through from the back of the grid into second at Wilson on lap three of six. Lamaster had also



Winstanley was a driver on a mission in both Elise Trophy races, storming up the order from the back

WEEKEND WINNERS

MINI CHALLENGE – COOPER

Race 1 Dominic Wheatley

Race 2 James Hillery

F3 CUP

Race 1 Stefano Leaney (Dallara F315)

Race 2 Alex Fores (Dallara F311)

ELISE TROPHY

Race 1 Matthias Radestock (Elise S3)

Race 2 Danny Winstanley (Elise S1)

RACING SALOONS & PRODUCTION BMW

Race 1 Cliff Pellin (Ford Fiesta ST)

Race 2 Alex Kite (Volkswagen Vento)

TRACKDAY CHAMPIONSHIP

Mark Higginson/Matt Higginson
(Honda Civic Type R)

TRACKDAY TROPHY

Aaron Harding/David Slater
(Honda Civic Type R)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

lost out to Jon Packer, but had been safe in fourth until David Alexander got by on the last lap.

Packer led Alexander at the start of the second race, until Caterham ace Winstanley stormed through from the back again. He grabbed second down the Bentley Straight on lap two and took the lead around Coram a lap later. Packer retained second until Murrys on lap six of eight, when Craig Denman pounced, finally finishing fourth after Radestock got by into Riches a lap from home.

Cliff Pellin's Ford Fiesta demoted early leader Alex Kite's Volkswagen Vento on the penultimate lap of the Racing Saloons & Production BMW opener, as Nigel Innes's BMW M3 looked on from a race-long third. Kite was able to maintain his lead in the second race, taking the victory from Innes and Marcos Burnett's M3.

PETER SCHERER



McCullough completes Donnelly Trophy hat-trick

KIRKISTOWN

500MRCI

MARTIN DONNELLY TROPHY

26 SEPTEMBER

Reigning Northern Ireland Formula Ford 1600 champion David McCullough added another title to his growing collection at Kirkistown when he won the Martin Donnelly Trophy for a third time last weekend. There have been other three-time winners in the past, but McCullough was the first to score his three triumphs in successive years.

In a break with tradition, the 'Donnelly' this year was an aggregate affair, with the result based on the outcome of the two NI championship races. Not ideal, perhaps, but it was a situation born out of the COVID-19 crisis, and the need to fit in as many championship rounds as possible before the season comes to an end.

It could have become complicated but, despite the best efforts of Alan Davidson — who got his Mondiale ahead of McCullough's Van Diemen several times — the organisers were spared the task of doing complex additions. McCullough's winning

margin in race one was a massive — by FF1600 standards — 3.7 seconds and, while the gap was smaller in the second encounter (0.9s), the overall result was beyond doubt.

Dave Parks had to start both races from the back after transponder problems in qualifying, but carved his way through the pack to claim a brace of podiums, although his impressive progress was overshadowed by the struggle at the front. Honours for top non-podium finisher were split, with Drew Stewart claiming fourth spot in the first race, while reigning Sprint champion Adrian Pollock, making his return to FF1600 in Hugh Reid's Mondiale, turned the tables in race two.

Not to be outdone, Irish Formula Vee made its second visit north in as many months with a trophy of its own, in addition to championship points.

After two highly entertaining races, honours were split between points leader Gavin Buckley, who took the first, and reigning champion Anthony Cross, who emerged victorious from the second, winning the Emerson Fittipaldi Trophy in the process. In both cases the lead squabble also involved poleman Jack Byrne, Philip

Sheane and Jordan Kelly, who all looked like contenders until the final laps.

Close squabbles were also the order of the day in three encounters for Irish Legends. Teenager Jamie Moylan took the overall victory with two race wins to veteran racer Ivor Greenwood's one, as Greenwood retired from the restarted finale. Geoff Richardson, however, was the most consistent, finishing second three times.

There was consistency, too, but less percussion, among the Fiesta Zetec brigade, where Mark Stewart headed home a squabbling bunch comprising Keith Dawson, Neville Anderson and Paul Stewart in the first race, before the result was repeated in race two. Bearing in mind the quartet managed to swap places umpteen times between start and finish, to achieve the same result twice was quite a feat!

The first race had to be restarted after a first-corner kerfuffle resulted in Megan Campbell facing the wrong way, while an unknown soldier tried to park between her headlights. The red flags flew, but thereafter everybody was very well behaved.

Paul Sheridan and Robert Kennedy took a win and a second place apiece in the concurrent Mazda MX-5 battles, after series founder David Cousins went out from the opener with electrical gremlins.

Niall Fitzsimmons and his Radical Prosport scored a brace of Roadsports wins ahead of the Crossle of John Benson, despite a spin in race two, while Jack Finlay took back-to-back victories in the Global Lights, which were sharing the grid.

Among the Saloons and GTs, Gerard O'Connell found himself facing a challenge from Iain Leinster's very special MG Midget. Starting from pole, the MG led O'Connell's SHP Escort-Millington until the rains came, whereupon the Midget reversed smartly into the scenery to take no further part in the game. This allowed



WEEKEND WINNERS



DEMPSTER

KIRKISTOWN

NORTHERN IRISH FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 David McCullough (Van Diemen RF01)

IRISH FORMULA VEE

Race 1 Gavin Buckley (Sheane R4)

Race 2 Anthony Cross (Sheane FV94, above)

IRISH LEGENDS

Race 1 Ivor Greenwood

Races 2 & 3 Jamie Moylan

MAZDA MX-5s & FIESTA ZETECs

Race 1 Paul Sheridan (MX-5)

Race 2 Robert Kennedy (MX-5)

ROADSPORTS & IRISH GLOBAL LIGHTS

Races 1 & 2 Niall Fitzsimmons (Radical Prosport)

SALOONS/GTs

Race 1 Gerard O'Connell (SHP Escort)

Race 2 Iain Leinster (MG Midget)

For full results visit: speedhive.mylaps.com

MONDELLO PARK

FORMULA BOSS IRELAND

Race 1 Paul O'Connell (Dallara F3)

Race 2 Barry Rabbitt (Formula Renault)

FIESTA ZETECs

Races 1 & 2 Alastair Kellett

GINETTA JUNIOR IRELAND

Race 1 Se Og Martin

Race 2 Karl O'Brien

FIESTA STs

Race 1 Ross Barnes

Race 2 Alex Denning

IRISH STRYKERS

Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

SEAT SUPERCUP IRELAND

Races 1 & 2 Shane Murphy

For full results visit: timing.ie

the Escort to slither away to a win ahead of Gareth Thompson's MGB V8.

Race two was drier, and this time the Midget – its rear end suitably restored to its proper shape – galloped away to win. Top saloon in both races was the Honda Integra of Stephen Traub from Peter Baxter's SEAT Supercopa.

RICHARD YOUNG



Rabbitt leapt his Formula Renault into the lead at the start of race two, and stayed there

CHESTER

Rabbitt pulled out of hat to defeat F3 cars in BOSS race

MONDELLO PARK

MEC

27 SEPTEMBER

Barry Rabbitt regularly beats the Formula 3 cars off the BOSS Ireland grid when the lights go out, and generally entertains by hanging on for as long as possible before the inevitable happens. But in race two last weekend, he did what many thought impossible and hung on for the win in his Formula Renault.

Despite massive pressure, first from race-one winner Paul O'Connell and subsequently from double F3 Cup champion Cian Carey, Rabbitt was able to cling on.

Alastair Kellett moved closer to yet another title by taking two wins in the action-packed Fiesta Zetec class. Rallycross graduate James Fleming was runner-up in race one, with former champion Phil Lawless close behind in race two, from a delighted Darragh Brennan.

Kellett's title rival Michael Barrable had a torrid day, a penalty

demoting him to seventh in race one, and he only managed fifth in race two. Reigning champion William Kellett's fortunes were also the polar opposite of his father's – a spin in race one and a clutch issue in race two were made slightly more bearable by his breaking the long-standing class lap record.

Se Og Martin drove superbly to take the first Ginetta Junior Ireland race, slicing by Karl O'Brien early on for second before snatching the lead from Jack Byrne starting the final tour. In race two, O'Brien fought past Byrne for the win.

A delighted Ross Barnes took his maiden win in the opening Fiesta ST race, belying his lack of experience by holding off severe pressure from Alex Denning and subsequently Michael Cullen, the race having been restarted early on when Graham McDonnell made heavy contact with the pitwall. In race two, Denning relieved the fast-starting Eddie Peterson of the lead with an impressive move round the outside into the Esses and eased away for a dominant win to move closer to the 2020 title.

Michael Cullen was impressive in Irish Strykers, taking two wins despite a loose exhaust in race two, while Shane Murphy won a pair of poorly supported SEAT Supercup races, with Barry English second both times.

LEO NULTY



Barnes took a first win in opening Fiesta ST race

CHESTER

Winning streak continues for Byrne at Brands

BRANDS HATCH
BRSCC
26-27 SEPTEMBER

John Byrne's relentless march towards the Caterham Seven UK Championship continued at Brands Hatch as two more convincing wins maintained his perfect record in the category in 2020.

Byrne, champion in the series last year under its 420R guise, took advantage of a slow getaway from poleman Stephen Nuttall to lead the field into Paddock Hill Bend on the opening lap. But Gordon Sawyer never allowed Byrne to pull clear, and the duo swapped positions several times in the early laps.

Once backmarkers came into play, Byrne pulled out a sizeable advantage that he never relinquished. Nuttall survived a brush with Sawyer at Paddock to snatch second, while Sawyer suffered further frustration when a track-limits penalty condemned him to fifth in the final results.

Byrne proved uncatchable again in the second encounter, as a four-way tussle for second was fought behind him. Nuttall eventually emerged on top ahead of Jake Swann-Dixon, but not before Sawyer had tangled with Henry Heaton at Paddock as the quartet worked their way through traffic.

As has become the norm in 2020, the 310R drivers shared the grid with the Seven UK competitors and produced



Byrne kept up his 100% winning record in Caterham Seven UK this season

plenty of their own excitement. Tom Grensinger emerged victorious in the opener after a race-long battle with James Murphy and Greg Monks. Murphy dropped to fourth before the end after losing the nose of his car, while Monks narrowly held off Lewis Thompson for second on the sprint to the line.

Murphy led home Monks in the second contest after Grensinger was forced to pit with front-end damage of his own, while Thompson was denied third at the flag by season debutant Pete Walters.

There was no lack of entertainment in the pair of races held for the 270R competitors either. After Andy Lees, Angelos Alvanos and Lars Hoffmann all enjoyed spells out front, the first race settled down into a battle between Ben Lopez-Appleton and Harry Cook. A fine move at Clearways in the closing stages gave Lopez-Appleton the initiative, and Cook's attempt to regain the position seconds later led to a trip through the Paddock gravel, dropping him to sixth.

Lopez-Appleton was left to take the flag

from Lees and Hoffmann after 33 laps of breathless racing. Alvanos denied Lopez-Appleton the double in race two after another frantic contest, as Hoffmann held off Cook for third.

Three races were held for the Roadsport Championship, with each driver permitted to take part in two events, the category sharing the grid with the 270R runners in the opening two encounters. Victory in race one went to Tom Wyllys after Blair McConachie and Alex Conway made contact at Druids. McConachie won the second race after a thrilling race-long battle with Wyllys, while Conway charged his way through to second in the third race behind winner Harry Eyre.

Two faultless drives from Steven Dailly in the BMW Compact Cup double-header strengthened his hopes of claiming a fourth successive series title. Former British GT star Jordan Stilp muscled his way through to second in the opener after enjoying a fierce tussle with Wayne Flint. The top three finished in the same order again in



Hill set the pace in the Production GTi races at Brands Hatch

BRANDS HATCH WEEKEND WINNERS

CATERHAM SEVEN UK & 310R

Races 1 & 2 John Byrne (420R)

CATERHAM 270R & ROADSPORT

Race 1 Ben Lopez-Appleton (270R)

Race 2 Angelos Alvanos (270R)

Race 3 Harry Eyre (Roadsport)

BMW COMPACT CUP

Races 1 & 2 Steven Dailly

PRODUCTION GTis

Races 1 & 2 Simon Hill

Race 3 Martyn Walsh

CATERHAM ACADEMY – WHITE GROUP

Races 1 & 2 Taylor O’Flanagan

CATERHAM ACADEMY – GREEN GROUP

Race 1 Tom Cockerill

Race 2 Gwyndaf Jones

NATIONAL & NORTHERN FORMULA FORD

Races 1 & 3 Neil MacLennan (Spectrum KMR)

Race 2 Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10)

CMMC TIN TOPS

Bradley Lane (Honda Civic Type R)

CMMC SUPER SALOONS & INTERMARQUE

Race 1 Adrian Bradley (BMW M3 E46)

Race 2 Ray Harris (Ginetta G40)

For full results visit: [tsl-timing.com](https://www.tsl-timing.com)

race two, although former Mazda MX-5 racer Paul Maguire provided a strong challenge to Flint’s third place throughout.

Simon Hill was another reigning champion to score two wins over the weekend as the Production GTi series made its long-awaited return to action after the coronavirus hiatus. Hill won the opener from James Colbourne after polesitter Martyn Walsh briefly lost power exiting Paddock on the first lap and dropped back. Walsh followed Hill home in race two, while Paul Blackburn claimed third. Hill withdrew from race three, leaving Walsh to claim a lights-to-flag success from Adam Hance after Walsh’s fellow front-row starter Blackburn spun twice on the opening lap.

Taylor O’Flanagan also enjoyed a double success as he claimed victory in both Caterham Academy White Group contests. Oulton Park winner Dominique Mannsperger recovered from a first-lap excursion to claim third behind Simon Shaw in the first race, while Hugo Bush bounced back from a race-one clash with Ian Brown to deprive Mannsperger of the runner-up spot in the second event.

In the Green Group, Tom Cockerill fended off Chris Skillicorn’s race-long pressure to win race one, but Gwyndaf Jones later denied Cockerill a double after powering ahead on the outside of Paddock on lap 16 of 18.

MARK LIBBETER

FORMULA FORD ACTION AS CLOSE AS EVER



With preparations for the Formula Ford Festival gathering momentum, picking an outright winner for the showpiece event will be no easy task, especially if the action in last weekend’s trio of National Championship races is anything to go by.

Double Oulton Park winner Neil MacLennan and last year’s Festival winner Jonathan Browne – a five-time Champion of Brands victor in 2020 – would appear to be the standout candidates. Yet with drivers including Rory Smith, reigning National champion Ross Martin and 2013 Formula Renault BARC title winner Chris Middlehurst all likely to be involved, there’s the potential for a thrilling event.

All five drivers were present at Brands last weekend for the second round of the truncated National FF1600 season, but none of them claimed pole position for Saturday’s opening encounter. That honour fell to upcoming American youngster Bryce Aron in his Ray GR19, who beat Middlehurst’s Van Diemen LA10 by a mere 0.09 seconds, as the top 14 starters were covered by just over half a second.

Aron, recently awarded a Team USA Scholarship to allow him to compete in the Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy, initially led race one, but Middlehurst usurped him with a move at Clearways on the opening lap. Martin (Van Diemen RF99) followed through into second

until he was pushed back by a charging MacLennan (Spectrum KMR) a lap later.

MacLennan snatched the advantage from Middlehurst on lap seven of 18 and was able to withstand several attempts by Middlehurst to regain the position to claim his third win of the season in the category. Martin held off the battling Browne and Aron to claim third.

Middlehurst was more successful in the defence of his lead in race two after getting ahead of MacLennan at Druids on lap two. MacLennan continued to apply unrelenting pressure thereafter but Middlehurst proved unbeatable, despite nearly coming to grief on the exit of Surtees following a minor clash with a backmarker.

Behind the top two, a determined effort from Browne allowed him to relieve Martin of third at Paddock on lap six, while Smith (Medina JL18) and Aron also pushed Martin back to sixth by the finish. Smith was handed a slice of luck post-race when a time penalty for exceeding track limits was rescinded, allowing him to keep fourth.

The reversed-grid race three handed Martin his best chance to claim a win. After building up a lead in the early stages, he was soon caught by Aron. An attempt to go around the outside of Martin at Paddock on lap 12 failed to come off for the American and enabled the opportunistic MacLennan to grab second by diving through on the inside.

Three laps later, Martin’s attempt to defend his lead led to a grassy excursion at Surtees and allowed MacLennan to claim a narrow win from Smith. Martin salvaged third ahead of Browne after the engine in Jamie Sharp’s Medina JL17 expired.

MARK LIBBETER





Staines produces strategy masterclass to win

**DONINGTON PARK
CSCC
26-27 SEPTEMBER**

On a weekend when too many races were settled by penalties applied for pitstop infringements, the Swinging Sixties Group 1 contest was decided by a piece of strategical mastery, with Ian Staines making all of the right moves to take victory in his MG Midget.

Staines held the lead initially, losing it after the first of two safety car periods and falling to fourth, with Richard Belcher's Lotus Cortina taking the helm. But, when a second caution period was called, Staines immediately moved to make his mandatory stop while those ahead, unaccountably, waited until racing resumed. Once Chris Watkinson belatedly pitted his Mini, Staines emerged ahead with Tom Pead's BMW 1600Ti fending off the Mini of Joshua Brooks for a distant second. Belcher, meanwhile, had smoked into retirement.

Father-and-son pairing Nigel and Oliver

and Reuben appeared to have produced a perfect performance in the Group 2 race, but their TVR Griffith wasn't in the pitlane for the mandated period and so was chucked back to fourth. Will Plant was rewarded for sticking to the task after an early spin in his Morgan +8 with a win, his penultimate lap move on the brakes at the chicane to pass Matt Manderson's Chevrolet Camaro proving decisive.

The Classic K race was a convoluted affair. It was red flagged almost immediately as an extra car had erroneously taken the start; there were two caution periods; and it was finally flagged six minutes early. The top three all failed to follow the pitstop regulations, meaning the TVR Griffith driven to fourth by Nathan Dod was classified first – the position co-driver and father Peter had held for the first half.

Piers Masarati took the lead on the fifth lap of the Modern Classics encounter and he and brother Miles, who took over their Porsche 964 Turbo, didn't look back. Dave Griffin's BMW M3 came out on top of a

hugely entertaining battle for second by passing both Karl Cattliff's similar car and Alex Taylor's Mazda RX-7 in one fell swoop at Old Hairpin near the end, but his efforts were wasted as he was penalised for a short stop and dropped to fourth.

A similar punishment for Tim Davis meant that he did not keep his on-the-road win in the Magnificent Sevens opener. His Caterham C400 had just passed the Hayabusa Turbo-powered version of Rich Webb before making its inadequate pit visit, but afterwards the pair traded the lead several times – Davis's last-lap pass at Redgate having seemed decisive. Webb controlled the second race to make it a double.

A first ever dry Slicks Series race was led for much of its duration by the Lotus Elise of Rob Fenn, who only squeaked into the race having been a reserve for qualifying. Daniel Wylie's Porsche 911 GT3 Cup led after the stops and a caution period but Fenn soon overturned the advantage. Both were usurped by historic ace Michael Lyons – in Alistair Fazekas' Ferrari 458 Challenge – who breached the staunch defence of Fenn with seven minutes remaining.

Andrew Windmill was within two minutes of claiming his second Tin Tops victory of the year in his Honda Civic Type R – overcoming a 30s success penalty to do so – only to run out of fuel when comfortably ahead. "It is something we had been experimenting with and we thought we had it spot on, but we must have been about two litres short," he said. Steve Simpson's Peugeot 206 took the spoils, while on-track runner-up Martin Addison was pinged back to fourth for a sub-two minute pit visit.

Darren Fielding and Colin Wells, in



WEEKEND WINNERS

SWINGING SIXTIES

Group 1 Ian Staines (MG Midget)

Group 2 William Plant (Morgan +8, below)

CLASSIC K

Peter Dod/Nathan Dod (TVR Griffith 400)

MODERN CLASSICS

Piers Masarati/Miles Masarati
(Porsche 964 Turbo)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Races 1 & 2 Rich Webb (Caterham Blackbird)

SLICKS SERIES

Alistair Fazekas/Michael Lyons
(Ferrari 458 Challenge)

TIN TOPS

Steve Simpson (Peugeot 206)

NEW MILLENNIUM

Darren Fielding/Colin Wells (BMW E46 M3 GTR)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Mark Chilton (Nissan Skyline GTR R32)

SPECIAL SALOONS & MODSPORTS

Races 1 & 2 Andy Southcott
(MG Midget Spaceframe)

TURBO TIN TOPS

Dan Ludlow/Stuart Emmett (Honda Civic Type R)

JAGUAR SALOON AND OPEN SERIES

Races 1 & 2 Michael Vitulli (BMW M3 E46)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

their BMW E46 M3 GTR, ran out victors of the New Millennium race by three seconds from the Lotus Europa of Andrew Rath, but were beneficiaries of a failure for another Lotus. Chris Griffin's V6 Cup ran strongly before a long mid-race stop, with its engine letting go almost immediately upon rejoining the track.

Mark Chilton's stunning Nissan Skyline GTR R32 chalked up a second Future Classics victory of the season, reeling out a sufficient gap in the first half to counteract his 30s handicap for winning at Snetterton.

Andy Southcott maintained his clean sweep of victories in the Special Saloons and Modsports, taking his spaceframe Midget's tally for the season to six.

IAN SOWMAN



DAF 55 V8 RETURNS AFTER 42 YEARS A piece of Special Saloons history returned to competitive action for the first time in 42 years when Andy Wilson drove the ex-Tony Hazelwood DAF 55 V8. Because of the volume of entries, Wilson – who normally pilots a Holden Monaro – didn't get to drive the car, which has March F2 underpinnings, in qualifying before sampling it in race conditions. "It's a bit quirky, and didn't have any brakes at all, which is a bit frightening through the Craners," he said. Wilson finished 24th and 14th in the two races. **Photograph by Mick Walker**



BOLT OUT OF THE BLUE The most dramatic change on the Dan Ludlow Engineering Honda Civic Type R for the 2020 season was the striking metallic blue livery but, behind the scenes, winter work was done to save weight and make the car more watertight. Ludlow paved the way for success in Turbo Tin Tops with a strong first stint before handing the car over to Stuart Emmett. There was one car ahead of him on the road – but Alex Tait's Ford Fiesta ST inexplicably failed to make its mandatory stop and was dropped to fifth in the results. **Photograph by Steve Jones**



HEALEY IN DEVELOPMENT One of the standout performances in the Special Saloons, Modsports and Bernie's V8 races was that of the James Plant Austin-Healey 100/6. The car, built and engineered by James' father John, is still in the early stages of development and has borrowed several parts from the Allard clone that they ran previously. It runs a 400 cubic inch Chevrolet engine and was built to replace the "lumbering" Allard and is shorter, narrower and 100kg lighter, to enable better handling. Plant finished second overall in race two. **Photograph by Mick Walker**

CHRIS FROGGATT

After some stunning recent performances in the GT World Challenge Europe series, we meet Britain's latest rising star

The name Christopher Froggatt isn't immediately familiar in the way that his Tempesta Racing team-mate, two-time grand prix winner Giancarlo Fisichella is. But that's perhaps to be expected given that the 26-year-old Briton only started his motorsport journey four years ago after being encouraged by Eddie Cheever Jr – son of the 1998 Indianapolis 500 winner Eddie Sr – on a trackday to pursue his natural flair for driving. Now a Pro-Am class-winner in the ultra-competitive GT3-based GT World Challenge Europe series and a recent podium-finisher at Le Mans, Froggatt has come a long way in a very short time – all without any background in karting.

"I always had a fascination with speed growing up," he says, "but none of my family have any background or interest in racing, so I wasn't very well-educated in it."



That all changed after he met Cheever Jr. After getting his racing license in Dubai in a production-spec Toyota GT86 – Froggatt admits he "was actually terrible at racing (race craft) to start with, I had no idea how to overtake or defend my position" – he found he was a quick-learner in his first outings in the one-make Ferrari Challenge series.

"In the first race I got pole position in class and finished P5 overall, just behind Fabio Leimer who was a GP2 champion a couple of years before," he says. "It was then a case of 'how far could I take it?'"

Following those impressive early showings, in 2018 Froggatt secured backing from Sky, which shows Ferrari Challenge races on its dedicated F1 channel. Froggatt says the partnership "seemed natural".

"A lot of it was about supporting a young British athlete with a different story, who didn't have the traditional motorsport background but was trying to show that you could still be competitive against people who have been groomed to do it," he says. "I think it's a positive message that if you can find something you're passionate about later in life and feel like you're meant to



From left to right: Jon Hui, Giancarlo Fisichella, Eddie Cheever, Chris Froggatt

be doing, you can still be successful if you're dedicated to it. Now in GT World Challenge I'm racing against people that are much more experienced than I am, but I can still be competitive.

"The guys at Sky know how grateful I am for their support, they really have been pivotal to taking the next step in my racing and continuing my development. It's been an awesome journey so far and I've really enjoyed everything I've done. There's never been a moment where I haven't learned something."

Working with experienced team-mates Cheever and Fisichella gives Froggatt the ideal sounding board to learn from and, he says: "I'm like a sponge when I'm around them, trying to take into account everything they're saying and shortcut my learning curve". So far, it certainly seems to have paid off.

On his debut in the GTWCE Endurance Cup in 2019, Froggatt took a class victory at Monza, and finished third in the Pro-Am class standings at season's end. This year, he's expanded his programme to include the Sprint Cup and opened the campaign with two class victories at Misano. Despite a compromised practice, he and Cheever then retained their points lead with two runner-up finishes at Magny-Cours, highlighting one of Froggatt's key strengths.

"I think I'm pretty good at getting on the pace straightaway," he says. "If it's a new track, then I'll be quite quickly on the pace, like for example at Magny-Cours. We had a few problems – we had to change the gearbox in night practice, so we had no time in the

night before going straight into a race at night, so that was very difficult."

Froggatt believes a key part of his year-on-year improvement can also be attributed to time spent practising in the simulator, a tool he rates highly as a means for improving concentration – without any of the inputs that are familiar to drivers in a real-life car – and learning tracks.

"My consistency over a double stint is much better than it was last year," he says. "I attribute that to a lot of sim work over the two-month lockdown we had, when I competed a lot in various Esports competitions to keep sharp."

Hot on the heels of a podium finish in the Michelin Le Mans Cup race held prior to the Le Mans 24 Hours in September, Froggatt returns to the Spa 24 Hours race he experienced for the first time last year. The Ardennes region is famous for its unpredictable weather, but in one of the wettest events in recent memory, the 2019 race was red-flagged during the night due to the atrocious conditions. As a result, Froggatt is wary of making any firm predictions, especially against a high-quality entry which is expected to count works-supported entries from Ferrari, Porsche, BMW, Bentley, Audi, Lamborghini and Mercedes.

"I've been enjoying the GT World Challenge a lot, I think the championship is only getting stronger," he says. "The organisation is great, there's more attention to it now that it's live on Sky Sports and it's going to attract more quality drivers and teams."

"I'd love to compete one day at the staple endurance races like Le Mans and Daytona but we've found a bit of a home for now in GTWCE. I'm happy at the moment where I am, especially as there's still plenty to learn."



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What car does Chris Froggatt race in the GT World Challenge Europe?

- a) Mercedes-AMG GT3
- b) Bentley Continental GT3
- c) Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo

Prize includes a 55 inch TV, a Sky Q Complete Bundle TV package including Sky Sports Complete and Sky Cinema, Sky Q Multiscreen subscription, free standard installation provided by Sky subject to the prize conditions, and Sky will also loan the prize winner 1 x Sky Q 2TB box and 1 x Sky Q Mini box at no charge. T&Cs apply*



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HANSEN IS AS HANSEN DOES



BOOK REVIEW
KENNETH HANSEN:
FOURTEEN
 RRP £50

There are a couple of points to clarify before Autosport can review *Kenneth Hansen: Fourteen*. First, readers need not worry about seeking out 13 prequels to

this book. Second, its author is our long-time World Rallycross correspondent and occasional rough-stuff track tester Hal Ridge. But we'll try to be impartial, and cross our fingers that Hal doesn't withhold copy on magazine press day if he's not happy with our assessment of his latest venture...

The title of this near-400-page biography is, of course, in reference to Hansen's 14 European rallycross titles, which make him the most decorated FIA mixed-surface competitor of all time. In more recent seasons, his team has run his sons Timmy and Kevin in World RX, with Timmy winning last year's championship at the wheel of a Peugeot 208.

Autosport must also reveal that we're reviewing a Swedish-language copy of *Fourteen* and so we're not able to enjoy the foreword written by nine-time Le Mans 24 Hours victor Tom Kristensen without a hefty session on Google Translate.

However, we can delve into the opening section, which is unconventionally presented from the viewpoint of Hansen's rivals, featuring the likes of part-time rallycross opponent and Lydden Hill circuit owner Pat Doran, Bjorn Skogstad (a four-time European runner-up to Hansen) and Petter Solberg, who Hansen opted not to sell a Citroen DS3 Supercar

to when the 2003 World Rally champion turned his hand to rallycross. Pleasingly for each entry, Hansen is also given his right to reply.

This quarter of the book works speedily to shed light on Hansen's character, much faster than a straightforward biography might. For example, Tommy Kristoffersson reveals a ruthless driver but a thrifty team boss. He's honest, too, saying: "In some ways I think [Hansen] destroyed the sport because he was too good." Perhaps the same account is too open, though, as readers are treated to the knowledge that's it's unpleasant to visit the toilet after Hansen...

Each section — dedicated to family members, friends and team-mates — follows a similar format. Nine-time WRC champion Sebastien Loeb, FIA president Jean Todt, World RX TV commentator Andrew Coley, and compatriot and 1999 Indianapolis 500 winner Kenny Brack also lend their voices. It's an extensive and impressive ensemble compiled by Ridge.

This exposes a slight gripe with the format, in that Hansen's own voice is absent for much of this title. Without his guidance in places, it allows myriad drivers in particular to focus on their own achievements and accounts of events, rather than place them in the context of Hansen's career as a normal biography might.

Where *Fourteen* does excel is in its lavish use of archive imagery. As well as a healthy dose of family photographs, there's also a dramatic 12-frame reel of Hansen's enormous roll aboard his Citroen C4 in the wet at Momarken in 2007. Similarly, it's always welcome to see shots of Ford Sierra RS500s, Citroen Xsaras, plus Volvo Amazons and 240 Turbos either airborne or fully on the lock-stops.

Compleatists will appreciate the full year by year breakdown of Hansen's three-decade career, artwork



WORLD RX



Kenneth Hansen with son Timmy, the reigning World RX champion

of all the liveries and cars that he competed in and results tables from every season, including the achievements of the Peugeot-Hansen and latterly the Hansen MJP teams in World RX.

The segmented presentation of *Fourteen* means that for many, it's not the sort of biography you'll sit down and consume in just a handful of readings. But that's no bad thing, as this glossy hardback is more successful as a coffee-table book that's best appreciated over time.

It should also be noted that titles focused on rallycross are few and far between, so it's kudos to Ridge that he's helped populate such a sparse area.

For its different presentation of a different topic, *Fourteen* is a gratifying, if perhaps not essential, addition to any motorsport collection.

MATT KEW

FINISHING STRAIGHT



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WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

IndyCar

Round 8/9

Indianapolis, USA

2-3 October

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Fri 2030, Sat 1930

Intercontinental GT Challenge

Round 2/4

Indianapolis, USA

4 October

NASCAR Cup

Round 31/36

Talladega, USA

4 October

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sun 1830

Super GT

Round 5/8

Fuji, Japan

4 October

Formula Regional European

Round 4/8

Mugello, Italy

3-4 October

Euroformula Open

Round 5/8

Mugello, Italy

3-4 October

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park MGCC

3 October

Metro Cup, MG Trophy, MG Cup, BCV8s, Cockshoot Cup, Midget and Sprite Challenge, Porsches

Silverstone AMOC*

3 October

Aston Martin GT4 Challenge, Intermarque, GT Challenge, Jack Fairman Cup/Innes Ireland Cup, Pre-War Team Challenge/St John Horsfall, Equipe GTS, Equipe Pre-'63

Snetterton MSVR

3-4 October

British GT, British F3, Radical Challenge, GT5 Challenge

Castle Combe CCRC

3-4 October

Autumn Classic: Mini Miglias, Mini Sevens, Pre-'66 Jaguars, Frazer Nash, GT Sports Car Cup, Formula Junior, Formula 3, Allstars, Jack Sears Trophy, Alfas, Coys Trophy, Formula Vintage, FISCAR

Mallory Park 750MC

4 October

Mazda MX-5s, Classic Stock Hatch, Clio 182s, Type-R Trophy, Ma7das

*Behind closed doors



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Polesitter Rick Mears (#3 Penske-Chevrolet PC-20) and team-mate Emerson Fittipaldi lead the field at the start of the 1991 Meadowlands

Grand Prix in East Rutherford, New Jersey – the last time this ultimately unprofitable event was held on a makeshift course in the car park and access roads of a sports complex. The race was won by

Bobby Rahal (#18 Lola-Chevrolet T91/00). Autosport debates the greatest Indycar of all time as part of our special series of podcasts to celebrate our 70th birthday. Go to bit.ly/GreatestIndycar



For classic US open-wheel racing DVDs head to www.dukevideo.com/Indycar





Ascari and Moss score landmark victories

28 September 1951

A small two-column story in Autosport magazine this week in 1951 marked the start of something big.

“Driven by Alberto Ascari, the new four-cylinder Formula 2 Ferrari gained its first victory last Sunday,” said our report of the two-hour Modena Grand Prix. That car was Aurelio Lampredi’s Ferrari 500, which would dominate the world championship for the next two seasons, following the decision to change the points-scoring category from F1 to F2. Ascari would be champion both years, winning 11 of the 15 GPs.

Autosport also reflected on the Dundrod Tourist Trophy, held earlier in the month. The event had been won for the second time (of a record seven) by Stirling Moss, this time in a works Jaguar as opposed to a private entry as the year before. Autosport described Moss as “a young man who, given his

chance, will surely win the world championship”, but did lament the scheduling of the sportscar contest on the same weekend as the Italian GP at Monza: “The presence of Juan Manuel Fangio, Jose Froilan Gonzalez or Ascari would have drawn thousands more folk to Dundrod.”

As it was, Moss led a C-type 1-2-4, with only Bob Gerard’s Frazer Nash preventing a Jaguar podium lockout.

The biggest report of the issue, however, was for the British Hillclimb Championship finale at Shelsley Walsh. Ken Wharton really underlined his supremacy of the discipline as the 1951 champion took his fourth win in six rounds with his supercharged Cooper-JAP in a record time. And he managed the second fastest time of the day too, in Peter Bell’s ERA! Hillclimbing also made our cover, Pat Prosser’s Cooper being pictured at Bo’ness.

AUTOSPORT

Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG
Tel +44 (0) 20 3405 8100 **Email** autosport@autosport.com
Individual email firstname.surname@motorsport.com
Website www.autosport.com **Twitter** @autosport

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK +44 (0) 344 848 8817 **Overseas** +44 (0) 1604 251451
Email help@asm.secureorder.co.uk **Back issues** 0344 8488817

EDITORIAL

Chief Editor **Kevin Turner**
 Deputy Editor **Marcus Simmons**
 Grand Prix Editor **Alex Kalinauckas**
 F1 Reporter **Luke Smith**
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Photography

Steven Tee
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Special Contributors

Ben Anderson
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 David Malsher-Lopez
 Jonathan Noble
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 Tim Wright

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ADVERTISING

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 Sales Director **James Robinson**
 Creative Solutions **Don Rupal**
 Display Sales **Nick Gavigan, Matthew Meszaros, Karen Reilly**
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ADVERTISING PRODUCTION

Production Controller **Ben Webster**

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MANAGEMENT

President, Motorsport Network **James Allen**
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CIRCULATION/TRADE ENQUIRIES

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MARKING 70 YEARS OF A POPULAR CIRCUIT

Much has been written about Formula 1's 70th birthday this season. And, throughout 2020, we've been marking 70 years of Autosport too. But these are not the only elements of motorsport to reach the milestone this year: Castle Combe circuit has also turned 70.

In a world without coronavirus, the landmark would have been commemorated in style with a two-day Autumn Classic meeting at the Wiltshire track packed with spectators and plenty of special features. Sadly, that will not be possible – and it is ironic that Combe, historically one of the best-attended UK motorsport circuits, has therefore been one of the hardest hit by the restrictions on fans.

Instead, we are using this latest edition of the national racing supplement to celebrate Castle Combe's special birthday. The fact that the old wartime-airfield venue has even reached 70 is quite remarkable considering the number

of challenges – and noise objections – it has received over the decades. And that it has survived is largely down to the tenacity of one man: the late Howard Strawford, the owner who did so much for the circuit.

Over the years, there have been countless memorable Combe moments and Marcus Pye has picked out some of the most significant (see page 10). We also profile Gary Prebble, the circuit's most successful driver (p16), and hear from Tom Davis about how Combe has dealt with the challenge that is COVID-19 (p7).



Stephen Lickorish

STEPHEN LICKORISH
NATIONAL EDITOR



COVER IMAGES

Steve Jones; Ted Walker; EDP Photos; Mick Walker

04 DRIVER RANKINGS

Autosport's national winners' table

Appropriately, it's a Combe hero leading the way in this special issue

07 OPINION

Tom Davis

Combe's marketing director on overcoming the circuit's latest threats

08 TECH FOCUS

Castle Combe Hot Hatch

Peugeot 106 GTI driver Shaun Goverd guides us around his winning steed

10 RETROSPECTIVE

Castle Combe's key moments

We pick out the most significant events from the track's history

16 DRIVER PROFILE

Gary Prebble

An in-depth look at the racing career of Combe's most successful driver

20 CAR RECREATION

Bristol 450 coupe

How a rare Le Mans class-winning design from the 1950s is back on track

24 ARCHIVE

British GT at Combe, 2005

Ferraris were in control the last time the GT series headed to Wiltshire

26 CONTACTS

Organising clubs

All the key details you need for the UK and Ireland's major racing clubs

SUB-EDITOR Peter Hodges **CONTRIBUTORS** Stefan Mackley, Marcus Pye, Marcus Simmons, Kevin Turner
ART DIRECTOR Lynsey Elliott **SENIOR DESIGNER** Michael Cavalli **ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES** James Robinson (email james.robinson@motorsport.com)

LATEST AUTOSPORT NATIONAL DRIVER RANKINGS

It's over a month since we produced our first winners' table and, despite a plethora of race meetings, two of the original top three have retained their places at the sharp end

BY MARCUS SIMMONS AND STEPHEN LICKORISH



Thirty-six circuit racing events have been held in the UK and Ireland since we relaunched Autosport's National Driver Rankings in the previous edition of the national racing supplement. And a lot has changed in those past five weeks in the world of motorsport and beyond.

Back when our first winners' table was printed, no one would have believed you if you'd said Pierre Gasly would become a Formula 1 race winner with AlphaTauri this year, while it also dates from a time

when you could still visit a pub after 10pm. But, despite everything that's changed, two of the drivers in the top three of Autosport's rankings back in August have remained there.

Initial leader Lewis Saunders has still been out front in the Junior Saloon Car Championship and has avoided some of the questionable driving from others in the field to take four further wins. And Cam Jackson has continued to notch up the victories in Formula Junior and Classic Formula Ford 1600 (albeit not in Historic

FF1600!) to sit second on the leaderboard. But the current leader – and production deadlines mean the table is only up to date to include the 19-20 September weekend's racing – is a driver who was 'only' 24th in that first table.

And given that this latest supplement is a Castle Combe celebration, it would be appropriate that the most successful ever driver at the Wiltshire venue in terms of race wins is now leading the way. Gary Prebble has been on the march in both



Gary Prebble

READ



Cam Jackson

WALKER



Lewis Saunders

HAWKINS

Look out
for updates to
our rankings at
autosport.com



STYLES

his SEAT Leon Cupra (Combe Saloons) and Honda Civic (Combe and 750 Motor Club Hot Hatch) to secure 11 victories and top the rankings. But, with the regular Combe season now complete, there could be the chance for others to steal that top spot (and for more on Prebble, turn to page 16).

Remember, the rankings – a revival of Autosport's old 'Golden Helmet' competitions – are purely based on the number of wins a driver achieves in a year. There are no fancy formulas or complex calculations used to produce the table. Every win from a British GT enduro to a Vintage Sports-Car Club pre-war sprint counts the same. And class wins are included too, provided the classes are based on differing cars/engines and not driver ability, and there are at least six starters.

As well as Saunders and Jackson, Caterham racer Harry Senior, Radical and GT Cup winner Marcus Clutton, provisional Ginetta Racing Drivers Club champion Stephen Docker, and Formula Vee dominator James Harridge have all retained places in the top 10 from August. ■

LEADERBOARD AUTOSPORT'S MOST SUCCESSFUL CLUB RACERS SO FAR IN 2020

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	OVERALL WINS	CLASS WINS	TOTAL
1	Gary Prebble (Honda Civic/SEAT Leon Cupra 20v T)	11	0	11
2	Cam Jackson (Van Diemen RF80/Brabham BT2/ March 709)	10	0	10
3	Lewis Saunders (Citroen Saxo VTR)	10	0	10
4	Tom Golding (Ginetta G40 Cup)	9	0	9
5	Lucky Khera (Ferrari 488 Challenge/BMW M3 E46)	8	1	9
6	Harry Senior (Caterham Sigmax)	8	0	8
7	Marcus Clutton (Radical SR3 RSX/Lamborghini Huracan GT3)	8	0	8
8	Paul Brydon (Solution F BMW M3)	7	0	7
9	Stephen Docker (Ginetta G40 GRDC)	0	7	7
10	James Harridge (Maverick Vee)	6	0	6
11	Michael Pensavalle (BMW M3 E46)	6	0	6
12	Luke Cooper (Swift SC18)	6	0	6
13	Harry King (Porsche 911 GT3 Cup)	6	0	6
14=	Tim Mogridge (Ferrari F355 Challenge)	6	0	6
14=	Richard Wildman (MG Midget)	6	0	6
16	Ben Short (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	5	1	6
17	Dave Griffin (BMW E36 M3)	3	3	6
18	Phil Jenkins (Caterham 420R)	5	0	5
19	John Byrne (Caterham 420R)	5	0	5
20	Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)	5	0	5
21	Luke Herbert (Mazda MX-5 Mk3)	5	0	5
22	Fergus Campbell (MG ZR 170)	5	0	5
23=	Michael Igoe (Lamborghini Huracan GT3)	5	0	5
23=	Michael Gibbins (MCR S2000)	5	0	5
23=	Jonathan Browne (Ray GR18)	5	0	5
26=	Pierre Livingston (Merlyn Mk20A)	5	0	5
26=	Bailey Voisin (Ginetta G40 Junior)	5	0	5
28	Josh Malin (Ginetta G40 GT5)	5	0	5
29	Luke Browning (Mygale M14-F4)	5	0	5
30	Oliver Bull (Vauxhall Tigra Silhouette)	5	0	5
31	Geoff Richardson (Legend)	5	0	5
32	James Card (BMW E46 M3)	4	1	5
33	Benn Tilley (March 743)	4	1	5
34	Jeff Smith (Mini Se7en/Austin Mini Cooper S)	3	2	5
35	Joe Ferguson (Austin Mini Cooper S)	3	2	5
36	Shaun Traynor (Toyota MR2 Roadster)	2	3	5
37	William Heslop (Ford Fiesta ST/Honda Civic)	2	3	5
38	Nick Gwinnett (Renault Clio)	2	3	5
39	Andrew Bourke (Alfa Romeo 156)	0	5	5
40	Shaun Goverd (Peugeot 106 GTi)	0	5	5
41	Aaron Smith (Mini Miglia)	4	0	4
42	Joe Wigg (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	4	0	4
43	Nigel Innes (BMW M3)	4	0	4
44	Mark Holme (Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2/VW Fun Cup)	4	0	4
45	Ash Sutton (Infiniti Q50)	4	0	4
46	Dan Clowes (Jedi Mk6/7)	4	0	4
47	Ollie Neaves (MGB GT V8)	4	0	4
48	Rod Birley (Honda Integra)	4	0	4
49	Miles Rudman (34 Ford Coupe)	4	0	4
50	Ryan Polley (Renault Clio 182)	4	0	4

Table accurate after 19-20 September races. All car races in UK and Ireland are included except qualification/repechage, consolation and handicap races. No races in other countries. Class wins are only counted when there are at least six starters in the class. Only classes divided by car characteristics are included. Classes divided by driver characteristics such as ability, professional status, age, experience (for example rookie or Pro-Am classes) are not included. Where there is a tie, overall wins take precedence. Where there is still a tie, average grid size for a driver's wins determines the order.

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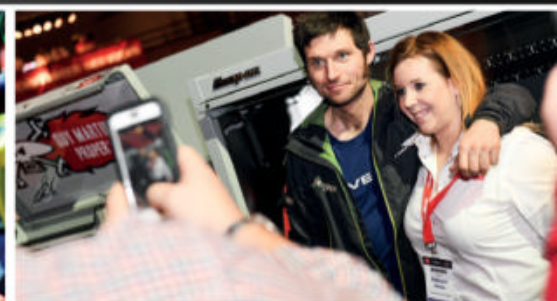
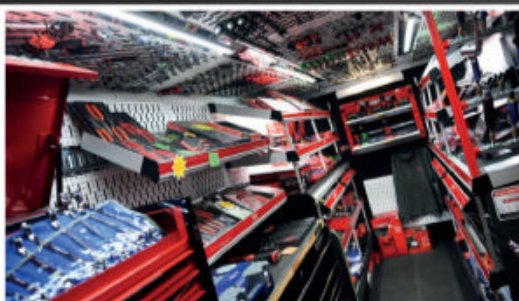


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OPINION TOM DAVIS

ADAPTING TO THE CHANGING TIMES

Castle Combe's sales and marketing director admits 2020 has been a struggle in the wake of COVID-19, but it will overcome this challenge

It wasn't an easy task organising race meetings pre-COVID, and to add in so many extra guidelines and rules in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Castle Combe Circuit's Racing Club has been absolutely outstanding – Steve Weston, Richard Beard, Ken Davies, Jo Lewkowicz and all the hundreds of other people that are involved. I also want to thank the Strawford and Marshallsay families as the owners for all their support during a difficult time.

I think Motorsport UK has also done all it can to help. It's supported us with PPE and provided a lot of guidance so far. Governing bodies have been put under an extraordinary amount of pressure this year, and I believe they've done the best they can in the circumstances.

Like all companies, here at Castle Combe Circuit we've had to significantly change some of our day-to-day operations, and

“Needless to say, we're doing everything we can and will always be here for motorsport fans”

unfortunately take away some of the services and qualities that we have been renowned for. Qualities such as friendly, open paddocks and a close community feel have had to temporarily take a back seat.

The most difficult part has been to shift our outlook and tell our loyal customers that things are a lot stricter at the moment. We currently have about a half-dozen people working in the office full time, and the main concern is that if one of them was to fall ill, it's not just the impact of closing the office, it's the impact of potentially having to close the entire venue. This has been the toughest part – we are a very, very small, family-owned business,



This weekend's Autumn Classic will be held across two days for first time



and we do not have the infrastructure that other venues do.

It can be hard for outsiders to fully understand the difficulties that companies face at this time, but the truth is we have staff that have only very recently returned from furlough, meaning we're still fighting to play catch-up. While the vast majority have been extremely supportive and understanding, others don't quite see this side of things.

We know that the winter months will be quiet so we're now making projections about what we can do and how we can ride through those months. Things such as reducing our advertising and marketing budgets until the season kicks off once again, for example.

To top things off, 2020 was the venue's 70th birthday, with big celebrations planned for this anniversary that have sadly since been cancelled. It's amazing just how much of the day-to-day dynamic COVID-19 has affected for every single person.

However, Castle Combe Circuit is very regionalised, which has certainly been one of our strong points recently. Loyal locals can come here on a Friday evening and then be home again on Saturday night. And in these circumstances at the moment that's brilliant for a lot of people; it works really well.

Racing is governed, licensed and permitted by Motorsport UK, and as long as it's confident and the government is confident in what they're doing, we will run the racing as long as we're allowed to. Spectators are another aspect. Yes, it's great to have the crowds, we need them financially and they want to come, but at the moment we've sadly had to concentrate our efforts on the racing itself.

The entries for this weekend's Autumn Classic historic race meeting – which is a two-day event for the first time – are brilliant. There are some absolutely amazing cars! The GT Sports Car Cup has 42 entrants – you can't get any more on the grid – and there's two days' worth of Mini racing too. There were one or two grids that drifted off, I think because they couldn't get the numbers, but the uptake on everything else has been absolutely brilliant.

We're quite a traditional place and I think that works in some ways. In other ways, however, it would be nice to have the Hollywood sheen of some other circuits. I have to keep reminding myself that if this were the case, we wouldn't be who we are though. Everyone here has had to pull together and I think that's been the thing I'll remember the most from 2020.

It's our 71st anniversary year next year, meaning our business has certainly weathered other big issues in its lifetime, from noise complaints to recessions and everything in between.

Needless to say, we're doing everything we can and will always be here for motorsport fans, but the most important thing right now is to 'bear with us' as we continue to adapt to the ever-changing situation we find ourselves in. ■



CASTLE COMBE HOT HATCH CHALLENGE

The Wiltshire circuit's newest series has only been going for four years, but has already become a mainstay of the racing club

BY STEFAN MACKLEY

Castle Combe's newest series – the Hot Hatch Challenge – has grown to become the circuit's most popular category since it was introduced in 2017.

The emphasis is on cost-effective and affordable racing, which has been embraced by competitors as grids have continued to grow year-on-year. And despite the COVID-19 pandemic,

the field of 2020 has been consistently around the 30-car mark.

Eight 20-minute races have been held at four meetings, with a plethora of cars competing across six classes. Shaun Goverd has dominated Class C in his Peugeot 106, taking seven wins, and believes it's one of the most affordable ways to go racing.

"It is probably the cheapest

to get into," says Goverd, who estimates that a full season when starting out costs around £10,000.

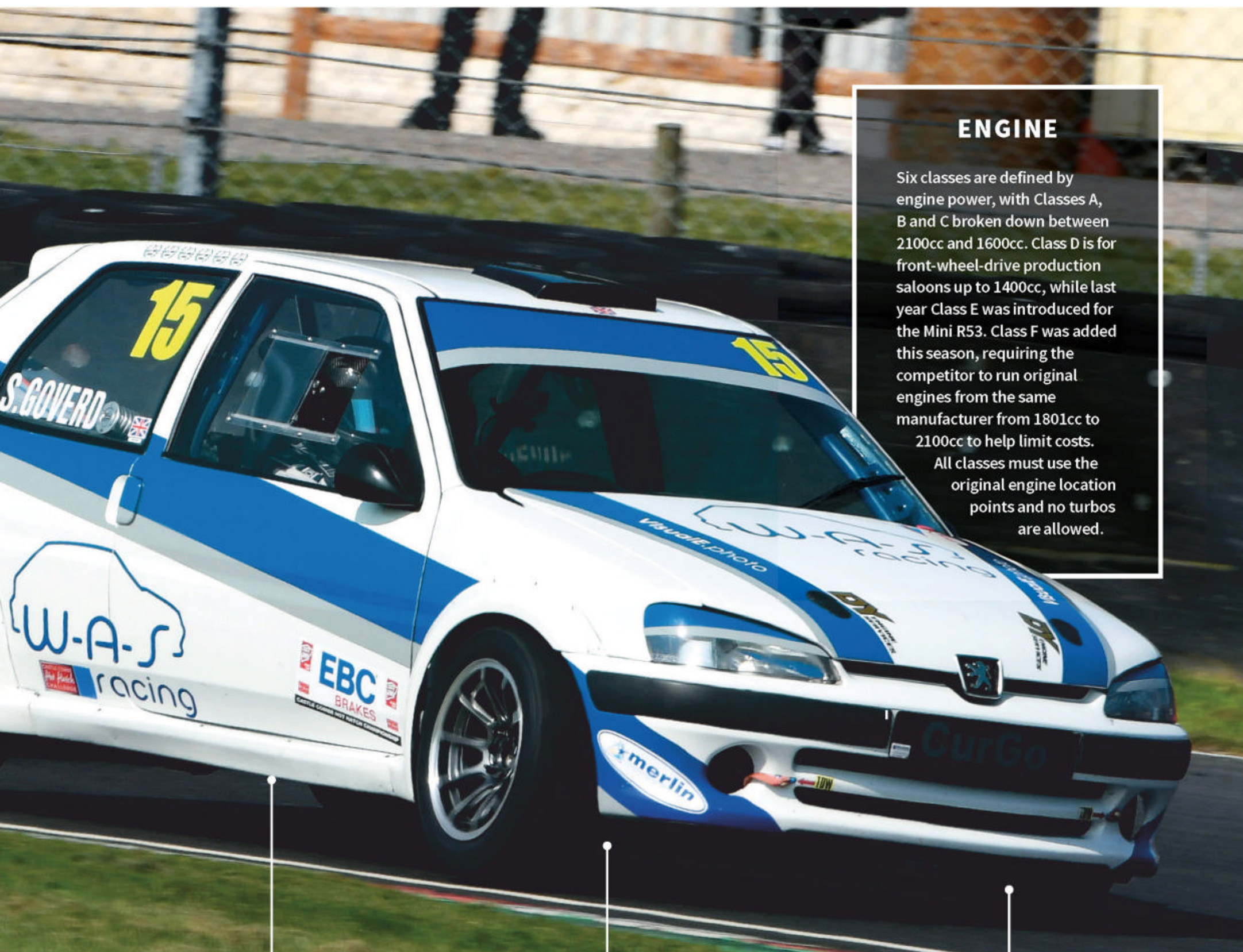
"You could start as low as you wanted and then obviously things do get carried away, but it's all down to budget. Everybody has got a different budget and it was just easy for me to get started.

"The racing is close and you can trust a lot of the

drivers out there," adds Goverd, who joined the series in 2018. "They're not going to do anything silly because they know how much money goes into getting these cars out on the track and if you bend it or crash it, it costs a lot to put them back out again.

"If you like your driving and you get the thrill out of driving fast, then I can't see any substitute for it."

JONES



ENGINE

Six classes are defined by engine power, with Classes A, B and C broken down between 2100cc and 1600cc. Class D is for front-wheel-drive production saloons up to 1400cc, while last year Class E was introduced for the Mini R53. Class F was added this season, requiring the competitor to run original engines from the same manufacturer from 1801cc to 2100cc to help limit costs.

All classes must use the original engine location points and no turbos are allowed.

CHASSIS

A huge range of cars can compete in the series, including Vauxhall Astras, Corsas and Novas, Ford Pumas and Fiestas, Renault Clios, Honda Integras, Peugeot 106s, 205s and 206s, MG ZRs, Citroen Saxos, Fiat Puntos, VW Lupos and Suzuki Swifts to name just a few!

With minimal work allowed on the silhouette of the car and the variety of different models, it means the characteristic of each chassis can prove crucial in such a competitive series.

"You've got the Peugeot 106, which is a nice, easy handling car, the Honda that's apparently a good handling car, easy to tune, and the Clios as well," says Goverd. "They're all cars that are easy to work on and easy to get bits for as well."

SUSPENSION

There is some scope to tune the suspension, as Goverd explains.

"All the suspension, like the turrets and struts where they sit, all have to stay the same [to the silhouette], so you can't change where they bolt on," he says. "But you can spend a lot of money on coilover springs, shocks... there is a lot you can do."

The fitting of an additional, or uprated, front and/or rear anti-roll bar is permitted, and uprated or Poly-type replacement bushes may be fitted as well.

TYRES/BRAKES

Competitors are limited to using only Motorsport UK approved 1A, 1B and 1C tyres to help limit costs.

No alteration to the tyre from the manufacturer's specification is permitted, so recutting, regrooving or any other modification to the tread pattern is not permitted.

Goverd, who uses Yokohama AO50s, says: "It's got lots of grip and it just lasts quite a long time – it's a good tyre, an all-round tyre."

Brakes are allowed to be changed and even anti-lock can be added to the car.

THE KEY RACING MOMENTS FROM COMBE'S 70 YEARS

From wins for Moss and Hawthorn to a 1994 Tyrrell smashing the lap record, there have been plenty of memorable occasions in the circuit's long history

BY MARCUS PYE

Moss was among the stars to race at Combe in the early days, along with Hawthorn and Collins



CASTLE COMBE ARCHIVE

EARLY STARS SHINE ON NEW AIRFIELD TRACK

Castle Combe was England's most westerly circuit when the Bristol Motor Cycle & Light Car Club organised its first race meeting on the disused airfield, for cars and motorcycles, behind closed doors on 8 July 1950 – a month before Gregor Grant published the first issue of Autosport. Although Davidstow in Cornwall hosted events from 1952-55, Combe endured, through various hiatuses, to be the popular venue it is today.

Early stars included Stirling Moss, Peter Collins, Mike Hawthorn – who won twice on his debut in 1951, driving Rileys, and would be Formula 1 world champion with Ferrari inside seven years – and Ken Wharton.

Moss was ejected from his Cooper 500 in October 1953, having clipped Tony Rolt's F2 Connaught at Quarry. Wharton shattered the outright lap record that day in a shrill BRM V16, leaving it at 1m13.6s (89mph). Some 20,000 spectators witnessed it, underlining enthusiasts' thirst for racing and the fledgling venue.



CASTLE COMBE ARCHIVE



ABECASSIS WINS REDEX TROPHY THRILLER

Sportscar racing was on a par with single-seater competition at Castle Combe in the 1950s. Aston Martin's future Le Mans winner Roy Salvadori was the standout of the former genre, driving Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica, Maserati A6GCS, Jaguar C-type and DB3S with gusto. But Squadron Leader George Abecassis – partner with John Heath in Hersham and Walton Motors, whose HWM marque competed in sportscar and F2 races – won the RedeX Trophy international race in October 1955 after Salvadori's Aston broke.

Driving an HWM-Jaguar, Abecassis (left) beat 1950 Le Mans victor Louis Rosier in a Ferrari 750 Monza – by a fifth of a second in a photo finish with the Frenchman! Noel Cunningham-Reid in another HWM finished third.

Abecassis's grandson Jonathan is a regular competitor at the Autumn Classic. Last October he won the FiSCar Intermarque race at the wheel of his left-hand-drive Austin-Healey 100/4.

GRIFFITHS FORMULA SPAWNS BIRTH OF HSCC IN 1966

Concerned that obsolete sports-racing cars were being sold inexpensively and exported from Great Britain, eminent motorsport photographer Guy Griffiths addressed the situation positively, leaving a legacy for enthusiasts to savour to this day.

His 'Griffiths Formula' initiative was a mechanism designed to give owners of some fantastic cars, which were little more than a decade old, the opportunity to compete and reason to keep them.

The inaugural race at Castle Combe in May 1966 – won by Neil Corner in his ex-works/Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type XKD 504 (right), from Chris Warwick Drake (Lotus-Bristol X) and John Le Sage (Aston Martin DB3S) – laid the Historic Sports Car Club's foundation stone.

The event was run jointly by the Frazer Nash and Porsche Clubs, parts of the AFN Ltd 'family' in Isleworth, which owned the circuit. That important link is why the HSCC's logo still features an iconic Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica.



CASTLE COMBE ARCHIVE



FORMULA FORD'S ROOTS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AT COMBE

Castle Combe hosted the second Formula Ford race in July 1967, won by Dan Hawkes in a Lotus 51. The British Racing and Sports Car Club South Western centre – with Howard Strawford now at its helm – launched a championship in 1969, also taking in rounds at Llandow in South Wales.

FF1600 has consistently provided some of the greatest racing at the Chippenham venue, with four-time champions Bob Higgins (Martlets, Royale RP29A and Reynard 91FF) and Gavin Wills (Van Diemens and Swift) and title hat-trick winners Kevin Mills and Josh Fisher its leading alumni.

Higgins still competes (left) alongside his two lads, Adam twice champion himself, taking the family haul to six. That's a total matched by the Fishers, Josh's late father Brian having snared three Combe Special GT championships in Shrike P16 and Skoda 130RS machinery.

Mills's successful team has invariably been among the frontrunners with subsequent generations of drivers and continues to gun for more.

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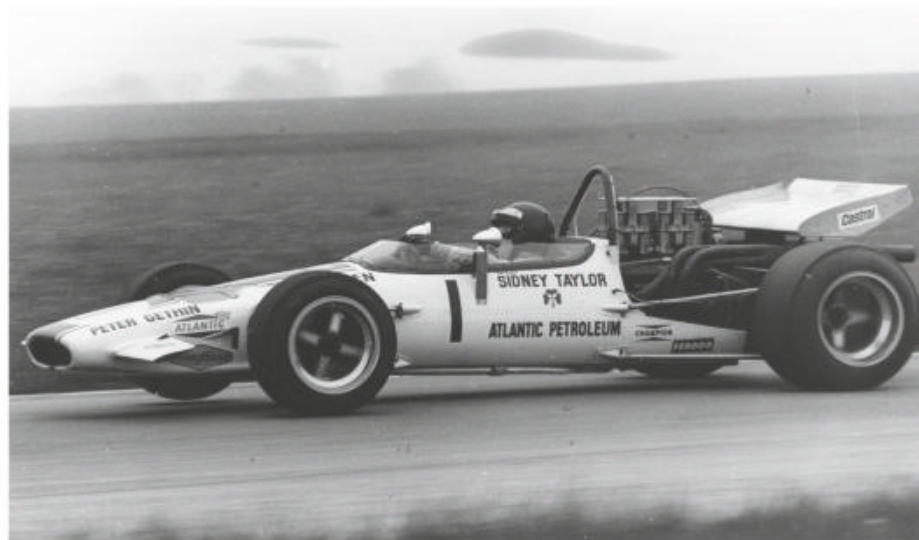
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THUNDEROUS FORMULA 5000s PLUNDER THE LAP RECORD

Formula 5000 – the American V8 stock block-engined category whose speeds mirrored F1's, albeit at a fraction of the running cost – visited Castle Combe only twice, in May 1970 and 1971, before the arrival of the most sophisticated chassis brought greater speeds.

McLaren M10Bs finished 1-2-3-4 in the pioneering race, defending champion Peter Gethin winning in Sid Taylor's Atlantic Petroleum car (right) from Howden Ganley, Mike Walker and New Zealander Graham McRae, who went on to design some of the greatest cars in the class's history. Gethin and Ganley shared the outright lap record at 56.6s (117.03mph).

Australian Frank Gardner was victorious in 1971 in a Lola T192 – the futuristic F2 T242-based T300 not yet ready – from Gethin and Ganley in McLaren M18s and Ray Allen (winner of Brands Hatch's inaugural FF race in 1967) in an M10B. Gethin qualified on pole with a 56.2s shot, but the race was wet.



CASTLECOMBEARCHIVE



CASTLECOMBEARCHIVE

NIGEL GREENSALL'S ULTIMATE LAP RECORD

European Aviation boss Paul Stoddart's passenger ride in Nigel Greensall's Prosport 3000 at Silverstone landed his chauffeur a EuroBOSS seat for 1997 in one of the Australian's ex-Mark Blundell/Ukyo Katayama 1994 F1 Tyrrell 022s powered by a 3.5-litre 650bhp Judd V10 engine.

"Free practice at Combe was in pouring rain," recalls Greensall, who set a 50.59s (130.93mph) time. "It was fantastic slithering round inside the record. Qualifying was on a drying track, so my first lap on slicks was the race's standing start, which reset the record officially.

"We were pulling about 175mph up Avon Rise – with spikes of wheelspin in sixth gear – and lowered the time progressively until the gearbox started to break up. I did the last four or five laps in fifth, with everything crossed, but we made it to the chequered flag.

"It's amazing how many people remember that day. I'd love a crack at the current track's record but love racing there, in anything."

LAP RECORDS FALL AGAIN IN POST-CHICANES ERA

Rising speeds were countered by the introduction of two infield deviations from the old aerodrome perimeter track over the winter of 1998-99. While not universally popular, the Esses (between Quarry and Old Paddock corners) and Bobbies (named for circuit owner Howard Strawford's newly departed lieutenant Bob Davies) on the return from Tower to Camp were seen to improve safety and spice up racing by adding two overtaking zones.

Mike Millard (Prosport LM3000) logged the first lap record at 1m05.61s (101.50mph), taking average speeds back to 1965 levels, when Chris Summers (Lotus-Chevrolet 24) broke the 100mph barrier.

The quickest cars racing regularly in 1999 were resident Special GT series contenders and double champion Bob Light progressively reduced it to 1m03.389s in his 6.2-litre Ultima-derived B6 Sport. The closest to Dan Clarke's 2005 F3 best of 59.387s (112.14mph) remains Tony Sinclair's 1m00.649s (109.81mph) in his self-designed and built Jade-Nissan 2 sportscar in 2006.



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FORMULA 3 RETURNS AFTER 30-YEAR HIATUS

In Castle Combe's early years, 500cc Formula 3 was a staple of meetings, and hugely popular since the motorcycle-engined movement is credited as having been propagated in nearby Bristol. The subsequent 1000cc screamers visited in the 1960s but, when two-litre British F3 arrived in 2001 for what would be a five-season run alongside British GT, it broke a 30-year lull.

Jochen Mass (Brabham BT35) had won the 1971 Shell Super Oil series round from future F1 world champion Jody Scheckter (Merlyn Mk21) and Roger Williamson (March 713M) in its first of three 1600cc seasons.

Current F1 TV pundit Anthony Davidson – who pushed the lap record back through the one-minute barrier in 2001 – South African sometime F1 pace car driver Alan van der Merwe, Danny Watts and Brazilian Alvaro Parente won twice each. Watts' famous 2004 victory (left) marked a breakthrough for the Lola Dome chassis amid a sea of Italian Dallaras.



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AUTUMN CLASSIC RETROSPECTIVE REFLECTS THE PAST

Eight historic races peppered throughout the 2012 Grand Finals meeting proved popular and paved the way for the first dedicated Autumn Classic in 2013. With the accent initially on marque contests, top gun to date is recent round-the-world aviator Steve Boulton Brooks, who won five races from 2015-17 in his ex-Kangaroo Stable Aston Martin DB3S.

Former hillclimb ace David Grace has topped Austin-Healey fields four times, while Blakeney Motorsport trio Patrick Blakeney-Edwards, Martin Hunt and American Fred Wakeman has the best collective record across pre-war Frazer-Nashes and a Jaguar E-type.

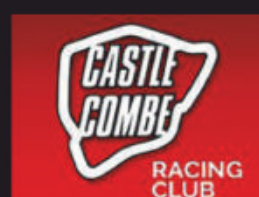
Spindly 500cc F3 cars from the dawn of the circuit and the subsequent Formula Junior epoch have regularly been showcased.

Fresh from finishing 10th at Le Mans last month 2018 FJ victor Richard Bradley is back in his Brabham BT2 this time. Another welcome returnee is the GT & Sports Car Cup Pre-'66 enduro, with a wonderful grid.



READ

THE STORY BEHIND ENGLAND'S ONLY SINGLE-VENUE RACING CLUB



Another of the key moments in the history of the Wiltshire circuit was the formation of the Castle Combe Racing Club ahead of the 2006 season.

A variety of clubs had stints organising events at Combe – initially it was the Bristol Motor Cycle & Light Car Club, and for several decades the British Racing and Sports Car Club's South Western Centre was in charge. But circuit owner and centre chairman Howard Strawford decided he wanted more freedom and instigated the creation of the CCRC.

"He sought a little more autonomy – they were more or less confined to a staple diet of BRSCC championships, and they had some great championships, but Howard sought more flexibility to have races of other types and from

other clubs," explains CCRC chairman Ken Davies. "The club flourished and two years after that, in 2008, the Castle Combe Racing Trust was formed as an offshoot – it was born out of some of the surpluses from the early days of racing."

The Trust supports good causes at the circuit, including new medical equipment and facilities for marshals.

After its formation, the CCRC continued to operate Combe's long-running Formula Ford 1600, GT and Saloon categories and then launched a Hot Hatch series for 2017. This has proved very successful, attracting grids of more than 30 cars this year, despite the difficulties posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

"It's been a popular grassroots series that's very down-to-earth cost-wise and

it's a very competitive series," says Davies, who adds that the club is continually evolving its race offering to look at ways of attracting new competitors.

"One of the secrets to its success is that it's not a championship so people can do ad hoc races. That's a concept

"Howard Strawford sought the flexibility to have races of other types and from other clubs"

the Classic Sports Car Club have used to very good effect."

While that has been a success, and the club was among the first to return to action after the COVID-19 suspension, Davies admits being a single-venue club has positives and negatives.

"We're bolted to a circuit so when we started racing a couple of months ago, there were clubs without a circuit, struggling to get venues," he says. "We had an instant solution.

"But the circuit is licenced for 10 race meetings a year and motorcycles are incredibly popular, so North Gloucestershire Motorcycle Club have at least one weekend. We usually end up with eight race days, but we could probably, as a club, handle more than that."

This season was also due to feature commemorations of 25 years of the Saloons and 45 for the GT championship, but those anniversaries are now set to be marked next year instead as the club honours its history as well as looks to the future.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



READ



CASTLE COMBE'S RECORD BREAKER

Gary Prebble has the most outright wins at the Wiltshire circuit, and shows no signs of slowing down

BY STEFAN MACKLEY

Castle Combe Circuit is celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2020, and the venue's most successful driver isn't far behind that same number in terms of victories — and he's spent far less than 70 years racing. Even before the truncated current season got under way late due to the coronavirus pandemic, Gary Prebble was far and away the Wiltshire venue's 'winningest' driver.

And in many ways Prebble has been making up for lost time. He's taken seven outright wins at Combe in the space of just three months to move his total tally at the venue to 67, continuing his

undisputed dominance at the circuit, and a further four victories further afield have thrust himself to the top of Autosport's National Driver Rankings (see page 4).

To put Prebble's achievements into context, Bob Light sits second in the Combe all-time-winners list on 36 — only just over half Prebble's total. And what makes Prebble's achievements even more impressive is they have come in a number of series and behind the wheel of a variety of cars, beginning in 1990.

He got the itch to race from watching his dad, Special Saloon ace Brian Prebble, in action. "The first car that I ever drove

was dad's spaceframe [1.4-litre] Maguire Hillman Imp," he says. "I'd never had a trackday in my life, never driven on a race circuit before, and it was a case of sink or swim and he threw me straight out in qualifying."

Class wins soon followed, but any prospect of taking more success with the Imp was ended — almost along with Prebble — in a huge accident in 1993 at Camp Corner. "If you look at the pictures of the car you're surprised anyone even survived it," he says. "I had a lot of aches and pains for a long time. How, I don't know to this day, but I actually managed



Still in use today: Prebble's successful SEAT Leon Cupra

JONES



Prebble took 26 outright wins aboard his Rover 220 Coupe

GARY PREBBLE'S OUTRIGHT WINS

CAR	WINS
Rover 220 Coupe	26 (2000-06, Saloons)
Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 7 RS	14 (2007-14, Saloons/Sports & GT/other)
SEAT Leon Cupra	22 (2014-20, Saloons)
Peugeot 205GTI	3 (2017-19, Hot Hatch/other)
Honda Civic	2 (2020, Hot Hatch)

CASTLE COMBE HONOURS

CHAMPIONSHIPS	TITLE-WINNING YEARS
Saloon Car - Overall champion	2002
Saloon Car - Class A champion	2001, '04, '06, '15, '17, '19
Sports and GT - Overall champion	2012, '14

“If you look at pictures of the car you’re surprised anyone even survived the crash”

to walk out of there with no broken bones, a lot of sore joints and a lot of bruising.”

Undeterred by his accident, Prebble soon returned at the wheel of a Rover 220 Coupe, which had previously been used by Tony Pond as a test car for the one-make Rover Tomcat series. Six more years of class wins followed but it wasn’t until 1 April 2000, almost a decade since he’d first raced at the circuit, that he took his maiden outright triumph. “I just remember how ecstatic I was and I think I was literally screaming in my helmet for the entire cooling-down lap – I think you always remember your first race win,” says Prebble.

The floodgates had finally opened and he went on to claim another 25 wins in the Rover by the end of 2006, by which time he had also won the circuit’s Saloon Car Championship outright in 2002, as well as Class A honours in 2001, 2004 and 2006.

By now four-wheel-drive cars had begun to change the complexion of Class A, and it wasn’t long before Prebble made the switch to a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 7 RS formerly owned by Rob Ballard. It may have been a different machine, but the end result often proved to be the same as Prebble notched up 14 wins aboard the Lancer in the Saloons as well as the Sports and GT

Championship, claiming the outright title for the latter series in 2012 and 2014.

With the Lancer E7 RS proving too expensive to maintain, Prebble switched to the SEAT Leon Cupra that he still uses today, and which is another former Ballard car. “We put it on pole and actually won the race from the first time ever sitting in the car,” says Prebble. “I think there are some pictures somewhere when I got out of the car and sort of leapfrogged and jumped into Rob and we ended up having a big embracing moment. It was quite something else, I’ll always remember that race.”

At the wheel of the Leon Cupra he has taken 22 outright wins at the track so far – including five this year – as well as further Class A spoils in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

Despite having lived in Southampton his whole life, Prebble considers Combe to be his local circuit, and its family atmosphere ►

“THE TRACK IS MY CANVAS, THE CAR IS MY BRUSH”

GRAHAM HILL



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Gary and his brother Adam have battled each other in the Saloons Championship this season



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“I want to try and put a record there that makes it hard for anyone else to beat”

and close racing are what attracts him back year after year. “It’s just a fantastic circuit, the people there are so friendly,” he says. “It’s a great circuit to actually race at. They are a little bit more relaxed there. The circuit’s not so corporately run if you like, it’s like you’re a big family.

“What I love about Combe is it’s just the sheer competitiveness of what you’re doing — you’ve got to drive the wheels off the car to stand any chance of winning the race. Combe doesn’t take any prisoners. There’s no big massive crash barriers or gravel traps. If you come off the circuit you’re in the wall and I kind of guess that adds to the excitement of driving there to be honest. It’s one of those circuits that I think sorts the men out from the boys.”

As well as Saloons, Prebble has also been taking part in Combe’s newest series, the Hot Hatch Challenge. He took three wins in a Peugeot 205 GTI last season before switching to a Honda Civic this term, adding another two victories at

the circuit to his impressive tally.

Prebble’s younger brother Adam has also been following his lead and has created a “brotherly rivalry”, as Gary admits. The younger sibling claimed two outright wins of his own in Saloons this year at the wheel of a Vauxhall Astra, taking his total score to 16. Add in father Brian’s seven victories and the Prebble dynasty has 90 wins at Combe and shows every indication of adding more to that next year.

Stirling Moss, Nigel Mansell, Ayrton Senna and David Coulthard all won races at Combe, but it’s Gary Prebble who continues to rewrite the circuit’s record books. And three decades since he first started racing and 20 years since his first outright victory, he is showing no signs of slowing down.

“I think motor racing is one of those games that you just keep doing for as long as you’re physically and financially able to do it,” adds Prebble. “My dad gave the game up when it started scaring him and I think that’s when he sort of said



All smiles: Prebble has won 67 times

EDPPHOTOS

to me, ‘The minute you start not enjoying it, or it’s frightening you, is the time to hang up your overalls’. Until such time I’m just carrying on.

“My goals really are just to keep doing what I’m doing. I love the circuit, the people there are so friendly, and I want to try and put a record there that makes it hard for anyone else to beat. The more wins that I can get the bigger the target, and that’s what I intend to do.” ■

Honda Civic has raced in the Hot Hatch Series



READ



Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 7 was too expensive to run

JONES

THE RESURRECTION OF A FAMOUS LE MANS SHAPE

Seemingly lost forever, the Bristol 450 coupe design is racing again thanks to one of historic racing's feel-good projects

BY KEVIN TURNER





Mitchell's outing at Silverstone was the first 450 coupe race appearance for 66 years

D

istinctive. That's probably the best word to describe the Bristol Type 450, a shape that had been lost to motorsport

but has now been 'rediscovered'.

The series of Bristol endurance racers scored successes in the mid-1950s, but arguably the most famous of the line could only be seen in photographs until French Bristol Owners' Club member Olivier Bore commissioned Mitchell Motors to build a remarkable recreation in 2017. The project was completed this year, and the coupe design hit the race track in the Fifties Sports Car Racing Club encounter at Silverstone in August. Given that the originals never competed outside of France, it was the design's first race on home soil.

"It was wonderful," says project leader and driver Andrew Mitchell. "It could not have been better. It was lovely to have it in a pack of cars and everyone loved it. I've never had so much praise! Wherever I go someone wants to talk about it. It's been so welcomed."

That's perhaps unsurprising given the Bristol almost has a cult status with Le Mans aficionados. The original 450 coupes first appeared in 1953, but both cars retired early from the 24 Hours following nasty incidents. A class-winning fifth overall at the Reims 12 Hours and some speed records demonstrated the design's promise and preceded an expanded three-car effort the following season.

The 1954 Le Mans is probably best remembered for the impressive debut of the Jaguar D-type – or Jose Froilan Gonzalez's heroic wet-weather efforts in the monstrous Ferrari 375 Plus he shared with Maurice Trintignant to defeat the

“Everyone loved it. Wherever I go someone wants to talk about it. It's been so welcomed”

Big Cats – but the Bristols made quite an impression too. Revised bodywork, introduced during 1953, made the cars less offensive to the eye and they dominated the two-litre category, finishing 1-2-3 in seventh, eighth and ninth overall. They were also recorded at 150mph down the Mulsanne Straight. That was at a time when the fastest open cars, with much bigger engines, were managing around 170mph, underlining the aerodynamic efficiency of the coupe, created by the design team led by David Summers.

“The Bristol team was the only one to finish intact and their speed and ▶

Winning team together after 1954 Le Mans, with #33 sporting its front damage



reliability, as well as their pit control, was applauded by everyone,” reported *Motor Sport* magazine.

The three 450s then headed to Reims again, where they finished 2-3-4 in class, narrowly beaten by a Ferrari 500 Mondial.

“In 1953 they made a car that looked as though it was from a *Mad Max* movie but in 1954 the cars were better looking – though not perfect!” says Mitchell. “It’s a faithful recreation of the body and it’s got a shape people relate to and love to see. It’s a smiley sort of car.”

That didn’t stop Bristol slicing the roofs off for 1955. The team again took a class 1-2-3 at Le Mans, amazingly in the same overall spots as the year before. Bristol withdrew from motorsport following the Le Mans disaster and all but one of the cars, in open form, were scrapped.

That meant the coupe design seemed destined never to be seen again, until Mitchell’s team set to work. The original cars were based on reworked ERA G-type single-seater chassis, but “that would have made it expensive and virtually impossible”, reckons Mitchell, so a suitable Bristol chassis was found.

The donor chassis originally had a 2.2-litre version of the famous Bristol straight-six engine, but the 450 recreation has a period-correct two-litre unit.

Although the engine can be made to produce 180bhp – “if you really go



for it,” according to Mitchell – the 450’s powerplant gives around 130-135bhp, a little less than the figures quoted for the factory cars in period. “We’re not out to win, we’re out to go and have some fun, and to bring it home,” he adds.

A handful of original parts – including a cylinder head, steering wheel and rev counter – have been used, while Mitchell Motors created the bodywork from photographs. Despite the fact that it was the #35 Peter Wilson/Jim Mayers car that took Le Mans class honours in 1954, the recreation is based on the #33 Tommy Wisdom/Jack Fairman car that finished three laps further back in second – and with damage to the front end.

“Olivier likes Jack Fairman – he has some of his overalls and things – and just

decided to go for that,” explains Mitchell. “It’s our responsibility to make sure that, if we have an accident, it’s the front-left-hand corner that gets damage!”

Unfortunately, Mitchell did have an incident at Silverstone, but happily the Bristol escaped serious damage. After qualifying 22nd in the 25-car field, Mitchell had just made his mandatory pitstop in the race when a wheel failure put him out.

“The wheels were reproduced from pictures and we had a problem,” explains Mitchell. “There was a fracture so we ended up in the gravel and retiring.

“It’s all part of the learning curve. We don’t know what problems they had or what was done in period so we’re going through all this now. The wheels have now been modified and redone to be a lot



“It’s all part of the learning curve. We don’t know what problems they had in period”

stronger, but we’ve kept the original look.”

Mitchell, who has extensive historic racing experience in cars with similar engines – including AC Aces and a number of Bristol-powered specials – had been pleased with the Bristol’s performance before the off. The cars were renowned for their fine handling in the 1950s and the recreation has followed that.

“We were pretty quick in the corners, but lost out on the straights,” adds Mitchell. “And there’s a lot of straight at Silverstone National! She was quicker than I thought we were going to be.”

As well as the swiftly found remedy to the wheel problem, Mitchell has also done more work on the powerplant since Silverstone. “The engine has been back on the dyno to try to find a bit more power and torque from the exhaust system,” he says. “It’s an unusual system – pipes one and six join, two and five, and three and four, then there are three secondaries. It sounds like a Merlin Spitfire engine on the rolling road!”

Mitchell had planned to race his Lotus Elite in FISCAR this season, but that is having its engine rebuilt. The Bristol is nothing like as fast, but offers something different – to Mitchell and enthusiasts.

“It’s the only Bristol racing – there are loads of Bristol-engined cars out there, but this is the only one that has competed for years,” says Mitchell. “It’s nice for the Bristol Owners’ Club to have a car they can cheer on. I’m having a lot of fun.”

Happily, the car is already up and running again, with Mitchell planning to contest the FISCAR race at the Castle Combe Autumn Classic this Sunday (see right). Even better news is that he’s also hoping for some outings in 2021, including a display at the Le Mans Classic. That means there should be more opportunities to see that unusual – sorry, distinctive – shape in action. ■



GT & Sports Car Cup enduro is back after a year’s sabbatical

CASTLE COMBE’S AUTUMN CLASSIC PACKED WITH NOSTALGIA

Harking back to 8 July 1950, when 500cc Formula 3 raced at the venue’s inaugural meeting, the motorcycle-engined cars are again a major draw at this weekend’s Castle Combe Autumn Classic, a two-day bonanza celebrating the circuit’s 70th anniversary.

Cooper-Norton drivers dominated then, the battle between Stirling Moss and Peter Collins in the second heat going Moss’s way. Moss made a sluggish start in the final, however, leaving Collins to stave off first-heat victor ‘Curly’ Dryden.

Surbiton-built Coopers comprise eight of the 21 entries for Saturday’s race in which George Shackleton (MkXI) and Mike Fowler (MkV) start hot favourites. Machines representing 12 marques should take the rolling start, with Simon Frost (Martin) and Xavier Kingsland (Staride) in the mix.

Back after a year’s sabbatical, the GT & Sports Car Cup enduro pulls a mouth-watering array of pre-’66 GT cars into focus alongside earlier sports-racers. Previous winners Philip Walker/Miles Griffiths (Lotus 15) return, facing the similar car of Brazilian Bernardo Hartogs/Will Nuthall and recent Thruxton poleman Ben Adams’s zippy Lola Mk1 in the SP2 division.

Gary Pearson (Jaguar E-type) defends his 2018 crown, and is due to face British Touring Car racer Rory Butcher and Richard Kent in similar cars in GT4.

Marino Franchitti and Combe’s pre-chicanes outright lap record holder Nigel Greensall share earlier E-types in GT3, as does former BTCC racer John Clark with his teenaged Ginetta racing protegee Gordon Mutch. Six Austin-Healey 3000s, including the ex-Le Mans/John Chatham

‘DD300’ of Dutchman Christiaan van Lanschot/Jeremy Welch plus charismatic Bristol duo Chris Clarkson/David Smithies, head the opposition.

Also out on Saturday are a capacity field of

Formula Juniors, Pre-’66 Jaguars and the sensational ‘chain-gang’ Frazer-Nashes, which made a thrilling Autumn Classic debut last October. The Vintage Sports-Car Club Owner-Driver-Mechanic series provides Sunday’s Pre-War race, before FiSCar showcases the 1950s.

The Historic Racing Drivers Club’s triple-whammy (Coys Trophy saloons, Allstars and Classic Alfa Challenge) guarantee close racing, but perhaps not as tight as the Mini Miglias and Se7ens out both days to thrill members of 25 invited car clubs.

MARCUS PYE

“THE GT & SPORTS CAR CUP ENDURO PULLS A MOUTH- WATERING ARRAY OF PRE-’66 GT CARS INTO FOCUS”



FROM THE ARCHIVE

While traditional club racing has formed the backbone of Castle Combe's calendar for decades, the higher-profile British F3 and GT categories did visit

Wiltshire from 2001-05. On that last appearance, before tougher noise restrictions prevented a return, it was the Scuderia Ecosse Ferraris that were in control, taking a 1-2 in both races.

Andrew Kirkaldy and Nathan Kinch (above) won both contests in their GT2-spec Ferrari 360, and claimed that season's title too, ahead of the sister car of Tim Mullen and Chris

Niarchos. Behind the Ferrari is the Mosler MT900R that Steve Hyde shared with a certain Phil Keen, who was then a British GT rookie, and is still waiting for that elusive first crown.



JEP



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750 Motor Club

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Fifties Sports Car Racing Club

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