

F1'S RISING STARS Norris, Sainz and Russell

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

7 JANUARY 2021

Heirs to Hamilton's

F1 throne

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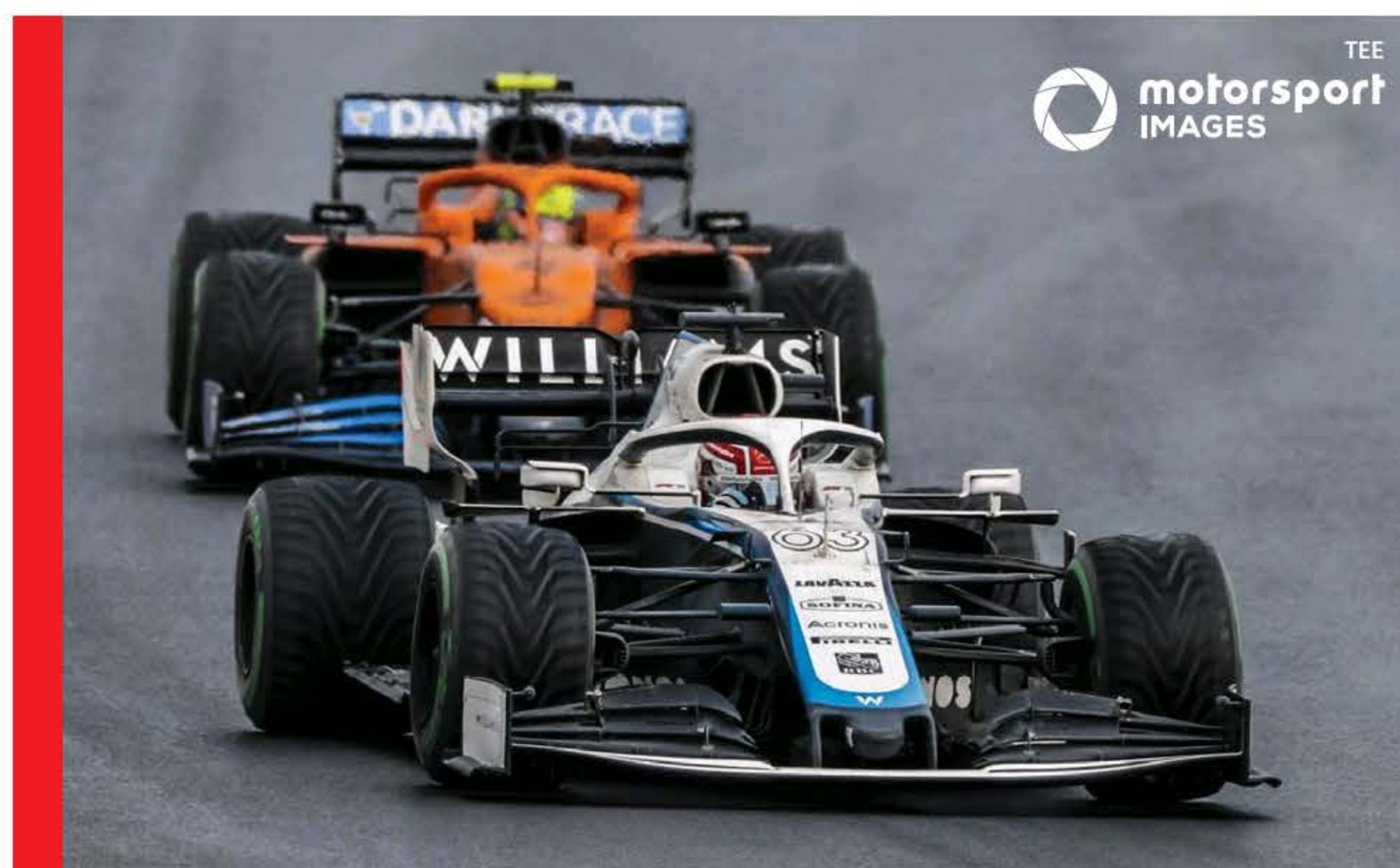
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The next drivers to step up and challenge Lewis Hamilton?

Who will end Lewis Hamilton's title run at the top of Formula 1? Max Verstappen is the most obvious candidate but, given the strength of Mercedes, the Red Bull star may not get the chance until the big rule changes arrive in 2022. By which time others could have emerged...

For our first issue of 2021, Luke Smith runs the rule over – and talks to – arguably the three best F1 drivers who have yet to take to the top step of the podium (see page 18). And who, for various reasons, could be well placed to become true forces over the next couple of campaigns.

George Russell (2014) and Lando Norris (2016) are winners of the (then) McLaren Autosport BRDC Award. Both won multiple titles on their way to F1 and both impressed in their first two years at the sport's pinnacle. Norris has generally had the more competitive car but, partly thanks to his superb Sakhir Grand Prix performance subbing for Hamilton, Russell could be the first to find himself in race-winning machinery.

Sainz's path to the top was perhaps more fraught and he has been around for longer, but there can be no doubt that the Spaniard has matured into one of F1's star performers over the past couple of years, and his move to Ferrari to join Charles Leclerc is fully deserved.

Joining them on the 2021 grid will be Mick Schumacher. Being the son of F1's other seven-time world champion brings its own pressure but, as he says in our F2 review (p26), he's already used to dealing with that.



Kevin Turner

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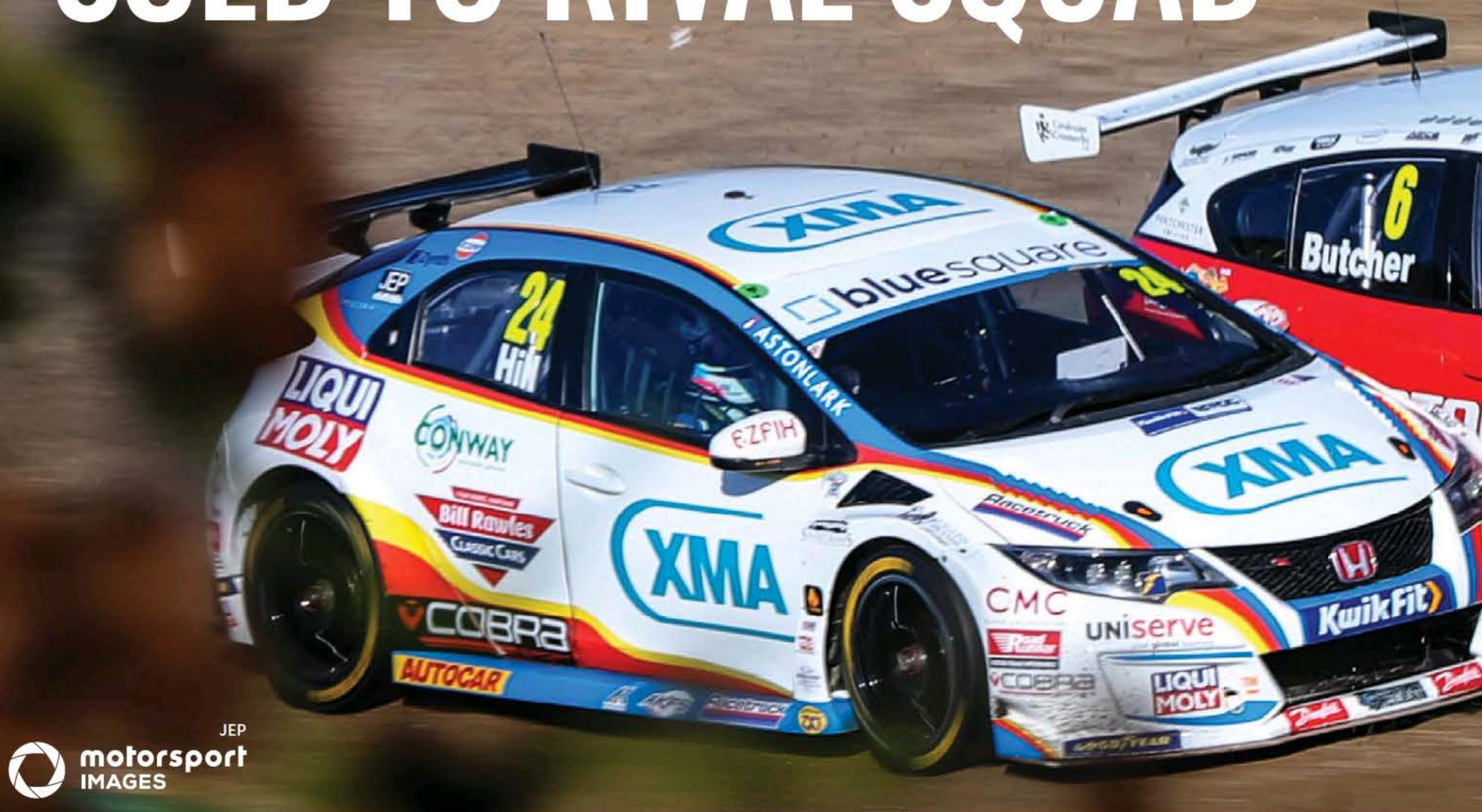


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MOTORBASE FORD TEAM SOLD TO RIVAL SQUAD



BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Leading British Touring Car Championship team Motorbase Performance has been taken over by new owners in what amounts to a merger between the squad and the rival AmD-run MB Motorsport operation.

Motorbase founder Dave Bartrum took his team into the BTCC in 2006, since when it has had an almost unbroken presence in the series, but has now sold the company to AmD boss Shaun Hollamby and Pete Osborne, father of BTCC racer Sam Osborne, who contested his second season in the championship last year at the wheel of an MB-run Honda Civic Type R.

It means that four Ford Focuses will be run from the Motorbase premises close to Brands Hatch in the Kent town of Wrotham, with two being entered under the Motorbase title and two as MB Motorsport, which is named after AmD commercial partner Mark Blundell. It also means the end of the BTCC life of the old-spec FK2 Civic, one of the most successful cars in series history.

Former racer Hollamby told Autosport that the acquisition of Motorbase represents a step up in his BTCC aspirations. "That is a dedicated workshop," he said. "AmD is all very well, but it's been a compromise to have a racing team among a garage workshop. At Motorbase we've got a dyno room, a gearbox room, a spray booth — we've got everything to do it. And it's on exactly the same site where I used to go to Sisley Karting when I was 13 or 14, and Johnny Herbert was working behind the counter!"

The new ownership plans to retain all the existing staff, which produced the new fourth-generation Focus for the 2020 season — it was regarded as one of the fastest cars in the BTCC. "The key thing is that

everyone who wanted to stay at Motorbase can stay, and so far that's 100% of them — full-time and part-time guys," said Hollamby. "It's Motorbase merging with AmD, and we're expanding to four cars."

The plan is for a testing programme to begin in late January or early February. "We're already moving ahead with plans and have a day on the shaker rig coming up," added Hollamby. "Engineer James Mundy, who's been at Motorbase for many years and helped design the car with Custom Cages, is an integral part. Whenever anyone has mentioned building cars, because of our experience building the Golf [the Volkswagen run by AmD in the early 2010s] I've realised you can spend a lot of money being not competitive. So by buying Motorbase we've reverse-engineered that, and we have the potential to build customer cars."

"Ford is a good brand — probably the biggest on the grid — and the hybrid thing [the system is introduced for 2022] is another part of why we went for this, because the Focus has been built with that in mind."

With Motorbase's 2020 team leader Rory Butcher linked heavily with replacing Tom Ingram at the Speedworks Toyota squad, it appears that Jake Hill — already confirmed as remaining in the AmD/MB stable for 2021 — will spearhead the Ford attack. Osborne Jr is a logical pick considering his father's role. Motorbase's two-time 2020 race winner Ollie Jackson already has an AmD history, while the other member of the Ford squad last season was Andy Neate — none of this trio have confirmed their 2021 programmes to date.

Logistics and property businessman Osborne Sr, who raced as a driver in TVR Tuscans, the Porsche Carrera Cup GB and GTs, and is friends with Hill's father Simon (another former racer), said: "In 2006 and 2007 we ran

QUEEN TELLS CHAMPION TO 'ARISE, SIR LEWIS'

FORMULA 1

Lewis Hamilton is now Sir Lewis Hamilton after receiving a knighthood in The Queen's New Year Honours list for his services to motorsport.

The recognition comes after his march to his seventh world championship title in 2020, when he surpassed Michael Schumacher to become F1's all-time wins record holder, as well as campaigning to improve diversity throughout the sport.

The honour comes 12 years after Hamilton was awarded an MBE following his first F1 title, and means he is the third F1 world champion to receive a knighthood following Sir Jack Brabham and Sir Jackie Stewart (below, with Hamilton). Other F1 figures to have been knighted include Williams founders Sir Frank Williams and Sir Patrick Head, and Sir Stirling Moss.

"Lewis is one of the very greatest racing drivers of all time and the most successful British sportsman of his era," said Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff. "The news shows that he is now receiving the recognition he has earned during a career of unparalleled success in motorsport."

In other good news for F1 knights, Sir Frank Williams was discharged from hospital just before Christmas after just over one week, and is set to continue his recovery from home.

"We're delighted to say that Sir Frank has been discharged from hospital and is now on the mend at home," a Williams statement read. "The Williams family would like to thank everyone for their support during this difficult time."

LUKE SMITH



Inset pic: Bartrum signs team over to Osborne (left) and Hollamby (right)



AmD Honda runs alongside (off track) Motorbase Ford. Now the teams have merged

our own team in Porsches but we were supported by Redline Racing to supply engineering expertise. I've known Jake since he was a nipper – he and Sam used to sit on my motorhome floor playing Lego!

"When we went with AmD, we got on really well with them. We felt at home and safe with Shaun that he wouldn't rip us off. He's looked after us and in business that's 90%, especially in this business where you're the guy handing the money over rather than collecting it. I've bought it for my family as a business because I enjoy it, and I've always said if you enjoy something you do all right at it. But my younger son [Jamie, who hopes to race in Mini Challenge this year] was taking the Michael and saying I'm trying to be like Lance Stroll's dad, and I told him to shut up!"

Bartrum said: "I've thoroughly enjoyed building this team from the ground up over the years that has seen Motorbase achieve tremendous success. I have a big birthday [his 60th] coming up next year and with that in mind, I think the time is right for Shaun and Pete to take over the reins and guide the team into a bright future. I wish the team all the best and good luck."

Elsewhere in the BTCC, it was confirmed just before Christmas that 2020 champion Ash Sutton will remain at the expanded three-car Laser Tools Racing Infiniti squad alongside Aiden Moffat and incomer Carl Boardley, as part of a liaison between LTR and Boardley's former squad Team Hard. BTC Racing has announced multiple race winner Josh Cook and Michael Crees as remaining in its line-up of Hondas. BTC's other driver from 2020, Tom Chilton, is heavily linked with a move to Ciceley Motorsport to partner Adam Morgan in the squad's new line-up of BMW 330i M Sports.

MARCUS SIMMONS



Hill scored six podiums in MB Honda in 2020, and will lead Ford team



Postponement looms for Australian GP F1 opener

FORMULA 1

The 2021 Formula 1 season-opening Australian Grand Prix is set to be postponed, Autosport learned before we went to press.

After its 2020 calendar underwent significant changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, F1 aimed to return to a more regular season in 2021 and announced a 23-race schedule in November. The Australian GP was scheduled for Melbourne on 21 March, 12 months after the 2020 edition was cancelled just hours before Friday practice was due to begin. But with Australia still enforcing strict travel restrictions, and amid global fears over the emergence of a new strain of COVID-19, doubts have been growing about the viability of the race.

A postponement could force a reshuffle of the races later in the year, and would mean that the Bahrain GP, scheduled for 28 March, becomes the 2021 season opener.

A spokesman for F1 told Autosport that the series “proved that we could return to racing safely and delivered what many thought was impossible in March. We have set out our 2021 calendar and look forward to the return of F1 in March this year.”

Construction work on Melbourne’s temporary Albert Park street circuit typically begins towards the end of January, but ticket sales are yet to begin for the race. Strict quarantine

rules have been in place in Australia since last March, forcing all arrivals in the country and those moving between states to spend two weeks in designated quarantine hotels.

That would have meant that all personnel attending the Australian GP would have had to arrive in the country almost three weeks before the race date, making it unviable for teams following pre-season testing, which would also have required rescheduling.

With Bahrain now set to become the F1 season opener for a third time – following 2006 and 2010 – it is possible that pre-season testing could be shifted from Barcelona to the Sakhir International Circuit to ease the logistical challenge facing teams.

With F1 having such a congested schedule beyond the summer break, any reshuffle would likely have to accommodate a rescheduled Australian race towards the end of the season. The only current vacant dates between the Belgian GP on 29 August and the season finale in Abu Dhabi on 5 December lie on 19 September, 17 October, 7 November and 21 November, leaving little room to slot Australia back in.

The emergence of a new strain of COVID-19 has led to soaring case numbers in the UK, where seven of F1’s 10 teams are based, and prompted a clampdown from many countries on flights to and from Great Britain.

LUKE SMITH

Albon switches to DTM attack

DTM

Red Bull has placed Alexander Albon in the DTM for 2021 after dropping him from its Formula 1 team in favour of Sergio Perez.

The exact details of Albon’s programme are yet to be revealed, including the team with which he will drive, but the 24-year-old will compete in DTM whenever his duties as Red Bull’s F1 reserve and test driver allow. An announcement regarding the driver with whom Albon will alternate the seat will be made at a later date.

Red Bull will also position its FIA Formula 3 race-winning young talent Liam Lawson in the DTM for the first year of its GT3 era. The Kiwi could potentially undertake a dual campaign in 2021 – he appeared in last month’s post-season Formula 2 test in Bahrain and has long been tipped to graduate to the category alongside fellow Red Bull Junior Juri Vips.

Red Bull has history in the DTM. It sponsored the works Audi of two-time champion Mattias Ekstrom for most of his 17-year stint in the series. Series chief Gerhard Berger, meanwhile, is a long-time friend of Red Bull motorsport chief Helmut Marko, whose Formula 3 team he drove for in 1983. “The DTM with a high-class field and GT3 sportscars is an interesting platform and a real challenge, both for successful race drivers like Alex Albon and for our Red Bull junior driver Liam Lawson,” said Marko.

The announcement is a major coup for the DTM, which has so far managed to secure five teams for its move to GT3 regulations. The latest to commit to the series is Team Rosberg, which powered Rene Rast to all three of his titles for Audi and will field two cars of a yet-to-be confirmed make in 2021-22.

RACHIT THUKRAL



John Hogan 1944-2021

OBITUARY

A hugely respected pioneer in Formula 1 sponsorship who was instrumental in brokering Ron Dennis's McLaren takeover, John Hogan has died of a COVID-related illness. He was 76.

Hogan was best known for his work with Philip Morris, overseeing deals with McLaren and Ferrari that led to world championship victories for Emerson Fittipaldi, James Hunt, Niki Lauda, Alain Prost, Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher. He was a key player in moving the goalposts and showing what could be done as Bernie Ecclestone expanded the series' horizons, and TV coverage became more important.

Australian by birth, Hogan moved to England for his education, and in the late 1960s he entered the advertising business. An association with Coca-Cola led to an early involvement with racing through modest backing for F3 drivers Hunt and Gerry Birrell. He then found support for the Rondel F2 team run by Dennis and Neil Trundle.

In 1973 he joined Philip Morris. The US company's Marlboro brand was already involved with BRM, and it was on Hogan's watch that it switched to



McLaren with Fittipaldi in 1974. When Fittipaldi made a shock move to his family team at the end of 1975, Hogan was instrumental in getting his old friend Hunt into McLaren.

In the late 1970s, Hogan brokered a deal for McLaren to join forces with Dennis's Project 4 team. The carbonfibre MP4/1 won the 1981 British Grand Prix in John Watson's hands, and the team became a major force once more. Hogan would oversee Marlboro's dealings with McLaren all the way through the Prost/Senna Honda era, while building up a parallel relationship with Ferrari.

Philip Morris parted ways with

McLaren at the end of 1996, and put its full focus on Maranello. That signalled the start of an unprecedented era of success with Schumacher.

Marlboro's racing involvement trickled down to the feeder categories, and the company gave many young drivers a helping hand.

Hogan left Philip Morris in 2002, and had a brief spell as sporting director of Jaguar Racing, but the team was in disarray and he soon left. He then worked as a consultant for current McLaren CEO Zak Brown's JMI marketing and sponsorship concern.

ADAM COOPER



Audi lynchpin Mies gets LMP debut

DAYTONA 24 HOURS

Two times a Nurburgring 24 Hours winner, Audi factory driver Christopher Mies has been at the top of the tree in GT3 racing for the better part of a decade. Now he is taking up a new challenge, when he races a prototype for the first time at this month's Daytona 24 Hours.

The German, who triumphed in the blue-riband enduro on

the 'Ring in 2015 and 2017 with Audi, has signed to race an ORECA-Gibson 07 LMP2 for the DragonSpeed squad, winner of the P2 class at the IMSA SportsCar Championship opener for the past two seasons.

Mies will share the car on 30-31 January with another GT3 regular, Mercedes works driver Fabian Schiller, along with 2020 Indy Pro 2000 runner up and ex-European single-seater racer

Devlin DeFrancesco (who will step up to race in Indy Lights this season), and Daytona stalwart Eric Lux.

The drive for 31-year-old Mies comes in the wake of Audi's announcement last month that it will be returning to the Le Mans 24 Hours to challenge for outright honours with a new LMDh prototype in 2023.

GARY WATKINS



Peterhansel takes early lead of Dakar Rally



DAKAR RALLY

Stephane Peterhansel led the Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia at the wheel of his X-raid Mini as we went to press, but as the third stage ended on Tuesday he was being rapidly chased down by the Toyota of Nasser Al-Attiyah.

It was 2020 winner Carlos Sainz Sr who laid down the marker in the opening stage from Jeddah to Bisha, beating team-mate Peterhansel by 25 seconds to establish an early X-raid Mini 1-2. But after conceding ground in stage two due to a turbo issue, the Spaniard lost another 30 minutes in the following test with navigational errors and a puncture. This has allowed 13-time

winner Peterhansel and Al-Attiyah to establish a two-way showdown at the front, with the remainder of the field nearly half an hour behind.

It wasn't a smooth start for three-time champion Al-Attiyah, who ceded 12 minutes to his main rivals in the first stage, but back-to-back victories over the following two days have allowed him to close the gap to just over five minutes to an ultra-consistent Peterhansel. Behind the leading duo, Mathieu Serradori holds third position in the lead Century entry, with Sainz slipping to fourth after his latest setback.

Sebastien Loeb's hopes of a maiden Dakar crown at his fifth attempt suffered a major blow on the first full day of running

with a series of issues on the new Prodrive-built Bahrain Raid Xtreme BRX1, but the nine-time World Rally champion has since recovered to sixth. Nani Roma sits 11th in the sister car.

Several leading contenders remain out of place after stage three, with 2009 winner Giniel de Villiers most notably running well down the order in one of the four factory Toyotas. None of the X-raid 4x4 drivers feature at the sharp end either, allowing Serradori, Jakub Przygonski (Overdrive Toyota), Yasir Seaidan (Century), Khalid Al Qassimi (Abu Dhabi Racing Peugeot) and Martin Prokop (Benzina Ford) to provisionally secure places in the top 10.

RACHIT THUKRAL

British GT teams join Rossi in sparse entry list

GULF 12 HOURS

Four British GT teams feature in a reduced 12-car entry for this weekend's Gulf 12 Hours in Bahrain, the first international endurance race of 2021.

Nine GT3 cars and three GT4s will line up for the race, which has never been held outside the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi since its inception in 2012.

MotoGP legend Valentino Rossi heads the entry list for his second attempt at the race. Armed with a Ferrari 488 GT3 by four-time event winner Kessel Racing, he's again joined

by half-brother Luca Marini and Alessio Salucci.

Of the British GT teams, the 2 Seas McLaren squad partially owned by Bahraini royal Isa Al Khalifa will field two 720S GT3s entered in the Pro class. Al Khalifa will share one with factory driver Ben Barnicoat

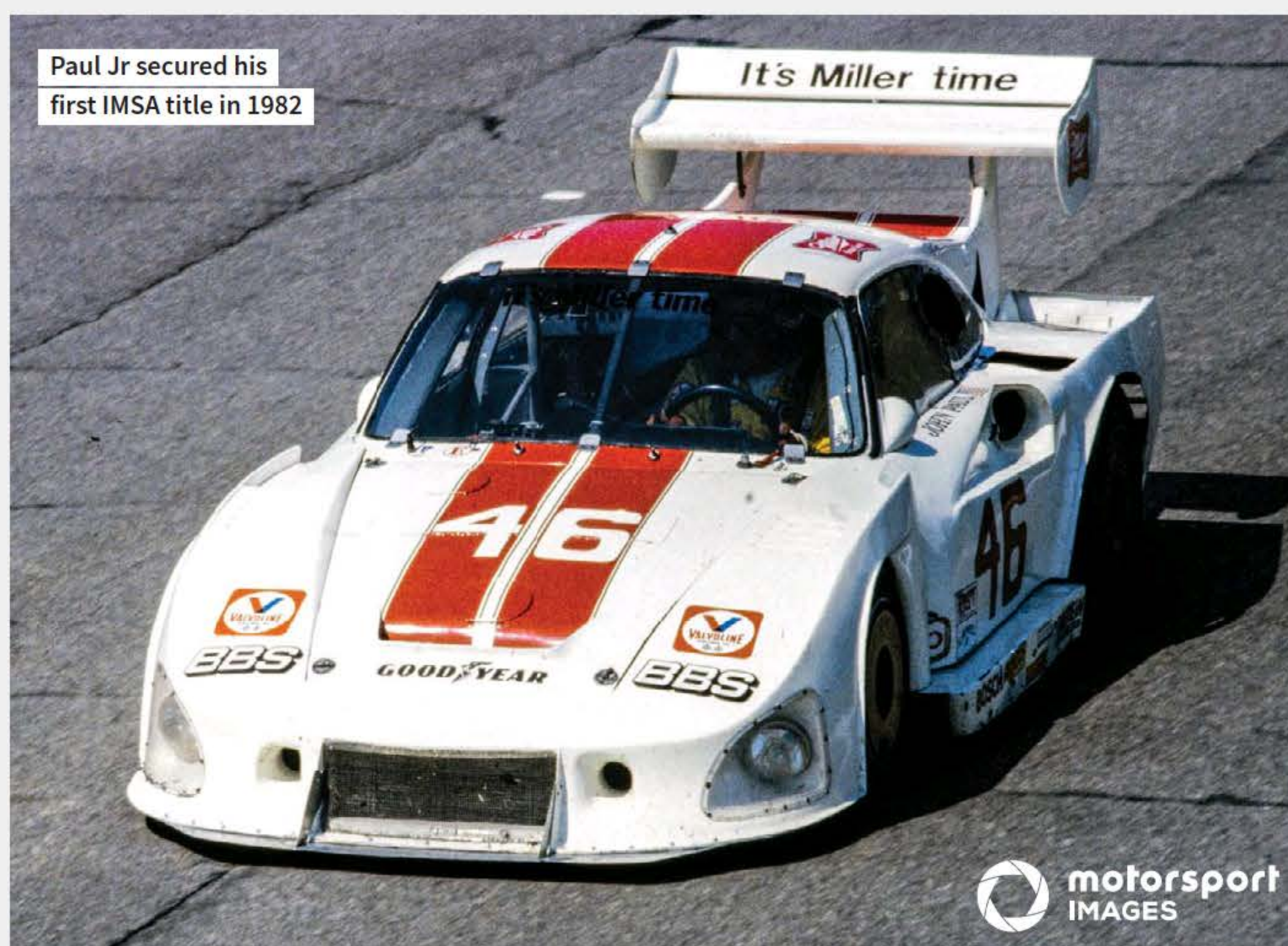
and Martin Kodric, with team regular Jordan Witt joined by Fraser Ross and Frank Bird in the second entry.

Optimum Motorsport has another McLaren GT3, which features Joe Osborne and Ollie Millroy, while additional GT3 machinery comes from Team

Parker Racing's Bentley and a RAM Racing Mercedes — in which 2019 British GT race winners Callum Macleod and Ian Loggie are reunited — clothed in a special livery (above) paying homage to the Stuttgart marque's 1992 DTM title.

JAMES NEWBOLD





John Paul Jr 1960-2020

OBITUARY

John Paul Jr was a winner of the Daytona 24 Hours and in the highest echelons of North American single-seater racing in two distinct stages of his career. What the American, who has died aged 60 after a long battle with a neurological disorder, might have achieved but for a two-year spell in prison for racketeering in the middle can only be conjecture.

Paul Jr burst onto the IMSA sportscar scene in 1980 with a debut victory at Lime Rock together with his father, John Paul Sr, in a Porsche 935K3 run by the family JLP team. Within two years he was IMSA GTP champion, his nine race victories with JLP in 1982 including triumphs at Daytona and the Sebring 12 Hours. Two years after that, he finished second at the Le Mans 24 Hours driving a Porsche 956 entered by Preston Henn and run in conjunction with Jean Rondeau, who co-drove the car.

A one-off CART appearance in 1982 was followed by a full campaign the following year with a VDS Penske-Cosworth PC10. He famously beat works Penske driver

Rick Mears to victory at Michigan with a last-lap pass. He was set to drive for the Indy 500-winning Shierson team in 1985, only to stand down when his father was indicted for drug smuggling and attempted murder. The racketeering charges followed Paul Jr's refusal to testify against him.

Paul Jr returned to racing after his incarceration in both IMSA and CART. He became a regular at the Dyson sportscar team, claiming five wins across 1996-97 aboard a Riley & Scott-Ford MkIII, including Daytona in the second of those seasons. Over in the new Indy Racing League, he scored a victory at Texas Motor Speedway in 1998 aboard a Byrd-Cunningham G-Force-Oldsmobile GF01B.

Butch Leitzinger, who co-drove with Paul Jr at Dyson, described him as "an incredible talent, so naturally gifted", yet at the same time "gentle, caring and humble".

"I think it speaks of both his talents and his personality that John was accepted back so quickly when returned," said Leitzinger.

Paul Jr retired in 2001 after being diagnosed with Huntington's disease.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

CASTRONEVES AT SEBRING

Three-time Indy 500 winner Helio Castroneves will make his World Endurance Championship debut at Sebring in March with the Inter Europol prototype squad. The Brazilian has been named by the Polish LMP2 entrant as part of the driver roster for its maiden season in the WEC together with full-time drivers Renger van der Zande, Alex Brundle and Kuba Smiechowski. Castroneves will drive the team's ORECA-Gibson 07 at Sebring on 19 March because van der Zande will be on duty in the following day's 12-hour IMSA fixture with Chip Ganassi Racing.

ALDO ANDRETTI 1940-2020

Former racer Aldo Andretti, the twin brother of motorsport great Mario, died in late December. He was 80. Andretti began his career on dirt ovals in the 1950s with his brother, but retired following a serious accident and then another shunt, in which he broke a finger. His late son John – one of five children of Aldo's – became an Indycar race winner.

HAUGER IN FOR PREMA F3

Red Bull Junior Dennis Hauger has sealed a place at Prema Racing for his second season in the FIA Formula 3 Championship, as predicted by Autosport. The Norwegian, who won the 2019 Italian F4 crown, had a tough season as an F3 rookie with Hitech Grand Prix, and scored just one podium finish. He has tested well with Prema and joins Ferrari protege Arthur Leclerc in the line-up.

GRESINI OUT OF COMA

Gresini Aprilia MotoGP team boss Fausto Gresini's condition was serious but stable as we went to press following his hospitalisation in late December with COVID-19. Gresini was placed in a medically induced coma in Bologna, before the awakening process began last Friday. His team said on Monday that he was improving but still sedated and on a respirator.

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BRUCE JENKINS



Kiwi stars lining up for NZGP

TOYOTA RACING SERIES

Two Bathurst 1000 winners are among the famous names who are set to line up in the New Zealand Grand Prix, which kicks off the Toyota Racing Series over the weekend of 22-24 January at Hampton Downs.

Shane van Gisbergen and Greg Murphy will join the hordes in the TRS, which usually attracts a high-quality crop of young international racing talent. While the series has been cut from five rounds to three this year, all taking place on the North Island in the midst of New Zealand's strict coronavirus-combatting regime, international drivers were permitted, but most of those recruited for the full season have been home-grown talents. And now, with NZ's isolation facilities at capacity, the door has been closed to foreign drivers.

Van Gisbergen (right), the 2020 Bathurst winner and 2016 Australian Supercars champion, is waiting to see whether he can compete in the event and then get back to the Queensland base of the Triple Eight Supercars team for pre-season preparations without violating that state's quarantine obligations. The 31-year-old, who was runner-up in the TRS in the 2006-07 season, said: "While I don't have any expectations, and adapting to driving the cars will take a bit of getting used to, it is going to be fun and I will give it my best."

Four-time Bathurst victor Murphy, at 48 years of age, was well past his single-seater days when TRS started, but has won the NZGP before – in 1994, when it was run for the Holden-engined Formula Brabham category. "It will be a massive challenge," Murphy admitted. "I think perspective



KLYNSMITH/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

needs to be applied – I haven't done anything serious in a car, competing for such a big trophy since 2014 really."

Chris van der Drift is another star name on the grid. The 34-year-old was champion in the Honda-powered Formula Master series in Europe in 2008, only to lose out on his F1 prize test when the manufacturer withdrew from the pinnacle of the sport. He will race under the banner of the revived Tasman Motorsports name with the support of founder Steve Horne, whose squad ran in Indycars in the 1990s.

Daniel Gaunt, one of NZ's most unheralded talents, returns to the series he won in 2005-06 and 2006-07 (when he beat van Gisbergen). A two-time NZGP winner, he has been active in sportscars over the past decade. NZ legend Ken Smith, 79, will line up for the 50th time in a race he has won on three occasions. Smith has raced against Stirling Moss, Jack Brabham, Bruce McLaren, Denny Hulme, Chris Amon and Yuki Tsunoda in the historic event!

MARCUS SIMMONS

MIKKELSEN GOES FOR DOUBLE ATTACK IN SKODA

RALLYING

Former Volkswagen and Hyundai factory World Rally Championship ace Andreas Mikkelsen is to contest the WRC2 and European Rally Championship this season as he still targets a full-time return to the top echelon of the WRC.

Mikkelsen will tackle both series at the wheel of a Skoda Fabia Rally 2 evo that will be prepped by Toksport WRT, the squad that helped Chris Ingram to the ERC title in 2019.

In addition to his dual campaign, Mikkelsen will help Skoda to further develop its Czech supermini this year while also trying to secure the backing to start a handful of WRC events in the top class.

Mikkelsen contested just three rallies last year, with his standout performance coming on November's Rally Hungary, which he won by one and a half minutes. He finished sixth overall on the final round of the ERC before going on to win WRC3 at Rally Monza.

The Norwegian believes that his deals for 2021 will serve as the perfect "stepping stone".

"Of course, it is not the WRC, which is where I want to be, but I think this is a great step towards that goal of being fully back in the WRC in 2022," said Mikkelsen. "I have one aim: that is to dominate every rally that I am doing. I have the car to do it – Skoda has the best R5 car. For me, there is no question about that. I love the car and, getting the chance to spend even more time in it, I will perform even better than I did in 2020."

JASON CRAIG



MCKLEIN



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WALERO

TOP FIVE



GREATEST BTCC CARS

It's been a big week for British Touring Car news so we thought we'd pick out the finest tin-tops to have appeared in the series since 1958. For an extended list, go to: [autosport.com/btcc/news/150751](https://www.autosport.com/btcc/news/150751)

KEVIN TURNER

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
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 IMAGES

5 CHEVROLET CAMARO
 Many mighty American V8s graced the British Saloon Car Series (as it used to be known) after the Ford Galaxie appeared in 1963. In terms of wins, the Camaro was the most successful, scoring 53 by the end of 1975, when the big bangers were outlawed. The odd points system – which rewarded class winners as richly as overall success – meant titles were rare, but Frank Gardner won the 1973 crown in his Camaro.



4 FORD LOTUS CORTINA
 It only won championship races outright in the hands of the great Jim Clark, but the Lotus Cortina is undoubtedly an iconic tin-top. The 1600cc machine, developed by Harry Mundy and Colin Chapman, was one of the first super saloons and dominated its class for several seasons. Its relatively light weight, enthusiastic engine and excellent chassis made it a potent weapon, even against much bigger opposition.



3 NISSAN PRIMERA
 There can be little doubt that the Super Touring era was the high point in BTCC history. It was so competitive that no one marque tended to stay on top for long. Ford's Mondeo set the pace as the expensive category came to an end, but the Primera was arguably the greater car. It was the fastest machine of 1998 with Anthony Reid, dominated in the hands of Laurent Aiello in 1999, and allowed Matt Neal to win as a privateer.



2 FORD CAPRI
 After the big-capacity V8s disappeared, Ford's three-litre Capri (in Mk2 and Mk3 forms) was the car to have. Well-balanced and easy to drive, it provided some great competition, though Gordon Spice has to be regarded as the king. The Capri is one of the most popular touring cars of all time and won more BTCC races than any other car on this list, so why isn't it first here? Well, quite simply, it didn't have 550bhp...



1 FORD RS500
 More power than grip, brilliant liveries and an almost unlimited number of incredible stories, such as one blowing past an F3000 in a test. The Group A RS500 won every BTCC race from September 1987 until the end of 1990, after which the series switched to non-turbo regulations. True greats such as Andy Rouse and Steve Soper excelled in the monster, which remains one of the most spectacular tin-tops ever.





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Advice for Ferrari star in waiting

The Italian squad's 2021 test driver must bide his time and not be disheartened by missing out on an F1 race seat. The waiting game is one he could well win

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Ferrari had an embarrassment of riches in the 2020 Formula 2 season. It had five of its juniors placed on the final step of the single-seater ladder; three finished in the top four championship places, and two fought for the title to the final race. Only one will race in Formula 1 in 2021, but he will not be alone in representing Ferrari's young-driver interests on the grand prix scene.

As Mick Schumacher prepares to make his debut in the upcoming campaign – wherever and whenever that is set to begin – he will join Antonio Giovinazzi in being on Ferrari's books (although it should be noted that there is a difference between contracts with the F1 team and the driver academy) while racing for another F1 squad. Both will run Ferrari power at Haas and Alfa Romeo respectively.

Giovinazzi is about to start his third F1 season, again alongside Kimi Raikkonen at Alfa. His official finishing positions from his first two campaigns are two 17th places, but that somewhat undersells his story. The Italian may have repeated his 2019 championship position in 2020, with a points tally reduced from 14 to four, but the picture looks different if the 'Class A' results are removed.

The final table in Autosport's very much unofficial 'Class B' championship standings (published in full in our 31 December 2020 issue) reveal that although Giovinazzi's recalculated points tally falls from 88 to 39 with the results of the big teams missing, he climbs from 12th to 10th. Plus, he ended up just behind

“There is a bottleneck the closer a driver gets to the top of a junior programme”

Raikkonen, after being five places adrift in the 2019 version.

This reflects Giovinazzi's improved qualifying form versus Raikkonen last year, where he edged the 2007 world champion 9-8, following a 9-11 defeat the previous year. He also edged him on total points finishes (3-2), as the dramatic deficit from the lack of pace of Alfa's customer Ferrari engines forced the team to hastily revise its season targets after winter testing. Suddenly, just making Q2 was the goal.

Giovinazzi set out to improve at the start of races – he knew, much like Charles Leclerc in the works Ferrari, that early gains despite an uncompetitive car could prove decisive later on. This paid off and he was often a lap-one hero, while Alfa regularly split its strategic options to try to ensure that at least one driver had a shot at points should the big teams falter.

But despite closing the gap to Raikkonen, Giovinazzi is still yet to show that he can really outstrip F1's most experienced driver on pure pace, and there were several negative moments, including his big crash at Spa.

“[There's] still I think a lot of work to do,” says Giovinazzi. “It's not [finished] yet and I think as well [having] Kimi again beside me next season I can still do another step. It will be really important to watch him because, like I've said many times, he's still one of the best on the grid, especially on race pace and managing the race. I'm happy to continue with him.”

Giovinazzi's F1 career is an interesting case study for Ferrari. Like Red Bull and Mercedes, the team should be applauded for the number of young drivers it's supporting in the junior formulas. But in much the same way as at Red Bull, there is a bottleneck the closer a driver gets to the top of a junior programme. As Carlos Sainz Jr joins Leclerc at the works operation for the foreseeable future, Giovinazzi and Schumacher know they must stay as understudies. For both, at different stages of burgeoning GP careers, this isn't necessarily a negative, despite the explosive rise of young stars in recent years.

The bottleneck is more problematic for a driver now in the same position as Giovinazzi, then the GP2 runner-up, was four years ago. Callum Ilott missed out on the 2020 F2 title by 14 points to Schumacher in what was a fluctuating campaign for both drivers. The 22-year-old says he won't be returning to the F1 support series in 2021, but has been signed as Ferrari's test driver.

Having been through the same process, what advice does Giovinazzi have for Ilott directly? “You cannot do nothing, and you need to be patient and you need to do what Ferrari want, and do the best you can do in the route that you have in that moment,” he replies. “And be sure you will get the opportunity.”

Last year, there was a great deal of speculation regarding the final line-ups at both Ferrari customer squads for 2021. In the end, Alfa and Haas went with vastly different approaches, as one stuck with its existing line-up, while the other turfed out its incumbents and signed two rookies. But the long-term commitments enjoyed by drivers such as Leclerc and Max Verstappen remain relatively rare in F1 (and any contract can ultimately be renegotiated if both sides agree). Ilott's F1 dream is far from finished.

As his predecessor as Ferrari's in-waiting star suggests, he needs to seize this opportunity to support the team as best he can. Giovinazzi's racing programme in 2017 and 2018 was limited, but he got the golden chance to make his F1 debut in place of the injured Pascal Wehrlein, which shows the potential of a supporting deal. ✍

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QUESTION

Lewis Hamilton matched Michael Schumacher's remarkable record of seven Formula 1 world drivers' titles in 2020. In which race did he clinch the crown?

- A)** The Eifel Grand Prix
- B)** The Portuguese Grand Prix
- C)** The Turkish Grand Prix

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YOUR SAY

This isn't a left or right political point, it's about building a better and more sustainable industry for everyone

SAM FISH

Motorsport lagging behind the times

As a long-term reader, I want to say thank you for your great articles supporting figures in motorsport pushing progressive ideas and movements – for equality and positive change in the industry and society.

I grew up at race circuits with my dad running a race team and did a bit of racing myself, and I've always felt a bit embarrassed to like motorsport because of its 'macho' sentiments, the disregard of the environment and the pursuit of money over morals. It has felt like a guilty pleasure to follow and indulge in motorsport over the past few decades – it has been lagging behind the times regarding equality and the environment.

I'm so pleased and slightly relieved to see Autosport publish and voice support for women, black lives matter and the environment. It's not always easy to confront these subjects, but I take my hat off to the editorial team for highlighting these conversations. Please may it continue through 2021.

This isn't a left or right political point, it's about building a better and more sustainable industry for everyone.

Sam Fish
By email

A measure of Hamilton's abilities

I fully agree with the points raised by Tom Martin (Your Say, 31 December), clearly expressed and insightful.

Racing cars, particularly F1 machinery, are designed to be driven at 100% otherwise they do not function fully or operate at maximum performance. That Lewis Hamilton is able to do this on a regular basis is a measure of his abilities and not 'just' because he has what is perceived as the best car. This can be illustrated by George Russell's performance in the Mercedes in Sakhir; he has to drive the Williams at 110%+ so driving the Mercedes at 100% was a simpler task. I am generalising here of course and not undervaluing George's fabulous drive.

Max Verstappen has been able to maximise the performance of the Red Bull, but Alex Albon has not been able to extract anything like the same level of performance, albeit that the car seems to have had some inherent difficult

characteristics relating to the rear end.

Fernando Alonso alluded to the nature of an F1 car when describing his drive in the V10 Renault. He explained that you couldn't 'pussyfoot' around, the engine ran to 19,000rpm and if running below that figure it simply wouldn't work effectively, making the car uncomfortable to drive. This is why I disagree with those who express the opinion that it is all down to Hamilton and others having the best car.

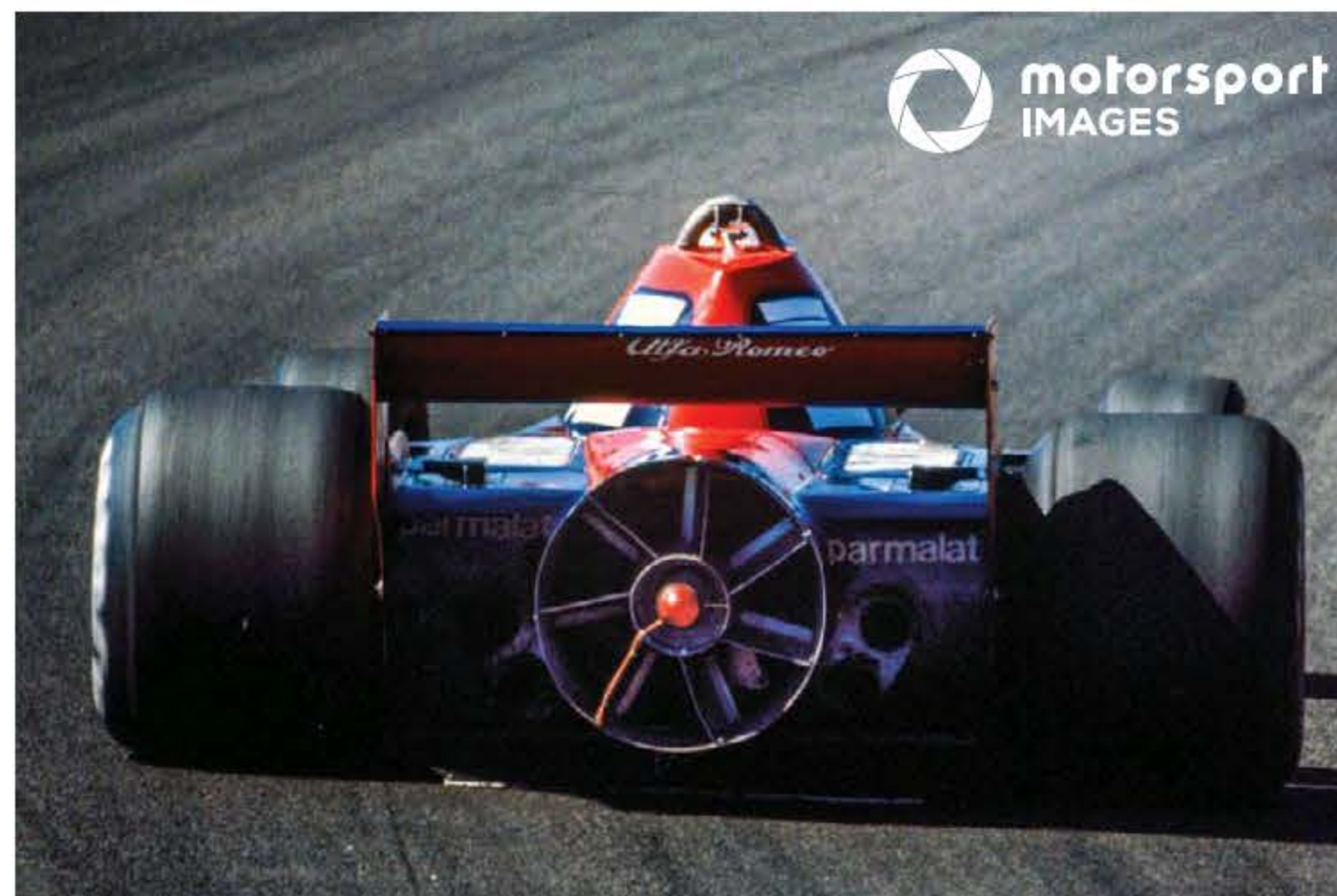
Looking forward to a new F1 season, and hopefully this will be a complete season.

Neil Davey
Newport, South Wales

Inspired by fantasy combos

I thoroughly enjoyed your little fantasy combo vignettes (Finishing Straight, 17-24 December); it tempts me to offer one of my own. How about Ronnie Peterson, at The Brickyard, in a Brabham BT46B. Imagine the king of instinctive feel committing into Turn 1 at Indianapolis with a car with almost limitless grip the faster you go. I'm getting goose-bumps just thinking about it!

Phil Oakes
Portishead



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THE HEIRS TO HAMILTON'S F1 THRONE

Three drivers who are yet to stand on the top step of the podium could inherit the world champion's place at the pinnacle of Formula 1

LUKE SMITH

As Lewis Hamilton lined up on the grid for the 2007 Australian Grand Prix, baby-faced and ready to shake up the Formula 1 world, the battle to be the heir to the then-retired Michael Schumacher was about to step up a gear.

Hamilton has been essentially ever-present at the front of the F1 pack since his debut, seeing off an impressive roster of names in title fights. Since the start of the V6-hybrid era, Kimi Raikkonen, Fernando Alonso (the driver who ended Schumacher's reign), Daniel Ricciardo, Sebastian Vettel, Nico Rosberg, Valtteri Bottas, Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc have all aimed to take the fight to Hamilton, yet none of them has been able to get close to his level of performance.

Hamilton hit new heights through the truncated 2020 campaign, taking 11 wins to match his best tally for a single season despite only entering 16 races. He has regularly said he feels in the peak condition of his career, and is eager to keep writing history with the Mercedes team that has taken him to six of his seven titles.

It's bad news for those hoping to succeed Hamilton as the king of F1 in the short term. Verstappen has already missed the chance to become the youngest-ever world champion, even if he did wildly outstrip the capabilities of the Red Bull RB16 through last year, while Bottas was without reply to his

Mercedes team-mate's performances for the fourth season in a row, making a Rosberg-esque defeat of Hamilton seem unlikely.

But nothing lasts forever. Today – 7 January – is Hamilton's 36th birthday, and he has previously downplayed the chances of racing well into his forties *a la* Schumacher. Contract talks with Mercedes are ongoing, and include a view to a bigger picture outside of F1 – perhaps planning for post-F1 life for the seven-time world champion.

It means that by the time Hamilton does decide to hang up his helmet, the current established race winners such as Verstappen and Leclerc could find themselves with fresh competition from a raft of new youngsters.

But out of F1's non-winners, who could be the heir to Hamilton's throne? >>



WHY THE REST OF THE GRID HAS A POINT TO MAKE

When it came to profiling the drivers most likely to be the next F1 race winners, George Russell, Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz were the only three to truly stand out.

But there weren't too many names to choose from. Only two teams – Haas and Williams – won't have a race winner on their books this year, while doubts linger over a number of other names.

Esteban Ocon is one of the most curious cases. After being much-vaunted by Mercedes throughout his F1 career, and even considered as a replacement for Valtteri Bottas in 2020, Ocon had a rough return to racing last year. He was soundly beaten by Daniel Ricciardo at Renault, outqualifying the Australian just once in the dry, and now has renowned career-ender Fernando Alonso coming through the door at Enstone.

But to Ocon's credit, he made big strides late in the year, notably picking up his first F1 podium with second place in the Sakhir GP. If he can lead the renamed Alpine squad and defeat Alonso this year, it would put him back on the radar as a future grand prix winner.

Ocon is also a free agent at the end of this year, meaning he would factor into Mercedes' considerations as he remains affiliated to its junior programme. The 2021 campaign really is looking to be make-or-break for the Frenchman.

Lance Stroll looked poised to join the winners' club midway through the Turkish Grand Prix after forging a big lead early on in difficult conditions, before an alleged front-wing issue dropped him all the way back to ninth in the end. There were other win chances at the Italian and Sakhir GPs that he let slip, meaning he needs to be more clinical when such opportunities arise in the future.

Antonio Giovinazzi did enough to earn a third season with Alfa Romeo, but he has hardly made a convincing case for a future move to Ferrari. With Mick Schumacher now on the grid at Haas, and juniors such as Callum Ilott and Robert Shwartzman circling for future seats, Ferrari has plenty of potential long-term options. That said, it is unlikely to need them for a while given the youth of its present line-up.



Ocon and Stroll both need to step up

HONE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

MAIN PIC: ETHERINGTON

INSIGHT HEIRS TO HAMILTON'S THRONE

GEORGE

RUSSELL

BEST RESULT 9th (Sakhir GP 2020)

DEBUT Australian GP 2019

STARTS 38

POINTS 3

PODIUMS 0





George Russell may have recorded just one points finish in his F1 career to date, yet he arguably has the strongest case to one day succeed Hamilton. When Hamilton was forced to miss the Sakhir Grand Prix following a positive test for COVID-19, Mercedes drafted in its junior protege Russell from Williams for the weekend. Having spent his F1 career to date hampered by the limitations of Williams's machinery, it offered Russell an opportunity to truly prove himself as a star for the future in the fastest car on the grid.

He took full advantage. He qualified second, narrowly missing out on pole to Valtteri Bottas, before taking the lead off the line and dominating. A pitlane slip-up by Mercedes dropped him back to fifth, but he was able to fight through to second – including a superb, symbolic pass on Bottas – before a puncture resigned him to ninth.

“It’s not eating me up inside, because I see the race almost was a victory in itself with how everything panned out,” says Russell. “That’s what I’m trying to tell myself anyway, to get over the disappointment of losing it! The pitstop fiasco gave me that opportunity to go out there and sort of show what I can do in a very difficult circumstance – when the pressure is high.

“I wasn’t the first driver to have a race taken away from them, and I won’t be the last. That’s just the nature of the beast.”

Although Russell’s Mercedes appearance proved to be a one-off, it only underlined his ability. Mercedes was inadvertently handed a rare opportunity to see how a driver fares in a top-line car across a race weekend without the commitment of signing him long-term. Such a switch would ordinarily be based largely on performances for a backmarker team, meaning it would always carry an element of risk.

Yet even without Russell’s Sakhir showing, the case was already looking strong for him to one day join Mercedes’ works squad. He has consistently punched above his weight throughout his F1 career to date, coming close to points on a number of occasions despite Williams being far from quick enough. He reached Q2 nine times in 2020, and has never been outqualified by a team-mate at Williams. A crash behind the safety car at Imola while in 10th saw him throw away his best chance to date, but the outpouring of support that followed from the rest of the F1 grid showed how highly he’s rated.

Sakhir also offered Mercedes a like-for-like comparison between Russell and Bottas, the driver he could one day replace. Mercedes insisted it was not treating it as a shootout for a 2022 seat – when both drivers are out of contract – but the fashion in which Russell routed the more experienced Bottas did little to quell such thoughts. Bottas admitted that from the outside he could look “a complete fool”, while Russell cheekily said he hoped it gave Mercedes boss Toto Wolff a headache “not just for 2022, maybe sooner”.

Bottas has always been on one-year rolling contracts with Mercedes, with his next deal set to expire at the end of this season. Mercedes weighed up replacing Bottas for 2020 with then-reserve Esteban Ocon, before deciding to retain the Finn and allow Ocon to

join Renault. It is understood that Mercedes enquired about Russell’s availability for 2021 early in 2020, only for Williams to make clear it intended to see out the third year of his contract. Given Russell will be a free agent at the end of this year, Mercedes has a tough decision to make about his future. Now he remains focused on delivering the best performances he can for Williams.

“[Mercedes has] not said what I need to do,” he says when asked about the chances of moving up for 2022. “I’m just respectful to everybody at Williams and will be giving my absolute all for that team, as they have done for me for the past two years. I don’t like to think about the future. This sport changes incredibly quickly, people’s perception of drivers and your reputation [can change fast]. And outside factors, as we’ve seen [can come into play]. Nobody could have predicted the events that happened.”

While Williams may be braced for the ‘Class C’ fight once again in 2021 with Haas and Alfa Romeo, under fresh ownership it will have its sights set on clambering ahead of its immediate rivals. Russell has been the spearhead for Williams in the past two years. If he can be the man to lead it back into the points in 2021, it would only strengthen his case for a Mercedes seat.

Mercedes knows what Russell can do in its car. It’s charted his development since the end of 2016, including his title wins in GP3 and F2. It knows he can jump into one of its cars with minimal preparation and dominate a race. The decision really comes down to where it sees its future line-up: does it bring Russell in to replace Bottas, and then be left seeking another driver once Hamilton retires? Or wait until that moment to give the next great Briton his chance?

Musing a possible Hamilton/Russell line-up after the Sakhir GP, Wolff said: “I can understand that it would be an interesting situation to have both in the team. Maybe [it would be] a bit of a wild ride for all of us. Maybe that will happen in the future.”

Seeing Russell in a Mercedes excited F1 in 2020. The idea of it happening again next season, perhaps as Hamilton’s team-mate and title rival, will surely keep us going for much of this year. >>



INSIGHT HEIRS TO HAMILTO

LANDO

NORRIS

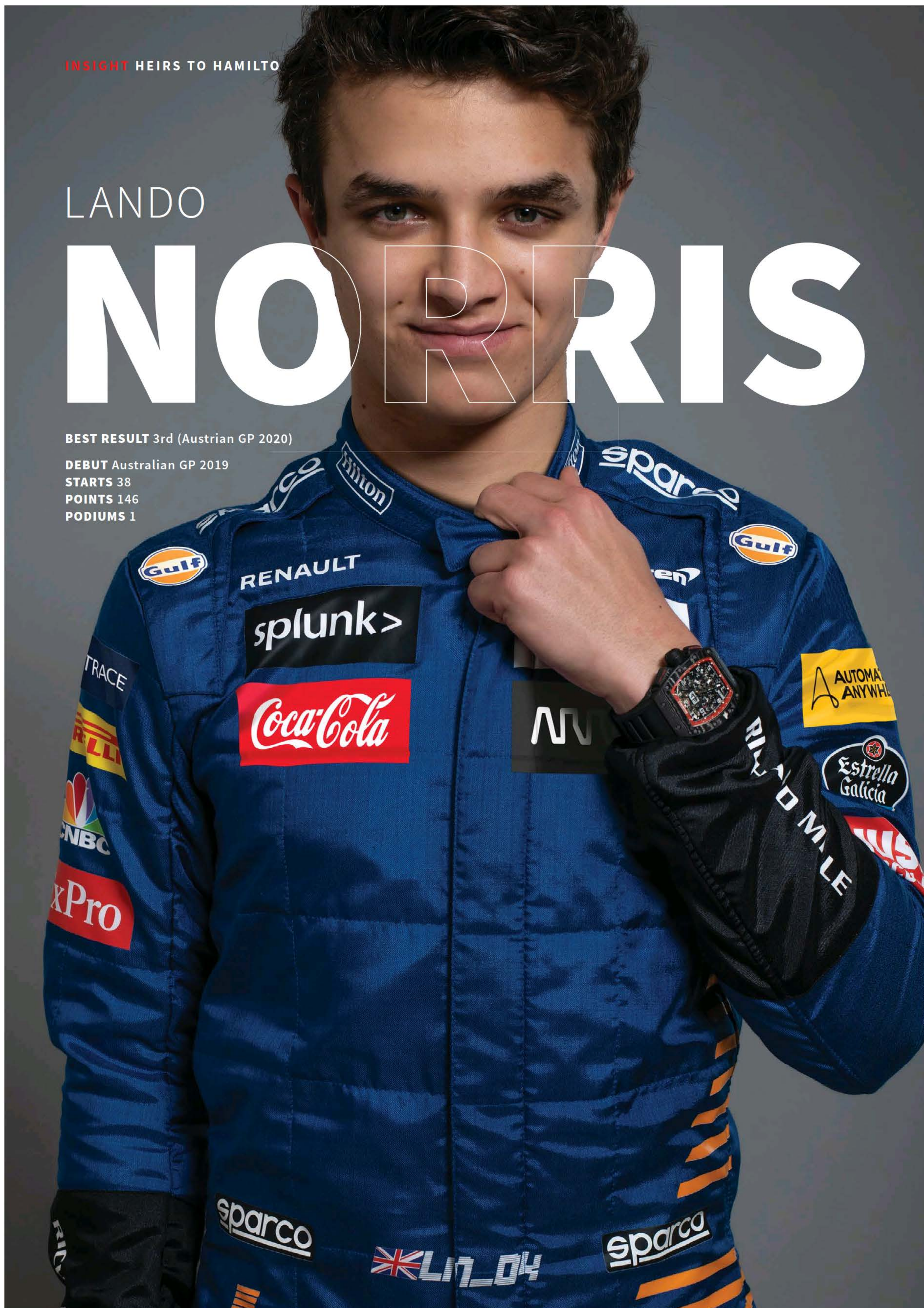
BEST RESULT 3rd (Austrian GP 2020)

DEBUT Australian GP 2019

STARTS 38

POINTS 146

PODIUMS 1





Lando Norris may have made a name for himself in F1 with his fun, easygoing nature and social-media antics, but his on-track performances speak for themselves. He proved to be an even match for Ferrari-bound Carlos Sainz Jr during their two seasons as team-mates at McLaren, and made a considerable step forward for 2020. Norris scored almost double the points of his rookie campaign, and picked up a maiden podium finish at the season opener in Austria.

"Seeing the improvements from the previous year, I'm very happy with it, and I think the team are too," declares Norris. "I think it's been a very good year. My first podium in Formula 1 is a pretty insane thing."

Norris's charge to the podium in Austria offered a glimpse of the killer instinct the (now) 21-year-old bears. Sitting fourth on track, he was told he had to make up nearly two seconds on the last lap to Lewis Hamilton, who had a five-second penalty to be applied. With some assistance from his engineer, Norris was able to post the fastest lap and bridge the gap, snatching third in the process.

A similar story unfolded a week later at the Styrian Grand Prix as Norris made three overtakes in the final two laps, picking off Daniel Ricciardo, Lance Stroll and Sergio Perez. It led to the moniker of 'Last Lap Lando'; something he said proved "not to give up in any way".

Another show of Norris's race-management cunning came at the Turkish GP, a race Norris views as one of his biggest missed chances of the year. After a grid penalty and a terrible start in the wet, Norris was able to fight back into the points after realising that the best approach was to wear down his intermediate tyres as much as possible as the track dried in the closing stages, essentially making them a set of balding 'slicktermediates'. He set the fastest lap by 1.4s.

And while there were errors, such as the start in Turkey, at no point in 2020 did Norris blunder massively. Even as McLaren struggled with the initial updates for the MCL35, Norris adjusted

his driving style and approach to bring the best out of the car. Although he said he "felt less confident" at points with the 2020 car compared to 2019, Norris was glad not to have withered under the expectations of his second season, proving his mental resilience.

"When you come in as a rookie, people see you as a rookie, so when you make these little mistakes, it's not the end of the world – you'll improve it for next year," Norris says. "When you come in for your second year, they don't expect to see these things anymore. You have this kind of different pressure of having more expectation in some ways."

"You need to perform on that next level, which in a lot of circumstances I've managed to do."

Norris managed to outqualify Sainz 9-8 through the season, with his decisive success in Abu Dhabi being especially impressive. Armed with a fresh Renault power unit, Norris qualified fourth on the grid, and was just over two tenths of a second shy of Max Verstappen's pole position time. It was a performance that even made Hamilton talk up the chances of McLaren making it a three-team fight at the front in 2021.

And while that is perhaps a little optimistic, the building blocks are in place for McLaren to mount such a charge in the future. With the demons of the Honda era long banished, it has a strong core management in place, led by team principal Andreas Seidl. The switch to Mercedes power units for 2021 should offer another boost in performance, with Norris calling it "a better package all-round", while the incoming budget cap – married to the fresh US investment announced on the eve of last month's Abu Dhabi finale – puts McLaren in really healthy shape.

It points towards McLaren peaking just as Norris starts to hit his stride in F1. He enjoyed a friendly and well-fought partnership with Sainz in their two years together, and will now get another chance to prove his stardom against a proven race winner in Ricciardo.

"He's going to give a different perspective on a lot of things," says Norris of his new team-mate. "Daniel has worked with Red Bull, and knows how to win races, and how a team wins races and the car he needs for that. That'll be very good when Daniel comes in, giving those fresh ideas and helping the team move forward."

"It's nice for me to work with someone different, learn things, but also go up against a driver who has won races and people say is one of the best on the grid. It's a good chance for me to compare myself against him, and just work with a race winner."

If Norris can use the lessons from Ricciardo to his benefit, it will only add more strengths to his ever-growing skillset, and potentially allow for a similar stride forward to that seen through 2020. He's already shown he is capable of being clinical on track and can manage races well, and rarely makes errors.

Should Norris's rise continue in parallel with McLaren's own trajectory, he will be well-placed to provide George Russell with competition to be Hamilton's successor as F1's leading Briton in years to come. >>



INSIGHT HEIRS TO HAMILTON'S THRONE

CARLOS

SAIENZ JR

BEST RESULT 2nd (Italian GP 2020)

DEBUT Australian GP 2015

STARTS 118

POINTS 372

PODIUMS 2





Had the 2020 Italian Grand Prix lasted a couple of laps longer, Carlos Sainz Jr would probably already be a Formula 1 race winner. The gradual rate at which Sainz was able to reel in Pierre Gasly across the closing stages proved not to be enough. He only gained DRS with two laps remaining, and that left him an agonising 0.415 seconds shy of victory.

"It was an intense final few laps, probably the most intense of my career," says Sainz. "But looking back at it, I don't feel like I could have done anything differently. I think just due to the circumstances that day, I couldn't win the race. Finishing four tenths behind the winner, and that winner being Pierre, makes it feel like a win escaped from us. But at the same time, if you put everything into context, actually the race was the best I could have done."

Sainz's Monza display was another reminder of the quality that had made Ferrari so eager to snap him up for 2021 that it did not even wait for the 2020 campaign to start. The fashion in which he regularly topped the midfield and led McLaren to fourth in the constructors' championship in 2019 prompted Ferrari to make contact over the winter, tentatively sounding him out as a replacement for Sebastian Vettel. In May, talks intensified and yielded a multi-year deal for Sainz to become Charles Leclerc's team-mate starting this year.

Vettel's stuttering final season with Ferrari did little to suggest that the wrong decision had been taken, but replacing a four-time world champion comes with expectation, as does joining the most famous marque in F1 history. But Sainz is under no illusions about what he faces upon arrival in Maranello.

"Pressure in Ferrari is always high," he says. "It doesn't matter about the number of years on the contract. I'm the first one that is wanting to be as fast as possible out of the box. But for me, a two-year deal is important. It's one of the things that I've always said since I joined McLaren — for a driver to have a bit of stability in a team is always important."

"I feel like in McLaren in my second year, I was extracting a lot more out of the car than my first year. The Charles Leclerc of today versus the Charles Leclerc of a year and a half ago when he joined Ferrari, he's different."

Sainz joins a Ferrari team that is in a similar place to McLaren when he turned up at Woking in 2018: a once-dominant force now crestfallen and, in the case of Ferrari, reeling from its worst season for 40 years. The new power unit will certainly help after such a huge time loss through 2020, but the majority chassis carryover means the SF21 won't remedy all of the SF1000's woes. Sainz also faces the challenge of limited pre-season running, but he accepts that things will take time to slot into place.

"I know that when I arrive to Ferrari, I'm going to need my races and my experiences to get to know how to extract the maximum out of that car," Sainz says. "I'm going to go straight into my first race with only one day and a half of testing in a brand-new car —

for me it's going to be a tough thing to do. But I like those kinds of challenges. I'll try and adapt myself as well as possible and as best I can, and see what I can get out of it."

Sainz has shown impressive adaptability in the past, with the fashion in which he helped turn McLaren around being the strongest example. The Spaniard devoted everything to the team's cause. He moved close to the factory, and helped cultivate a positive, empowering atmosphere, something that will be crucial to succeeding at Ferrari as it tries to rebound.

"I try and build the best relationships I can with the people, and try to put together a good working environment," says Sainz. "Definitely a target is to bring this to Ferrari. It is something that has worked very well for me at McLaren, and it's something that I'm willing to bring forward in my career."

Ferrari may see Leclerc as the man it wants to build its future around, reflected by his long-term contract that was only justified further by his stunning displays through 2020. But Sainz is not arriving at Maranello just to play second fiddle — and neither is Ferrari expecting him to.

"There is nothing written in the contract of Charles being the [team] leader," says Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto. "I think that the two will be free to fight on track. It's important that they are not damaging themselves, that is clear, but I think that they will have equal opportunity, certainly at the start of the season."

It may take time for Sainz to get up to speed, but he has proven time and time again how he can maximise the chances that come his way. Once he gets into a groove, the opportunity to go head to head with Leclerc — as outrageously good as he may be — will be one that Sainz seeks to maximise.

Similar to George Russell and Lando Norris, Sainz has placed himself well with a view to F1's long-term future. If Ferrari can get on top of the 2022 regulations and return towards the head of the pack, Sainz can be a firm part of its future success, and would surely seize the chance to make up for his near-miss at Monza. ❧



FULFILLING THE DYNASTY

Michael Schumacher may have won seven Formula 1 titles, but he didn't even compete for a crown at the second tier... Son Mick put that right in 2020, and earned a graduation to the sport's elite

LUKE SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES

Stooped by the side of his car in parc ferme, Mick Schumacher drew his hand through his open visor, struggling to fight back the welling tears. A frantic final round of the FIA Formula 2 season on the Bahrain outer loop had begun with him qualifying a lowly 18th, before he fought back to sixth in the feature race. Then he'd locked up on the first lap of the sprint race and was forced to pit due to the resulting flat-spot. But he'd held on to be crowned champion.

It was not a title success that clinched him a graduation to Formula 1 for 2021, for that had already been agreed weeks earlier and announced by Haas three days before his coronation. But for Schumacher, it was a statement. For all of the weight of expectation faced as the son of a seven-time F1 world champion, he had made his mark all by himself against a fiercely competitive F2 field. "If you bring a championship title on your CV into F1, it's always great," he says. "I have one in F3 and have one in F2. To be able to win those championships with great competition, it's been a great challenge. The better the competition, the more you develop as a driver."

Schumacher entered the 2020 season facing the sternest test to date of his credentials as a future F1 driver. The experienced Callum Iltott and Guanyu Zhou were tipped as title rivals, while talented rookies such as Robert Shwartzman and Yuki Tsunoda posed a fresh threat. The fact that almost one quarter of the F2 grid came from the Ferrari Driver Academy meant Schumacher also had in-house competition to contend with for a place with one of its affiliated teams.

The fashion in which Schumacher started 2020 did little to suggest a title bid was on the cards. By the time he recorded his first podium of the year, in the third round at the Hungaroring, fellow FDA members Shwartzman and Iltott had already notched

race wins to sit first and second in the championship respectively. By the end of the following event, the first Silverstone race weekend, Schumacher lay ninth in the standings, 40 points back from leader Shwartzman.

But from that moment onwards, Schumacher delivered the kind of consistency that championships are built on. A 15-race streak of points, which only ended at the final event, allowed him to rise up the order as his rivals faltered. A brace of podiums at Spa in late August put him within range of Shwartzman and Iltott, before a first victory of the year at Monza from seventh on the grid gave Schumacher a real chance in the title race.

The revised schedule forced by the COVID-19 pandemic condensed three quarters of the season into just 11 weeks but, with momentum building, Schumacher found the run of races to his benefit. "I was very happy that it was so intense," he says. "There was so much rhythm in there, it was just really nice. You always manage to take the positives and negatives from one weekend, and try and improve those in the second weekend and so on."

During the successive Spa, Monza and Mugello weekends, Schumacher went from fringe title fighter to contender, before a second victory of the year at Sochi made him the favourite. In that period, Iltott had scored just one feature race podium, while Tsunoda and Shwartzman both had four non-scores.

Picking the key factor in his title success, Schumacher cites "definitely the consistency". "That's what managed to bring us the points advantage that we had arriving in Bahrain, and then it was all about managing that," he adds. Unsurprisingly, he didn't want to lose that momentum in the two-month break following the Sochi round. "After two days, I was like, 'OK, when is the next race?'" he jokes. "You're in such a rhythm, you're trying to always focus on the next one, and then suddenly you had that >>

Schumacher added another crown to his CV in Bahrain's F2 season finale



Already confirmed for 2021 F1 grid, Schuey Jr lets F2 triumph sink in



TEE



two-month break where basically nothing was happening.”

Behind the scenes, plenty was happening regarding Schumacher's future. Ferrari held a private test at Fiorano for its three leading F2 drivers with a 2018 F1 car, in which Schumacher impressed. Although a planned FP1 outing at the Nurburgring with Alfa Romeo was scrapped due to fog, Schumacher had done enough for Ferrari to place its chips on him as its 2021 F1 graduate.

As Alfa Romeo leaned towards retaining its drivers, Haas became the only real landing spot for Schumacher. Plans were put in place for him to partner fellow F2 driver Nikita Mazepin, who was on course for a superlicence and would bring considerable funding to the team. Ferrari kept hinting that an announcement would be made before the end of the F2 season, again pointing towards the championship battle not impacting its decision.

Ilott was left resigned to missing out on an F1 graduation, but the Briton made clear upon F2's return in Bahrain that he would not bow out of the title race quietly, and scored his fifth pole of the season with his Virtuosi Racing car. (Schumacher, by comparison, did not qualify on the front row all year and had an average starting position of 7.91.) With second in the Bahrain feature race, Ilott trimmed Schumacher's lead to 12 points, only for him to make a mistake in the sprint event and run into Jehan Daruvala, leaving him scoreless and extending Schumacher's lead to 14 points.

In the days leading up to the season finale on the Bahrain outer loop, Haas formally announced Schumacher in its line-up for 2021,

partnering Mazepin. “I'm really happy that everything is announced and confirmed now,” he said at the time, calling it “a dream come true”. But he made clear his immediate priority was sewing up the F2 title: “My great focus is definitely still to win the championship. Once that is done, then I can focus on what I have to do next.”

That focus was tested when Schumacher was left 18th on the grid for the final feature race of the season following a qualifying collision with Roy Nissany. But a stunning fight through the field to sixth place, just one position behind Ilott, allayed his fears of losing the title. It is the display that Schumacher picks as his stand-out race of the year. “We had everything to lose,” he says. “We knew Callum was quick and he was going to move forward. We ended up P6 with the fastest lap. I never thought that we would manage to go so far forwards.”

Even with Schumacher's final-race error and run to 18th, Ilott could not deliver the top-two finish needed to snatch the title away. It was breathing room Schumacher felt he had earned: “We had done enough over the whole year to give us that opportunity, to have a race to be maybe as bad as it happened to be.” It's a position his serial-winning father knew well: claiming the title while affording occasional bad races.

Such comparisons have naturally been rife throughout Schumacher's junior career, but he takes heart in the fact that the results have proven his status is not due to his surname. “It's quite clear that I've been under the spotlight since a very young age,” he

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	PTS
1	Mick Schumacher (DEU)	Prema Racing	11	7	4	R	3	3	9	14	7	2	6	3	3	2	1	3	5	4	1	3	4	7	6	18	215
2	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Virtuosi Racing	1	9	5	5	8	2	5	R	1	6	5	8	10	R	6	1	12	6	3	7	2	16	5	10	201
3	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	Carlin	18	11	2	R	16	18	3	R	6	1	4	4	1	9	4	NC	16	19	2	6	6	15	1	2	200
4	Robert Shwartzman (RUS)	Prema Racing	3	4	1	R	1	4	14	13	8	13	2	13	5	1	9	5	R	9	11	10	8	1	4	5	177
5	Nikita Mazepin (RUS)	Hitech Grand Prix	14	10	14	8	2	5	1	5	4	8	13	6	2	4	NC	8	1	18	7	2	5	2	9	9	164
6	Guanyu Zhou (CHN)	Virtuosi Racing	17	14	3	4	10	8	2	9	9	5	3	14	7	3	5	NC	R	5	8	1	14	5	2	4	151.5
7	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	ART Grand Prix	4	5	6	1	R	13	4	2	2	21	11	11	17	7	3	2	6	1	R	13	19	6	21	12	149
8	Louis Deletraz (CHE)	Charouz Racing	7	2	19	12	7	6	6	3	5	4	10	9	4	6	8	4	3	2	18	17	16	3	12	13	134
9	Felipe Drugovich (BRA)	MP Motorsport	8	1	13	13	5	16	7	6	10	12	7	1	EX	13	16	R	4	15	R	20	1	8	3	8	121
10	Luca Ghiotto (ITA)	Hitech Grand Prix	NS	R	11	10	4	1	17	19	13	10	8	2	9	5	2	15	2	R	4	5	12	R	16	7	106

11 **Dan Ticktum** (DAMS) 96.5; 12 **Jehan Daruvala** (Carlin) 72; 13 **Marcus Armstrong** (ART Grand Prix) 52; 14 **Jack Aitken** (Campos Racing) 48; 15 **Nobuharu Matsushita** (MP Motorsport) 42; 16 **Juri Vips** (DAMS) 16; 17 **Giuliano Alesi** (HWA Racelab/MP Motorsport) 12; 18 **Artem Markelov** (HWA Racelab) 5; 19 **Roy Nissany** (Trident) 5; 20 **Pedro Piquet** (Charouz Racing) 3; 21 **Sean Gelael** (DAMS) 3; 22 **Marino Sato** (Trident) 1; 23 **Jake Hughes** (HWA Racelab) 0; 24 **Guilherme Samaia** (Campos Racing) 0; 25 **Ralph Boschung** (Campos Racing) 0; 26 **Theo Pourchaire** (HWA Racelab) 0.



**“IF YOU SAY, ‘Q2 IS OUR GOAL’,
MAYBE IT’S HARD TO REACH, BUT
IF WE DO, THEN IT’S LIKE A WIN”**

admits. “Nevertheless, it’s something that I’ve been able to get used to, and would say that I’m able to deal with pretty well. The results speak for themselves. So I think I will do the same as usual next year, and we’ll just try and keep the same rhythm.”

Things will change for Schumacher upon his graduation to F1. He will go from a frontrunning F2 Prema operation to a Haas squad that has struggled for the past two years and is braced for a “transition year”, to quote team boss Gunther Steiner, in 2021. It hardly breeds much confidence for a rookie season in which Schumacher can make a huge impact, but he is realistic of the adjustment that will take place.

“It’s mainly just understanding your goals, and setting your goals accordingly to what you think is possible,” he says. “Next year is really going to be about managing our expectations and really be open-minded on every aspect with everything happening. If you say, ‘OK, Q2 is our goal’, maybe it is hard to reach, but if we reach it, then it’s like a win for us. So I’ll take it as that to not only observe ourselves, but also to show to the others that we’ll always keep fighting and give our best.”

Such a mentality has served other rookies joining backmarker teams well in recent times, best shown by George Russell’s stand-out displays for Williams. Schumacher has a multi-year deal with Haas, ensuring he will be around for the 2022 regulation change, when it hopes to clamber back up the order. And if Schumacher can develop at the same rate as he has across F4, F3 and F2, where he has taken a notable step in performance for his second year at each level, it could coincide well for him to truly make a splash in F1. 🏁

➔ P30 FORMULA 3 REVIEW



Schumacher cites consistency as key to his F2 title victory

BINGHAM

**ROOKIES STEAL THE SHOW
FROM EXPERIENCED HEADS**



Tsunoda and Schwartzman lock horns in Bahrain last month

SUTTON

With three of the top four drivers in the 2019 standings moving on for 2020, the door was open for F2’s sophomores to impress. And although Mick Schumacher was able to march to the championship ahead of Callum Iloft, each in their second year, a number of their peers failed to mount the anticipated challenge.

The switch to 18-inch wheels for the 2020 season did help hit the reset button for the incoming rookies, allowing the likes of Robert Schwartzman and Yuki Tsunoda in particular to shine. Schwartzman led the early phase of the championship, taking a superb wet victory at the Red Bull Ring before a second feature-race win one week later in Hungary, and was rapid on his day. But a lack of consistency hurt him, particularly up against Prema Racing team-mate Schumacher, meaning he will remain in F2 for another season this year.

Less was expected of Tsunoda, given he had been in F4 just two years earlier, and only took one win in F3 through 2019. Yet the Japanese flourished with Carlin, taking four pole positions and three wins en route to third in the standings, and secured an F1 promotion with AlphaTauri in the process. Had the championship been scored on feature (non-top-eight reversed) races alone, Tsunoda would have been the winner.

Felipe Drugovich was another standout rookie, punching above his weight to score three wins for MP Motorsport and clinch a move to UNI-Virtuosi for 2021, when he replaces Iloft.

Although Iloft missed out on the title, he did firmly overshadow UNI-Virtuosi team-mate Guanyu Zhou, whose anticipated title bid never came to fruition. He finished sixth in the standings ahead of ART Grand Prix-run fellow Renault junior Christian Lundgaard, prompting their parent team to call their year “disappointing”. Williams F1 reserve Jack Aitken dealt with a tough year following a late pre-season engineer change at Campos Racing, leaving him 14th overall.

Nikita Mazepin made a decent step in his second season to score two feature race wins en route to fifth in the standings with Hitech GP, clinching an F1 superlicence in the process. It paved the way for a graduation with Haas, but his antics both on and off-track prove there is a huge amount for the young Russian to learn.



Mazepin faces a steep learning curve in F1

COATES

SEASON
REVIEW

AN OSCAR WINNING PERFORMANCE

F3 rookie Piastri only just snatched the title with Prema Racing, but the setbacks he overcame made this an even more impressive campaign than results suggested

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**



Oscar Piastri grabbed a last-ditch FIA Formula 3 Championship crown in a thrilling title showdown at Mugello, pipping Theo Pourchaire by three points and team-mate Logan Sargeant by four. But he could so easily have had it all done and dusted before the field even arrived for the season-closing Tuscan Grand Prix support races. And equally, he could so easily have lost it. That he didn't was testament to the skills of the series' best driver, for Piastri was a fully deserving champion.

Renault F1 Junior Piastri was one of two drivers in the Prema Racing line-up who were stepping up as reigning champions in the lower categories. While the Australian had won the 2019 Formula Renault Eurocup, thanks largely to scintillating racecraft that rescued him from a couple of severe setbacks, team-mate Frederik Vesti had conquered the less competitive Formula Regional European Championship with Prema. Alongside

them was Sargeant, who was transferring from Carlin, where he'd endured an unsuccessful rookie season at FIA F3 level.

That immediately prompted a refocusing of ambitions from Prema, for a decade the class act of the third tier. For 2019, its maiden season in what used to be known as GP3, it had fielded its 2018 FIA F3 European Championship stars Robert Shwartzman and Marcus Armstrong, plus their former rival Jehan Daruvala. They all had race-winning experience at this level, and it predictably ended with a Prema 1-2-3, headed by Shwartzman. For 2020, Prema was very light on FIA F3 smarts among its three cockpits.

"Honestly, with both of them [Piastri and Vesti] we were expecting to do a learning season, to be fighting for the top but as well learning, because F3 is a big step compared to the Renault or Regional car," admits Prema boss Rene Rosin. "Both of them I was expecting an apprenticeship year, but on the other hand since the first test in Bahrain we saw that both of them could



Two wins, no front-row starts, but Piastri was a worthy champion

Title seesawed between Piastri (1) and Sargeant, here in frenetic Monza battle

do a great season, fighting for the top. And coming out in Spielberg race one, Oscar won at his first race, and Frederik won at the second Austrian round, so immediately they were already there.”

Indeed, Piastri won the season opener at the Red Bull Ring, yet he did so via a three-way first-corner clash — not his fault — that put scuffmarks all over his car but remarkably inflicted no damage. He was up and running, but was unable to add further to his tally of wins until the sixth event at Barcelona thanks to a maddening series of DRS glitches. This included a retirement on the first Silverstone weekend when the DRS stuck open, and two failures in qualifying at the follow-up round at the British track that restricted him to 11th on the grid. While Piastri gained an enthusiastic following thanks to his amusing DRS tales on social media, Prema set to work trying to find the root of the problem. And Rosin claims that Piastri’s record of zero front-row starts is an unfair reflection of the champion’s qualifying prowess.

“He’s a great racer, and I would say he’s a very quick qualifier, but this year we were struggling with some technical issues that we found out after five or six weekends that compromised the team’s performance,” points out Rosin. “He was for example on pole in Silverstone, and then he lost DRS for the second set of tyres [hence the slide to 11th]. So he had times where he had the potential to start on pole position but then because of some issues outside of his control he didn’t put everything together.

“Honestly it was frustrating for him, it was frustrating for the team. We tried to change everything whatever it was that was within our control. Unfortunately, after a certain point we had to say, ‘Guys we cannot do anything more’, and finally we got together with the technical guys of the series, we changed something else and finally we got the problem solved. But yes, it was a bit frustrating, but the good point of Oscar was he always kept his head cool, he didn’t overreact, he always maximised his >>



potential, and that's what got him the championship at the end."

While Piastri was struggling with his qualifying (and Rosin, while playing down that record, admits the Victorian "can still improve" in this discipline), Sargeant snared three successive mid-season poles, the foundation for a strong series of results. Put it to Rosin that this could have been aided by his prior year of experience in the category, and he responds: "I think for sure experience was a part of it, but on the other hand his capabilities to nail everything on one lap are there, and you need to have that inside yourself. I think that it's also part of his characteristics."

But Sargeant's racecraft seemed to be wanting compared to Piastri's. The eventual champion's standouts included a charge from 15th to third at Monza, a brilliant fifth-to-first within four corners of the Barcelona reversed-grid race, and two tenacious

second places at a wet Hungaroring, the first with massive floor damage from a spectacular early-race collision. That Monza drive came after a farcical grid penalty for blocking, imposed despite him doing his best to move out of the way. Then, after the reversed-grid race at Monza, he was given a potentially far more damaging grid penalty for the Mugello finale for what appeared to be simply a racing incident with David Beckmann. Piastri described the situation as "uncontrollable bullshit", and Rosin adds: "He got a grid penalty for Monza where honestly, where would he go? He was on a slow lap and he was trying to avoid the others. And then he got a grid penalty for Mugello for an accident that was not his fault."

Luckily for Piastri, a collision between his team-mates Vesti – who had endured a patchy mid-season that left him a little too much to do in the title fight – and Sargeant prevented the

SIX STOOD A CHANCE OF TAKING THE TITLE

There were six drivers still in mathematical contention for the FIA F3 title going into the final round at Mugello. To the eventual top four of Oscar Piastri, Theo Pourchaire, Logan Sargeant and Frederik Vesti were added Liam Lawson and David Beckmann.

Highly rated Kiwi

Lawson switched to Hitech Grand Prix for his second season in FIA F3, and the Red Bull Junior had a wins record that was unsurpassed by anyone in the series (he scored three victories, as did Vesti). A number of impressive drives suggest that he will be a rookie to watch as he graduates to

F2 this season with Hitech. German Beckmann has been around for a long time at this level – although he did make his F3 debut at the youthful age of 16 – and did exactly the solid job you'd have expected of him as he led the attack of Italian team Trident.

Like Beckmann, Jake Hughes has been at the third-tier level for five seasons. Once again the 26-year-old veteran spearheaded the German HWA Racelab operation, and he scored two wins on his way to a 2019-equalling seventh in the points.

Lirim Zendeli was Pourchaire's predecessor



as German F4 champion, and for his second season in F3 he switched to Trident and backed up Beckmann. He was a winner too, but lacked the consistency for a title threat. The other race victor was bespectacled Dutchman Bent Viscaal, who was sometimes superb for MP Motorsport but other times midfield.

Team-mate Richard Verschoor was much more regularly in the points and placed ninth, with Campos Racing's Alex Peroni 10th.

Another to impress was ART rookie Alexander Smolyar, who hails from the far east of Russia (close to Japan) and netted a pole, as did erratic team-mate Sebastian Fernandez.





American from taking the points lead into Mugello. Even more luckily for Piastrì, Sargeant was given his own grid penalty as he was deemed to be at fault.

Sargeant levelled the scores in the first race in Tuscany, as Piastrì laboured from 16th to 11th, and the Floridian would start ahead of his rival for the finale. But a collision with Lirim Zendeli put Sargeant out, and Piastrì did enough to hold off the surging Pourchaire for the title. When considering how Sargeant lost out on the ultimate prize, it should be remembered that he really should have allowed Liam Lawson to repass him in race one at the Hungaroring. The post-race penalty given to Sargeant for his illegal outside-track-limits move on the Kiwi cost him more points than he lost the title by...

"Logan had all the cards to play in the championship," says Rosin of the final two weekends in Italy. "Both of Logan and Oscar would have deserved to win the championship. For Mugello, unfortunately what happened especially left him [Sargeant] a bit sour of the taste."

The late-season dramas so nearly allowed Pourchaire to steal the title from the Prema trio. The French whippersnapper, just 16 years old when he took a beautiful win in the wet at the Hungaroring, stepped up with ART Grand Prix as the reigning German Formula 4 champion, and some of his drives were truly impressive – including

"SARGEANT'S POST-RACE PENALTY COST HIM MORE POINTS THAN HE LOST BY"

a charge from 18th (following an early incident) to third in the reversed-grid race at Monza. His runner-up championship position perhaps flattered him slightly in light of the late-season Prema dramas, but he is clearly a major talent. Pourchaire's form also backs up the opinion of Piastrì, who reckoned the compressed schedule – the nine rounds took place within 11 weekends – as a result of COVID made the season less disadvantageous for rookies, simply because they scarcely stopped racing.

Pourchaire looks nailed on to graduate to F2 with ART this season, while Piastrì is already confirmed at Prema. Sargeant, too, seems likely to go F2, and has tested with Campos Racing, while the grapevine indicates that Vesti has been snaffled away from Prema by ART for a second season of FIA F3. That should add some spice to what is shaping up to be a tasty Prema-versus-ART war in 2021-spec FIA F3. 🍷

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	PTS
1	Oscar Piastrì (AUS)	Prema Racing	1	8	4	5	2	2	2	R	7	6	6	1	5	6	3	R	11	7	164
2	Theo Pourchaire (FRA)	ART Grand Prix	13	26	9	1	1	6	12	8	6	3	7	6	2	5	2	2	3	3	161
3	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Prema Racing	2	27	6	2	6	4	3	5	1	R	3	5	8	1	26	24	6	R	160
4	Frederik Vesti (DNK)	Prema Racing	4	6	1	8	R	R	5	4	4	8	R	21	6	2	1	23	1	9	146.5
5	Liam Lawson (NZL)	Hitech Grand Prix	6	1	8	R	R	R	1	7	3	5	2	7	9	3	6	7	10	1	143
6	David Beckmann (DEU)	Trident	7	4	3	3	10	1	9	1	5	4	5	9	3	9	4	R	8	2	139.5
7	Jake Hughes (GBR)	HWA Racelab	28	12	10	R	24	19	4	10	2	7	1	10	R	17	5	1	2	6	111.5
8	Lirim Zendeli (DEU)	Trident	5	5	2	10	R	16	13	11	9	2	12	16	1	8	7	4	4	R	104
9	Richard Verschoor (NLD)	MP Motorsport	8	2	7	4	4	5	11	9	19	18	9	4	10	7	27	10	12	5	69
10	Alex Peroni (AUS)	Campos Racing	3	R	11	11	7	10	6	3	14	24	8	2	14	21	16	5	20	13	64

11 **Alexander Smolyar** (ART Grand Prix) 59; 12 **Clement Novalak** (Carlin) 45; 13 **Bent Viscaal** (MP Motorsport) 40; 14 **Sebastian Fernandez** (ART Grand Prix) 31; 15 **Enzo Fittipaldi** (HWA Racelab) 27; 16 **Olli Caldwell** (Trident) 18; 17 **Dennis Hauger** (Hitech Grand Prix) 14; 18 **Matteo Nannini** (Jenzer Motorsport) 11; 19 **Pierre-Louis Chovet** (Hitech Grand Prix) 5; 20 **Max Fewtrell** (Hitech Grand Prix) 5; 21 **Roman Stanek** (Charouz Racing) 3; 22 **Ben Barnicoat** (Carlin) 1; 23 **Michael Belov** (Charouz Racing) 1; 24 **Igor Fraga** (Charouz Racing) 1; 25 **Cameron Das** (Carlin) 0; 26 **Jack Doohan** (HWA Racelab) 0; 27 **Lukas Dunner** (MP Motorsport) 0; 28 **David Schumacher** (Charouz Racing/Carlin) 0; 29 **Sophia Florsch** (Campos Racing) 0; 30 **Federico Malvestiti** (Jenzer Motorsport) 0; 31 **Calan Williams** (Jenzer Motorsport) 0; 32 **Enaam Ahmed** (Carlin) 0; 33 **Leonardo Pulcini** (Carlin) 0; 34 **Alessio Deledda** (Campos Racing) 0; 35 **Andreas Estner** (Campos Racing) 0.

HOW A FALLEN RED BULL HOPE BECAME A PORSCHÉ GREAT

Michael Ammermuller's rise to the brink of Formula 1 collapsed with a wrist injury in 2007, but he's reinvented himself as a Porsche ace and claimed four titles in as many years

JAMES NEWBOLD

During a remarkable 2006 GP2 campaign, Lewis Hamilton marked himself out as a future Formula 1 star with a convincing title-winning charge that included clean sweeps of the Nurburgring and Silverstone. But while the now seven-time world champion had to wait until round three to get off the mark, another series rookie opened his account on the first weekend of the year, when he took the reversed-grid spoils at Valencia.

Like Hamilton, he's currently sitting on a run of four consecutive titles, although you'd be forgiven after the quickfire 2020 campaign

for missing former Red Bull junior Michael Ammermuller's coronation in the ADAC GT Masters. Coming after a hat-trick of Porsche Supercup titles for Lechner Racing, the bespectacled German's successful switch to Germany's hotly contested national GT3 championship is all the more notable given that the Porsche he shared with former Supercup rival Christian Engelhart was being run by a team brand-new to motorsport. Just like Hamilton's Mercedes operation, plagued by engine trouble in testing before dominating the season, Ammermuller's Munich-based SSR Performance squad benefited from the pandemic-induced

Three Porsche Supercup titles on the trot (this is 2019) for Ammermuller





On the GP2 podium at Barcelona in 2006 with Hamilton and Premat



Ammermuller takes GP2 sprint race victory at Valencia in 2006

delays to hit the ground running with a podium at its first race, before scoring the first of three race wins at the second round.

“Of course I’m very happy about the last four years and especially 2020 with the new team and a different series,” reflects Ammermuller, who admits he played hard to get with SSR boss Stefan Schlund. “I was not so sure in the beginning if this is the right decision. I said to him, ‘I will call you back in two weeks’, but I didn’t call him and he rung me back...”

“I told him, ‘I want racing because of fun, that’s the most important thing. But I only have fun if I have success.’ That’s why

I decided to do this. If I would have thought it will not be possible to win races or have good people in the team, I would have said no.”

The campaign was one that arose purely out of pragmatism. Ammermuller had originally planned to dovetail his first GT Masters campaign since 2017 with a ninth season in Supercup, before clashes following the pandemic prompted him to choose the series he considered the most likely to proceed. “I was not sure at that time [if the Supercup would happen] because it’s a very international championship,” he says. “I thought it might be more likely that a German championship will happen.”

It proved a sound call, and SSR – with technical support from Manthey Racing – was a highly competitive prospect. At the Oschersleben finale, Ammermuller and Engelhart overturned a seven-point deficit to the Rutronik Audi of Kelvin van der Linde and Patric Niederhauser after a stunning pole from Ammermuller set SSR on course for race one victory. Fourth place in race two, with van der Linde eliminated in a start crash, was enough for the title. Unsurprisingly, Ammermuller picks it out as the key point in the campaign.

“For everybody who is fighting for a championship, mentally that’s the hardest because that’s the last two races that count,” he says. “You have not so many races left so you have to be in front of the others and make the points. We had the lead after the first race in Oschersleben and I think this destroyed the other teams because then they were in the position like we were on Saturday morning.”

Given Ammermuller’s affinity with 911s, it’s perhaps not a surprise that he was immediately on the pace with SSR, but a GT3

“I RACE BECAUSE OF FUN, THAT’S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING. BUT I ONLY HAVE FUN IF I HAVE SUCCESS”

campaign is a very different beast from Supercup. Where the latter is a single-driver, spec-car formula, the former is a multi-make Balance of Performance category where two drivers share a car. Ammermuller says “you have a lot more factors which you cannot influence in the GT3. In the Supercup, it’s more the driver and what I can control.” But despite getting the car to himself in Supercup, its status on the F1 undercard means practice is very limited.

“Also, the tyre is not an endurance tyre; it’s a sprint tyre so you have only one lap sometimes where the new tyre is quick in qualifying,” says Ammermuller. “Without ABS it’s really difficult to push the car on the limit – you can lose the car more easily than a GT3 car. I think this helped me a lot.”

So how did Ammermuller, a man who works day to day for the family recycling firm, become an undisputed Porsche master? It’s not been an easy ride, despite the early patronage of Red Bull, which >>



PORSCHE AG/HOCH ZWEI

took him straight from Formula Renault 2.0 to GP2 with Arden. He followed his promising start at Valencia with second in the feature race at Imola and a third at Barcelona, joining Hamilton and winner Alex Premat on the podium. But his season tailed off afterwards, not helped by being taken out at the first corner at the Hungaroring after qualifying a promising third, so the pressure was on when he joined ART for 2007, even taking the #1 earned by Hamilton.

An “unlucky” clash with Kazuki Nakajima at the Bahrain season opener left him with a broken wrist, and his struggles on his return after almost three months out with no testing led to his being dropped by Helmut Marko, just as Scott Speed was being herded towards the Toro Rosso exit door. “At this time, we didn’t have any simulators to train on, so there was no chance to train,” he reflects. “This was my problem to come back after this break without testing to compete immediately with the top drivers.”

It was a bitter pill to swallow — ART team-mate Lucas di Grassi had endured a nightmare maiden GP2 campaign in 2006 for Durango, but emerged the following year as Timo Glock’s main title rival, so it wouldn’t be beyond the realms of possibility that Ammermuller could have made similar progress to earn the F1 berth that eventually went to Sebastian Vettel...

“They pushed me up very fast and they stopped it in the same way very fast!” he says. “If they let me have more time to recover, maybe I could have had more success in formula cars. I can’t tell because I did only one race weekend [before the injury], but I’m sure that if I wouldn’t be injured, I would have had a good chance to get a Formula 1 seat. It’s done and I can’t change anything, but if I hadn’t been injured, many things could have been different.”

To keep his F1 dream alive, Ammermuller headed to A1GP, where he was again quick in the Super Nova-run Team Germany squad with which Nico Hulkenberg had won the title the previous year, but earned a reputation for getting embroiled in incidents. “I had a lot of pressure to perform because at this moment I didn’t have a lot of options to do anything else, so that was not an easy situation for me,” he says.

Without the sponsorship to continue in GP2, “the only option was to do Formula Master which I knew was not very good, but I did it because it was the only chance to stay in motorsport”.

Third in the points wasn’t enough to revive his fading F1 hopes, but he managed to find a berth in GT Masters for 2010 before the crucial move to one-make Porsches came with the recommendation of an old friend. Christoph Huber, whose Huber Racing team ran Larry ten Voorde to the 2020 Carrera Cup Germany title, was then



Ammermuller had a practice run for Red Bull at the 2006 Chinese GP

working as team manager for Walter Lechner’s successful squad and was key in Ammermuller landing alongside double champion Rene Rast in 2012. Ammermuller learned quickly and followed his soon-to-be-triple-champion team leader home for a 1-2 at Hockenheim, but it was another two years before he finally broke his duck at the 28th attempt, in the final round of 2014 at Austin.

“The first win was very special because it took a long time; I was many times on the podium but never won a race,” he says. “After that it’s easier, you can drive more free because you know you can do it. After that I was always getting stronger.”

Third in 2014 and 2015, he improved his points tally in 2016 as he slipped to fourth, but then the floodgates opened in 2017. He took four wins on his way to the title, a feat he matched in 2019 after only winning once in an ultra-close fight in 2018.

Now fifth on the all-time Supercup wins tally, does becoming its all-time conqueror motivate Ammermuller? “I’m not racing to make history or to be somewhere on a list,” he replies. “I just want to race and have fun. I’m not completely fixed on the race weekends, I have different problems during the week, and that works for me because I’m not thinking all the time about the last race or the next race.”

Asked if he’s motivated by achieving the status of a works driver, his answer is telling. “To get a factory drive would be nice,” he says. “But if I get one, it would be not the same like a normal factory driver because I can’t spend 100% of my time on racing. It would be limited on races that I still can do my [day] job.”

It’s a matter-of-fact response from a matter-of-fact driver. Perfect material for a matter-of-fact company like Porsche. 🏆



Celebrating 2019 Porsche Supercup teams’ and drivers’ crowns in Mexico



WHY GT MASTERS IS TOUGH TO WIN

Christian Engelhart knows a thing or two about winning races in GT Masters. In fact, he's done so 15 times since a spectacular debut victory at the Red Bull Ring in 2011. But until 2020, when he teamed up with Michael Ammermuller and SSR Performance, he had never managed to win the title, although claimed a runner-up finish in 2019. What makes it so difficult to win?

For one, it's the most competitive national GT3 championship in the world, regularly attracting grids of more than 30 cars and featuring many of the same factory drivers who contest

the GT World Challenge Europe. But for another, it's the 30kg weight penalties handed to the winners of the first race of each round for race two.

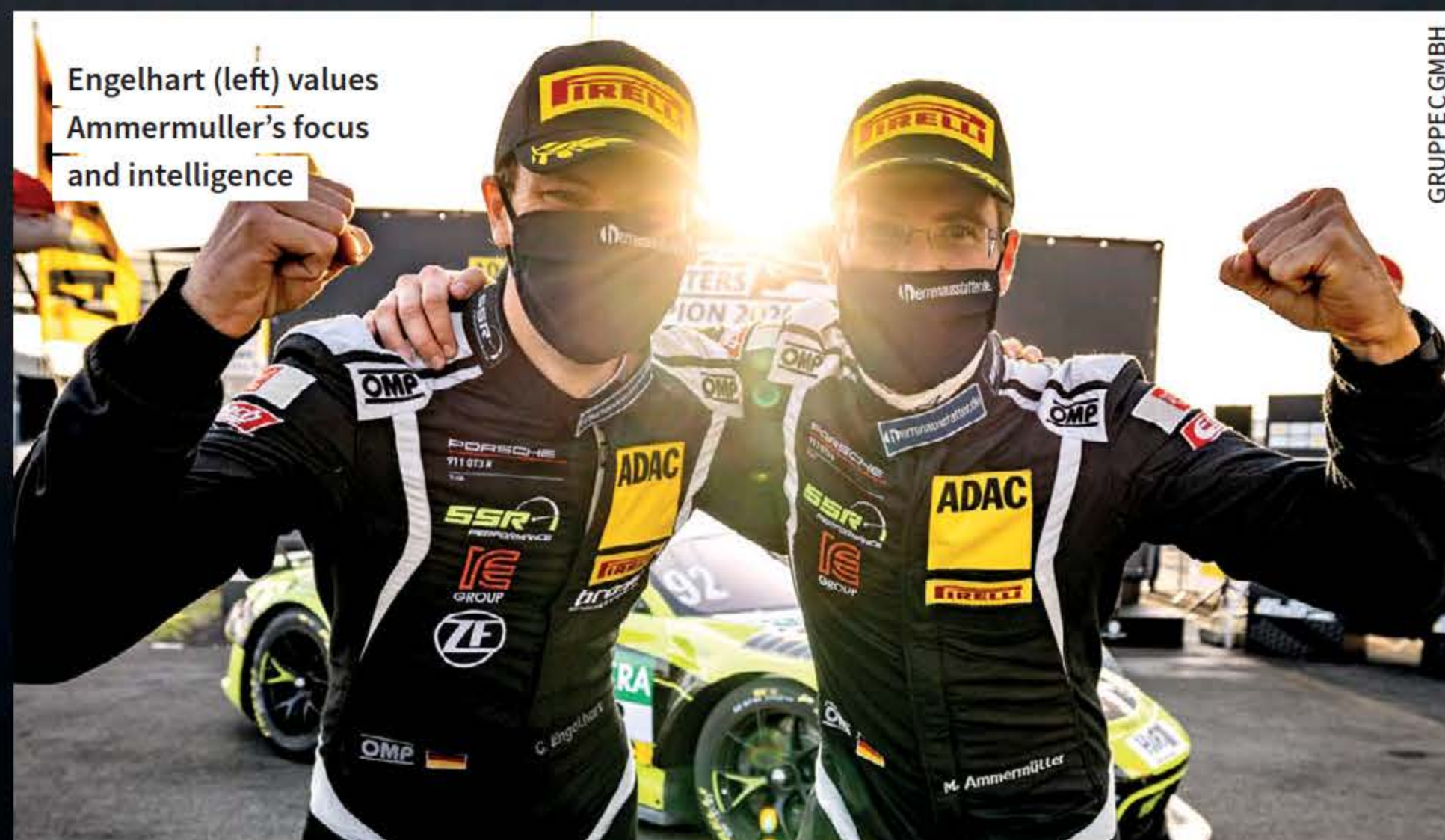
"In GT Masters it's

actually very difficult to get many points in the second race when you win the first race, because you always have to carry 30 kilos," says Engelhart, the 2017 Blancpain Endurance

and overall Blancpain GT champion. "That's why in GT Masters we had 12 different winners [from 14 races] this year. We're the only guys that won three races, the others only won

one race each. On the difficult races, you try to maximise what you have. You cannot win every race."

The cultured approach is well suited to Ammermuller, a driver Engelhart describes as "very clever". "You can see his great experience and how he's handling battles on track when he's fighting with other cars, how he's defending, or also how he can pull a lap out of the bag in qualifying," he says. "In every moment you can really see that he's focused. He has the experience and the abilities and he's a true professional."



Engelhart (left) values Ammermuller's focus and intelligence

GRUPPECMBH

WHY EXTREME E'S EQUALITY STANCE IS NECESSARY

The rules of the new electric SUV off-road series require teams to field one male and one female driver. Here's why the move is more important than it may seem

JAMES NEWBOLD

During the online launch for the new all-electric SUV off-road Extreme E series, which mandates a fifty-fifty split between male and female participants, Chip Ganassi Racing's long-serving general manager Mike Hull was asked a pertinent question. What was the response to his team hiring a female driver, Sara Price, for the first time in its storied 30-year history?

"Sara has proven that she can win and that has nothing to do with gender," Hull replied. "She knows how to win and she'll represent Extreme E and the global significance of what we're trying to do as a winning race driver, who happens to be female."

The brainchild of Alejandro Agag, XE is the latest avenue to offer female drivers a platform to showcase their skills. Unlike W Series, however, they will be pitched head-to-head against their male counterparts, and in equal equipment. While high-profile drivers such as Sebastien Loeb (X44), Carlos Sainz Sr (Acciona) and Mattias Ekstrom (Abt) have tended to hog the >>



THE WOMEN LEADING THE XE DRIVER CONTINGENT



CLAUDIA HURTGEN

Abt Cupra

The German GT racing regular counts a 1997 Daytona 24 Hours class win and a 1998 Le Mans GT2 podium on her decorated CV.



LAIA SANZ

Acciona Sainz XE

Dakar bike ace, who has made fleeting SEAT Eurocup, 24H Series and RX Lites cameos, partners WRC legend Carlos Sainz Sr.



CATIE MUNNINGS

Andretti United

Red Bull-backed Munnings has been a regular on the European Rally scene and then stepped up to the Junior World Rally stage for the Swedish event last season.



SARA PRICE

Chip Ganassi Racing

A 17-time national motocross champion, Price is the first female driver to be signed by the Ganassi team in its 30-year history.



CHRISTINE GIAMPAOLI ZONCA

Hispano-Suiza

A one-time WRC entrant and a top-10 finisher in the Baja 1000, the Italian-Canarian drives for the new squad that replaces HWA.



MOLLY TAYLOR

Rosberg Xtreme Racing

The youngest-ever champion of her native Australian Rally Championship, Taylor has also won a brace of British class titles.



JAMIE CHADWICK

Veloce Racing

The 2019 W Series champion is taking a big leap into off-road racing having only competed on sealed surfaces to date. Her team-mate is TBC.



CRISTINA GUTIERREZ

Team X44

Five-time Dakar starter has been picked by Lewis Hamilton's team to partner nine-time WRC champion Sebastien Loeb.

Note: Techeetah's drivers are yet to be confirmed.



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headlines, the likes of Price, Molly Taylor (Rosberg Xtreme Racing) and Catie Munnings (Andretti United) will have an invaluable opportunity to demonstrate their talents to audiences who may never have heard of them, and to become stars of the series in the way unheralded Formula 1 refugees such as Sebastien Buemi and Lucas di Grassi became the standard-bearers in Formula E.

Unsurprisingly, the “revolutionary” sporting format, which requires both the male and female driver to complete one lap in each heat, has the full support of FIA Women in Motorsport Commission president Michele Mouton.

“For many years we have been striving towards gender equality and equal opportunities in the sport,” she said at the launch. “Extreme E is supporting this philosophy and has taken a concrete action that highlights female racers’ competence, and it’s for me a very important element. We are really supporting seeing more women competing in a mixed environment and we are extremely pleased with this great opportunity for them.”

There can be no doubt that XE’s stance points to an encouraging shift in the opportunities being provided to female participants in motorsport, but there will always be critics who deride it as a case of artificial positive discrimination. Surely, according to their logic, if a woman was good enough to be selected on merit then a team would do so without being forced to.

But the reason for Extreme E taking this bold stance for equality is a simple one: lack of funding and visibility of female drivers is creating a vicious circle that means the talent pool is far smaller. This will take time to resolve but, as Agag reasons, “it’s a task that’s worth it”.

THE PROBLEM

In three of the four years between 2010 and 2013, there were four female drivers on the starting grid for the Indianapolis 500. But in 2020 there were none, for the first time in two decades. The impact of COVID-19 certainly played its part in Pippa Mann being unable to continue her run of seven consecutive appearances at America’s biggest race, but hardly explains why the Indianapolis-based Brit was the only one in a position to continue the streak started by Lyn St James in 2000.

Mann has become a specialist in one-off deals at the 500 since graduating from Indy Lights in 2011, and found most success with sponsors based near to the Speedway, having discovered larger companies to be a closed door unless “they have a vested interest in potentially supporting women, which narrows my field significantly”. It shows that things have changed little since the start of St James’s own Indy foray – the long-time IMSA racer famously had 150 sponsorship proposals rejected over a four-year spell before snaring JC Penney and becoming rookie of the year in 1992.

“The biggest hurdle still in my opinion for any racing driver, whether male or female, is the sponsorship side and literally being able to find the money to keep competing,” says Mann, who recently announced that she will contest the 2021 Nurburgring 24 Hours as





“EXTREME E HAS TAKEN A CONCRETE ACTION THAT HIGHLIGHTS FEMALE RACERS’ COMPETENCE”

part of the Girls Only TCR team that, as well as drivers, is staffed by an all-female crew of mechanics and engineers. “But for women in motorsports specifically, that presents additional hurdles, because we’re effectively pitching still to a mostly male audience who’s controlling the money. And with all human beings, let’s be honest, it’s much easier to relate to someone who is more like you.

“Plus, you still have the lingering stereotypes that may not be directly affecting the person who is making the decision, but the person deciding whether to award this sponsorship money and who is going to get it has to do so based on what’s best for their brand. And there’s still that small but relatively vocal portion of the population who certainly make themselves heard when female race car drivers are involved. It’s different if I am involved in a crash, whether it’s my fault or not, than if a male driver is 90% of the time. That’s just a fact.”

“It’s no secret that motorsport is really expensive,” agrees Formula 3 racer Sophia Floersch, who broke into sportscars last year with the all-female Richard Mille Racing LMP2 team. “If your parents don’t have the money every single year to pay €1-2million, or partners or sponsors or people like Richard Mille believing in your story, that’s where it gets more difficult for women because there is never a really performing woman in top motorsport ranks where sponsors see that women are actually able to do it.

“So sponsors are like, ‘Yeah, but first you have to prove it’, and you don’t just have to prove it once, you have to prove it five times that you’re actually as quick as the men. And it’s like a circle, because you are not able to win a race if you don’t have the same test days as the others. Even if you have testing bans in F3 or F2 or whatever, people can still find a way to go around those things. So I think that’s the biggest issue, that women are not getting the same sponsorship deals.”

Sportscar stalwart Katherine Legge says that she’s “been around long enough and bullied enough people into believing me” that she can match her male counterparts, but struggled all the way through her Champ Car, DTM and Indycar careers to open doors with teams that could give her a chance of winning. And that, she agrees, is part of the problem. “We would all get opportunities, but it wouldn’t be with the Ganassis and the Penskes of this world,” she says of her time with PKV, Dale Coyne Racing and Dragon in Indycars.

Mann, a member of US-based female collective Shift Up Now, which aims to help more women get opportunities in motorsport, >>



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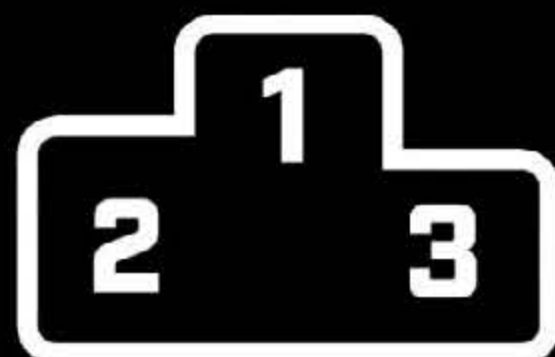


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EXTREME



Laia Sanz will partner Carlos Sainz Sr at the Acciona team.

Inset: Mouton backs XE initiative

Formula 1 is often couched in terms of ability – “When is there going to be a girl good enough to be in F1?” – when then-IndyCar rising star Simona de Silvestro’s time as a Sauber-affiliated driver never amounted to an opportunity to test contemporary equipment. F1’s door remained firmly closed to the Swiss, who Mann acknowledges is “possibly the best female driver in a high-level open-wheel car that most of us have ever seen on a road course” (and who is now Porsche’s FE reserve). With the problem of sponsorship persisting, Mann says it’s no surprise that progress is slow. “When women are funded enough the entire way up the ladder to gain the same experience in the same level of teams as their male counterparts, that’s when you’re going to start to see women be ready for Formula 1,” Mann says.

“We can be as quick as the top of the guys, I’m 100 per cent sure that a woman can do the same,” agrees Floersch. “But we still need to get the same testing days, the same new tyres, the same chances.”

THE WAY FORWARD

So what’s the answer? “It’s really got to be a numbers game,” says Legge, a member of Mouton’s Women in Motorsport Commission since it was founded. “You get more girls involved at grassroots level when they’re young, and more of those will then make their way up through the ranks.”

Mouton is, of course, all too aware of this and is actively working to address that very point. “We have a pyramid and what is missing for us is the base of our pyramid,” she points out.

More than 1200 girls aged between 13 and 18 entered the FIA’s Girls on Track Karting Challenge, a national selection held in nine European countries in 2019 for aspiring racers with or without experience, from which six with the most potential were picked out after a final assessment at Le Mans.

The Commission has also partnered with Ferrari on the Girls on Track Rising Stars programme, a driver selection held at Paul Ricard to discover a new member of the Ferrari Driver Academy to race in Formula 4, although that was postponed in November due to a positive COVID test for one of the final four drivers. Nevertheless, Mouton was pleased by what she saw and encouraged for the future. “We have seen now in Le Castellet, we had very good potential, girls who were very good and adapting very quickly on Formula 4,” she says. “They will be our resources for the future so I am quite convinced that we are on the right way.”

That optimism is shared by Legge, who notes “opportunities now for women in racing are thousands of times more than when I first started”, with W Series offering a platform for young female drivers to race for free on the support bill of eight F1 weekends in 2021.

“I wish I was 20 years younger honestly!” she says. “Back

when I moved to the States [in 2005], there was literally Danica [Patrick], myself and Susie [Wolff], so three of us racing globally professionally, and now there’s a lot more. When I first started it was more of a novelty and now it’s not really a novelty anymore. More and more girls are proving that we can be competitive, so it’s not an anomaly.

“Times are changing. Doors are opening, which is going to make the nine-year-old Katherines of the future have more opportunities, and it’s really cool to see that unfold during my career. I think it’s going to explode here in the next 10 years or so and I think we’ll see females in F1 and all the top ranks of racing.”

And as more female drivers prove themselves at the top, Mouton believes that more young karters will be encouraged not to give up on their dreams in an altogether more positive cycle. When the right female driver gets the right opportunity, Mouton believes “there is no reason” why she would not be able to take it.

“I tell you, it was happening for me,” she says. “When I was in the French Championship, I was lucky enough to have a manufacturer who gave me the same car, the Fiat, as the best driver in France and for me to have the same condition. I didn’t want to be ridiculous compared to this guy – I had to push.

“Then Audi called me for the world championship against the best drivers in the world and then you have the same car, they treat you the same way, same testing and you think you will be three seconds slower per kilometre? No way! It pushed my limit.”

Whether or not XE will prove the catalyst for meaningful change is impossible to say for now. But there is rightful optimism that XE’s equality stand can be a focal point to inspire young girls to have a go themselves and, ultimately, for female participation to continue its upward trajectory to a point where many more are pushing to upend a status quo that required a fifty-fifty rule to be introduced in the first place. Transformative change may not happen overnight but, as Mann points out, “change is happening all around us”. That, surely, can only be a good thing. ❧



Munnings will compete for Andretti United in inaugural XE season

EXTREME

The first American to conquer Europe

The French Grand Prix was *the* big race in European motorsport and Jimmy Murphy won it 100 years ago. And then he won the Indy 500, making waves as he went

PAUL FEARNLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

Orphaned by the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, aged 11; the owner of a thriving Los Angeles garage while still in his teens; a riding mechanic of burgeoning repute before he turned 21; and a works racing driver at 25. Within two more years James (Jimmy) Anthony Murphy would become the first American winner of a grand prix in an American car – a feat matched once since.

Within three he would become the first owner/driver to win the Indianapolis 500, and the first driver to win it from pole. And within five he would become a twice national champion of the world's most competitive form of motor racing. Tragically, this king of the extremely fast and dangerous board tracks sprouting up across the United States would also be dead.

Murphy had just turned 30 when he paid the ultimate price for a fractional misjudgement. The neat style that made him such a force on those towering wooden bankings – and on his increasingly rare appearances in road races – left him little room for error on dirt ovals. He was not a fan, considering their surface to be too unpredictable, but this 150-miler at Syracuse, New York on 15 September 1924 was a round of the prestigious American Automobile Association (AAA) Championship – the only one of nine not held on boards that season – and he had arrived chock-full of confidence after a hat-trick of wins at Altoona, Pennsylvania (twice) and Kansas City. He was at the top of his game.

Though he had perhaps underestimated the speed and staying power of the previously unheralded Phil 'Red' Shafer – the margin being more than two laps at one point – he was catching the leader's Duesenberg in the closing, rutted stages when it happened: Murphy's fast but fragile Miller single-seater snagged the inside rail entering the back stretch – some say a shock absorber failed – and spun at least twice before scything yards of fencing, which in turn pierced car and driver.

Death in racing was a given then. Joe Boyer, Murphy's millionaire friend, ex-Duesenberg team-mate and fellow Indy winner, had just weeks before been chasing the Altoona lead when he crashed to his death: one of 16 fatalities in a two-month period. Murphy's passing was different nevertheless. His ready smile, "pleasing golden tenor" and easygoing manner, with children and future Fascist dictators alike, had not only hidden fierce ambition and determination but

also made him America's favourite speed demon. The long train ride home to Vernon, California – copper casket in the baggage car, rivals mourning in the next carriage – was a procession, via New York and Chicago. (The superstitious Murphy had not wanted to accept the return ticket before the race started.) And thousands more would file past this self-made man of Irish-immigrant stock as he lay in state.

His 'journey' had begun on a motorbike gifted by prosperous aunt-and-uncle guardians eager to please, and Murphy honed his balance, speed and mechanical skills on it. Switching to cars, fearless and knowledgeable, he would sit alongside several big names after a lucky break had seen him ride shotgun to Eddie O'Donnell in the victorious Duesenberg at California's Corona road race of 1916. Team captain Tommy Milton may have been blind in his right eye since birth, but he could spot talent and leant

an ear and political clout to Murphy's oft-stated desire to drive. Though the protege crashed twice given his chance at 1919's end, Milton continued to press his case, and the promoted Murphy sensationally won the 200-miler at the new Beverly Hills board track in February 1920. They were, of course, too equally talented not to clash eventually.

The inevitable happened sooner rather than later. Milton, after recuperating from leg burns suffered in a crash in 1919, was en route in April from a

business/pleasure trip to Havana when Murphy, at boss Fred Duesenberg's behest, blasted a twin-engined record-breaker across the Daytona sand. The run was unofficial but fast enough to grab the headlines. Milton was furious. Not only had he invested money and expertise in the car, but also he was paying Murphy's wages. Milton's tirade drowning all attempts at explanation, the bombarded Murphy turned and walked away. Deepening and widening, only in death would their faultline be bridged.

Naive rather than malicious, Murphy toughened up. Unmarried, abstemious and fastidious, he dedicated himself to the protection and progression of his career, preparing cars with unstinting precision and racing them in a fashion befitting, while either setting the pace or sitting back before striking. Such professionalism would cause a sensation in Europe, supposed home of the sport.

Murphy put the truculent locals to shame – bar the redoubtable Jean Chassagne – at the 1921 Grand Prix de l'Automobile Club >>

“Unmarried, abstemious and fastidious, he dedicated himself to his career”



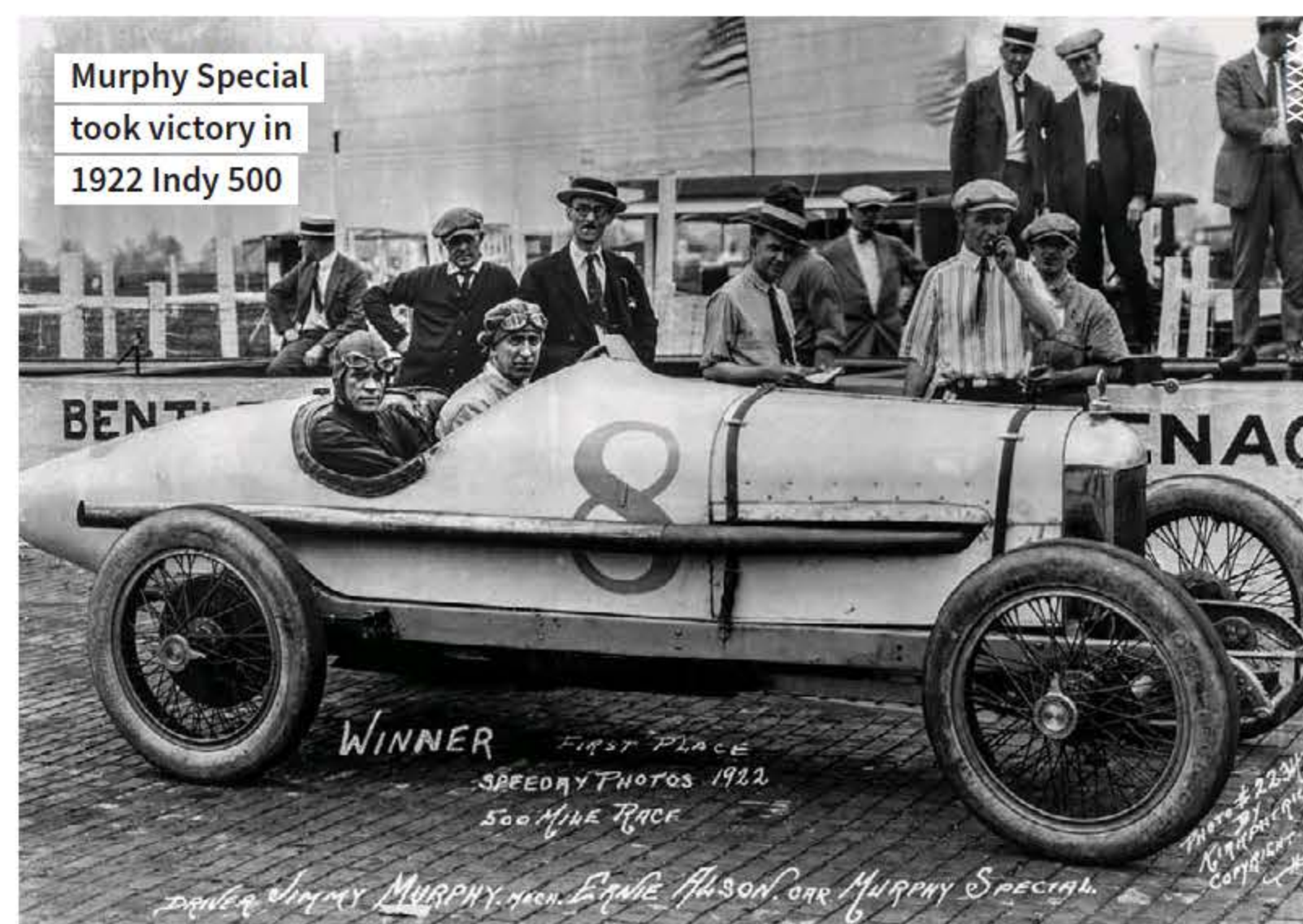
'Gentle Jimmy' smiles for the camera after his 1921 French GP victory at Le Mans

de France. His Duesenberg, immaculate and *au point*, was ostensibly simpler – single-overhead cam, three valves per cylinder, three plain main bearings and a three-speed gearbox – than its main rival and fellow straight-eight advocate Ballot. Any deficits in chassis and power (both are debatable) were, however, compensated for by a more flexible and accelerative delivery of a lighter car harnessed by Lockheed's hydraulic (a glycerine-and-water mix) four-wheel brakes, a GP first; Murphy pretty much invented the modern style of overtaking, once he had balanced their effect by reducing the linings' area to prevent the fronts from locking. He also preferred the carburettors of LA genius Harry Miller to those of Claudel-Hobson, no matter the size of any financial incentive. He knew his stuff and his own mind.

The team, tuned by the cut-and-thrust of the board tracks, with its emphasis on clear, informative pit signals and athletic, choreographed pit work – Murphy and regular riding mechanic Ernie Olson moved as one – was well prepared; it had been orienting for almost two weeks before tardier competitors piped up about a lack of official practice. The 10.72-mile Le Mans circuit – fundamentally that used today for the 24 Hours – cut up horribly in places, but Firestone's Oldfield-branded tyres, though not immune to punctures and lacking a studded 'wet' option, were a match for Ballot's Pirellis and far superior to the Dunlops of the chaotic effort of the new Sunbeam-Talbot-Darracq combine. The 87mph practice laps turned by Murphy and Boyer would lie several seconds beyond the subsequent Bentley Boys' reach until the circuit was shortened in 1929.

Even the best-laid plan can go awry, however. Murphy overturned during practice, reportedly due to an errant horse, while showing team-mate Louis Inghibert the ropes. The Frenchman, whose fortune had helped fund the project, was *hors de combat*, but Murphy, jockey-tough, would start the race bandaged from waist to armpit. And he would finish it with a holed radiator and a right-rear puncture.

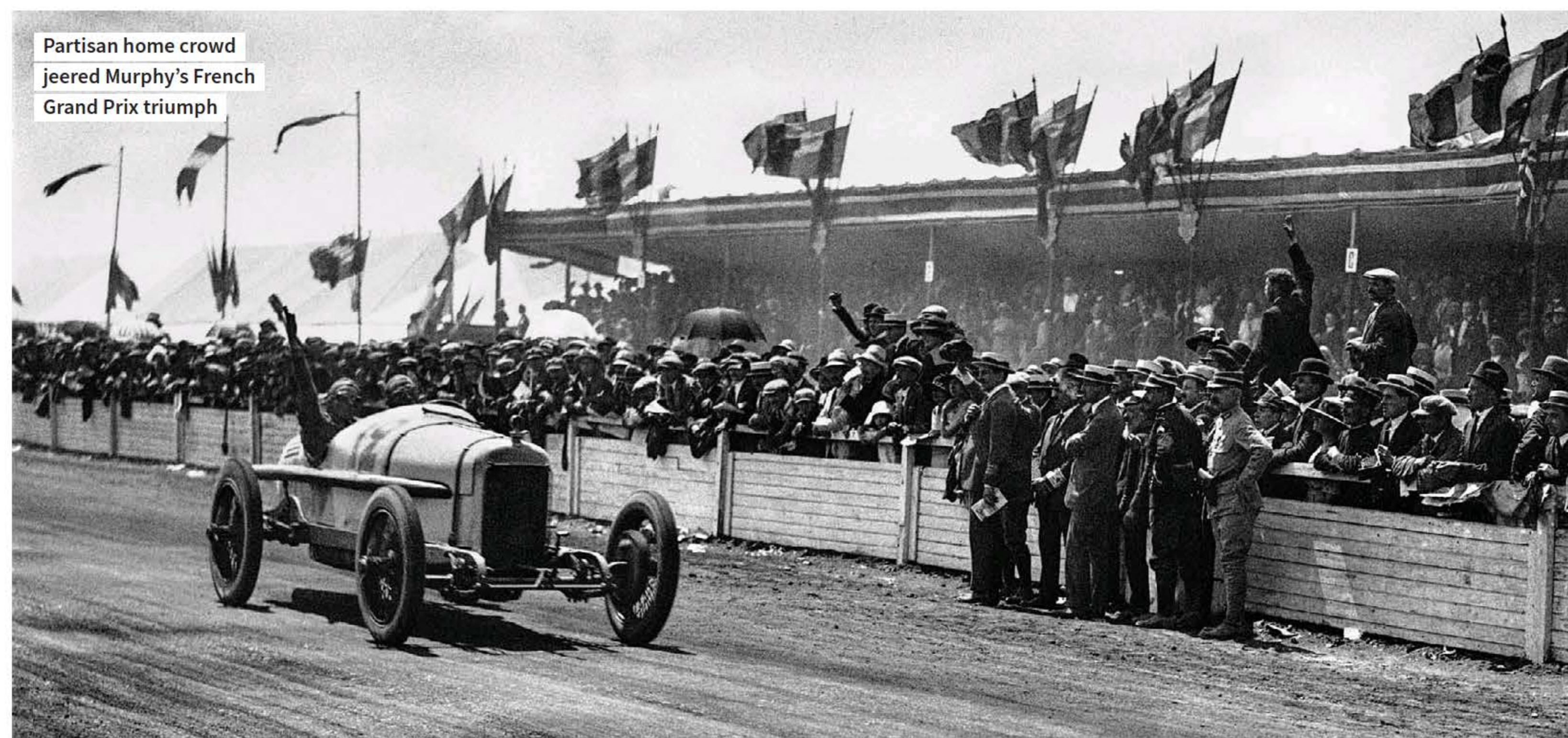
Chassagne's Ballot led for a time, until its fuel tank broke free just beyond half-distance, and Boyer then led briefly until his engine expired. But Murphy, who had run out to a big early lead, setting fastest lap, insisted that everything had been in hand. He had the winning knack. Which is why the Duesenberg brothers, Fred and Augie, were happy to sell one of the GP cars to him, 'secure' in the knowledge that they could bask in reflected glory while concentrating on the road cars rolling from their new factory on West Washington Street, Indianapolis. They had underestimated the depth of Murphy's desire.

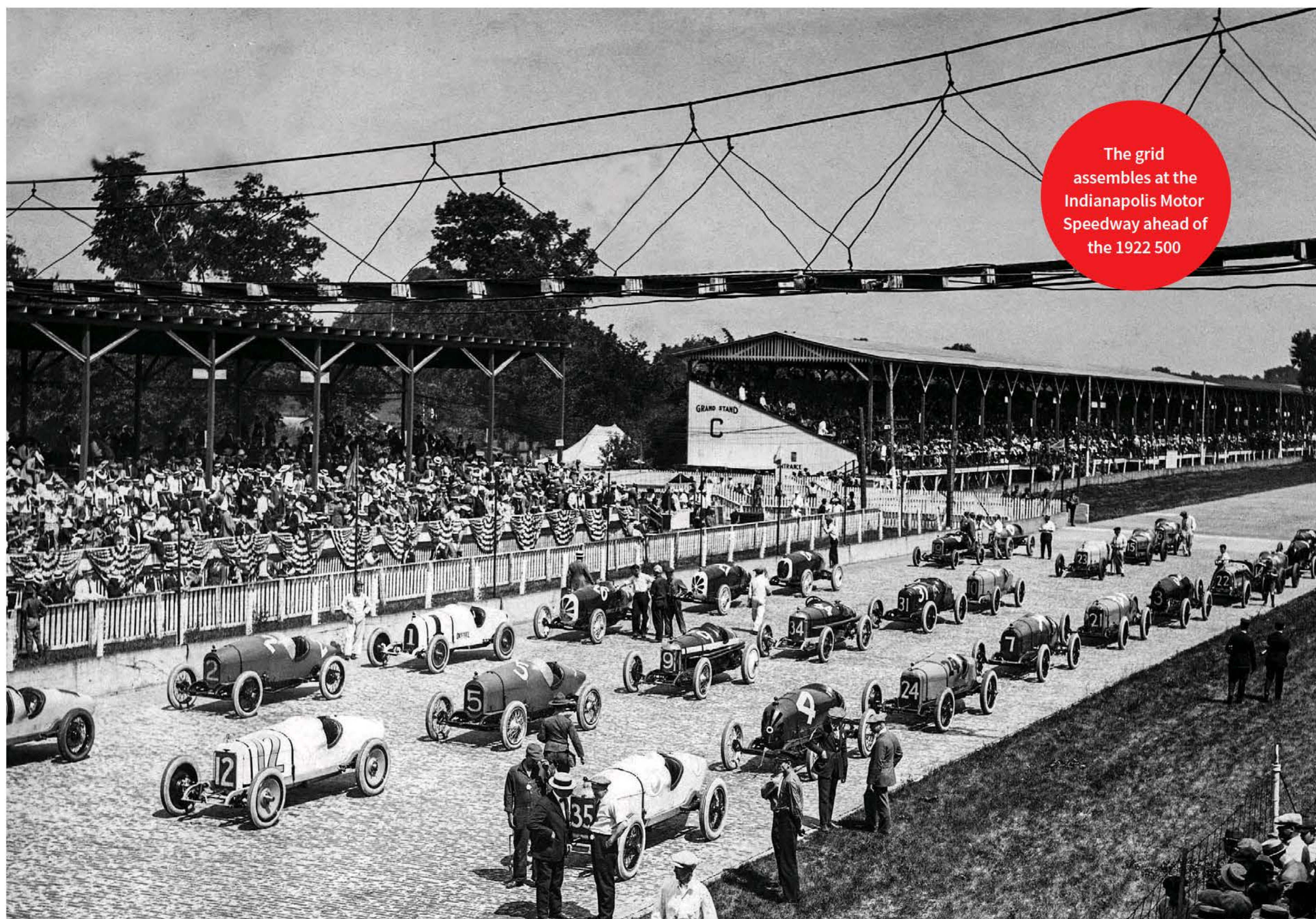


His 1922 AAA campaign began well – victories at Beverly Hills and Fresno – but at May's Santa Rosa meet he caused a stir by winning using a Miller straight-eight in the Duesenberg, renamed the Murphy Special. He was again stealing his greatest rival's thunder. Milton had been at the forefront of this engine's gestation and development – an amalgam of the best practices of Peugeot and Duesenberg – yet a patently unfair AAA ruling would prevent his using a sorted Miller chassis at Indy; the replacement was radical but an unreliable handful still on its transverse leaf-springs, and would retire after 44 laps. Murphy, meanwhile, powered to the victory that underpinned his maiden AAA title. Not one to rest on his laurels, however, he would end the season at the wheel of a Miller chassis. Board tracks were accelerating technology and its contenders were becoming increasingly specialised, as Murphy would discover upon his return to Europe.

His 1923 AAA campaign began well – wins again at Beverly Hills and Fresno – but this time Milton bested him at Indy after their vivid early dice was diffused by the heavier tyre wear for Murphy; he had charged from ninth to first on the opening lap, but would eventually finish third. Riding mechanics had been banned and the resultant lightweight single-seaters, reduced to two litres from three, proved skittish over the bricks; Milton, in a Miller benefiting from raised compression thanks to high-octane, anti-knock Ethyl, was the first to properly tie his chassis down.

Murphy was still in the title hunt nevertheless, until he chose to





The grid assembles at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway ahead of the 1922 500

miss two September rounds to contest the European GP in Italy (he would finish runner-up to Eddie Hearne in the final AAA standings). There was to be no repeat of his Le Mans success. His Miller was not only outpaced by the Roots-supercharged Fiats but also woefully under-braked. Despite the governing bodies legislating for internationalisation (seven of the 13 starters at Le Mans in 1921 had also contested that year's Indy 500), motor racing's demands and make-up either side of the Atlantic were diverging. America's mainstream manufacturers were already turning their backs on the sport and being replaced by specialists lavishly backed and rewarded by suppliers keen to promote and prove their components.

Murphy still stole the show in finishing a distant third at Monza, and twice dined with Prime Minister Benito Mussolini, who awarded him a brace of German Shepherds. He was by now rich – he had his own aeroplane – having captured hearts to an extent not seen since the barnstorming of the boisterous Barney Oldfield. 'Gentle Jimmy' had achieved this in a less affected fashion, yet still possessed the chutzpah to dance the foxtrot named after him and play a small role in the 1923 silent comedy *Racing Hearts* alongside Agnes Ayres, who two years before had co-starred to heart-throb Rudolf Valentino in *The Sheik*. Doors were opening for Murphy and his future was bright.

Racing remained his priority and he continued that impressive Indy sequence by starting from pole and finishing third in 1924, his Miller outgunned by an inspired Boyer's centrifugally supercharged Duesenberg. Memorial Day weekend's International Sweepstakes was amid an era of small but increasingly competitive grids. Murphy rode its waves of rising excitement and speed better than most: he had finished fourth (behind Milton) as the best rookie of 1920; even when he crashed the following year, he

“Murphy stole the show at Monza, and twice dined with Prime Minister Benito Mussolini”

assumed team-mate Eddie Miller's car and drove it to fourth place (Milton being victorious on this occasion). He was calculating and consistent – he led 220 of his 907 laps of the Brickyard – as well as quick, which made his fatal crash all the more shocking for his legion of fans (the AAA, bereft, would break with tradition with its confirmation of Murphy as its posthumous champion).

Even Milton, who also crashed from that ill-starred Syracuse race, rushed to the scene in an ambulance, accompanied Murphy's broken body to the hospital and attended the morgue. Asked by a clueless reporter if he was related to the dead man, he replied: “Almost a brother.” Having stayed behind to oversee the tiresome bureaucratic aftermath, Milton made his belated peace, admitting that likely he would have done the same at Daytona given Murphy's position.

Had Murphy lived, likely he would have continued to span the other divide. Though he had crossed the finish at Le Mans to boos and jeers, and been snubbed at the post-race banquet – he and the team were treated with due courtesy at a later Paris function – clearly it had not put him off. The money was good in America. But the allure of European cachet was powerful. His focus for 1925 was to have been the front-wheel-drive car that he had commissioned from Miller – it finished second on its Indy debut driven by Dave Lewis – but thereafter he could have acted as transatlantic ambassador and technological conduit. Racing's internationalism would survive two more years in the form of a universal 1.5-litre limit before the Great Depression enforced a more *Libre* approach. Long enough for the engaging Murphy to reinforce his unifying example?

Instead America would have to wait more than 40 years for the likeminded and popular Dan Gurney to land his Eagle. ❧

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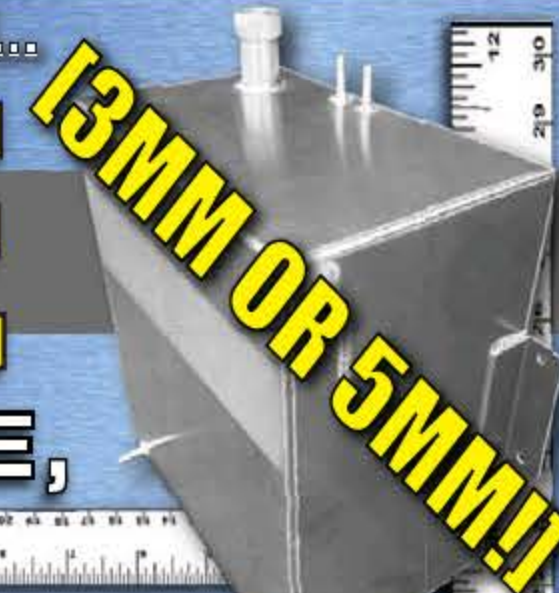
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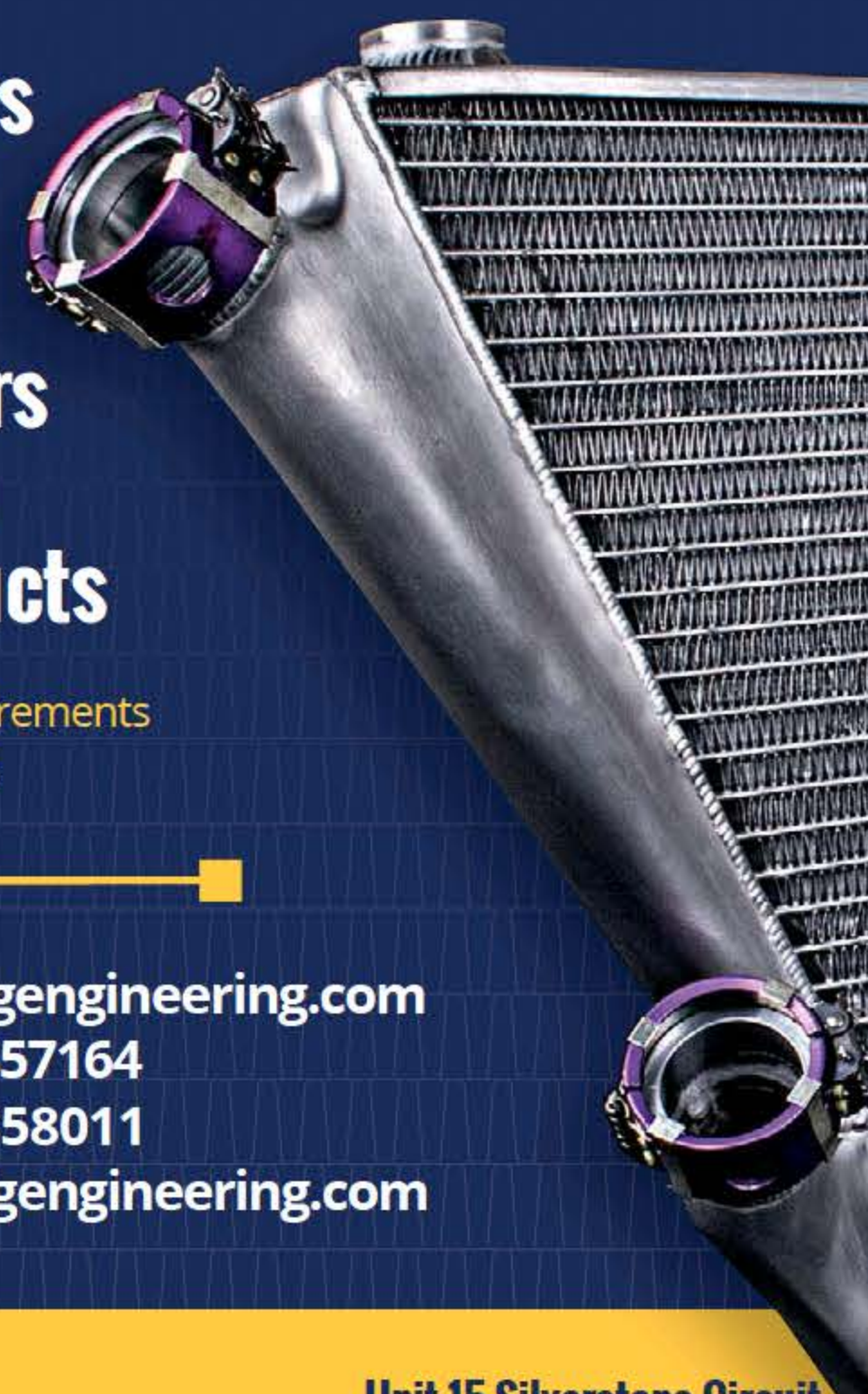
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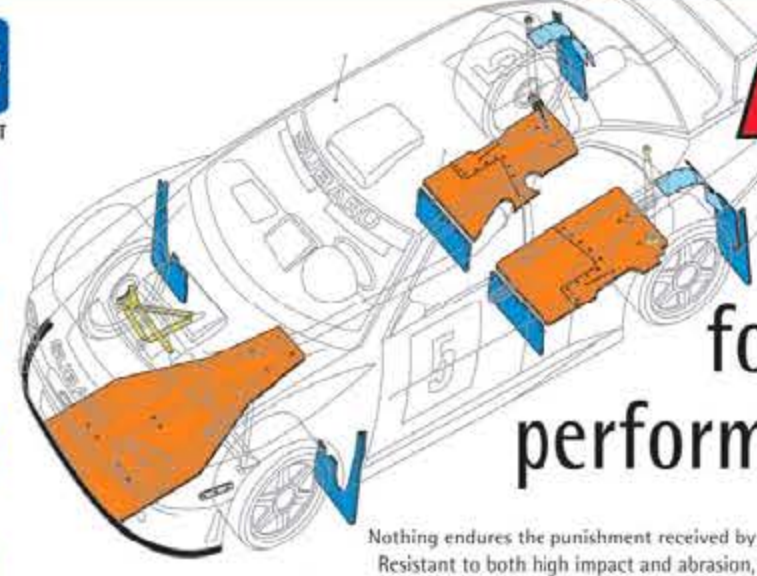
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Jones was a popular character who commentated at Brands Hatch for decades

FAREWELL TO 'THE VOICE OF BRANDS' BRIAN JONES

BRIAN JONES 1935-2021

A jovial, warm-hearted character who became celebrated as 'The Voice of Brands,' veteran circuit commentator Brian Jones died on New Year's Day. He was 85.

From a rugby-playing background, via a spell in the army and a motorsport-based marketing role at BP, Jones arrived at Brands Hatch in time for the golden 1970s era, and soon became one of the central figures close to circuit impresario John Webb. Initially he worked alongside Motor Racing Stables chief Geoff Clarke, the racing school enabling Tom Pryce's first foothold on the racing ladder. He soon moved into circuit commentary, and by the late 1970s was leading the circuit's British Grand Prix team, as well as being the man on the mic at pretty much every car-racing fixture in between.

His was the perfect voice for Webb-era Brands, where the emphasis was on attracting new fans to the sport. With his baritone, measured, slow-paced delivery, he was the antithesis of the fast-talking commentators that prevail in action sports. Jones himself said he wasn't necessarily the man for the hardcore fan, and his job was more to entertain the wives, girlfriends or children who might be making their first visit to Brands.

That's not to say he lacked knowledge – his circle of contacts and friends in the sport was so wide that his 'inside info' was as good as anyone's, and never was this more apparent than when he commentated

on the local Champion of Brands series for his favourite Formula Ford category (Jones loved Formula Ford so much that he once referred over the tannoy to Rene Arnoux's Formula 1 Ferrari as "looking for all the world like a big red Van Diemen").

Current Brands boss Jonathan Palmer, who took part in numerous races commentated on by Jones, said: "Brian Jones was to Brands Hatch what Murray Walker was to British F1. Both were synonymous with the motor racing they covered and had wonderful, distinctive and charismatic voices. Brian was a tremendous supporter of Brands Hatch particularly, and of national motor racing generally. His knowledge and enthusiasm was immense, while he was a popular regular in the Kentagon too, where much valuable research was of course done!"

Jones was not only the Voice of Brands, but he was a kind, genial man who rarely passed up an opportunity to support anyone in motorsport he believed in, whether that was a driver, a journalist or an aspiring fellow commentator. One such was Ben Edwards, who Jones encouraged into his first stint on the Brands PA in the late 1980s.

Jones was greatly honoured when he was eventually put forward as a member of the British Racing Drivers' Club – his proposer was no less than Sir Stirling Moss, and his seconder Sir Jack Brabham.

He is survived by wife Ros and their daughter Charlotte, as well as son Tim (a 1980s Formula Ford ace) and daughter Fay from a previous marriage.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Influx of Delta machines set to arrive in FF2000

HISTORIC FF2000

The Delta marque is set to have a major resurgence in Historic Formula Ford 2000 this season, following several years in which occasional competitor Callum Grant has flown the flag almost single-handedly, and won races.

Several of the Ford Pinto-powered cars — designed by Patrick Head between stints at Lola and joining Frank Williams's F1 team — have changed hands since last year's finale and are now with previous frontrunners.

Reynard converts Paul Allen and Jason Redding have bought the Grant T78 and the ex-Tom Mills/Pat Blakeney T80 respectively, while John Moore has added the late Mike Bell's ex-Nick Pearce T80 to his stable.

Two former Imp-powered derivatives are re-entering the fray too. Classic F3/FF2000 stalwart Anthony Hancock has reacquired his original F4 car, and Monoposto man Geoff Pashley the ex-Charles Barter chassis.

Marque custodian Iain Rowley —



winner of the first standalone Historic FF2000 pilot race at Cadwell Park in 2007 — is excited at the prospect of more Deltas on the grid. "I'm building up a T78 with original Ralt RT1 rear uprights, and busy fabricating wishbones," he added.

Run by former P&M Racing Preparations boss and twice 750 Motor Club F4 champion Nick Crossley, Delta Race Cars' name reappeared with a rebodied evolution of Head's Starfire/Sark FF2000 chassis at the end of 1976.

Crossley's Hove-based Horseless Carriage Company team made strong progress over a full season in 1977, selling cars and landing a coveted British title with the late South African Mike White in 1978.

MARCUS PYE

BRITISH RX ENDS 2020 SEASON; DONNELLY CHAMP

BRITISH RALLYCROSS

British Rallycross 5 Nations Trophy organisers have abandoned plans to run a final round of their disrupted 2020 season later this month and have confirmed Mark Donnelly as the overall champion.

The category was badly affected by the coronavirus pandemic last year as its plans to visit five different countries were torn up amid differing restrictions across the UK and mainland Europe. The revised season opener at Lydden Hill ran at the end of August, but it was not until last month that a second event could take place.

Amid the worsening virus situation, a planned third event at Lydden has been scrapped and the titles have therefore been awarded based on the season opener and the December Lydden double-header.

Citroen DS 3 driver Donnelly (below) was crowned champion, despite only first competing in the discipline in 2019. He won the Lydden opener and took the title after guest entry Liam Doran, who won twice, was not eligible for points. Ollie O'Donovan — the 2007 champion — was runner-up.

"I'm delighted — over the moon!" said Donnelly. "I think there was a bit of beginner's luck involved and I got lucky winning the first round. It would have been nice to have got to a few more circuits, but full credit to 5 Nations and the marshals for making it happen."

● O'Donovan is due to use a new car in the series this year as he switches from a Ford Fiesta to a Proton Iriz, with which he also plans to compete in European and World Rallycross events.



BRIAN SHEAD 1937-2020

OBITUARY

Australian Brian Shead, who died on 30 December, was among a rare breed of old school racecar designer/builders who achieved remarkable success driving their creations.

Shead built around 50 Cheetahs, mainly single-seaters, at his home workshop in Mordialloc, a bay-side suburb of Melbourne, starting with his Mk1 Formula Junior of 1960.

Cheetah drivers dominated Australian F3 and won six Australian F2 titles between 1979 and 1988, Shead triumphing in 1979 with a Mk6 powered by a Toyota Celica engine, prepared by long-time collaborator Brian Sampson.

Rohan Onslow's 1988 title and CAMS Gold Star crowns in a VW-engined ground-effects Mk8 broke the mould,



and was succeeded by the unique Mk9 Formula Holden of 1989.

Winner of more than 100 races, Shead subsequently steered Formula Holden and advised CAMS on circuit safety. Nephew Mike Borland, who learned his skills from the master, builds the superb Spectrum FFord and Sabre FVee cars in nearby Braeside, Victoria.

MARCUS PYE

TCT, TCR UK, VW Cup and the Civic Cup
will all have meetings
with Time Attack

Maximum-organised series to run at Time Attack events

ROBERT'S

TOURING CAR TROPHY

Maximum Motorsport's three tin-top championships, headed by the Touring Car Trophy that includes TCR UK, will run alongside popular car shows on the Time Attack bill this year.

TCT and the Volkswagen Racing Cup will again form a combined grid and,

with the Civic Cup, begin their seasons at Time Attack's Anglesey event on 11 April.

All three categories will take in Tunerfest shows at Brands Hatch, Oulton Park and Donington Park as well as Snetterton's Modified Live.

The TCT and VW Cup calendar features a trip to Castle Combe, while the Civic Cup will follow the full Time Attack schedule,

incorporating Cadwell Park's edition of Modified Live and Go Japan! at Brands.

Each series will have a free practice session in addition to qualifying and two races, plus a third race at the pair of two-day meetings.

"We're trying to raise the profile for our drivers," said Maximum Motorsport boss Stewart Lines, adding that the events – which can draw crowds of up to 10,000 – will be "better for providing hospitality".

"All the rest of the packages in the UK are very similar and you don't see any spectators there. We need to be different."

The championships' Motorsport UK permits will transfer from the British Racing & Sports Car Club to Club Time Attack.

Competitions secretary Simon Slade said: "We're looking to boost the profile of all three championships, but in particular TCR to get it nearer the status it deserves in the UK. We pride ourselves on being able to run these shows and bring a crowd."

Rob Baker, the 2018 Civic Cup champion and whose Area Motorsport team will run seven cars in the series, said: "Everything seems positive in terms of track time and value for money. Whether the audience at Time Attack is going to be the same profile of people I don't know, but it'll certainly give us a much larger audience."

MARK PAULSON

Burton graduates to British GT with Century

BRITISH GT

Ginetta GT4 Supercup runner-up Gus Burton will stay with Century Motorsport this year and step up to British GT in the team's 2018 title-winning BMW M4 GT4.

Burton took five wins in his first season out of Ginetta Junior in 2020 and impressed team boss Nathan Freke, who believes the 18-year-old has "a bright future ahead of him".

"We've had a lot of drivers come through our hands that are still doing stuff with

BMW, and my feeling is Gus is good enough," said Freke. "It's an opportunity for us to get back to the top and try and win a championship.

"With Gus, it all comes naturally. It's easy to forget

he's 18 because he's got such a level head. He's good to work with and just gets on with it."

Century has also tested Jamie Falvey, who won twice in the GT4 Supercup at Thruxton last year.

The team will benefit from an upgrade package on the M4 this year, with a revamped traction control system, developed by factory ace Augusto Farfus, among the areas to be improved.

"At Snetterton in the three-to-four degree ambient and pouring rain, the car was very difficult and it was all down to the traction system," said Freke. "It's been noted that the new system is quite a performance aid so we're quite excited about that."

JAMES NEWBOLD

Ginetta GT4 ace will drive
BMW in British GT



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CityCar Cup is entering its sophomore season in 2021

New series for uni and college teams to run within CityCar Cup

CITYCAR CUP

Student Motorsport has created a new series within the CityCar Cup for teams from universities and colleges to compete against each other.

The CityCar Cup was launched last year and features modified versions of the Peugeot 107, Citroen C1 and Toyota Aygo. Large grids are expected this year, when it gains championship status.

Student Motorsport is a network designed to link students and graduates with motorsport educators and employers, and founder JP Latham believes the CityCar Cup provides a perfect platform for students to get a better understanding of the motorsport world.

Teams of students studying either motorsport or automotive technology have the option of buying a donor car and converting it to race spec, partnering up

with an existing driver and running their car, or buying a ready-to-go machine.

“For many years, I’ve wondered why there isn’t a motor racing series that was solely aimed at education and educators,” said Latham. “You can teach skills but you can’t teach that underlying knowledge.

“The CityCar Cup seemed a really good fit because it’s low-cost. It’s keeping it fun but the crucial one is getting people in who have no knowledge of motorsport.

“We want to connect people and give them opportunities but also give them a greater understanding of how the industry works. It bridges the gap between education and motorsport.”

Latham says there has already been a lot of interest in the Student Motorsport Challenge from educators and, if the idea proves successful, it could lead to a standalone series.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Hot Hatch class restructure for 2021

HOT HATCH

The 750 Motor Club’s Hot Hatch Championship has undergone a class restructure for 2021 following a drop-off in Class A entries.

A season-high of seven cars took part in the class during a revised 2020 campaign, with the final event attracting just a single entry.

Last season’s Class B will now become Class A, retaining the same power-to-weight limit (200bhp/tonne) from 2020, and will predominantly be for Honda Civic EP3s and Integras. Class C will remain the same (145bhp/tonne) and feature cars such as Citroen Saxos,

Peugeot 106s and BMW Compacts.

A new Class B (175bhp/tonne) will slot between the existing classes and is aimed at cars such as Renault Clio 182s and Ford Fiesta STs.

“We had seen the numbers in Class A drop off and, although it’s a bit harsh to jump to the success or failure of last year, it had been a trend for a couple of years,” said 750MC competitions manager Giles Groombridge.

“We needed a group between Class B/C – there’s quite a lot of cars that don’t really fit in either. We thought if we restructure and put a class in the middle it gives them a good home.”

STEFAN MACKLEY

IN THE HEADLINES

KARTER FLACK TO BRITISH F4

Australian karter Marcos Flack will graduate into car racing this year, driving for Argenti Motorsport in British Formula 4. He was invited to Ferrari’s Driver Academy camp last year after his impressive performances in karting and is set to combine his British F4 bid with outings in selected rounds of German and Italian F4 with the R-Ace GP squad.

GADD’S SINGLE-SEATER MOVE

Former Locost champion Thomas Gadd is due to switch to single-seaters this season and race in F1000. Gadd claimed the Locost title in 2019, while he was sixth in the standings during last year’s shortened campaign, and is the latest driver to announce they will be competing in the 750 Motor Club category. He is due to receive support from Team Sellars Racing.

ECURIE CALENDAR REVEALED

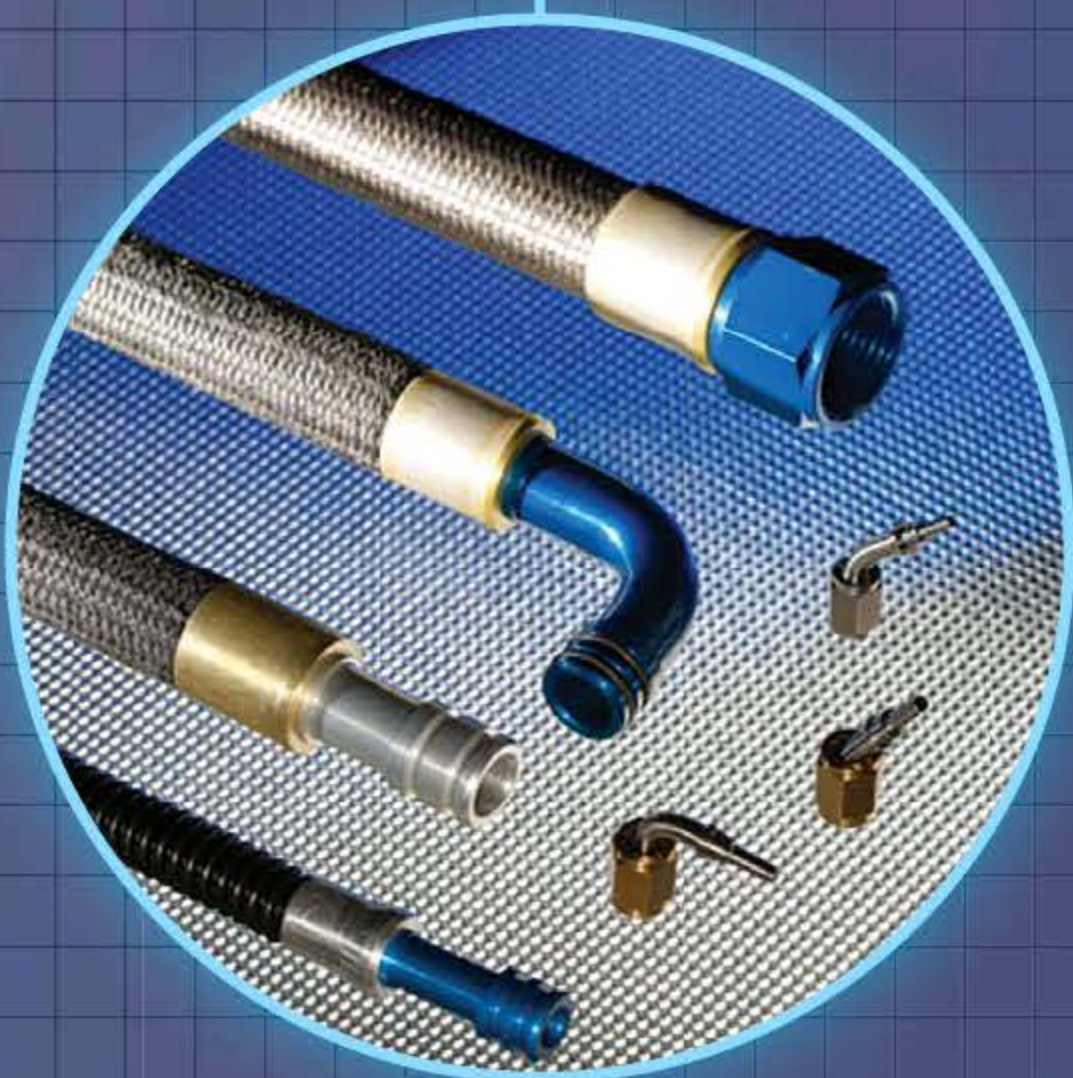
Ecurie Classic Racing has unveiled its inaugural calendar of races for up to 2.7-litre pre-’66 sports and GT cars. Forty-minute optional-two-driver races for the new series are due to be run at Snetterton (April), Silverstone (May and August), Castle Combe (June) and Donington Park (September), along with a 30-minute race at Oulton Park in July.

GT CUP RETURN FOR FOX

Fox Motorsport plans to return to the GT Cup for a first full season in three years in 2021, running two of the team’s regulars – James Townsend and Ian Duggan – in a Ginetta G55 (below). Townsend competed in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB last year, while Duggan was the Ginetta GT5 Challenge Am class champion. “GT Cup’s a series that gives competitors a lot of track time and has a well-thought-out class structure, so you really need to perform to make it onto the top step of the podium,” said team boss Paul McNeilly.



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Memories of the great Brian Jones

MARCUS PYE

Two days after the sad news broke of Brian Jones's passing on New Year's Day, I am still struggling to believe that he is gone. Brian was Brands Hatch for those of us blessed to have been there from 'golden boy' James Hunt's riotous era, 45 years ago. His voice – ah, those honeyed tones – echoing round the hallowed Kentish amphitheatre, or reverberating through the Grand Prix circuit's dense trees, was invariably the first we punters heard as we arrived early, determined to bag our favourite vantage points for major events.

Those were the days, and joyously they continued for many a season as Brian continued to entertain hardened racegoers and their less ardent acolytes in his unique style. "Well, I have to say, ladies and gentlemen," was one of his lines preceding the delivery of words of import. On everything from harum-scarum Champion of Brands Formula Ford bouts to his beloved end-of-term Festival, via Formula 1 – the British GP in even years or the Race of Champions, last run in 1983 – that was the norm for enthusiasts.

I consider myself privileged to have worked with Brian there often, initially in the corner of his commentary box lap-charting races for my Autosport reports, later in tandem on mic. The cars were not that important to him, thus I'm told we made a good team. As a consummate people's man, he was passionate about the competitors from around the world, many of whom he knew socially from post-race libation in The Kentagon. The detail, as we announced grids to those religiously jotting in their programmes, was down to me.

Alongside circuit group boss John Webb, Brian was at the hub of everything at Brands. Polar opposites they may have been as personalities, but jointly they made things happen. Webby had the ideas in the mornings, owner Motor Circuit Developments footed the bills, and loyal wingman Jones skilfully juggled the balls and kept guests in sponsors' hospitality suites up to speed.

Who could tire of hearing stories about the Motor Racing Stables school (later Brands Hatch Racing) and its alumni – notably rising star Tom Pryce who went on to win the 1975 ROC, only to be so

cruelly taken at Kyalami in 1977? Or colourful former Lola T70 racer Jackie Epstein, the sculptor's son who kept the show on the road, and had guided Dutchman Gijs van Lennep to the 1972 European F5000 title, after the first of his two Porsche Le Mans victories? Not me!

Having watched several Formula Ford Festivals from Brands Hatch's first in 1976, it was great to start competing in 1981. When I won the first of three heats that comprised the opening round of the 1982 Dunlop-Autosport Star of Tomorrow on Brands's GP circuit, Brian's delight at being able to interview me in an unfamiliar situation was palpable. That warm smile, glint in his eyes and timbre of tone greeted me post-race a few more times over the years. Others felt the same. His avuncular presence was always an agreeable addition to proceedings, which made those days even more special. Particularly to those of us for whom podium visits never became routine, but remained a welcome novelty.

Brian loved helping others in a shared pastime, was invariably kind, and his words of encouragement inspired many, whether a raw novice taking their first tentative steps to becoming 'a racing driver' on a school day, or consoling one who had just wrecked their pride and joy.

Maybe 15 years after I'd started commentating on a regular basis, Ferrari North Europe offered me work out of the blue, as MC on the F430 Scuderia launch programme at dealers nationwide. My first reaction was to call Brian, 23 years my senior and an adept public speaker, recommending that he should take the job. He could have walked it in his sleep, but no, he insisted I went back to accept, and suggested a 'going' rate per event. Naively, I'd have probably asked for half, but his inspiration buoyed my confidence. All was well and British GP work followed.

The outpouring of love and respect for Brian Jones on social media this week has been touching, but no less than I would have expected for a fine colleague who I am proud to have called a friend. To racer son Tim, his sisters Fay and Charlotte, and Brian's wife Ros, I'm certain I speak for the widespread racing fraternity in sending love and sincere condolences. RIP Brian. ❧





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A LESS RADICAL APPROACH

The manufacturer has not rewritten the rulebook with its latest machines, but the new SR3 XX and SR10 still provide a step forward on previous models

BEN ANDERSON

The coronavirus pandemic has meant everyone jumping through hoops just to go about their daily lives, and of course it's no different in motorsport. Many felt the pinch last year as events became fewer and harder to do, and competitors struggled for budget. The tremors were felt across the industry, from organisers to manufacturers and suppliers too. We all hope for much better in 2021.

Nevertheless, Radical launched two new cars amid the pandemic – well, one brand-new one and one upgraded one – and Autosport is among the first group of people outside of Radical's inhouse team to be offered a chance to try the new kit out on track. We've been

invited to a 'COVID-secure' test day at Bedford Autodrome to see for ourselves what Radical has been up to since the UK first went into coronavirus meltdown back in March 2020.

But first, the hoops. The 'joining instructions' for the event, issued by organiser Motocom on Radical's behalf, run to three sides of A4. Obviously, anyone displaying symptoms, returning from an at-risk country abroad, or asked to isolate by the NHS, can't get near the place, and we all must follow social distancing rules. Face masks are mandatory, arrival times staggered, only one driver per car per session, and both cars are sanitised after each outing (which runs to an hour).

I didn't race at all in 2020, for the first time since 1996, so motorsport's COVID-19 protocol is new to me, but actually the hassle is minimal, and the day passes without a hitch, although it does feel slightly odd not being able to so easily hold those casual conversations with engineers, mechanics and fellow drivers that ordinarily lubricate such experiences. It's an intricate work of stage management, but it feels good to be out on track again, discovering what Radical has been up to while coronavirus waves swept the planet.

As it turns out, Radical has been very



WALKER

Radical SR3 XX took outright victory in last year's Birkett Relay



busy indeed, working on the first orders for the new RPE Ford EcoBoost-powered SR10, as well as rolling out the latest iteration of its most popular open sports-prototype – the SR3 XX. The example I'm driving won the 750 Motor Club's annual Birkett Relay at Silverstone, just before UK club motorsport went back into lockdown.

The 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' mantra continues to underpin Radical's most successful model, of which it has sold thousands worldwide since introducing it in 2002. This latest iteration focuses principally on updating the electronics. The conventional wiring loom is replaced with what Radical calls a 'solid-state Power Distribution Module', the aim being a 65% weight saving and increased efficiency when capturing and transmitting data, as well as finding and solving faults.

This is incorporated with a new Formula steering wheel and integrated dash from

"THE SR3'S UPDATED ELECTRONICS IS PRETTY HIGH-TECH STUFF FOR CLUB RACING"

renowned, long-time Radical supplier AiM, which includes scope for tyre temperature and pressure (and ride-height) sensors to be fitted. This is pretty high-tech stuff for club racing. Radical hopes these new options will be particularly useful for endurance events.

There are several largely cosmetic alterations to the mirrors, rear-wing endplates and the seat (wider and more comfortable), but otherwise it's the same tried-and-trusted package: spaceframe chassis mated to Radical's own Suzuki-based 1340cc or 1500cc >>

TECH SPECS

SR3 XX

Chassis Cold-drawn seamless laser-cut, lightweight, spaceframe two-seater with FIA-spec safety cell and crash structure; LMP-inspired, high-downforce composite bodywork
Suspension Fully adjustable Nik-link system; wishbones; fabricated pushrods; interchangeable roll bars; bespoke Intrax fully adjustable dampers
Brakes Radical 4-pot calipers on 280x25mm fully floating discs
Wheels Radical centre lock, cast aluminium; Hankook slick and wet tyres
Powertrain Six-speed sequential with paddleshift; Quaife LSD
Engine Gen 4 RPE-Suzuki four-cylinder (1500/1340cc)
Power 226bhp (1500cc); 195bhp (1340cc)
Power/weight 363bhp/tonne (1500cc); 314bhp/tonne (1340cc)
Price £69,000 (basic)



SR10

Chassis Lightweight spaceframe two-seater with FIA-spec safety cell and crash structure; LMP-inspired, high-downforce composite bodywork
Suspension Fully adjustable Nik-link system; wishbones; fabricated adjustable pushrods; interchangeable roll bars; Intrax triple-adjustable dampers with anti-roll control
Brakes Radical 4-pot calipers on 300x35mm (front) & 300x26mm (rear) fully floating discs
Wheels Radical centre lock, cast aluminium; Hankook slick and wet tyres
Powertrain Six-speed Hewland sequential transaxle with paddleshift; WaveTrac automatic torque-biasing LSD
Engine RPE-Ford V6 (2261cc) with custom Garrett turbocharger
Power 425bhp; 380lb ft torque
Power/weight 586bhp/tonne
Price £105,000 (basic)



motorbike engine; six-speed sequential gearbox with paddleshift; and Quaife limited-slip differential. There are no real surprises here. You know what you're going to get for £69,000 (before options), but you also know you can be confident it's going to feel great once you get going.

To that end, first up we have some acclimatisation laps to do with British Touring Car racer Bobby Thompson, who does some driver-coaching in Radicals when he's not panel bashing. I don't know Bedford, so these half-dozen tours as Bobby's passenger are very helpful. Everything comes at you thick and fast on this track, and there's not much by way of scenery or furniture to take as a reference. The trackday signs and cones are all there is to go on really.

We are on a version of Bedford's 'West' circuit: hairpin left, hard braking, second gear. Short blast up to a left-right esses (taken in third), which acts as your braking zone for a long, tightening left (patience is a real virtue here). You accelerate through a right-hander onto a short straight, before another (tighter this time) left-right sequence. We use the tighter, shorter hairpin left at the back of the circuit before blasting back towards the pits. In our way stands a quick chicane (taken in third or fourth gears), through which you

try to attack the kerbs without clipping the cones, then a fast left-hander (taken in fourth) and an even quicker right (taken in fifth and probably flat with more confidence and better tyres) to complete the lap.

As you'd expect with an SR3, it's all about being precise and maintaining momentum. It's a proper physical workout (especially after so long away from driving) but enormous fun too. I have to strain my neck to see the dash (which is too low for my height), so it's better to relax and do things by feel instead. This car feels hooked up – no doubt it's well set up after winning the Birkett – and it's not too long before I'm lapping a couple of seconds faster on my own than Bobby was doing with

my 80kg frame acting as unwelcome ballast.

After a short break to catch my breath and stretch my legs, it's time to hop into the SR10. This is essentially an updated SR8 chassis, featuring the same swanky new data-logging and electronics as the SR3 XX, mated to a Ford EcoBoost engine stripped and refettled by Radical's in-house team. The idea here is to give wealthy trackday enthusiasts and endurance racing nuts a high-end option with superior reliability and driveability compared with the conventional SR8, which is high revving and thus high stress for its engine's components.

The engine in the SR10 has eight different torque maps, depending on conditions and



RESISTING THE REVOLUTION

The last car I drove before getting my shot in Radical's latest offerings was the new carbonfibre-based sportscar designed by Radical co-founder Phil Abbott.

His Revolution, which is about bringing cutting-edge technology into national-level racing at a relatively affordable price, is still very much in its infancy, but several cars supported Formula 1's Portuguese Grand Prix last season, and Abbott is confident that his product will develop quickly as the technology becomes better understood and lessons are applied.

The Radical SR10 and the Revolution are on a collision course in the high-end, single-make, open-topped sportscar market. Both cars retail slightly north of £100,000, and Radical is confident that the technical specification of the SR10 will roughly equate with performance figures for the Revolution.

The timing of the launch of Radical's latest

offerings gives the impression that the company is reacting to what Abbott's doing, but Radical says its concepts for the SR3 XX and SR10 (circa 2018/19) predate the Revolution, which broke cover in late 2018. In fact, the SR10's EcoBoost-based drivetrain is an evolution of a concept already deployed on the RXC (launched by Abbott before he left) and the Rapture, while the chassis is the same as that used for the tried-and-trusted SR8.

But, of course, Radical is well aware of what Abbott has brought to the party and says it is "evaluating carbon in our product planning". But the current feeling is that the SR8 chassis has been so successful for so long, there is no reason to chuck the baby out while the bath water is still warm.

Even so, it feels like we're reaching a seminal moment, perhaps similar to what occurred during the 1960s in F1, when spaceframe resistance to the growing monocoque tide ultimately proved futile. We're not there yet, but Abbott has certainly laid down a serious challenge to the established way of doing things.

Nevertheless, Radical appears to be in rude health. Its Peterborough manufacturing centre has remained open for business throughout the pandemic, and the company says it has an order book to keep it busy well into the spring. Radical has also recently expanded into the Philippines and Romania, and added new dealerships in the Benelux region, Western Australia, New Zealand and the US.





preference. I'm told the first five offer linear progression; six to eight exponential, to a peak of 380lb ft. The 2.2-litre V6 produces 425bhp, all transmitted through the same six-speed Hewland sequential transaxle deployed on the former FIA F2 cars that now underpin the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver test.

I do my out-lap in mode 5, but quickly decide to switch up to 'full beans'. I mean, the track is dry, life is short, so why not? To begin with, I try to drive this car like the SR3, but it simply won't take it. 'Point and squirt' seems better for how this particular car is handling. The performance of the engine straight out of the box is impressive, but it doesn't feel as

though the chassis can quite keep up with it.

The SR10 features a different cooling set-up to the SR3, deploying radiators at the front rather than sides of the car, so there is extra weight on the nose, plus diveplanes for extra aero load. The weight distribution – something Radical worked hard on with the previous iteration of the SR8 – has come further forward still on the SR10, but the car is overall heavier than an SR8, and you can feel it's lazier than the SR3 I've just driven. The brakes are a bit spongy, and the front won't stay down – power-on understeer and high-speed understeer abound around the lap.

But this is to be expected. Radical tells me this car is pretty much the first one to roll off

the production line. It's done a couple of photo/video shoots (at Cadwell Park and in a studio), but this is its first proper outing on track. No set-up work has taken place yet – that begins once the car reaches its next destination: Spring Mountain, Nevada, USA, where the car was set to undergo an extensive test programme.

Unsurprisingly, this leaves the SR10 trailing the SR3 in terms of overall enjoyment of the driving experience. The SR10 is obviously potentially well capable of outgunning the SR3, particularly with the added grunt from that EcoBoost engine, but the overall package is not there yet. It also feels as though Radical is potentially reaching the limit of the development curve for this type of spaceframe sportscar, but maybe that's OK – Porsche has produced iterations of the same basic 911 for decades now. Not every new car needs root-and-branch redesigning to produce greater excitement or find its gap in the market.

I mean, just look at the SR3 – almost 20 years old and still by far Radical's most popular and successful model. And rightly so. You have to hustle it; you have to *drive it*. Power is nice of course, but it's not the be all and end all. That said, if Radical can get the SR10 and that turbo engine to handle as well as this SR3, it's going to take some beating... ❧

“THE SR10 IS OBVIOUSLY WELL CAPABLE OF OUTGUNNING THE SR3”





McQUEEN'S MISSING FORMULA 1

DOCUMENTARY REVIEW STEVE McQUEEN: THE LOST MOVIE

"*Day Of The Champion's* curious ultimate fate must now surely rank among Hollywood history's most tantalising what-might-have-beens," so go-to motorsport film-archive treasure-hunter Richard Wiseman signed off his wonderful feature in the 9 May 2019 issue of *Autosport*.

Day Of The Champion was to be Steve McQueen's motorsport passion project. Should it have kept to schedule and beaten *Grand Prix* in the race to put Formula 1 on the silver screen, there's a good chance *Le Mans* and even the peerless *Bullitt* car chase might never have made it into the stuff of cinema legend.

Given Wiseman also noted "the actual script for *Day Of The Champion* – which this writer is fortunate enough, if that's the phrase, to have read – comfortably beats even *Grand Prix* for cinematic cliché", on balance we can make peace with it never being released in return for the others having seen the light of day.

It would also have meant Sky wouldn't have ever commissioned the recent documentary *Steve McQueen: The Lost Movie*. Narrated by late-night talk-show king and IndyCar team co-owner David Letterman, the 90-minute documentary is nothing short of enthralling.

And despite its title, *The Lost Movie* stretches well beyond a study of the 40 minutes of crisp 35mm film stock from the *Day Of the Champion* that unexpectedly made its way online in 2018. This is equal parts a McQueen biopic, a behind-the-scenes look at the filming of *Day Of The Champion* and *Grand Prix*, plus a screenshot of

Hollywood and F1 in time all rolled into one.

It tracks how McQueen came to the UK for the filming of *The War Lover* and, while across the pond, attended the Jim Russell Racing School and formed a friendship with John Whitmore. Then, off the back of *The Great Escape*, how McQueen's success gave him and director John Sturges the standing to make pretty much whatever film they wanted for Warner Bros. The foundation for *Day Of The Champion* was formed.

Here is where the Sky documentary is at its finest, as it charts the race against MGM and John Frankenheimer as studio and director set to work on *Grand Prix*. Both were based on the same book, *The Cruel Sport*, and both were on location for the 1965 Monaco Grand Prix, won by Graham Hill while Jim Clark was busy claiming the spoils in the Indianapolis 500. Two titan studios of Hollywood were squeezed into the principality and courting their own grand prix stars to play a role in their movie. It's all worthy of its own long-lost film...

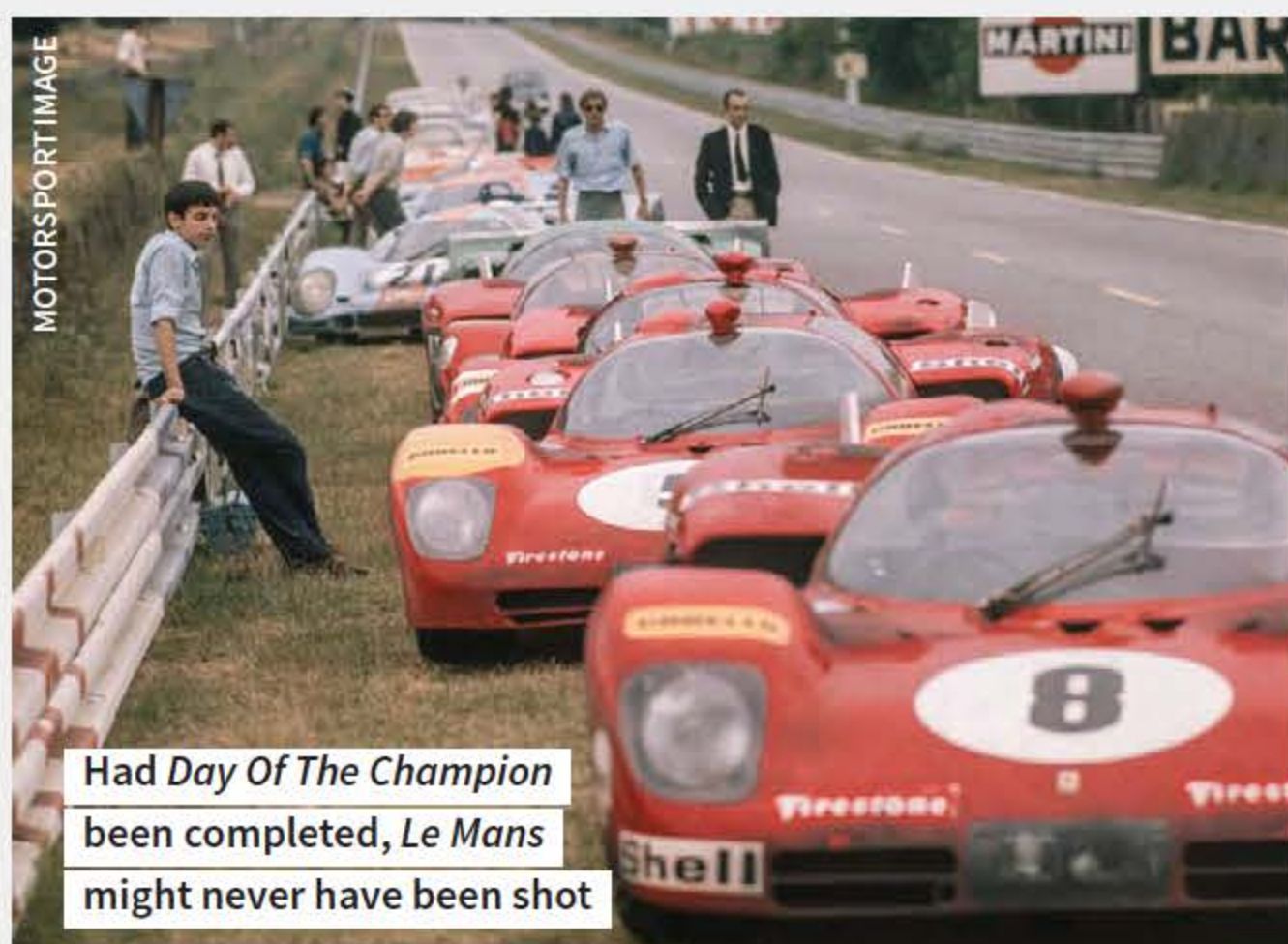
At this point, this review could easily turn into a narrative of the events that led to McQueen losing his six-month head start over Frankenheimer that ultimately put paid to *Day Of The Champion*. But the documentary recounts it brilliantly and is recommended in the highest terms, so let's leave the chain of events there.

Spoilers aside for what remains a lesser-known chapter of motorsport and Hollywood becoming entwined, *The Lost Movie* is pieced together fantastically.

Contemporary interviews with Jackie Stewart and pundits Simon Taylor, Nigel Roebuck and Peter Windsor are weaved in and around the narrative. Similarly, cultural authors and film critics – and



MASTERPIECE



Had *Day Of The Champion* been completed, *Le Mans* might never have been shot

even camera assistants — are present too, helping to better frame McQueen and the *Day Of The Champion* in the context of the time.

On-set photos, some featuring Stirling Moss in his role as the movie's technical consultant aboard a Lotus 30, excerpts from the script and letters from the studio are included. But nothing quite competes with the footage from the ill-fated film.

Scanned and seen for the first time in 55 years, it's a technical masterpiece. Although *Grand Prix* would win one of its three Academy Awards for its editing, *Day Of The Champion* — shot in Panavision — appears to be every bit its visual equal.

Although you'll have to pay to view *Steve McQueen: The Lost Movie* on catch-up, it's well worth it for this excellent feature-length documentary on the 'King of Cool'. It's also worth your time finding that past issue of Autosport to reread Wiseman's words.

MATT KEW

FINISHING STRAIGHT



youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



Prodrive is in the crosshairs for the first episode in this new series that recalls the failed bids from prospective teams to join the Formula 1 fraternity for the 2010 season. Autosport explains why the BTCC and WRC-conquering squad had all the deals in place to make a grand prix splash before politics reared its ugly head. **Go to bit.ly/ProdriveGP**

AUTOSPORT PLUS

bit.ly/F1experiment

Why F1's willingness to experiment shouldn't end with 2020

To sprint or not to sprint? After a season in which Formula 1 has departed greatly from its regular calendar, and with some success, F1 tech chief Pat Symonds reckons it's worth carrying on that spirit of embracing the new by considering alternative race formats in 2021.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Dakar Rally
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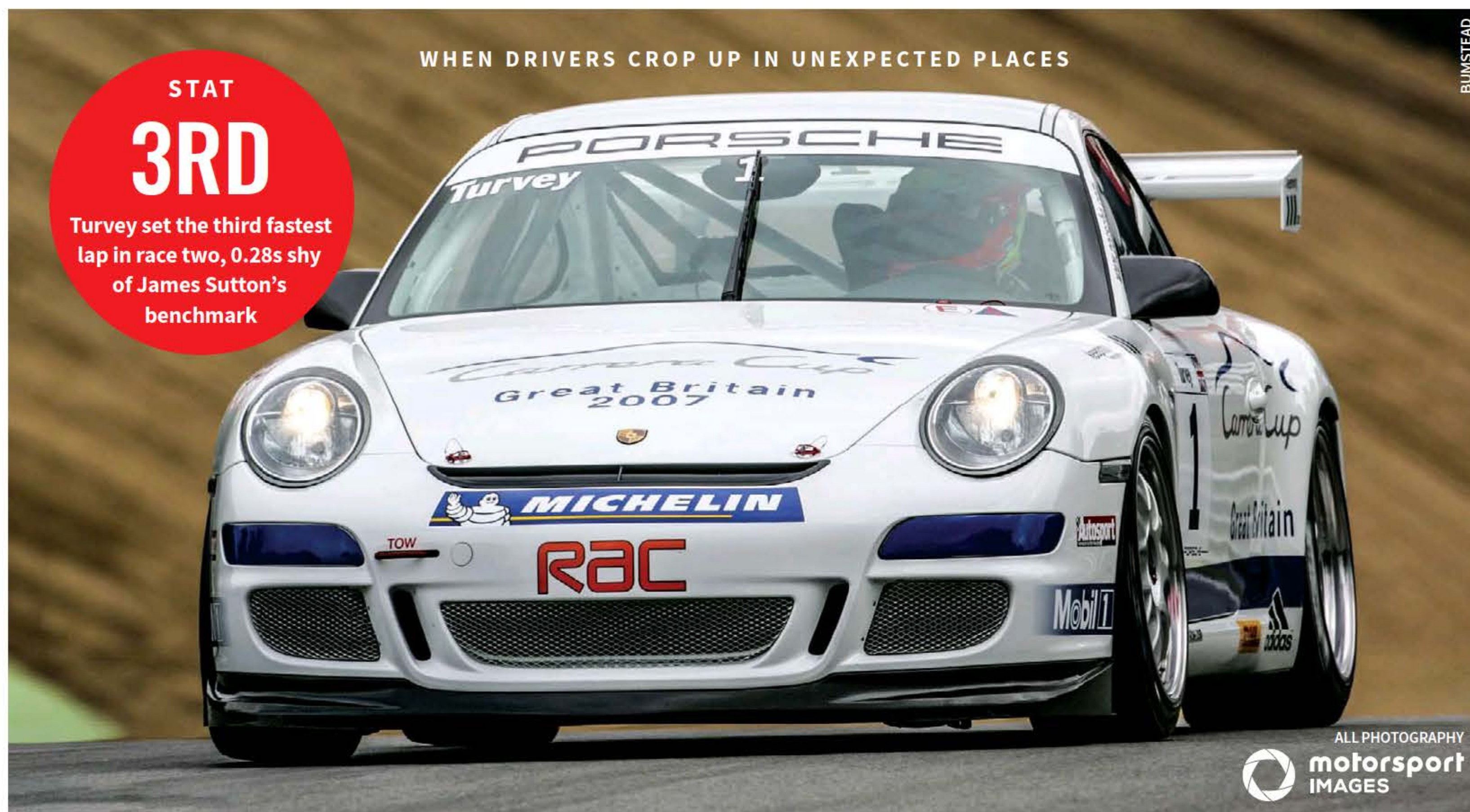
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WHEN DRIVERS CROP UP IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

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Turvey set the third fastest lap in race two, 0.28s shy of James Sutton's benchmark



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OLIVER TURVEY

When Porsche briefly put a roof over an award winner's head

MATT KEW

For the second visit to Brands Hatch of the 2007 Porsche Carrera Cup GB season, the rear of Tim Harvey's Redline Racing machine sported a new yellow sticker. It read 'How's my driving?', and there was a number to call.

As of 2021, ring it and the line drops dead. But perhaps title rival Steven Kane would have had more success with his dialling had he aired his grievances after the pair collided at Druids on the opening lap of the second race. In their battle for third, Kane spun and Harvey took to the gravel, both dropping to the tail of the field.

That crash paved the way for current NIO 333 Formula E driver Oliver Turvey to score a respectable fourth-place finish on the Sunday afternoon to round out his cameo in the 997 guest car.

"I WAS DEFINITELY AWARE I WAS DRIVING A CAR THAT WAS A LOT SOFTER – THERE WAS A LOT MORE MOVEMENT"

Then 20 years old, the Brit was invited for the two races on the Indy circuit off the back of winning the 2006 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award. For Turvey, runner-up in Formula BMW UK, it marked his first race with a roof over his head.

"It was quite a baptism of fire," he recalls of dicing alongside Harvey, Kane and that year's champion James Sutton. "At that time there were some really good drivers, some really experienced guys that had raced saloon cars and Porsches before."

Sixth place on the grid in the opener, 0.26 seconds shy of polesitter Sutton, was held to the flag. But thanks to Kane and Harvey's tangle in race two, Turvey crossed the line just four tenths shy of a podium. "I really enjoyed driving something a bit different, something outside of single-seaters," adds Turvey. "I thought for my first races that wasn't bad!"

More closed-cockpit adventures would follow – a 2011 Spa 24 Hours outing in a McLaren MP4-12C preceded two seasons aboard a Honda NSX Concept-GT in Super GT across 2015 and 2016. But for a driver who has spent the vast majority of his career plying his trade in lithe formula cars, including multiple tests for the McLaren grand prix team, the Porsche



J BLOXHAM

felt like a much lazier proposition.

"It requires a completely different driving style, the car pitches a lot more," says Turvey. "The tyres on that Porsche, I remember in qualifying they were really difficult. The rears came in quick, but the fronts were a lot slower. It was quite tricky to get a qualifying lap right. That's where the experienced guys were really good. I was definitely aware I was driving a car that was a lot softer – there was a lot more movement than I was used to."

Oh, and for the next round at Knockhill, the stickers were no longer on Harvey's car when he claimed the spoils in race two... 🏆



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Jackie Stewart takes a welcome swig after hitting trouble in his unloved Tyrrell-run March 701 during practice for the 1970 German Grand Prix, the first to

be run at Hockenheim. A mystery problem afflicted the 701 all weekend, causing it to occasionally jump out of gear. It happened in the race too, eventually leading to Stewart's Cosworth

DFV over-revving. His woes contrasted with further joy for his friend Jochen Rindt, who scored his fourth consecutive win in his Lotus 72. Sadly, it would also prove to be the last of his life.



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IN DEFENCE OF...

LUCA BADOER

In the first of a new series defending the often-criticised in motorsport, we look at one of Formula 1's unfairly mocked drivers

'My grandmother is faster than Luca with a Ferrari. Shameful.' The banner at the 2009 Belgian Grand Prix has served as an epitaph for long-time Ferrari tester Luca Badoer's career in motorsport, after the Italian became a figure of mockery following his disastrous two-race cameo subbing for Felipe Massa.

But while those performances were inescapably poor – Autosport rated his Valencia weekend 0.5/10, and 1 for Spa – Badoer was certainly better than his unfortunate record as the driver to have started the most GPs without scoring a point (50) might attest. While he was perhaps not world champion material, his poor reputation is an unjust consequence of his most recent actions outlasting memories of the perfectly adequate performances that had gone before.

Badoer was the 1992 International Formula 3000 champion, beating the likes of Rubens Barrichello and David Coulthard, but was saddled with several poor cars in F1, from the hurriedly finished Scuderia Italia Lola (never saw a

windtunnel until after it was drawn) to two spells at Minardi either side of another hopeless campaign with Forti in 1996. By today's metric, Badoer would have scored at the fourth time of asking with seventh at Imola in 1993 (the first of 11 top-10 finishes in F1), but points were only awarded down to sixth place then, so his wait went on.

He was passed over to deputise for the injured Michael Schumacher in 1999 – Ferrari boss Jean Todt chose free agent Mika Salo – and a possible fourth in that year's European GP went begging when his Minardi's gearbox failed with 13 laps to go.

After playing an important if understated testing role in Ferrari's run of six consecutive constructors' titles between 1999 and 2004, Badoer's loyalty was finally repaid in 2009, but it was a poisoned chalice. After a decade without racing, to return in a year when Ferrari had only the fifth fastest car – one that even Giancarlo Fisichella would also struggle with – and in the closest season from front to back in F1 history, he didn't stand a chance.

JAMES NEWBOLD

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Senna's greatest title?

WE LOOK BACK AT THE 1991 F1 SEASON



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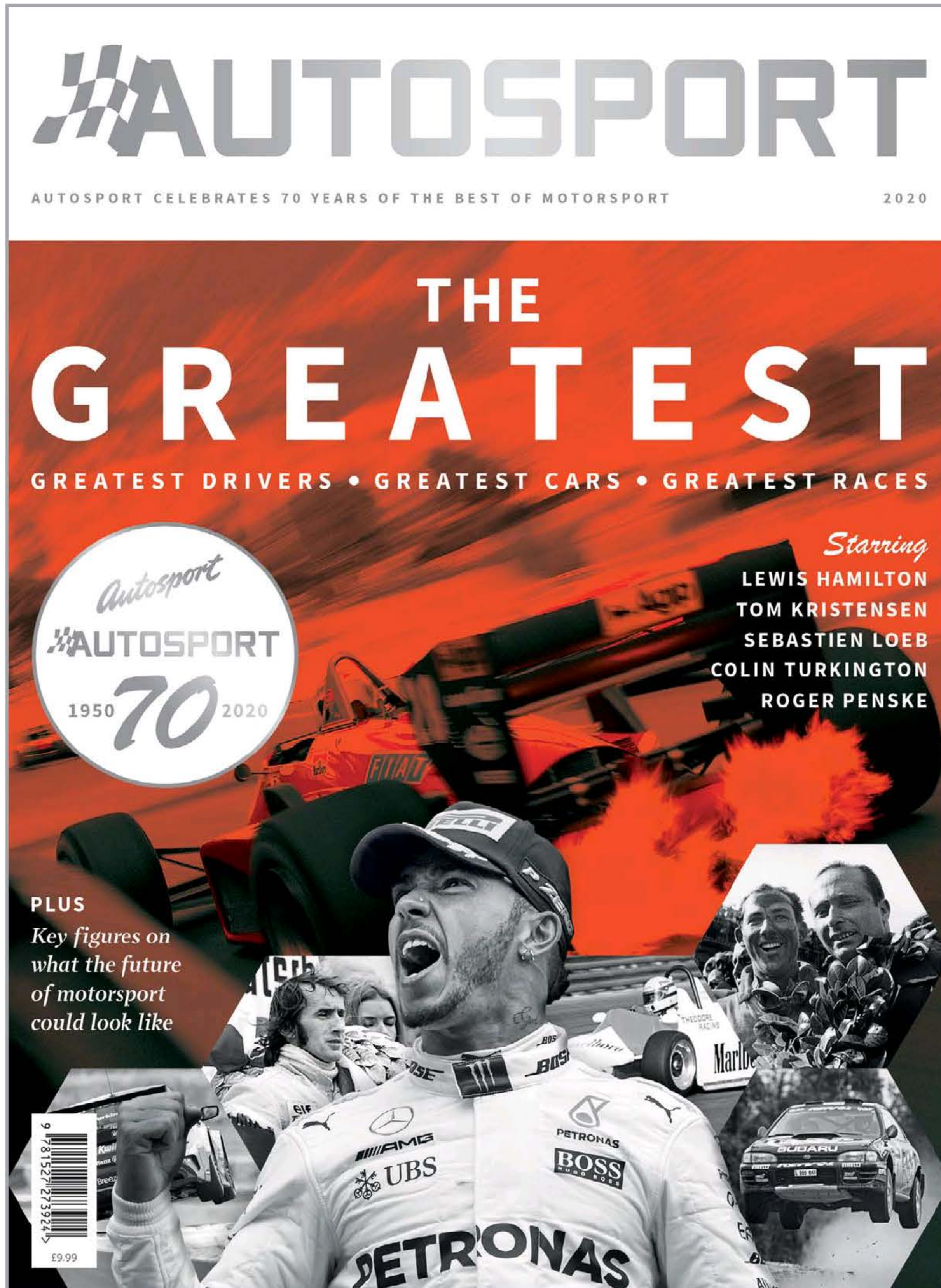
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