F1 Tech secrets of the Ferrari SF21

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

17 JUNE 2021

How Ferrari stopped its Formula 1 slide

Two poles and third in the points. Now for the new rules…

'We have made our choice and the effort has switched to 2022 already'

LAURENT MEKIES

'It was important for us to show our capacity for addressing weaknesses'

MATTIA BINOTTO

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Ferrari's latest F1 recovery has already begun

When, in March, we assessed Ferrari's chances of recovering from its dire 2020, we suggested that solving its problems would be more challenging than identifying them. But the first six Formula 1 races of 2021 have been more positive than most tifosi could have hoped.

As Mattia Binotto says in our cover feature on page 14, it is probably fair to say that Charles Leclerc's pole positions in Monaco and Baku flattered the team, but there's no doubt that Ferrari is in a much better place than it was 12 months ago. Our Technical Editor Jake Boxall-Legge picks out some of the SF21's key areas on p20.

Leclerc and Carlos Sainz Jr are also proving to be one of the best line-ups on the grid and, if Ferrari really has switched its focus to making the most of the new rules for 2022, last year will soon just seem like a blip, even if it's nearly a decade and a half since Ferrari's last F1 title.

Two new eras will kick off this weekend. The GT3-based DTM gets under way at Monza, so we talk to Ferrari 488 racer Alex Albon about life away from F1 (p22), while the powerful machines of the Pure ETCR series will battle for the first time at Vallelunga (p26). Marcus Simmons speaks to the key players and is your guide to the all-electric tin-tops.

Last weekend was a bumper one for UK motorsport. Turn to p36 for our extensive British Touring Car coverage and p55 for the start of our 22-page National section.

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor
kevin.turner@autosport.com

NEXT WEEK 24 JUNE

French GP report
All the action and analysis from Paul Ricard, plus W Series preview

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Jerry Andre/Motorsport Images

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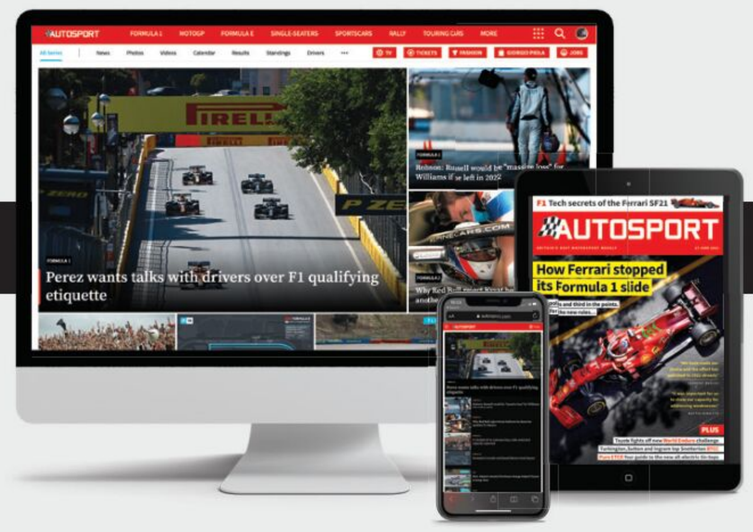

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Autosport editorial
Autosport Media UK Ltd
1 Eton Street
Richmond
TW9 1AG

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SILVERSTONE PLANS BRIT GP CROWD DESPITE LOCKDOWN

FORMULA 1

The British Grand Prix will go ahead in front of a crowd this year despite the UK's extended lockdown, but numbers may be more restricted than originally planned.

The UK government announced on Monday (14 June) that it was delaying the end of lockdown in the country by four weeks until 19 July – the day after the Silverstone race. Prime minister Boris Johnson had hoped to lift all restrictions on 21 June, paving the way for a possible capacity crowd at Silverstone, but has been forced to extend lockdown due to concerns about the Delta variant of COVID-19.

The ongoing restrictions mean that there are limits on the number of people able to attend events. Under the current regulations, outdoor events are limited to 10,000 people or 25% of a venue's capacity, whichever is lower. But the British Grand Prix is set to be part of the Event Research Programme, which has been created to examine the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from attendance at events.

In the coming weeks, the Wimbledon tennis tournament and the UEFA Euro 2020 games at Wembley are set to be part of the programme, allowing them to host a crowd larger than the current restrictions allow. Wimbledon will begin at 50% capacity on 28 June before the two finals go ahead in front of capacity crowds on centre court. The Euro games at Wembley are set to take place in front of 45,000 fans from the knockout stages onwards, around half of the stadium's full capacity.

Silverstone had laid out plans for a sell-out crowd for its race on 18 July, with plans for up to 140,000 spectators to attend on the Sunday. While having unrestricted numbers now seems unlikely, there remains hope that the event will still be allowed to admit a bumper crowd.

It is understood that F1 chiefs have been in detailed discussions with the UK government to ensure that the British GP can go ahead with decent figures, after running two races at Silverstone last year behind closed doors. As part of the ERP, Silverstone could offer valuable insight into the viability of loosening restrictions for major outdoor sporting events.

One factor in Silverstone's favour is that the venue is spread out over a large area, which means social distancing is much easier to implement than at Wimbledon or Wembley. Its location also means that most spectators use their own cars to get there rather than public transport, so there is a limited risk of transmission from those travelling to and from the event.

Talks are expected to remain ongoing for the next few days, with a potential decision on crowd numbers allowed at Silverstone coming later this week.

In a message sent to ticket holders in the wake of the government's announcement, Silverstone said that it "remained confident fans will be back for the 2021 Formula 1 British Grand Prix".

"Our ongoing discussions with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, as well as Public Health England, are positive," the track said. "We will communicate the full details with you once

SBLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

we have them."

"We want to gather further evidence on how we can open up all big events safely, and for good," added culture secretary Oliver Dowden. "The expansion of trials of the NHS app and lateral flow testing will mean that bigger crowds will be able to attend a limited number of major sporting and cultural events early this summer as part of our Events Research Programme. In the next few weeks, this means more fans enjoying the Euros and Wimbledon, and some of our biggest cultural and sports events."

Spectators have gradually been returning to F1 races so far in 2021 in a limited capacity, although some races, such as the Azerbaijan Grand Prix earlier this month, remained crowdless.

LUKE SMITH & JONATHAN NOBLE

Electric man takes over as Ferrari CEO

FORMULA 1

FERRARI

This is the new man to take charge of Ferrari as it continues its push back to the front in Formula 1 and returns to the top level of the World Endurance Championship with a factory team. Or could it also mean an expansion into Formula E?

The appointment of Benedetto Vigna as Ferrari's new CEO, from 1 September, is a sign of the marque's shift towards greater electrification. Following the resignation of Louis C Camilleri in December due to personal reasons, Ferrari chairman John Elkann took over as interim CEO.

Vigna currently serves as the president of STMicroelectronics' Analog, MEMS and Sensor Group, and is a member of the company's executive committee. He has 26 years of experience working with computer chip technology.

"We're delighted to welcome Benedetto Vigna as our new Ferrari CEO," said Elkann. "His deep understanding of the technologies driving much of the change in our industry, and his proven innovation, business-building and leadership skills, will further strengthen Ferrari and its unique story of passion and performance, in the exciting era ahead."

LUKE SMITH

P14 FERRARI PROGRESS

ANDRE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Williams rejig means new boss

FORMULA 1

Williams has parted company with its Formula 1 team principal Simon Roberts as part of a shake-up of the team's management structure.

Roberts joined Williams from McLaren last June as its managing director of F1 operations, before taking over as interim team principal in September following the departure of the Williams family and the team's acquisition by US investment fund Dorilton Capital. He was appointed in the role on a permanent basis in December after the arrival of former Volkswagen Motorsport chief Jost Capito as CEO.

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Capito is now set to take on the responsibilities of team principal in his role as CEO, while technical director Francois-Xavier Demaison will take accountability for trackside and engineering. Ex-VW World Rally Championship project leader Demaison joined Williams back in March.

"It has been a pleasure to take on the role of team principal following the departure of the Williams family from the sport," said Roberts. "However, with the transition well under way, I am looking forward to a new challenge and wish everyone in the team well for the future."

LUKE SMITH

BMW quiet on Le Mans as it outlines IMSA programme

IMSA/LE MANS 24 HOURS

BMW is the latest manufacturer to sign up for the new 2023 LMDh prototype category. But unlike fellow German manufacturers Porsche and Audi, it has made no commitment to race in the World Endurance Championship. Its programme will be focused on the IMSA SportsCar Championship in North America.

A return to top-flight sportscar racing by BMW for the first time since the Le Mans 24 Hours-winning V12 LMR that raced in 1999 and 2000 was announced in perfunctory style on Instagram by Markus Flasch, the head of the M brand whose remit covers BMW Motorsport. Meat was put on the bones the following day when an official announcement talked about an LMP2-based LMDh "being developed for use in the North American IMSA series".

Its communique talked about a "works project" in IMSA and competing for "overall race wins at such prestigious classics as Daytona, Sebring and Road Atlanta". It pointed out, in parentheses, that these races are all in the US.

The marque did offer some kind of hint that it might have wider aspirations in the WEC and, more particularly, at its Le Mans blue-riband round. Flasch talked about challenging for victories "at the most iconic endurance races in the world from 2023", and pointed out that the new class "offers a wide range of possible applications".

The silence on the subject of the WEC follows comments from Flasch just a week before the project was signed off that an ability to race in two markets with the same car was a major selling point for LMDh. But should BMW want to race at Le Mans in the middle of an IMSA programme, it is unclear whether it would be welcomed by the race organiser and the promoter of the WEC, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest.

"It would be difficult to come to Le Mans without being in WEC," said ACO president Pierre Fillon. "In 2023 there will be a lot of demand for Le Mans. I can't answer, because there is a selection committee [that decides on non-WEC entries]. We would be happy to welcome all the US competitors, but the issue is that we cannot give them preference over people who are involved in our championships."

Fillon's comments could be interpreted as the ACO saying 'no WEC programme, no Le Mans entry', but he also outlined the necessity of LMDh machinery to at least race in the WEC before Le Mans. LMDh will be part of the confusingly named Hypercar category, which also incorporates Le Mans Hypercars. The performance of individual car types, which will be built to two different sets of regulations. will be equated by the Balance of Performance.

The identity of BMW's factory team and the drivers will be revealed along with technical details. It has not announced which of the four licensed P2 constructors it will work with or any details about the engine.

GARY WATKINS

Tandy bids for Spa 24 repeat

SPA 24 HOURS

Nick Tandy will defend his Spa 24 Hours crown this summer along with Laurens Vanthoor at the wheel of a KCMG Porsche. Two thirds of last year's winning line-up at the Rowe Racing Porsche team will drive one of the Hong Kong entrant's Porsche 911 GT3-Rs with Maxime Martin.

The Briton will be making his fourth start at the wheel of a Porsche since he left the German manufacturer to drive for Chevrolet: he contested this month's Nurburgring 24 Hours and two warm-up events on the Nordschleife with the Frikadelli team. The GT World Challenge Europe blue-riband on 31 July-1 August will mark a return by Tandy to a team with which he contested five races in the 2015 World Endurance Championship at the wheel of an ORECA-Nissan 05, winning at the Nurburgring.

"It's definitely one I wanted to go and do again as reigning champion," said Tandy, who had been scheduled to race with KCMG at the Nurburgring 24H last year before clashes with his IMSA SportsCar campaign forced the plan to be abandoned. "Paul [Ip, the team owner] has a real passion for racing and winning, and I still know a lot of the people at the team. They contacted me, and once it became apparent that it was going to be such a good driver crew, it was an easy decision to say yes."

Tandy always hinted that he would be seen at the wheel of other manufacturers' machinery after he joined Chevrolet's Corvette Racing squad for the 2021 IMSA season and the Le Mans 24 Hours. "Corvette obviously have given their blessing; they like their drivers to stay sharp," he explained. "And who knows, one day there might be a Corvette GT3 car, so they will want their drivers to have experience of the big races."

GARY WATKINS

Rosenqvist in huge accident

INDYCAR

IndyCar race winner Felix Rosenqvist was hospitalised following a mammoth shunt in the first race of the Detroit Belle Isle double-header last weekend.

The Swede slammed into the barriers on the outside of Turn 6 due to a stuck throttle on his Chevrolet-engined Arrow McLaren SP machine, and needed to be extricated from the car. Track clean-up and repairs to the barriers and concrete wall forced a red flag that lasted an hour and 20 minutes before the race could resume.

Rosenqvist was held at DMC Detroit Receiving Hospital before being released the following day. His seat for Sunday's race was taken by Oliver Askew, who was dropped by the team for 2021 and replaced by Rosenqvist.

A statement from Arrow McLaren SP on Saturday evening read: "Rosenqvist is being observed overnight prior to discharge, after being sent to the hospital for advanced imaging and evaluation by the trauma and neurological teams at DMC Detroit Receiving Hospital. Evaluation revealed no life or limb threatening injuries and he is awake and alert."

Rosenqvist said on Sunday: "Yesterday was by far the most violent crash I've had, and I'm just so thankful I didn't have any serious injuries. I'm fine but very sore, so driving today would not have been realistic. We had a great race to that point yesterday, which makes it even worse to take. My focus is on getting rested up and fully recovered."

It was unclear as we went to press whether Rosenqvist will be cleared to race in this weekend's round at Road America, where he scored his breakthrough victory last year with Chip Ganassi Racing. Sources close to Rosenqvist indicated that his participation is in the hands of IndyCar's medics, who were due to assess his fitness during the middle of the week.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ & MARCUS SIMMONS

P44 INDYCAR REPORT

FELIX ROSENQVIST

Formula E plots electric junior ladder

Matt Brabham is youngest to race in FE, aged 20 in 2014 at Putrajaya

WARNER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

FORMULA E

Formula E bosses are forging ahead with "very aggressive" plans to introduce a full and electrified junior ladder all the way down to karting, but concede that the pandemic has forced delays.

The championship has been without a support series since COVID claimed the Jaguar I-Pace eTrophy for 2021. But the bid for the Vancouver E-Prix in July 2022 proposes a celebrity race akin to the Volkswagen e-Golf-based e-Touring Car Challenge that ran ahead of the 2016 Hong Kong round.

Formula E co-founder and chief championship officer Alberto Longo told Autosport: "We need to electrify the whole ladder starting even from karting. We have very aggressive and very clear targets on that.

"Obviously, COVID has been kind of a hard stop into all these plans for obvious reasons. But we are still working on it and hopefully in the very close future we will be starting to have different championships underneath Formula E."

A mooted idea to bring the Gen1 machines out of retirement has been all but kiboshed, with cars falling into private ownership and becoming increasingly expensive to restore and maintain.

MATT KEW

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Hoggard gets FIA F3 debut at Paul Ricard

FORMULA 3

Johnathan Hoggard, the 2019 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year, will make his FIA Formula 3 Championship debut this weekend at Paul Ricard.

Hoggard is replacing 2021 Asian F3 runner-up Pierre-Louis Chovet (above) at Jenzer Motorsport after the Frenchman's main backer pulled its support. Hoggard's slot at the Swiss team comes after impressive FIA F3 tests with Jenzer as well as Campos Racing last year. Those, along with his prize Red Bull Formula 1 run, were bright spots in a fallow year for the 2019 British F3 runner-up, who contested a single Formula Renault Eurocup round and whose Asian Carrera Cup programme was scuppered by the coronavirus pandemic.

Team boss Andreas Jenzer said: "Getting a new driver on board after all official tests and the first round over is always challenging, but we trust Johnathan to be fully involved and dedicated to catch this opportunity." Hoggard added: "This was unexpected and happened so fast. I have worked for this opportunity for years and I will give my best from Paul Ricard on."

Chovet was fifth in the Formula Regional European standings last year, and scored points on a two-round FIA F3 cameo with Hitech GP. He led much of the Asian F3 series in 2021, before losing the title at the last round to F2 race winner Guanyu Zhou.

"While I had the feeling our collaboration was going well, suddenly my main investor unilaterally decided to throw in the towel and withdraw from my project," said Chovet. "We were very confident to get excellent results from the second event at Paul Ricard, where I wanted to shine for my home GP and bring back to the team the first 2021 podium, but I won't have the opportunity to drive to my great despair. Disgusted, but we keep pushing!"

Bearman adds German F4 lead to Italian

FORMULA 4

British Formula 4 stars Ollie Bearman and Luke Browning were on form again at the Red Bull Ring last weekend. Bearman, who already leads the Italian championship, won two races at the opening round of the German series to take the early series advantage, while Browning won a crazy reversed-grid finale.

Bearman, driving for Van Amersfoort Racing, led all the way from pole in the opener to defeat Prema Powerteam pair Sebastian Montoya and Kirill Smal. He then beat US Racing's polesitter Tim Tramnitz away from the start of race two and led home the German and Leonardo Fornaroli (Iron Lynx).

Browning had taken seventh and fifth in the first two races in his US machine, and started the final race from fourth. Montoya, Victor Bernier and Smal battled for the lead, but the first two had incurred five-second jump-start penalties and Smal was forced out with a broken front wing after colliding with Bernier, who was given a drivethrough penalty.

A late safety car to retrieve Tramnitz's rear wing scuppered Montoya, who crossed the line first but whose penalty dropped him to seventh. Bearman was forced out in a collision with team-mate Josh Dufek.

ADAC MOTORSPORT

Le Mans to allow spectators

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Spectators are set to return to the Le Mans 24 Hours after a year's absence in August. The plan is to accommodate a crowd of 50,000 at the centrepiece round of the World Endurance Championship.

Full details have yet to be thrashed out by race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, but spectators will have to present the new *pass sanitaire* introduced in France last week to gain access to the circuit. This means they will have to be fully vaccinated, have a negative PCR test or provide proof that they have had COVID in the past six months and therefore considered immune.

Last year, the ACO had hoped to host a similar-sized crowd in 5000-strong bubbles, before having to abandon the plan and hold the race behind closed doors. This year, club president Pierre Fillon explained, there will be "no segregation and no bubbles". Fans will be free to move about in the spectator areas from the Maison Blanche campsite up to Tertre Rouge, though Fillon stressed that the flow of spectators would be strictly managed. The opening up of the Mulsanne Corner and Indianapolis/Arnage spectator zones is still under discussion.

Fillon explained that the ACO is expecting a largely local crowd for the race on 21-22 August. It remains unclear if Britons will be able to cross the Channel to attend the event. The French government introduced a ban on all non-essential travel from the UK and an enforced quarantine period for all arrivals at the end of May.

Fillon stated that the final decisions on how the crowd will be accommodated at this year's 24 Hours will be made at the beginning of July. This will include the number of campsites that will be open and their capacity. Tickets for the event go on sale on 21 June, with ACO members able to book theirs from 17 June (today).

There will also be a crowd at the Monza round of the WEC on 18 July. The ACO, also the promoter of the series, has revealed that it is planning to allow a small number to attend. This will be set by the Italian authorities and will be between 1000 and 10,000 on race day. It will be the first time spectators have been able to attend a WEC event since the hastily organised Austin round in February 2020 before the COVID crisis developed into a pandemic.

GARY WATKINS

P30 PORTIMAO 8 HOURS

IN THE HEADLINES

PAFFETT SET TO MISS OPENER

Two-time DTM champion Gary Paffett looked set to miss the first two rounds of the series' new GT3 era as we closed for press. Paffett's role as an advisor to the Mercedes Formula E team is likely to take precedence over his drive with a Mucke Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3, and this weekend's opener at Monza and the second round at Lausitzring clash with the Puebla and London rounds respectively. Mercedes GT3 veteran Maximilian Buhk looks set to deputise.

ANDRETTI'S IMSA DEBUT

IndyCar star Marco Andretti will make his IMSA SportsCar debut this month at the Watkins Glen 6 Hours. Andretti, who has scaled down to an Indianapolis 500-only programme in open-wheelers, will race Andretti Autosport's Ligier JSP320 in the LMP3 class with his cousin Jarett Andretti and Oliver Askew. Andretti tested the car at Sebring in March.

IT'S MANSELL AT SPA

British single-seater powerhouse Carlin is returning to the Euroformula Open grid for this weekend's round at Spa with a single-car entry. The team will run Christian Mansell, who has won reversed-grid races with Carlin in British F4 (last year) and British F3 (2021). He is unrelated to Nigel Mansell – he's Australian and doesn't have a moustache either.

SOLBERG SAFARI CALL-UP

Oliver Solberg, son of 2003 World Rally champion Petter, will get his second top-class WRC outing with Hyundai on this month's Safari Rally Kenya. Solberg impressed on his debut on Arctic Rally Finland, but had to skip his projected second outing in Sardinia when his dad contracted COVID and the family had to quarantine. "I know I talk about my dreams a lot but this one really is a dream," said Solberg. "It's such an honour and privilege to do this one."

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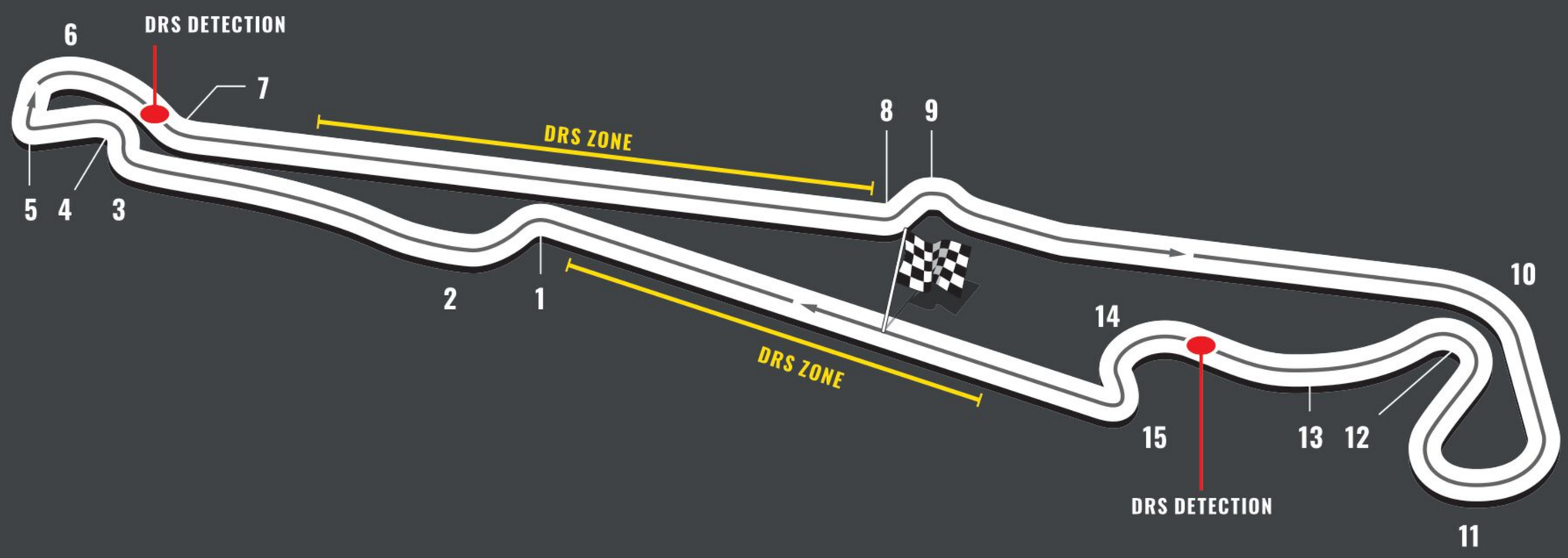
F1 FRENCH GRAND PRIX PREVIEW

LENGTH 3.630 miles **NUMBER OF LAPS** 53



2019 POLE POSITION
Lewis Hamilton 1m28.319s

POLE LAP RECORD
Lewis Hamilton 1m28.319s (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD
Sebastian Vettel 1m32.740s (2019)

UK START TIMES

Friday 18 June
FP1 1030 **FP2** 1400

Saturday 19 June
FP3 1100
QUALIFYING 1400

Sunday 20 June
RACE 1400

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TYRE ALLOCATION

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	**Verstappen**	105
2	**Hamilton**	101
3	**Perez**	69
4	**Norris**	66
5	**Leclerc**	52

Constructors

1	**Red Bull**	174
2	**Mercedes**	148
3	**Ferrari**	94
4	**McLaren**	92
5	**AlphaTauri**	39

Bottas is sixth after recent troubles

MAUGER

RACE STATS

Previous winners

2019	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2018	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2008	**Felipe Massa**	Ferrari
2007	**Kimi Raikkonen**	Ferrari
2006	**Michael Schumacher**	Ferrari
2005	**Fernando Alonso**	Renault
2004	**Michael Schumacher**	Ferrari
2003	**Ralf Schumacher**	Williams
2002	**Michael Schumacher**	Ferrari
2001	**Michael Schumacher**	Ferrari

Remember Jean Alesi's F1 debut in 1989? Martin Donnelly outqualified him on *his* debut, and was driving an Arrows…

SUTTON

Best results

Hamilton	1st x 2
Verstappen	2nd x 1
Bottas	2nd x 1
Raikkonen	3rd x 1
Leclerc	3rd x 1
Ricciardo	4th x 1
Vettel	5th x 2
Sainz	6th x 1
Norris	9th x 1
Gasly	10th x 1

Next big test for F1's top teams

Moving on from the street-race mini-season to a run of 'normal' circuits brings its own set of challenges, and a likely restoration of 2021's true pecking order

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

"The coming races are absolutely critical to the outcome of the world championship." That phrase is often heard in motorsport, and could really apply to any group of races throughout the 2021 Formula 1 season's schedule.

But, of course, as the rounds tick by and the results pile up, the share of points required to be successful differs. This is nothing new, but it and the phrase we started with are worth bearing in mind as F1 heads to Paul Ricard for the returning French Grand Prix this weekend. This is because the championship has just been through a mini-season of street races and is now returning to what might be called 'normal' tracks. This means purpose-built venues with wide, high-speed corners, which will really test the aerodynamic approaches at every team, as well as mean the tyres need to be treated differently to provide the best performance.

The street-circuit sojourn has not been kind to Mercedes, but it could have been worse had Max Verstappen not been violently removed from the Azerbaijan GP — and he knows it. "I think Mercedes is stronger at 'normal' circuits — that's why I would have liked to get a bit more margin [in Baku]," Verstappen recently told *Ziggo Sport* TV.

Verstappen and Red Bull are concerned because Mercedes has excellent historical form at the next three venues on the calendar: Paul Ricard, Red Bull Ring and Silverstone. Plus, the high-speed downforce-matched-with-power-dependent elements at the upcoming tracks means 2021's real pecking order returns to the fore after two races where interlopers — the Ferrari drivers — were able to get among the frontrunners. Mercedes is also not expected to have anywhere near as much trouble with tyre warm-up at such venues as it did in Monaco and Baku, and the low-speed turns that so favour Ferrari are lacking through this next phase of the season.

"Red Bull is concerned because Mercedes has excellent form at the calendar's next three venues"

Therefore, assuming there are no further Q3 disruptions, Red Bull and Mercedes drivers *should* occupy the top four positions on the grid at every race before the Hungarian GP on the eve of the summer break. And, really, even there too.

F1 drivers can only take a car to where it is fundamentally capable of reaching — it's just that reaching that limit is not something every driver can do, and even if they do, the same designs may be susceptible to relatively poorer race performance. As the two best cars on the current grid, we should therefore expect Red Bull's and Mercedes' drivers to occupy the top four spots. But looking back at the qualifying performances from this quartet so far in 2021 produces an interesting set of figures.

Only Verstappen has qualified in the top four at every race, with an average grid spot of 2.3. Hamilton comes next on 2.5 — hurt by his seventh-place start in Monaco. Bottas has 4.7, with Baku winner Sergio Perez's average qualifying position being 6.8 after his Bahrain Q2 elimination and eighth, ninth and seventh (which became sixth on the grid after Lando Norris's penalty) qualifying spots for the last three events.

For Perez, we must remember that the last two Q3s have been heavily impacted by red flags (or ruined, some would argue). But in general, both teams must hope that they don't have either of their drivers qualifying below this key cut-off. Barcelona can be considered a 'normal' track — qualify down the order, and you may not recover enough to influence the battle at the front, as Perez proved this year.

If Hamilton's Monaco result is the only blip from the qualifying stats of the two title contenders so far, then how Perez and Bottas perform against the clock will be vital to how their teams come out of the coming four-race stint.

For Perez, he's on a high after his Baku win, but he has been excellent at that track in the past, and so surely needs to back up that result sooner rather than later. Bottas is surely now fighting for his Mercedes future, with George Russell waiting if the Black Arrows squad does decide to make a change to its line-up for 2022. Solidly earning a grid spot his W12 should be occupying would go some way to proving Bottas's worth.

And then we come to Verstappen and Hamilton. As the figures above show, their speed and top results in qualifying are essentially expected. But now that F1 returns to 'normal' ground, their race performances come under a different kind of focus.

At the last 'normal' track — Barcelona — Mercedes won through a combination of strategic brilliance and Hamilton being kinder on his rear tyres than Verstappen. The second factor alone is remarkable considering the team's rear handling problems just a few months ago in testing. But has Red Bull been able to solve this apparent weakness in the intervening weeks? If Mercedes can enact an impressive turnaround, its rival must do so too if it's to ultimately triumph.

'Normal' F1 tracks will provide the answer, and likely a winner and loser to the coming 'crucial' phase of a finely poised, gripping championship fight.

P14 FERRARI'S REVIVAL

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McLaren's surprise electric move

The Racing division's decision to sign up to off-road series Extreme E may not have been foreseen, but it's mutually beneficial, ticking a bunch of boxes for both parties

MATT KEW

When Autosport was invited for a Zoom video call with Extreme E co-founder Alejandro Agag and McLaren Racing boss Zak Brown, the surprise was genuine. Many Woking high-ups have very publicly rubbished the prospect of this sportscar manufacturer delving into the murky waters of building an SUV. So, why has its Racing wing gone against the party line and pledged its allegiance to the most high-profile arena in motorsport for these kinds of vehicles?

Brown said: "I wouldn't want to speak on their [McLaren Automotive] behalf because it's not my job. What I would say is this is a McLaren Racing effort solely. Of course, electrification is very important to the Automotive Group. This is a racing-driven decision for what we think McLaren Racing need to do."

McLaren went through the financial wringer in 2020. It sought a £150million loan from the National Bank of Bahrain, and sold a cool £185m stake in its Formula 1 team to US consortium MSP Sport Capital. These injections of liquidity have helped balance the books, allowing it to pursue another programme in addition to F1 and IndyCar. And comparatively, Extreme E is a cheap way to do it.

Autosport understands that the lease deal per standardised Odyssey 21 E-SUV is in the region of €1.2m. The powertrain technology won't be opened until 2023 at the earliest, keeping a cap on development spending. And despite an increase for the second event in Senegal to manage workload for teams, personnel passes are capped at 10 per squad to limit logistics. Brown's cheque will be in the region of seven figures rather than the eight needed should McLaren Racing take up its option to join Formula E in 2022-23 for the Gen3 rules. Brown added: "We have a filter, if you like, when we look at new racing series. It has to be commercially viable. Extreme E ticked every single one of those boxes."

> **"We have a filter, if you like, looking at new racing series. It has to be commercially viable"**

In both the official announcement of McLaren Racing's foray into Extreme E and in the virtual press conference, some key phrases kept coming up. Involvement in the series would boost the team's "sustainability and diversity agenda", while engaging new "fans and partners" to grow the "brand and franchise".

In many ways, Extreme E, despite being only two events old, is ready-made to fulfil those criteria thanks to three core elements: electric motorsport; shipping the bulk of the cargo aboard the refitted and now more efficient RMS St Helena 'floating paddock'; plus the installing of 'Legacy Projects' at each of the five race locations visited per season. These fulfil the sustainability credentials. The rules mandating that each team runs a male and female driver would appear to fit the desire for improved "diversity".

Then there's the fan engagement, with Extreme E broadcast in the UK alone on Sky Sports, BT Sport, ITV1 and via BBC Online platforms. These contributed towards an 18.7m-strong audience for the first round in Saudi Arabia, with Agag telling Autosport "for sure, we don't charge much" to land deals with the biggest networks around the globe, to get as many eyes as possible on his brainchild.

Then there's what Extreme E can offer McLaren Racing as a commercial platform. Just Marketing founder Brown's bread and butter lies with establishing sponsor deals, and is a part of the reason why he earned his papaya gig.

Discounting all contracts agreed before the series made its debut, since Saudi Arabia the championship has sorted a partnership with a sunglasses firm and a luggage company in addition to 12 additional broadcast deals. Andretti United turned up in Senegal with a brand-new livery, Rosberg X Racing donned new stickers, as did Veloce Racing as brands picked up the phone and wanted to be associated with Extreme E. McLaren Racing can tap into that and helps explain its timely signature.

Then there's what McLaren Racing brings to Extreme E itself. Agag understands public perception, and works as hard as anyone to ensure good coverage of his championships, so McLaren Racing's arrival is a massive tick on both fronts.

"The McLaren news today is a major, major boost for Extreme E," he said. "We know that there are many manufacturers looking at Extreme E. I'm sure that there will be some car manufacturers looking at the news today with big interest... so we may have two other teams joining soon."

Incidentally, news of McLaren Racing's perusal of electric racing has come to the rescue twice now. When so many questions were asked about the health of Formula E following the successive announcements that Audi and BMW will quit at the end of the 2021 season, McLaren steadied the ship when in January it signed a Gen3 option that guarantees it a place on the grid should it decide to go ahead and commit.

Then, only four hours after the Extreme E commitment from Woking, news that both the Brazil and season-ending Argentina X-Prix events had been cancelled amid the ongoing COVID crisis in South America didn't come across as the calendar bodyblows they might otherwise have been seen to be.

FERRARI'S ROAD TO RECOVERY HAS BEGUN

After its worst campaign in 40 years, the famous Italian team had to bounce back in 2021 – and it appears to be delivering

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

COATES

16
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WAICHAI

"GUYS, THIS IS ONLY THE FIRST QUALIFYING BUT, COMPARED TO WHERE WE WERE LAST YEAR, IT'S QUITE A BIG STEP FORWARDS. WE HOPE TO FIGHT FOR POLES, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD BE SATISFIED WITH THE STEP WE'VE DONE – AT LEAST HERE. AND CONGRATULATIONS TO CARLOS – HE PUSHED ME MASSIVELY" Charles Leclerc

Charles Leclerc's team radio words to Ferrari (above) as he toured in after sealing fourth place in qualifying for the 2021 Bahrain Grand Prix rather neatly summed up both the team's position at that point, and how its campaign has played out since.

After the nadir of 2020 and the team's worst F1 season since 1980, 2021 has been better. Ferrari currently sits third in the constructors' championship. It's still not fully back, not anywhere close to fighting Mercedes and Red Bull across a season or claiming what it feels is its natural place at the head of the Formula 1 pack, but Ferrari has made progress. It's tempting to assert that things couldn't have got much worse for the Italian marque after 2020, but then former title rival and current midfield foe McLaren has shown exactly how far and how quickly the mighty can fall.

Ferrari came into 2021 with perhaps the most unfortunate consequences of the carryover rules requirements of any team aiming for F1's top spots: having to keep going with the essentials of a package that had put it on a sharp downward trajectory. It could rework the main problem with the SF1000 – the engine, which lacked its previous power punch advantage after the controversial 'settlement' with the FIA ahead of last season. Indeed, Ferrari redesigned parts of the power unit's internal combustion engine and made small tweaks in the thermal and electrical elements, including introducing a smaller turbine for this season. But, like all manufacturers, it cannot now upgrade the engine again this year. Further and more major developments are planned for 2022, but as it stands the Ferrari powerplant's output is thought to remain somewhere in the region of 20bhp down on Mercedes and Honda.

Ferrari spent its 2021 development tokens adapting the rear of the SF1000 into the SF21, which included a redesigned gearbox. A rear handling weakness was another part of the 2020 package that had hurt the team, and so it tried to address this while also incorporating the mandatory rear floor changes, recouping as much downforce as possible in this area being a key consideration. As we explain on page 20, Ferrari initially trialled a tapered floor concept that was perhaps more in keeping with the spirit of the intended rule change, before switching to the 'Z-floor' solution now widely implemented across the grid.

The result was the SF21, which, other than a few new aerodynamic parts at the front of the car standing out, looks largely similar to its much-maligned predecessor. Albeit with a slightly questionable blended livery covering the rear of the car...

It has a positive front end, rides bumps and kerbs superbly and excels in slow-speed corners, which could be seen in Ferrari's pace in the final sector at Barcelona and, most prominently, two weeks later around Monaco. The SF21 appears to be able to get the tyres working as needed for its drivers, although keeping them alive over a race distance remains a challenge. Apart from the remaining straightline speed deficit, the 2021 Ferrari has returned to many of the strengths its 2019 package possessed, as the team has also worked to reduce the drag that hampered the SF1000.

"With how much aero we [still] have on the car, it's actually quite

SUTTON

Leclerc's Monaco pole gained in bizarre circumstances

ETHERINGTON

SUTTON

Better luck in Baku, although qualifying pace couldn't be matched in race

powerful," Leclerc explained when discussing the SF21's low-speed strengths after his shock Monaco pole and before his surprise Baku follow-up.

"In the low-speed corners, it's a combination of chassis and aero that makes it quite nice. The balance is also quite nice in the low-speed corners, which helps us. So, it's a combination of things that makes our car quite strong in the low-speed. We were even stronger on the low-speed in Monaco than we were basically in the low-speed of all the tracks before, so I think there was maybe something more in Monaco that we need to understand."

So far, so encouraging, but the SF21's remaining problems – again, essentially with the power deficit – are causing knock-on effects. Ferrari typically must go with set-ups more compromised than would be ideal for any team (this is the game up and down the grid at every track, of course) as it sheds peak downforce to try to keep up with the more powerful engines on the straights. This could be seen most noticeably last time out in Baku, with that track's long straights and acceleration zones, but such an approach has a negative impact on tyre life, particularly at the rear.

In 2020, Leclerc in particular was able to grab excellent qualifying results for Ferrari, four fourths the highlights. But the SF1000 would inevitably drop back rather dramatically in races – if Leclerc was still in the fight, given his three first-lap shunts last year.

Overachieving in qualifying and then struggling more for race pace is arguably still a trait that the SF21/Leclerc combo shares with last year's Ferrari package, but the race results have been better. And the Monegasque is yet to be involved in a race clash, even if he showed in Bahrain and Spain with his bold passes on Valtteri Bottas that he's not going to shy away from a fight he can't ultimately win.

Bahrain and the Algarve Circuit are Ferrari's lowlights of 2021 so far. In the former, the team struggled to keep its rear tyres alive on the highly abrasive surface, with Leclerc slipping back to sixth in the race. New team-mate Carlos Sainz Jr was eighth. In Portugal, both drivers struggled with tyre management, sixth and 11th in the grand prix, although Leclerc did gain places while Sainz tumbled out of the points. But the team worked hard to improve this before the next event in Spain, and the results were very encouraging.

After sensationally nipping around Bottas at Turn 3 on the first lap at Barcelona, Leclerc took his equal best finish of 2021 in fourth (the others came at Imola and Baku). Sainz finished seventh in his home race, and engaged in battle with McLaren as Ferrari beat the orange team for the first time in what is becoming an engaging subplot fight for the best-of-the-rest spot behind Red Bull and Mercedes. »

Then came Monaco, where Leclerc claimed pole in bizarre and ultimately very painful circumstances, as the driveshaft hub damage sustained in his Q3 crash prevented him starting the race. Sainz showed well in the race to end up second, demonstrating strong pace against dominant winner Max Verstappen once Bottas had been removed by Mercedes' latest pitstop calamity. Sainz did not threaten the Red Bull, but he was fast enough to suggest that Leclerc would have had a strong chance of winning if he'd been able to take up his pole and hold the lead through Ste Devote.

In Baku, another Q3 red flag, this time with Sainz going off in sympathy behind Yuki Tsunoda, helped Ferrari double up on poles. But Leclerc was easily overcome by Lewis Hamilton and the Red Bull duo in the race's early stages. The red flag helped him get racy again in the final laps, but Pierre Gasly held on to deny him a podium.

"I think it was still a good weekend, and we should keep our heads up and be positive," team boss Mattia Binotto said after Leclerc had finished fourth and Sainz eighth in Baku.

"Obviously there are two cars ahead of us, which are still stronger [Red Bull and Mercedes], no doubt. It was great to have pole position both in Monaco and in Baku, but I don't think that is reflecting our true performance overall. There are two cars which are stronger. But I think we are progressing. We are progressing because eventually we are learning the car, we are exploiting it better compared to the start of the season. And we know that there will be some developments coming in the future. So overall, that's where we are."

If a future F1 observer were to take a somewhat lazy glance at the history books and compare Ferrari's very early 2020 to early 2021, they would likely spot something missing year on year. Ferrari immediately took silverware last year, with Leclerc second first time out in the pandemic-delayed campaign. That says a lot about the chaotic, controversial circumstances of the 2020 Austrian GP's ending, but it also skates over the 2021 Emilia Romagna GP.

At Imola for this season's second event, Leclerc had run commandingly early on, well ahead of Sergio Perez in the wet early stages, and was comfortably in third behind runaway leaders Verstappen and Hamilton. The red flag robbed him of what was surely a nailed-on podium, as it allowed Lando Norris to bring McLaren's power advantage with its Mercedes engine to bear, while Hamilton was gifted back a lap and set on a charge to rescue second after his first of two major errors so far this year.

There are tangible ways to track Ferrari's progress back towards the 'Class A' fight. For a start, the team is two places higher in the constructors' championship than it was after six races in 2020 (it ended the campaign sixth).

Leclerc's second pole position in a row was aided by Q3 red flag

FIA POOL

Then there's its year-on-year pace relative to the front of the grid. This can be seen in two areas. For a start, looking back to the season opener in Bahrain, all the teams set slower times in qualifying than they did in 2020, largely thanks to the rear floor changes and new tyres, but Ferrari only lost 0.541 seconds – the least of all. That's compared to 2.121s for Mercedes and 2.279s for Racing Point/Aston Martin – the most (not including the undeveloped, rookie-piloted Haas cars).

Plus, using supertimes calculations (based on the fastest single lap by each car at each race weekend, expressed as a percentage of the fastest single lap overall – 100.000% – and averaged over a number of events), from the six 2021 races, Ferrari has the third fastest car with an average pace deficit of 0.368%, whereas in 2020 it was fourth fastest, with an average deficit of 1.354%. That is real progress and in very difficult circumstances, given the carryover rules restrictions in place mean that normal, wholesale development can't be done.

"It was important for us to show our capacity of developing and addressing weaknesses," Binotto said in Monaco. "When coming to Bahrain for winter testing, I think the car behaved at least as we were hoping and expecting. That was the first good result, and after Bahrain we knew we had a car that was certainly better than last year, which was a minimum objective.

"We knew that somehow we could have done well during the race [there], but we know as well that Bahrain is a very specific circuit and I think we said we should first wait for five races in the season to understand our true potential.

"But I think that the car has been behaving consistently since

Leclerc leads the pack at the start of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix

SUTTON

FERRARI 2020 v 2021

	2020	2021
POINTS	61 (5th)	94 (3rd)
POLES	0	2
PODIUMS	2	1

After six rounds

Sainz's second place in Monaco is Ferrari's first silverware of the year

FIA POOL

SUTTON

"WE ARE ENJOYING THE INTERACTION CARLOS HAS WITH CHARLES. THEY ARE PUSHING EACH OTHER, THEY ARE LISTENING TO EACH OTHER IN TERMS OF WHERE THE CAR NEEDS TO GO FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT. IT'S CERTAINLY A STRONG POINT FOR US RIGHT NOW" Laurent Mekies

the start. The entire team as well is dealing well through the race weekends. Solid race weekends from the pitcrew, from engineering. We had some difficult races, like in Imola with the wet race. But not only Imola. I think that overall in terms of strategy, pitstops, it has been a solid start to the season and for that we are pretty happy."

Another part of Ferrari's positive progress in 2021 concerns its drivers. With Sainz on board in place of Sebastian Vettel – who it must be acknowledged is currently enjoying a renaissance at Aston Martin despite a tough start to life in green – Ferrari boasts the highest average combined driver grid spots of any team outside Red Bull and Mercedes, on 5.05 (McLaren is next on 8.65, with Mercedes leading the way with 3.55).

Sainz appears to be pushing Leclerc to new heights. It's still probably too early to say this for sure, but there has been a pattern since Bahrain qualifying for the Spaniard to generally lead the way for Ferrari in practice and Q1/Q2 before Leclerc rockets up the order with his fearsome qualifying speed when it really matters. The only thing preventing a Leclerc 6-0 lead on head-to-head qualifying was his unsettling by the rather random, blustery conditions around Portimao, where he'd done magnificently to get through Q2 on the slower medium tyres. But Sainz has proved his worth to Ferrari. He has scored its only podium so far this year, and has only qualified outside the top 10 once, in Portugal – Vettel did that for the final 13 races of last year.

"We are enjoying the interaction he has with Charles," Ferrari racing director Laurent Mekies said of Sainz in Portugal. "They are pushing each other, they are listening to each other in terms of where the car needs to go for its development. It's certainly a strong point for us right now, the interaction between our drivers, and it's not something we want to leave here. It's something we want to further develop with them and with their engineers."

After two street-track races, F1 is now heading back to more traditional ground with the higher-speed events in France, Austria and Britain. There are some in the paddock who believe that the low-speed strengths required to excel in Monaco and Baku have flattered Ferrari compared to how it really stacks up in 2021, and there is surely a grain of truth to this. But then, the team was expecting Monaco to be a one-off, before getting into the fight for Baku pole and the early race lead.

But with Singapore now removed from the calendar, Ferrari's best chance to return to race-winning glory has surely passed thanks to Leclerc's latest home-town heartbreak. It will surely be strong at the tight Hungaroring, but, before getting there, Paul Ricard and particularly Silverstone may well be a struggle, even compared to 2020, with the SF21's slimmer aerodynamics not working as well in the high-speed stuff.

This may hurt Ferrari in its fight with McLaren, which relies on good straightline speed and better high-speed corner performance to gain lap time. But if Ferrari can edge ahead and seal third in 2021's final results reckoning – and both it and McLaren are having to fight something of a rotating cast of other midfield runners for the best non-podium results as the year progresses – then that would still be an excellent turnaround from 2020. It would put Ferrari on a firm upward trajectory and make the previous year a mere blip, assuming of course that it can continue gaining pace and places through the rules reset coming for 2022.

"It's very clear for us – the vast majority of our resources are on 2022," Mekies explained back in late April. "It's an efficiency race now. We had to choose – and we have made our choice and we are pretty much on full push on 2022. It doesn't mean that you will not see things coming here and there, but certainly the vast majority of the effort has switched already."

So, Ferrari is heading back, but isn't quite there yet. And it's still trying to win a close fight in 2021 while at the same time attempting to avoid this impacting its potential in 2022. The same is true up the grid at Red Bull and Mercedes – exactly where Ferrari wants to get back to fully next year. But we'll only know if it has succeeded come this time next year.

P20 FERRARI SF21 TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

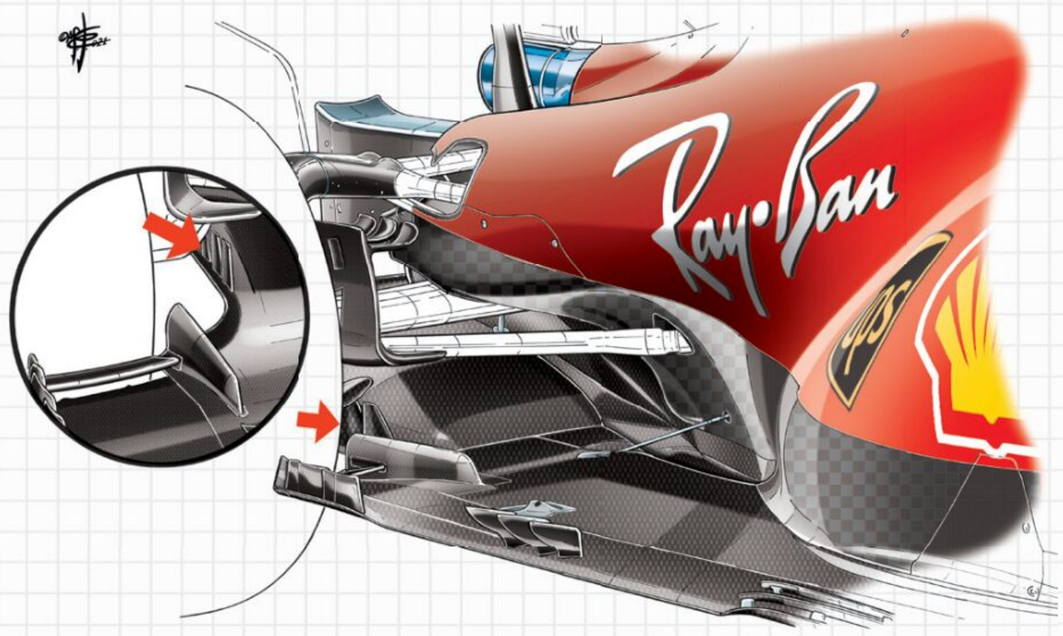
HOW FERRARI HAS MADE GAINS IN 2021

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND GIORGIO PIOLA

The tide is turning for Ferrari, as the team spent 2020 all at sea. Having initially developed the SF1000 to add more downforce to a design concept bearing rocket-like pace on the straights, Ferrari's 'agreement' with the FIA over its powertrain performance left last year's car seriously compromised.

The powertrain, owing to a flurry of technical directives from the governing body, was left neutered. The car then proved too draggy to overcome the reduced power and lacked straightline speed. Forced to produce a derivative of last year's car, Ferrari therefore faced a challenge to make progress, but at least it knew what the problem areas were.

Ferrari has now regained its edge in low-speed corners. The SF21 rides kerbs with ease, and a modest set of updates has continued the team's good work in mounting a prolonged assault on third in the Formula 1 constructors' standings.

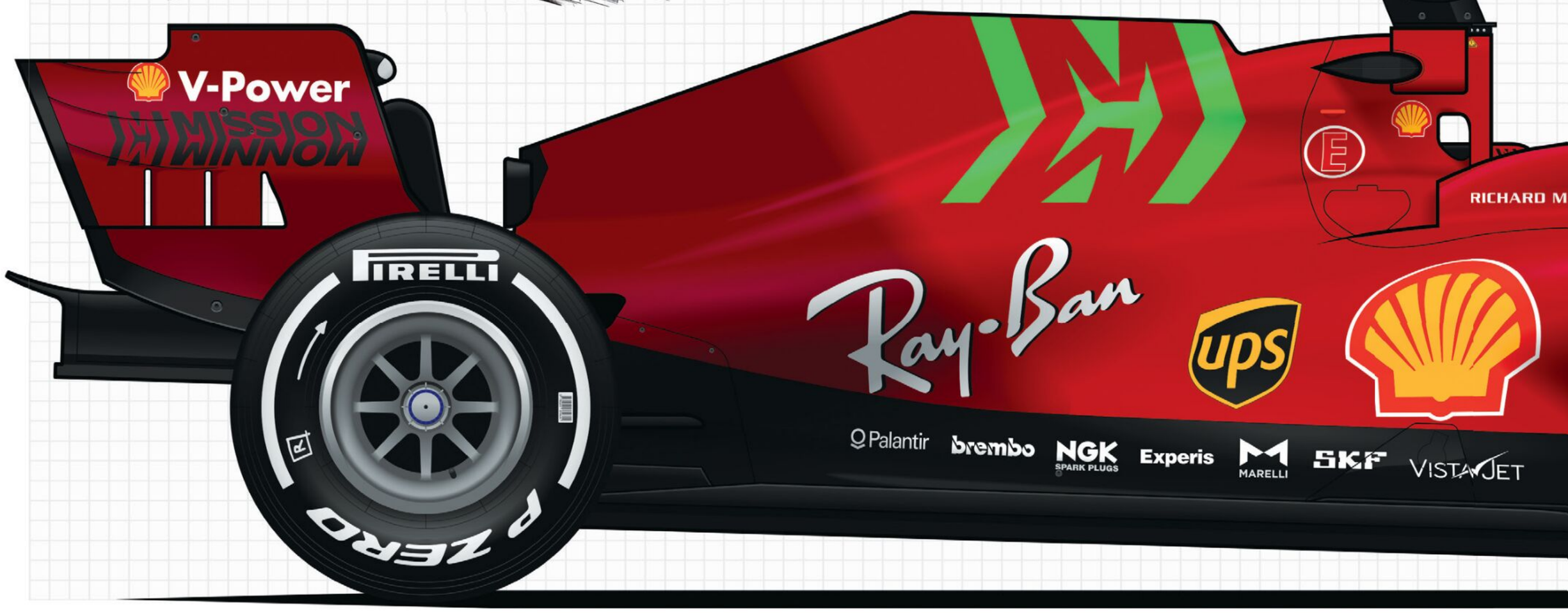


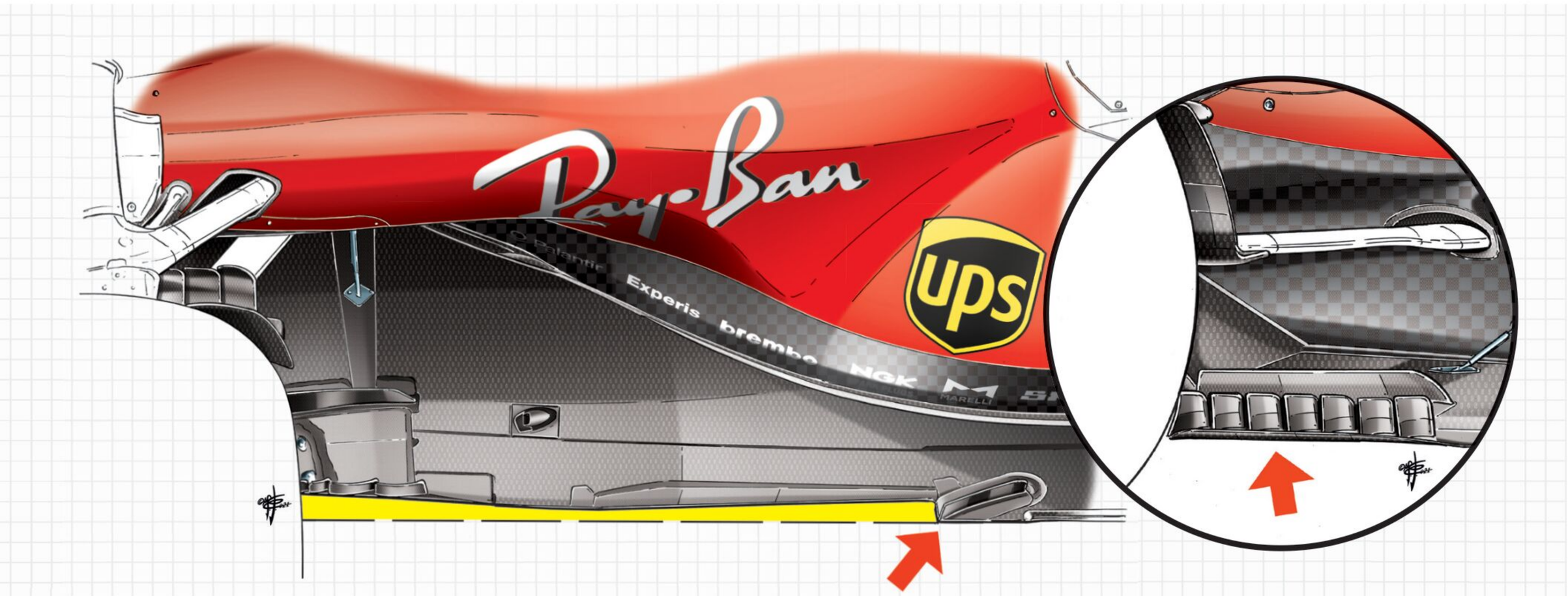
One of the biggest visual changes compared to the recent lineage of Ferrari cars has been at the front. Many teams over the past couple of years have moved away from the thumb-tip crash structure and created a more visually appealing nose design. McLaren, Renault/Alpine and AlphaTauri, along with Aston Martin and Alfa Romeo, have made the switch to a thinner geometry that can allow airflow to wrap around and enjoy a cleaner transition to the floor section. But Ferrari, having spent its off-season development tokens on reworking the rear of the car, had to make do with redesigning the nose fairing instead, creating a smoother transition to the nose tip.

Ferrari's design is a bit of a halfway house in that regard, but still incorporates a pair of slots either side of the nose to draw clean airflow underneath the front end and work with the variety of fins leading up to the bargeboards. Ferrari also added a quartet of fins to the top of the nose to direct airflow down towards the undercut of the sidepods.

The tokens spent on the rear end include a redesigned gearbox and suspension package to generate a more tapered design to open out the floor, giving the team more chance to generate the correct pressure differential between the top surface and the underside of the floor. With 2021's floor regulations having changed to limit downforce, Ferrari made reclaiming this one of its priorities. The bodywork has also been reconfigured to assist this, with the sidepods now producing a distinct downwashing effect to fit into that 'Coke-bottle' channel at the rear.

As the 2021 season opened, there was the opportunity to look at the other teams' interpretations of the new rules and assess their merits. The full gamut of floor solutions broke cover





at Bahrain's three-day test, with the cutaway 'Z-floor' solution coming to the fore. Ferrari, having developed its own tapered design in perhaps the spirit of the rules, pressed its own version of the Z-floor into service in practice at Imola in April. It was never raced at the Italian venue, but was installed for the Portuguese Grand Prix the following month after one was made for each driver.

Prior to that, Ferrari had experimented with fins at the back of the floor, designed to act as a stand-in to the slots that had previously been used to let airflow leak outwards, creating something of a seal for clean air to move underneath the car. These were paired with a small winglet mounted ahead of the rear tyres between those fins and a rib further inboard, seemingly to try to trim off any turbulence created by the rotating wheels. In addition, a small collection of fins was placed on top of the diffuser to try to keep that sealed even further.

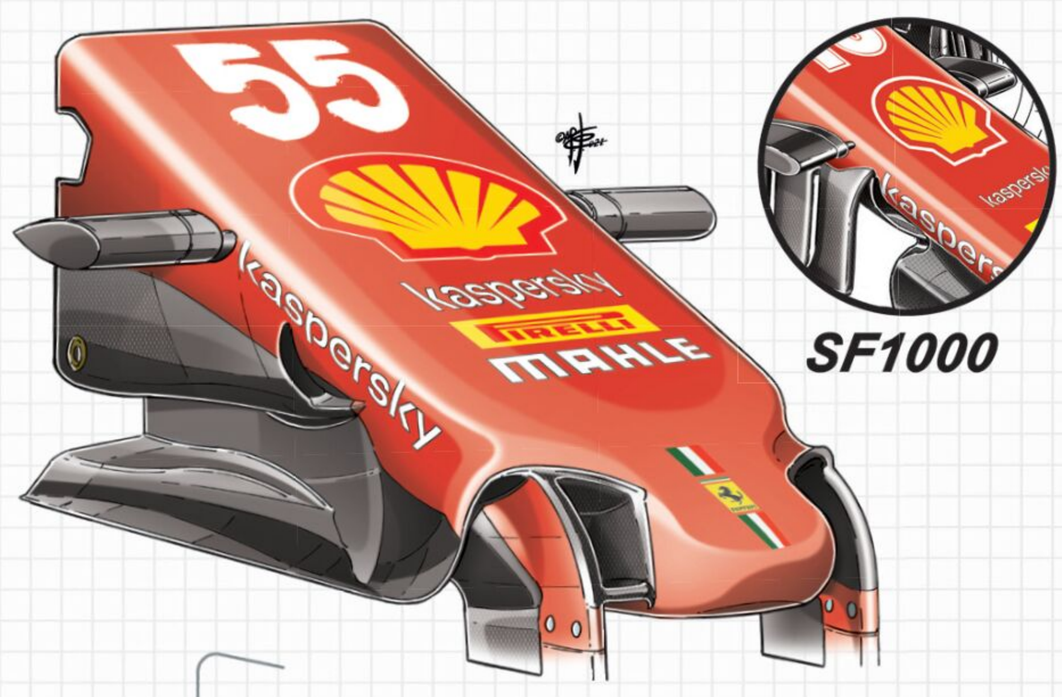
But Ferrari's eventual Z-floor design seemed to reduce the necessity for some of the fins towards the rear of the floor, giving the team the option to work the airflow earlier and sealing the floor with the additional exposed corner of the new design. During the early part of the season, Ferrari had three outwashing fins about three quarters of the way down the floor's edge, but these were removed with the introduction of the new floor. The Z-floor also features a fin along the top, helping to strengthen and direct the position of the vortex produced.

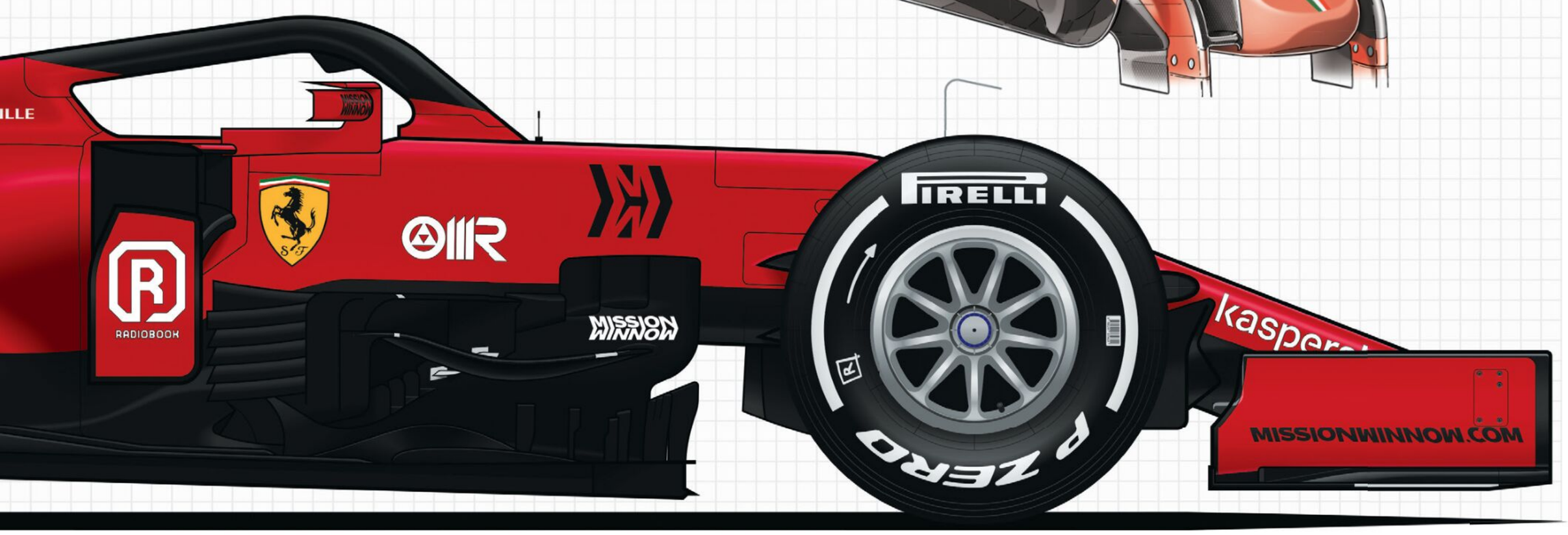
Ferrari later added to the collection of teeth at the rear corner of the floor, however, reducing their chord length to squeeze more in and strengthen their placement of airflow around the rear wheel. The 2021-spec floors have been a fertile ground for development as teams have had to grasp their limitations and work around them, and Ferrari has followed suit.

This willingness to make developments and not simply give up on the SF1000/SF21 concept has been a key factor in Ferrari's ability to move to the head of the midfield. But equally, it's had the chance to develop the power unit that left it struggling last season, introducing redesigned pistons and a new cylinder head to improve the efficiency of the combustion process. Ferrari also made minor changes to improve the hybrid components on board, extracting more power.

Although the Ferrari package is not the quickest on the grid in terms of straightline performance, the delivery of power has played nicely with the car's compliance in the bumpier sections of the street venues, resulting in excellent performance at both Monaco and Baku.

In race trim, the SF21 does seem to tear a little more life out of the tyres compared to its rivals on the grid, giving the team less flexibility with regards to race strategy. But Ferrari's developments and excellent performances in qualifying of late seem to hint at a remote chance of a big result this year – if the stars align just right for either Charles Leclerc or Carlos Sainz.





Given F1 rivalry, Red Bull's tie-up with Ferrari might raise an eyebrow, but it works for both parties

SEASON PREVIEW

RED BULL'S DTM MISSION

The DTM moves into its bold new GT3 era with welcome support from Red Bull, which enters two AF Corse-run Ferraris. That includes one for ex-F1 driver Alex Albon, who's determined to make a success of his GT switch

RACHIT THUKRAL

For many years, the Red Bull-backed Audi of Mattias Ekstrom was easily one of the most recognisable cars in the DTM, with the energy drinks giant becoming synonymous with the success of the two-time champion during their 16 years together in the series. So, when Ekstrom announced his exit from the DTM at the end of the 2017 season, it perhaps came as little surprise that Red Bull followed suit a few months later, pulling out as a sponsor of both the ex-Ekstrom Audi slot and Marco Wittmann's BMW.

But Red Bull's absence from the DTM has turned out to be short-lived, and it's back in the revamped GT3-based series this year with a team of its own. One of the operaton's two AF Corse-run Ferraris will carry the famous red-and-blue colour scheme of the Red Bull brand, while the other 488 GT3 will sport the fan-favourite AlphaTauri livery also seen in Formula 1.

But Red Bull's return amounts to more than bringing some popular liveries to the DTM grid. The long-running German championship desperately needed a boost over the winter following the demise of the Class 1 era, as it could no longer rely on manufacturers for driver talent. This is where series boss Gerhard Berger's decades-long association with Red Bull motorsport advisor Helmut Marko came into play, with Berger, who oversaw former Red Bull golden boy Sebastian Vettel's first F1 victory in 2008 while a co-owner of Toro Rosso (now AlphaTauri) successfully convincing his fellow Austrian to

deploy a fully fledged team in the series in no time.

The deal made sense for Red Bull, too. While a lack of manufacturer funding enjoyed in previous years will certainly hurt, the DTM still offers immense marketing benefits to its participants in Europe, particularly the German-speaking markets, where the energy drinks maker has a strong presence.

Red Bull also needed a new championship in which to field its young drivers, with its previously favoured Japanese route cut off by the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, Red Bull planned to run Estonian Formula 3 graduate Juri Vips in Super Formula, hoping he'd follow in the footsteps of Pierre Gasly and step up to F1. But Japan's strict travel restrictions meant that Vips wasn't able to contest even a single SF race last season, with a handful of appearances in Formula 2 not enough to make up for lost mileage. To avoid a repeat of the situation, Red Bull has not placed any of its junior drivers in Super Formula this year, despite continuing to sponsor the Honda-powered Mugen team. Instead, it has made the DTM its second home after F2, with three drivers from its camp racing in the category this year.

The most high-profile candidate of the trio is Alex Albon, who was dropped from Red Bull's flagship F1 team at the end of last season, but remains very much a part of its motorsport programme in 2021. The Anglo-Thai will share the AlphaTauri-liveried Ferrari with Super Formula and Super GT champion Nick Cassidy, with F2 race winner Liam Lawson contesting the full season in the team's other entry. »

RED BULL

Staying race-sharp is key factor in Albon's DTM participation

RED BULL

Albon will share AlphaTauri-liveried car with Nick Cassidy

RED BULL

The exact details of Albon's programme are unclear, but he will make his DTM debut at Monza this weekend, despite the cancellation of the Turkish Grand Prix triggering a series of events leading to a clash with the French GP at Paul Ricard.

Albon's goal is simple: return to the F1 grid in 2022 by staying race-fit in the DTM and assisting Red Bull's grand prix team behind the scenes in his role as a test and simulator driver.

"It must have been around December when the initial talks came," says the 25-year-old. "It was something we all agreed was supportive of my year out, to stay sharp and to make sure I've got that driving feeling, because if you spend a year out not driving at all it could be quite difficult to get back into the swing of things smoothly. Of course, at the time DTM was changing, and Red Bull with their history and relationship with DTM, it made sense for me to join in."

Albon's experience in GT3 machinery is quite limited, certainly when you compare it with some of the other drivers in the field. But he has done well to get acquainted with a car that shares little in characteristics to the single-seaters he's become accustomed to since he graduated from karting in 2012.

Albon ended up third fastest at the Lausitzring pre-season test, less than two tenths off the ultimate pace set by experienced Mercedes GT3 driver Maximilian Gotz. Uncertainty over the DTM's new Balance of Performance system means testing times should be read with a pinch of salt, but Albon's results bode well for his first racing season with GT3 machinery.

"We've done a fair amount [of testing], I don't think it's much compared to our competitors," he says. "I think I've had five and a half days in the car so far. Obviously, there are a lot of GT drivers and DTM drivers who have been doing it for a while now. So, we are a little bit behind in terms of experience, but I feel like I've picked up the car pretty quickly and I'm getting up to speed with it.

"It's quite a big challenge actually. If you think about Formula 1 as a driving style, purely how you drive these cars it's completely different. The amount of downforce an F1 car has compared to a DTM car, it's a lot more hustling the DTM car around. With engineering and the amount of people, it's a much smaller team in AF Corse. It's still a relatively big team compared to most racing teams, but it is different. It's quite a lot of set-up work we still do. So, it's not been too different but yes, there's a lot less to worry about in terms of steering wheel, buttons, and the things you can change on the car."

It would only be natural for the average viewer to compare Albon's

"WITH THE DTM CHANGING, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH RED BULL, IT MADE SENSE FOR ME TO JOIN"

performances in the DTM to those of Lawson, who has already made a strong case for an F1 graduation in the future by scoring a win on his F2 debut in Bahrain. But Albon doesn't think the DTM is the right place to compare their speed, given the obvious differences between a GT and a formula car.

"I don't think our performances in DTM have much relevance to Formula 1," says the two-time F1 podium finisher. "As a team, as Red Bull, we are fighting for a good result. We want to win, I want to win. But [the DTM] is quite different. [The performance] doesn't translate over across from single-seaters to tin-top cars. But of course, I'm competitive in nature. So, it would be silly for me to say we'll take it easy and that's that."

It's hard to overlook the fact that Red Bull has chosen Ferrari as its choice of steed, given their long-standing rivalry in F1. But while Honda would have been a logical partner because of their F1 ties, the Japanese manufacturer sees little marketing value in the DTM. This was evident when it passed over the chance to race the same NSX-GT it campaigned in Super GT during the DTM's Class 1 engine era. Aston Martin was also not an option following its split with Red Bull Racing, and due to its increasing ties with Mercedes in the automotive industry.

Fortunately for Red Bull, AF Corse, the squad that also runs Ferrari's factory programme in the GTE Pro class of the World Endurance Championship, is receiving some technical backing from the Italian marque's GT division, which could come in handy as it takes on factory-supported teams Audi, BMW and Mercedes.

"The good thing is with Ferrari being there for support, it does mean that there is still quite a lot of assistance through data but also just general car performances," explains Albon. "They are at every race, every test that we do, and these guys are the people that are involved in the Le Mans programme and other GT championships, so it's great to have that shared experience that they bring. They go to almost every race weekend with the Ferrari teams. So, there's a lot of experience there, a lot of brainpower as well behind the scenes. It is quite impressive actually to see their involvement and how much understanding there is in terms of GT cars."

Albon, Cassidy and Lawson join an impressive cast of drivers comprising not only established DTM racers but also series newcomers, many bringing vast experience of GT3 racing with them. The return of the old guard led by Gary Paffett (Mercedes) made plenty of headlines during the off-season, while fellow champions Wittmann (BMW) and Mike Rockenfeller (Audi) add to the depth of the series.

Then there's the influx of 'GT3 specialists' such as Gotz and Kelvin van der Linde, who knows the Audi R8 LMS GT3 like the back of his hand and has titles in the Nurburgring 24 Hours and the ADAC GT Masters on his illustrious CV. How the Red Bull trio stacks up against a quality DTM field will be one of the key subplots of 2021.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN DTM 2021

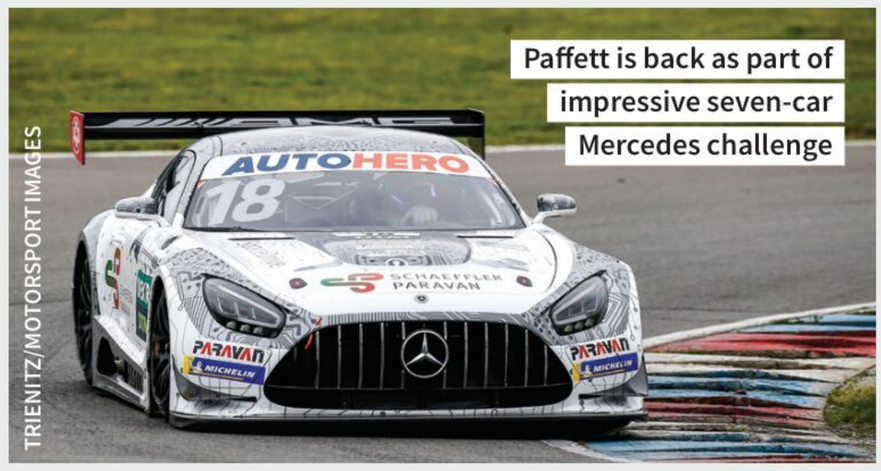
TRIENITZ/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

The DTM's new GT3 era bears little resemblance to its touring car roots, but that's no reason for fans to skip this weekend's curtain-raiser at Monza.

While the factory teams of yesteryear may be gone, manufacturers haven't turned their backs on the DTM. In fact, the switch to GT3 regulations has heralded a level of manufacturer participation never seen before in the series. For starters, Audi and BMW are supporting their customer teams, all of which have been immensely successful in the DTM or other sportscar racing categories. Mercedes is back, after departing at the end of 2018, with seven AMG GT3s, while Ferrari (Red Bull), Lamborghini and McLaren take the total number of manufacturers to six.

The exit of full-fledged factory teams had led to fears that the DTM would be flooded with pay drivers, but the quality of the field has exceeded expectations. With the obvious exception of three-time champion Rene Rast, all familiar names from the series are returning, including Rast's closest rival Nico Muller, two-time champion Marco Wittmann, 2013 title winner Mike Rockenfeller and BMW's top performer in 2020, Timo Glock. Double champion Gary Paffett is also back, although date clashes with Formula E mean he's expected to miss the first two rounds, while Sophia Floersch (above) and Porsche Carrera Cup GB graduate Esmee Hawkey will ensure female drivers on the grid for the first time in nearly a decade.

True, the DTM will find it hard to replicate purpose-built Class 1 cars with off-the-shelf GT3 machinery, but the series is putting BoP to good use to position itself as the fastest GT3 category in the world.



TRIENITZ/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Paffett is back as part of impressive seven-car Mercedes challenge

ELECTRIC RACING FOR THE PUREIST?

The new Pure ETCR series features great looking cars, top drivers and real tracks. Its format is wacky, but it exists in an era when its petrol-fuelled brethren are all artificially contrived

MARCUS SIMMONS

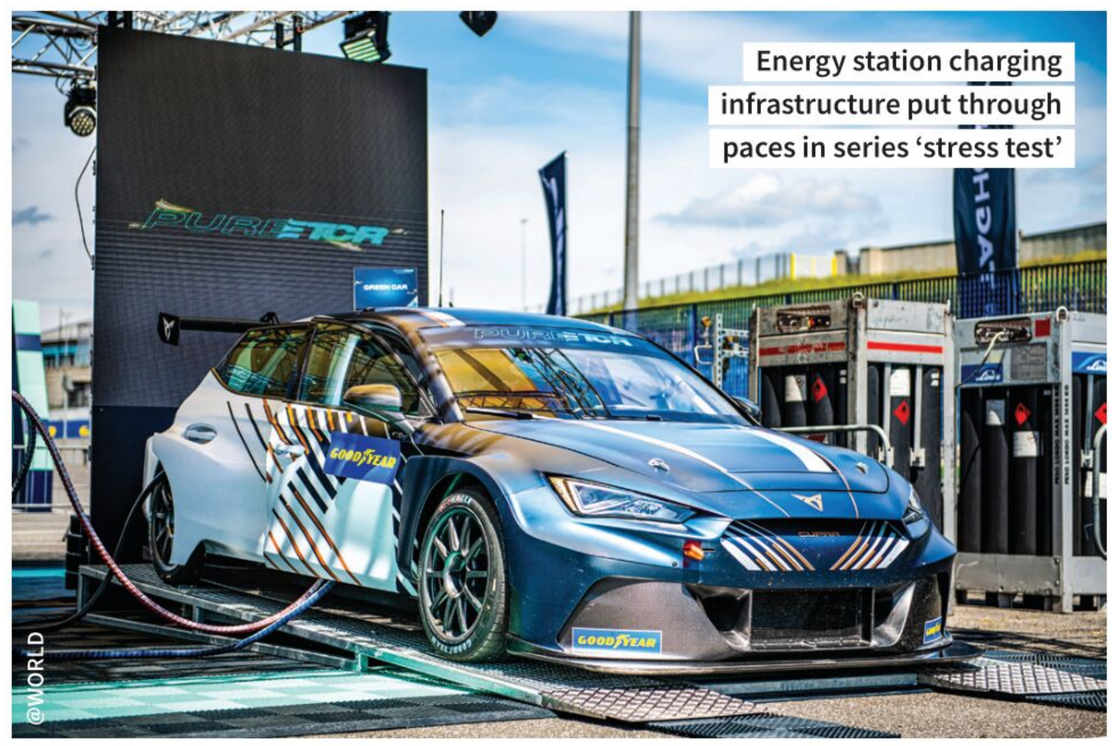
"WE ALL BELIEVE IN THE PROJECT," enthuses latter-day tin-top superstar and early-season 2021 World Touring Car Cup points leader Jean-Karl Vernay. "Marcello Lotti and Eurosport are putting a lot of effort into it to make it big. We just have to show what this car is able to do, that it's fun to watch, and we need other manufacturers. That's clear — we can't stay at three. We need to do a good job on track to make it fun, and other manufacturers will arrive, and if we are at five or six then it's going to be pretty cool. The world is changing, and motorsport has to change also."

There, in a nutshell, is the enthusiasm for Pure ETCR — which kicks off this weekend at Vallelunga — and the 'we're keeping our fingers crossed' optimism that this latest electric venture could provide a template for the future of electric motorsport, and, by definition, perhaps even motorsport itself.

Lotti, as touring car devotees will know, was one of the founding fathers of the FIA European Touring Car Championship, which took on World status in 2005 and was promoted throughout by Eurosport Events. His WSC Group then launched a new concept, TCR, for 2015. And, when the WTCC's ill-starred TC1 ruleset faded away at the end of 2017, an agreement was made with the FIA and Eurosport whereby TCR would become the FIA's new flagship global tin-top category, using the World Touring Car Cup name and the WCTR acronym.

In March 2018, Lotti loyalist SEAT's sub-marque Cupra launched an e-Racer at the Geneva Motor Show, and the concept of a new electric series, E-TCR, was born. But Lotti had already long been thinking of electric motorsport.

"Marcello is the pope of touring cars!" laughs Xavier Gavory, the WTCR and Pure ETCR series director who returned to Eurosport Events two years ago after some years working on the Dakar Rally.



Energy station charging infrastructure put through paces in series 'stress test'

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Series director Gavory does not downplay new concept's sporting and engineering challenges

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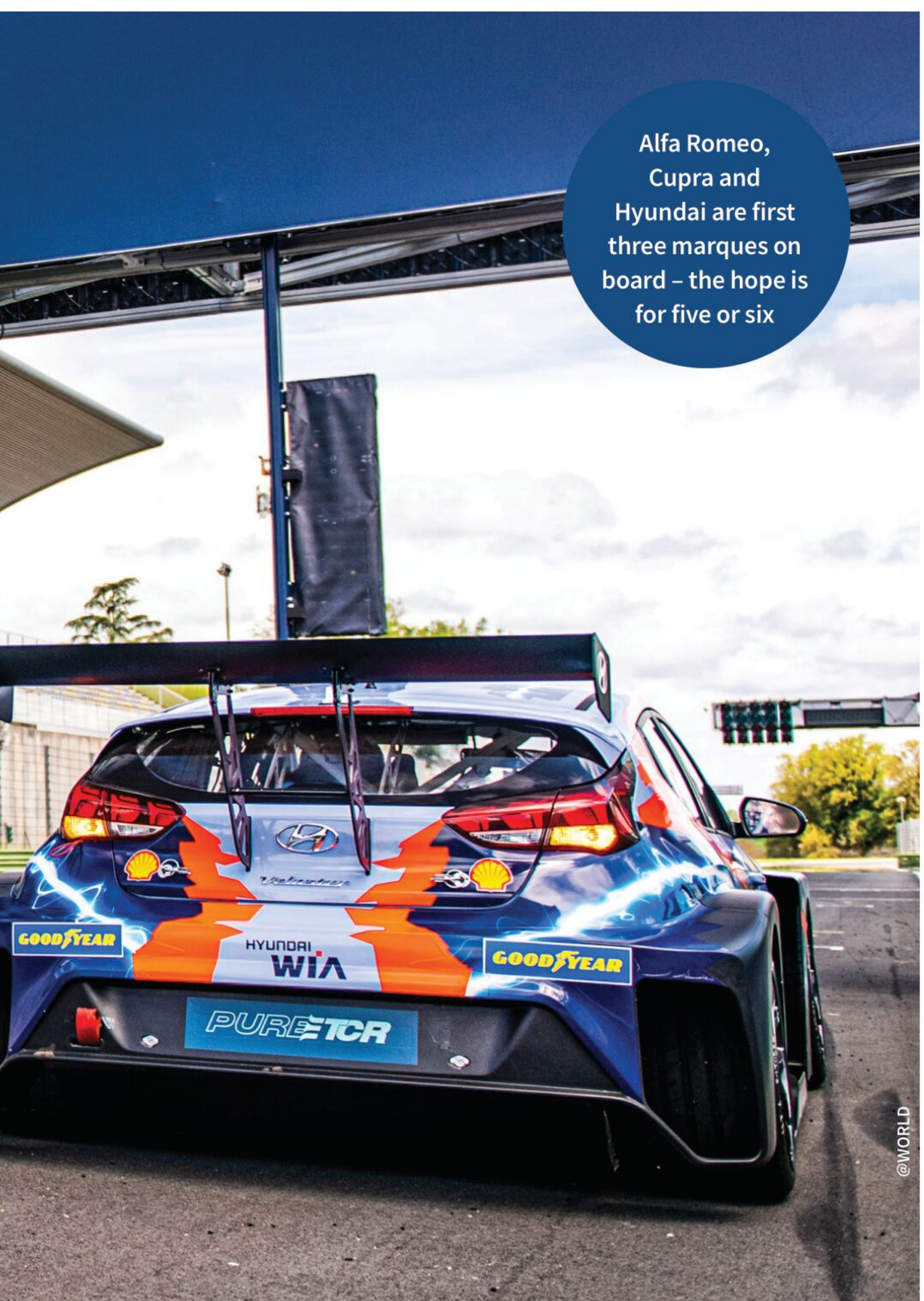
Gavory was still a student when, in the early 2000s, his path first crossed Lotti's while working as an intern at Eurosport. "He's a real visionary," he continues. "In the late 2000s I remember he was already talking about how to convert the touring cars at that time into a kind of hybrid vehicle with power made by braking and stuff. He was already seeing what the future could and would be."

The initial Cupra e-Racer was effectively a prototype for what will take to the track in combat for the first time this weekend. "We did the concept and most of the work ourselves," recalls SEAT veteran Jordi Gene, who has returned to competition this year under the Cupra banner in WTCR and Pure ETCR at the age of 50, after spending the past few years developing race and road cars for the Spanish car giant. "We did it together with a company called Rimac [a Croatian electric hypercar manufacturer]. We had the technology obviously, but some of the resources, like how to produce a battery, is a facility that we don't have in-house. It was easier to join forces with another company, and do the development together."

The e-Racer was shaken down at Idiada by Gene, and he undertook development work at the Circuit de Catalunya, Valencia, Calafat and in Croatia. All the while, momentum built for Pure ETCR, and eventually WSC appointed Williams Advanced Engineering to supply the batteries, Magelec Propulsion the motor, gearbox and inverter, and Goodyear the FE-style all-weather tyres. But, says Gene, the competition version of the e-Racer that he, DTM/World Rallycross superstar Mattias Ekstrom and exciting tin-top talent Mikel Azcona will campaign is not so different to its predecessor.

"The performance of the battery and the electronics was similar to what we have now," he points out. "Let's say that the car now is reliable, everything is done a bit more properly, all the components are a bit smaller so the car is a little bit lighter. It's like an evolution of this very first concept that we did in 2018."



Alfa Romeo, Cupra and Hyundai are first three marques on board – the hope is for five or six

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"WHEN WE ACCELERATE OR EVEN DECELERATE IN THE PURE ETCR CAR, SOME PEOPLE EVEN GET DIZZY"

And the performance of the rear-wheel-drive machines is eyewatering. The battery is good for 500kW peak power, or 680bhp in old money, at 12,000rpm, with 960Nm of torque. That allows for a 0-62mph acceleration of 3.2 seconds, and a maximum speed of 167mph. "This new generation of electric racing, obviously we have a handicap which is the weight; the battery is very heavy, and even if we have it in a very low position and we have the weight distribution really well done, this weight is *in* the car, so some inertias in braking and high speed are there," says Gene. "So this makes the car very different. But on the other hand, when we accelerate or even decelerate in the Pure ETCR car, some people even get dizzy, because from zero to 240km/h the acceleration is constant, so it's something that the brain is not used to."

Vernay adds "you can't even compare with Formula E", a category in which he was slated to be one of the drivers in the inaugural 2014-15 season with the putative team of Labour peer Lord Drayson before he transferred it to Jarno Trulli. Vernay points out that the Pure ETCR Hyundai Veloster N he will race alongside Augusto Farfus, Tom Chilton and John Filippi has around double the power of those old Gen1 FE bolides. "When you put the full power it's nearly too much, and the walls are too close to the track!" he chuckles. "Seriously, when we do practice starts, or the power exiting hairpins, it's quite amazing. You can't use 100% the potential of the car, because it's too much. When you put full power at 500kW, the temperature of the battery goes high super-quickly. You can do one or two laps let's say, so it's never »

ENTRY LIST

DRIVER	CAR
Tom Chilton	Hyundai Veloster N ETCR
Augusto Farfus	Hyundai Veloster N ETCR
John Filippi	Hyundai Veloster N ETCR
Jean-Karl Vernay	Hyundai Veloster N ETCR
Mattias Ekstrom	Cupra e-Racer
Jordi Gene	Cupra e-Racer
Mikel Azcona	Cupra e-Racer
TBA	Cupra e-Racer
Oli Webb	Alfa Romeo Giulia ETCR
Rodrigo Baptista	Alfa Romeo Giulia ETCR
Luca Filippi	Alfa Romeo Giulia ETCR
Stefano Coletti	Alfa Romeo Giulia ETCR

CALENDAR

RD	VENUE	DATE
1	**Vallelunga** (ITA)	19-20 June
2	**Motorland Aragon** (ESP)	10-11 July
3	**Copenhagen** (DNK)	7-8 August
4	**Hungaroring** (HUN)	21-22 August
5	**Inje** (KOR)	16-17 October

enough to find your reference points on braking, turning and accelerating. But it's fun and it's *a lot* of power."

That power will be enjoyed by 12 drivers this weekend, with the factory Cupra and Hyundai efforts joined by the Romeo Ferraris Alfa Romeo Giulia squad, represented by Luca Filippi, Stefano Coletti, Oliver Webb and Rodrigo Baptista. But here's the catch, there are only six cars… At each of the five rounds, the three teams will declare which drivers share each of their two cars, and then they are randomly drawn into two separate pools of six. For the whole weekend, the two pools compete independently. So, say you're Hyundai: you probably want to nominate your two top drivers to share a car so they are in separate pools, and won't be taking points off each other.

"I'M VERY CONFIDENT THAT THE FIGHT ON TRACK AND THE SPORT WILL BE VERY GOOD"

The first round consists of two three-car 'battles' of up to 15 minutes for each pool. Power is limited to 300kW, with the full 500kW available for 20-60 seconds as a 'push to pass' tool, but not if you are the race leader. Round two comprises two-car battles up to 12 minutes, with the round one winners from each pool facing off against each other, the second place finishers doing likewise, and also the wooden-spoon carriers. This time, they use 450kW with no power boost. Round three is a solo qualifying shootout over one or two laps, using the full 500kW, to set the grid for the SuperFinals. And those SuperFinals will use the same power as the round one battles, lasting up to 20 minutes.

"That's the nice thing that these races will bring to the spectators – it's something fresh, it's something new," says Gene. "It's not the typical free practice, qualifying and then you go to the grid and let's see who sees the chequered flag first. It's really challenging because there are so many things happening all the time."

Add to that the complexity of the car. "The driver has to think a lot," says Gene. "We have some parameters that we can change while we are driving – the traction control, power output, the way the power gets to the asphalt. Although the car is capable of doing it, to simplify things we don't use regeneration for race purposes. There are many things that the driver can do, and the car will perform and react differently according to what we demand on it. We have to think, not only drive."

It's also going to be tricky for those such as Vernay and Gene who are doing double duty in the WTCR. Apart from the August date with the Copenhagen Historic Grand Prix street race, Pure ETCR shares the bill with its petrol-powered sister series at its other three rounds: Motorland Aragon, Hungaroring and Inje.

"We did a test session in Hungary three weeks ago," relates Vernay, "and I was in Pure ETCR the first day, and second day WTCR, and of course your references are completely different. Also the way you hit the brake pedal is very different, and I was let's say struggling a little bit. It was nice to do this kind of session before the races – that will be very challenging, and I know now what I really need to focus on when I'm switching cars, and it won't be easy."

It's a testament to the excitement around Pure ETCR that it should have attracted drivers of such calibre. And of course, the FIA also approves: it will gain the governing body's World Cup status for 2022. Ironically, perhaps the COVID disruption of 2020 has proved a benefit. A 'promotional year' was planned with demo events at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, Copenhagen, in China and culminating at the 2021 Daytona 24 Hours, but this was called off.

Traditional qualifying and race format eschewed for fresh, action-focused approach

Tin-top superstar Vernay faces challenge of doing double duty in WTCR

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Vernay enthuses that the power of his Hyundai is "nearly too much"

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Put it to Gavory that this frustration could actually have been a blessing, and he admits: "I'd say you are right. With WTCR, you had the cars, the tech, the pilots standing by, the structure, and everything was ready to race. For Pure ETCR it's completely different, because the lockdown, the travel bans, everything literally changed the face of the series. The cars did not exist at the time, the cars had to be developed; Williams is based in the UK and it was not possible to go there for the battery integrations. All the providers got literally stuck and were not able to provide the teams and the manufacturers with what they needed to develop the cars. At the end of the year we still managed to have a couple of events – one in Copenhagen to reveal our structure and our energy station [where the cars are charged], and one in Aragon to reveal the starting gate. We decided to promote the series in any case to keep the ball rolling – that was very important, to give positive signs to the manufacturers, the public and the stakeholders, saying, 'Hey guys, OK we are postponing things, but things will happen'. You are probably right: we are maybe a bit stronger than we could have been last year."

Will Pure ETCR work? The Eurosport Events crew held what was dubbed a 'stress test' a month ago at Vallelunga, presumably 'stress' applying to the human beings involved as well as the hardware for what was effectively a dress rehearsal. "That's exactly what it was!" jokes Gavory. "The series is a challenge in terms of the unprecedented sporting format and TV production. It's a human challenge as well to put together all those new people: we have a lot of people from WTCR with long experience in touring cars, but we also have a lot of people coming from different horizons to enrich the concept and the way we are doing things. It's a technological challenge for the manufacturers, and for the teams it's a sporting and engineering challenge in terms of format.

"So to arrive at the first race with no rehearsal or no stress test or whatever would have been very complicated. We brought our energy station infrastructure, we charged the cars there for the very first time, we put on the grid our starting gate, we brought what we call the hot zone, an area where the pilots will wait for their turn to go on track and will be able to watch the race and get some data, and the teams got the chance to do some racing simulations. That was very exciting. We had a lot of things to do and fine-tune between the stress test and the first race, but we could see the potential of what we're going to get. I'm very confident that the fight on track and the sport will be very good."

So is Gene. "I think that all the cars are pretty similar in pace," he declares. "We have all the same battery and the same motor, but the one that produces the better package on suspension, aerodynamics, energy management and drivers is the one that's going to take the win. There's a lot of people looking at it – I know there are many brands interested in that concept, and I really hope that this attracts some other people because to me this is the future. I'm really happy to be in at the very beginning of this new chapter in motorsport."

Alpine's challenge thwarted as Toyota wins again

Pole-winning pace wasn't enough to overcome the non-hybrid car's inherent fuel-mileage disadvantage. Still, the two Toyotas staged a fight to the finish, of sorts

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY **JEP** motorsport IMAGES

The Toyota Le Mans Hypercars battled right to the end of the Portimao 8 Hours last Sunday in what on pace was actually a three-way fight. Sebastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Brendon Hartley led home a 1-2 for the Japanese manufacturer on a day when Alpine was a match for anyone on speed, but not on fuel mileage.

Toyota had a faultless race at the Autodromo Internacional do Algarve and therefore ended up making it two wins from two starts with the GR010 HYBRID at the start of the new era of the World Endurance Championship. Alpine had no issues either with its Gibson-engined A480 grandfathered LMP1, save for the one with which it started the race. There has been – and will be – no resolution to its inability to go the same distance between fuel stops as its LMH rivals. And for that reason, Nicolas Lapierre, Matthieu Vaxiviere and Andre Negrao were effectively racing with one hand tied behind their backs.

The shame was that the Alpine wasn't part of what was a thrilling, if choreographed, battle for the victory in the dying minutes of only the second ever world championship endurance fixture in Portugal. The irony was that Toyota's fears, however remote, that the ORECA design that formerly raced as the Rebellion R-13 might be able to win played a role in determining which of the GR010s emerged victorious.

Jose Maria Lopez led before and after the final round of proper pitstops for the Toyotas either side of the seven-hour mark, but victory for the #7 car he shared with Kamui Kobayashi and Mike Conway looked unlikely at this juncture. Toyota Gazoo Racing had split its strategies after the only full safety car of the race, early in hour five, wiped out a deficit for the A480 that already stood at over a minute, thanks to its need to stop seven or eight laps earlier than the GR010s.

The winning Toyota had pitted one lap later than the sister car from the beginning – the team always tries to separate the pitstops of its cars – and had also gone one lap longer on its fuel allocation on a single occasion earlier in the race. A two-lap differential between the pitstops meant it was a no-brainer to set the drivers of #8 into fuel-save mode over the remainder of the race.

"The safety car was terrible for us because it reset the race and left us with no advantage," explained Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon in reference to the scant couple of seconds that separated the GR010s and the Alpine when the race went green. "Car #8 had already done a bit more fuel saving before the safety car and was already stopping two laps later. It was the correct window to try to save the splash. We told the drivers of #8 to go for further on fuel saving and for #7

May the fastest Toyota win – change in team rules meant #8 car came out on top

Hartley, Buemi and Nakajima celebrate victory in Portugal

New Glickenhaus saw the chequered flag, albeit well adrift

we just told them to push."

Lopez was seven seconds in the lead after the final proper stops, a margin over Buemi that he managed to eke out to just over nine. But that wasn't going to be enough for the reigning world champions Lopez, Conway and Kobayashi to win in Portugal. They got lucky when a full course yellow virtual safety car was called with around half an hour of the race remaining, and that meant that Lopez could take the splash of fuel he needed to get to the end while the field was trundling around at 80km/h (50mph). The Argentinian was less than three seconds behind when the race went green with a tad over 25 minutes left on the clock.

Lopez quickly closed down the gap, and with 17 minutes left he was suddenly ahead. It wouldn't be quite right to say that he overtook Buemi, because that's not the way Toyota allows its drivers go about their racing at close quarters. But once the #7 car was into the lead, it wasn't any faster than the chasing Toyota; it was decreed on the pitwall that it was in fact slower. So, after just three laps, the call came for Lopez to cede the lead back to his team-mate.

It was a dramatic, though slightly confused end to the race, given that Toyota's traditional policy has been to freeze the positions between its two cars at the final round of pitstops. It turned out that there has been a change in the rules of engagement for the 2021 season.

"We are constantly discussing and refining the rules with the drivers, and they all preferred the end of the race to be the end of the race," explained Vasselon. "When we were freezing the race at the last pitstops, there were times when it was a bit difficult when the cars weren't in the same situation. In the end it doesn't change much."

When two Toyotas come into close proximity on the track, it assesses which is the faster and ensures that it is allowed through. "We just look at traffic-free sectors," said Vasselon. "In the first part of the stint [after the FCY] Jose Maria was faster, so he passed, but when he was in front he was not faster, so we swapped back. This is the rule we have to make sure the drivers accept the swap."

Buemi admitted after the conclusion that he was thrilled with his victory. He was at least partially correct when he said "we were on a different strategy to #7 and that made the difference".

Without the final yellow, Buemi would have been home and dry. But on the other hand, the safety car had wiped out an advantage of approximately 17s for #7 three hours before. It's difficult to argue that one of the Toyotas deserved to win this eight-hour race any more than the other. There was absolutely nothing between the cars on the averages, whatever sample size you chose, although in terms of laps led #7 had it over #8: 141 to 61. »

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The same goes for the Signatech-run Alpine, which had claimed pole position in Vaxiviere's hands by just less than a tenth from Hartley. It was on an absolute par with the Toyotas around the 2.89-mile Algarve circuit near Portimao, and led more laps (98) than the winning Toyota. The problem was that the fuel tank in a car that was hurriedly conceived at the back end of 2017 around the tub of the ORECA 07 LMP2 design can't accept the full energy allocation allowed to it under the Balance of Performance for the Hypercar class. The fuel tank simply isn't big enough, and neither is there space to incorporate a larger one.

That explains the Alpine's inability to match the Toyotas in going 37 or 38 laps between stops; it could only do 30 or 31. Toyota might have been fearful that Alpine had a chance of pulling a rabbit out of the hat after the hour-five safety car got the A480 back on terms, but there wasn't much confidence of that in the French camp. "If you are doing eight laps less, you've got absolutely no chance," said Lapierre. "It's sad because on this track we were so good, much better than at Spa [for the series opener in May]. Even after the safety car we knew we weren't going to win."

"Disappointing and frustrating" was how Lapierre described Alpine's Portimao 8 Hours. Those are emotions he and the team are going to have to get used to. They have been told that there is no fix for their problem, which is in part an accident of history, and partly the result of the rapid conception of ORECA's P1 design. "We are blocked because they are not going to change the Balance of Performance [to equate the stint length]," said Signatech boss Philippe Sinault. "We know we have to live with this issue. All we can try to do is manage the situation as best we can."

The Alpine was over a minute back on the second-place Toyota after taking two extra full loads of fuel than its rivals over the duration. The best of the LMP2s was four laps down, compared with the single lap over the six hours at Spa. That was despite changes to the BoP for the GR010 and the Alpine to peg them back on the arrival of the Glickenhaus LMH in the championship. The suspicion that having to run in low-downforce Le Mans configuration would hurt the P2s less at Spa than at other circuits was borne out last weekend, even if one of the secondary prototypes did top each of the trio of free practice sessions.

The Glickenhaus-Pipo 007LMH had what can probably be best described as a mixed debut with its solo entry in Portugal for Romain Dumas, Ryan Briscoe and Richard Westbrook. The Italian-built machine looked solid in opening practice when it ended up only a second off the pace in Westbrook's hands, and better still in FP3 when he was fourth quickest,

Alpine leads at the start of a "disappointing, frustrating" race

"Doing eight hours on this track isn't easy. It was important to finish, and we learned a lot"

less than three tenths behind the Alpine and ahead of both Toyotas. Perhaps most significantly, the Glickenhaus was still running at the end of the eight hours.

The lows were a gearbox problem in FP2 that resulted in the clutch being replaced and a disappointing qualifying performance. Westbrook struggled to get heat into the 007's tyres and ended up slower than in FP3 despite a lower fuel load, fresher tyres and cooler temperatures. He ended up only 11th, though a better time to the tune of four tenths lost to a track-limits violation would have put the car a place higher.

The Glickenhaus only ran for seven or so hours in the race: it needed another new clutch after the one with which it started the race was damaged when Briscoe tagged the TF Sport-run D'Station Aston Martin as he braked for the downhill hairpin behind the pits late in the second hour.

Seeing the chequered flag was definitely an important milestone for the team, reckoned two-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Dumas. "Doing eight hours on this track isn't easy," said the Frenchman. "It was important to finish, and by getting back out there we learned a lot. We've got to learn how to extract everything for that car. That's our job between now and Le Mans in August."

Dumas explained that he was encouraged with the pace of the car: "There were times when I was about 1.3s off the pace, which sounds like a lot, but it's a good starting point. We know we have a lot of work to do before Monza [the next round of the WEC in mid-July], but we collected a lot of data."

Glickenhaus was the newbie at the Algarve circuit last weekend. Toyota, by contrast, was celebrating its 100th world championship prototype start in Portugal, and did so with more than a hint of style with the latest in a line of machines stretching back to its earliest days in Group C in the early 1980s working with the Japanese TOM'S and Dome organisations. It let its cars race, and for longer than in previous years. The pity was that there wasn't a French car adding spice to the battle.

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JOTA WINS DESPITE SEVERAL SPINS

Antonio Felix da Costa claimed a race victory in a third discipline of the season at the Algarve circuit last Sunday. The Portuguese added a World Endurance Championship LMP2 win to his 2021 successes in Formula E and the Brazilian Stock Car Championship. But perhaps the more unlikely statistic is that his triumph aboard the #38 ORECA-Gibson 07 with Anthony Davidson and Roberto Gonzalez was that it was his first win on home soil since his karting days.

The British Jota team notched up a class 1-2 in qualifying and repeated the trick in the race, though it wasn't plain sailing. Both cars spun over the course of the eight hours: pole winner Tom Blomqvist was turned around by da Costa on the opening lap, and then the winning car was nudged into a spin by DragonSpeed driver Ben Hanley later in the race when Gonzalez was at the wheel.

Despite the spins, there was almost an inevitability to Jota's first and second positions at the end of the Portimao 8 Hours. Its ORECAs could go a lap longer than their rivals on the fuel, and sometimes two. If they could save a pitstop, which always looked likely, they were always going to be in the pound seats as the chequered flag approached.

That da Costa and his team-mates came out ahead of Blomqvist, Stoffel Vandoorne and Sean Gelael owed something to good fortune. Da Costa undoubtedly gained time on Blomqvist during the late FCY, and was right with the sister car for the final laps.

Da Costa/Davidson/ Gonzalez led home Jota 1-2

"They were quicker than us today, but right at the end I had the edge, but not by enough to get by unless something happened," explained da Costa. "He got the Ferrari [the GTE Am winning Cetilar Racing entry] in a really bad place. He had to lift and I was flat."

Jota boss Sam Hignett revealed that his drivers had been told to save fuel from the beginning. "That was key," he said, "but I also think we had the quickest cars today."

United Autosports ended up third, a lap in arrears, with Paul di Resta, Phil Hanson and Wayne Boyd. Team boss Richard Dean reckoned it was a good result despite all the team's successes in P2 over the past 18 months or so given the circumstances.

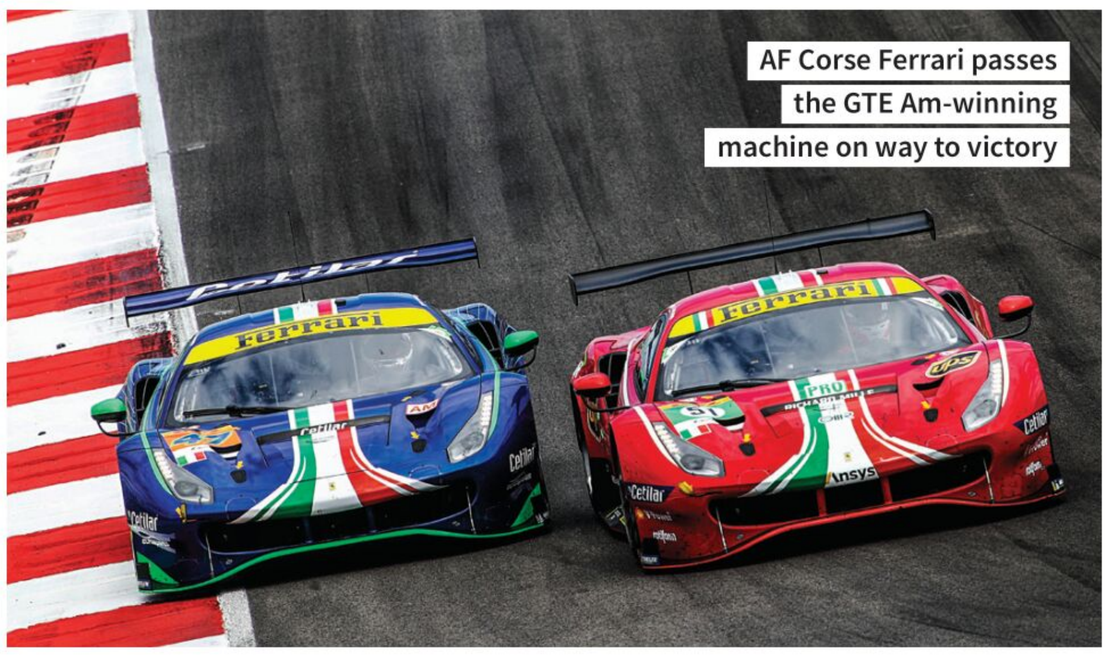
Boyd, a newcomer to P2 this year with the team in the European Le Mans Series, had to be flown out at the last moment when Fabio Scherer failed his COVID test. Di Resta, meanwhile, was driving a racing car for the first time since last November's WEC round.

WRT took fourth with its ORECA driven by Robin Frijns, Ferdinand Habsburg and Charles Milesi, their challenge blunted by two mid-race drivethrough penalties.

FERRARI TOPS GTE AT LAST AS PORSCHE HITS TYRE TROUBLE

Ferrari notched up a first GTE Pro victory in the World Endurance Championship since the Shanghai round of the 2019-20 series more than 18 months ago. Not much money would have been bet on the AF Corse team achieving that after it was once again outpaced by Porsche in qualifying, but a near-perfect race for James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi and a nightmare day for Porsche turned the tables.

Pole winner Kevin Estre edged away from the pack at the start, though the second of the Manthey-run Porsche 911 RSRs with Gianmaria Bruni at the wheel was in tyre troubles early doors. It was a portent of what was to come for the car Estre shared with Neel Jani and Michael Christensen.



AF Corse Ferrari passes the GTE Am-winning machine on way to victory

Jani quickly dropped off the pace and out of the lead, and the #92 wouldn't get back on the pace until the closing stages of the double stint from Christensen, who took over from Jani. The winning Ferrari 488 GTE Evo took the lead an hour and 20 minutes into the race with Calado at the wheel, and barely looked truly threatened thereafter.

The simple fact was that the winning Ferrari, as distinct from the sister car shared by Daniel Serra and Miguel Molina, was able to look after its Michelin tyres better on the high-energy Algarve circuit than the rest of the slender Pro field.

"The management of the tyres was our main target today," said AF team boss Amato Ferrari. "Honestly, we didn't feel we were competitive after qualifying, but our strategy was crucial."

Estre looked as though he would salvage second position for Porsche at the end. The car was back up to speed after a swap of tyre compound for his final double stint, but his bid for the runner-up spot was undone by the late FCY. The second Ferrari was able to make its final stop under yellows, and took the position by 20s from the chasing Porsche.

"It was super-weird out there today," said Jani. "The tyres just died on me in the middle of my stint. We struggled for three or four hours, and then towards the end of the race the car came alive again. It was one of the toughest races I've ever done in terms of tyre management."

RESULTS PORTIMAO 8 HOURS, WEC ROUND 2/6, ALGARVE CIRCUIT (PRT), 13 JUNE (300 LAPS – 867.372 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Sebastien **Buemi** (CHE) Kazuki **Nakajima** (JPN) Brendon **Hartley** (NZL)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	8h00m15.414s
2	Jose Maria **Lopez** (ARG) Mike **Conway** (GBR) Kamui **Kobayashi** (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	+1.800s
3	Nicolas **Lapierre** (FRA) Andre **Negrao** (BRA) Matthieu **Vaxiviere** (FRA)	Alpine Elf Matmut (Signatech)	Alpine-Gibson A480	Hypercar	+1m08.597s
4	Antonio Felix **da Costa** (PRT) Roberto **Gonzalez** (MEX) Anthony **Davidson** (GBR)	Jota	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-4 laps
5	Tom **Blomqvist** (GBR) Sean **Gelael** (IDN) Stoffel **Vandoorne** (BEL)	Jota	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-4 laps
6	Phil **Hanson** (GBR) Wayne **Boyd** (GBR) Paul di **Resta** (GBR)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-5 laps
7	Robin **Frijns** (NLD) Ferdinand **Habsburg** (AUT) Charles **Milesi** (FRA)	Team WRT	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-5 laps
8	Alex **Brundle** (GBR) Jakub **Smiechowski** (POL) Louis **Deletraz** (CHE)	Inter Europol Competition	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
9	Beitske **Visser** (NLD) Tatiana **Calderon** (COL) Sophia **Florsch** (DEU)	Richard Mille Racing Team (Signatech)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-10 laps
10	Norman **Nato** (FRA) Esteban **Garcia** (CHE) Mathias **Beche** (CHE)	Realteam Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-10 laps
11	Ben **Hanley** (GBR) Henrik **Hedman** (SWE) Juan Pablo **Montoya** (COL)	DragonSpeed USA	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-12 laps
12	Anders **Fjordbach** (DNK) Jan **Magnussen** (DNK) Dennis **Andersen** (DNK)	High Class Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-15 laps
13	Giedo **van der Garde** (NLD) Frits **van Eerd** (NLD) Job **van Uitert** (NLD)	Racing Team Nederland (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-20 laps
14	James **Calado** (GBR) Alessandro **Pier Guidi** (ITA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Pro	-21 laps
15	Daniel **Serra** (BRA) Miguel **Molina** (ESP)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Pro	-21 laps
16	Kevin **Estre** (FRA) Neel **Jani** (CHE) Michael **Christensen** (DNK)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	-21 laps
17	Gianmaria **Bruni** (ITA) Richard **Lietz** (AUT) Frederic **Makowiecki** (FRA)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	-22 laps
18	Roberto **Lacorte** (ITA) Giorgio **Sernagiotto** (ITA) Antonio **Fuoco** (ITA)	Cetilar Racing (AF Corse)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-26 laps
19	Egidio **Perfetti** (NOR) Matteo **Cairoli** (ITA) Riccardo **Pera** (ITA)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-26 laps
20	Francesco **Castellacci** (ITA) Thomas **Flohr** (CHE) Giancarlo **Fisichella** (ITA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-26 laps
21	Marcos **Gomes** (BRA) Paul **Dalla Lana** (CAN) Augusto **Farfus** (BRA)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-26 laps
22	Takeshi **Kimura** (JPN) Mikkel **Jensen** (DNK) Scott **Andrews** (AUS)	Kessel Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-26 laps
23	Claudio **Schiavoni** (ITA) Andrea **Piccini** (ITA) Matteo **Cressoni** (ITA)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-27 laps
24	Manuela **Gostner** (ITA) Rahel **Frey** (CHE) Michelle **Gatting** (DNK)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-27 laps
25	Ben **Keating** (USA) Dylan **Pereira** (LUX) Felipe **Fraga** (BRA)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-28 laps
26	Michael **Wainwright** (GBR) Ben **Barker** (GBR) Tom **Gamble** (GBR)	GR Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-29 laps
27	Dom **Bastien** (USA) Marco **Seefried** (DEU) Julien **Andlauer** (FRA)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-31 laps
28	Francois **Perrodo** (FRA) Nicklas **Nielsen** (DNK) Alessio **Rovera** (ITA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-33 laps
29	Miro **Konopka** (SVK) Oliver **Webb** (GBR) Tom **Jackson** (GBR)	ARC Bratislava	Ligier-Gibson JSP217	LMP2	-39 laps
30	Richard **Westbrook** (GBR) Ryan **Briscoe** (AUS) Romain **Dumas** (FRA)	Glickenhaus Racing	Glickenhaus-Pipo 007LMH	Hypercar	-54 laps
R	Christian **Ried** (DEU) Jaxon **Evans** (NZL) Matt **Campbell** (AUS)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	88 laps-acc damage
R	Tomonobu **Fujii** (JPN) Satoshi **Hoshino** (JPN) Andrew **Watson** (GBR)	D'Station Racing	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	69 laps-acc dam/ overheating

In each car, first named driver started the race. **Winners' average speed** 108.363mph. **Fastest lap** **Lapierre** 1m30.919s, 114.480mph. **LMP2** **Vandoorne** 1m31.970s, 113.172mph. **GTE Pro** **Molina** 1m38.757s, 105.394mph. **GTE Am** **Fuoco** 1m38.925s, 105.215mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Vaxiviere 1m30.364s; 2 **Hartley** 1m30.458s; 3 **Conway** 1m30.540s; 4 **Blomqvist** 1m31.210s; 5 **da Costa** 1m31.255s; 6 **van Uitert** 1m31.545s; 7 **di Resta** 1m31.598s; 8 **Frijns** 1m31.648s; 9 **Brundle** 1m31.737s; 10 **Nato** 1m31.854s; 11 **Westbrook** 1m32.167s; 12 **Hanley** 1m32.526s; 13 **Fjordbach** 1m32.626s; 14 **Florsch** 1m32.748s; 15 **Webb** 1m34.224s; 16 **Estre** 1m37.986s; 17 **Calado** 1m38.359s; 18 **Bruni** 1m38.389s; 19 **Serra** 1m38.743s; 20 **Perfetti** 1m40.191s; 21 **Ried** 1m40.236s; 22 **Lacorte** 1m40.885s; 23 **Flohr** 1m41.001s; 24 **Gostner** 1m41.085s; 25 **Perrodo** 1m41.141s; 26 **Kimura** 1m41.276s; 27 **Dalla Lana** 1m41.366s; 28 **Hoshino** 1m41.499s; 29 **Wainwright** 1m41.604s; 30 **Keating** 1m41.993s; 31 **Schiavoni** 1m42.521s; 32 **Bastien** 1m43.374s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

Hypercar drivers

1 Hartley/Nakajima/Buemi 63; 2 **Lopez/Kobayashi/Conway** 43; 3 **Negrao/Vaxiviere/Lapierre** 42; 4 **Westbrook/Dumas/Briscoe** 18.

Hypercar manufacturers

1 Toyota Gazoo Racing 64; 2 **Alpine Elf Matmut** 42; 3 **Glickenhaus Racing** 1.

LMP2 drivers

1 Davidson/da Costa/Gonzalez 56; 2 **Hanson** 49; 3 **Gelael/Vandoorne/Blomqvist** 43; 4 **Fabio Scherer/Filipe Albuquerque** 26.

LMP2 Pro-am drivers

1 Nato/Garcia 56; 2 **van der Garde/van Uitert/van Eerd** 43; 3 **Hanley/Montoya/Hedman** 42; 4 **Beche** 38.

GTE drivers

1 Pier Guidi/Calado 56; 2 **Estre/Jani** 50; 3 **Serra/Molina** 42; 4 **Bruni/Lietz** 30; 5 **Christensen** 24; 6 **Fuoco/Sernagiotto/Lacorte** 21.

GTE manufacturers

1 Ferrari 98; 2 **Porsche** 80.

GTE Am drivers

1 Fuoco/Sernagiotto/Lacorte 53; 2 **Castellacci/Fisichella/Flohr** 35; 3 **Keating/Pereira/Fraga** 28; 4 **Perfetti/Cairoli/Pera** 28.

NEXT RACE

6 HOURS OF MONZA
22 JULY ISSUE

What chance an upset of the Toyota hegemony when the WEC hits Italy?

Too much grip from soft tyre meant Turkington only just held off Ingram at start of opener

Three's a crowd as Ingram breaks Hyundai duck

Spectators were back at the circuit, and they enjoyed vintage victorious drives from BTCC class acts Turkington, Sutton and Ingram

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP motorsport IMAGES

The crowd – 4000 of them anyway – returned to the British Touring Car Championship at Snetterton. The smells from the food stands wafted across the rural Norfolk landscape; spectator skin sizzled red in the sunshine; pints of beer were being drunk before 9.30am. And how appropriate it was that those action-starved aficionados were present to watch three races won by the class acts of the series' lockdown era.

First it was Colin Turkington with a typically measured and intelligent drive. Then it was Ash Sutton with a traditional charge from the depths of the grid. So far, so 2020 BTCC. But then came a curveball: a maiden victory for the Hyundai marque and the Excelr8 Motorsport team, thanks to an absolutely superb weekend performance from Tom Ingram. OK, that may have been the reversed-grid race, but Ingram it was who was the weekend's top points scorer: 51, to 50 for Turkington and 44 for Sutton. That those three NGTC superstars were the victors on a weekend when the BTCC 'welcomed' back the option tyre – in many people's eyes, the series' one contrivance too many – made it all the more satisfying for the purist, as if the artificial system had been beaten.

Truth be told, Ingram and the Hyundai did seem to lack three or four tenths to Turkington on pure pace. But the West Surrey Racing-run BMW 330i M Sports are always dynamite around Snetterton, and everyone else was even further adrift than Ingram in qualifying. Ingram had topped free practice, where Turkington coasted to a halt in the closing stages with a fuel-pressure sensor glitch. But when it mattered, Turkington was almost 0.3 seconds to the good over Ingram in the opening 25-minute conventional qualifying session, and extended that to just over 0.3s in the 10-minute top-10 shootout. The fly in the ointment for the four-time champion, who was carrying 27kg of success weight, was that the unballasted Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R of Gordon Shedden had leapfrogged them both to claim provisional pole by 0.163s. Turkington was cooling off in a paddling pool on Saturday evening when he discovered that a Dynamics error on the rear-wing angle had resulted in Shedden's exclusion and demotion to 28th on the grid.

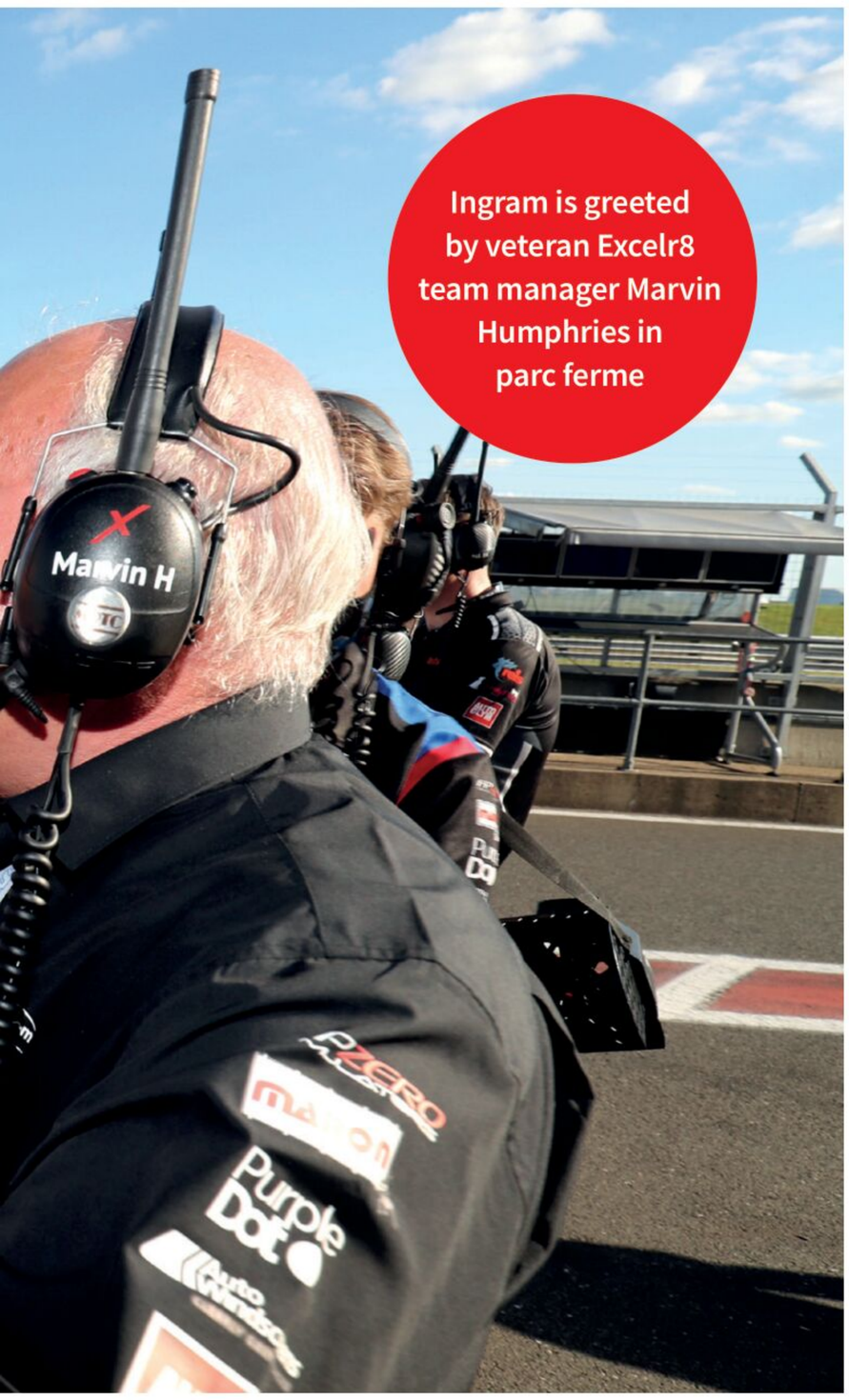
Such is the character of Turkington that he was later moved to remark: "You can't celebrate anyone else's misfortune because obviously Gordon worked hard for that." Of his own form, he added: "I was really pleased with my laps in both sessions. Even starting P2 I was happy with that. I knew I'd put everything on the table, carrying a little bit of weight with Gordon on zero."

Ingram, with 33kg of ballast on the Hyundai and a bout of hay fever, felt that a mistake at the Wilson hairpin had cost him a little bit of time, but was happy to line the Hyundai up on the front row. He'd been driving beautifully all day, the typical hustling Ingram front-wheel-drive style on full display, seemingly ridiculously late on the brakes yet still making perfect grass-strimming apexes. For Sutton, however, qualifying had been a disaster. The Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50 carried 48kg into Norfolk and looked strong on Saturday morning. "Free practice was fantastic," he related. "Going into qualifying we thought we'd have the pace to battle for the top five. Unfortunately the engine began to let go as we left the pits, and we were fortunate to get any laps on the board." One of them should have been good enough for 10th, but was deleted for a track-limits offence, and the next best lined him up 15th, with a new TOCA Swindon powerplant installed.

That grid position, combined with the Infiniti's success weight, put Sutton out of synch on option-tyre strategy with Turkington and Ingram. For the BMW and Hyundai pair, it made sense to fit the softer Goodyears for the opening pre-lunch race – they were starting from the front, they were likely running lighter on ballast than they would at any other point, and the track temperature on a very warm day would climb during the afternoon. For Sutton, it made sense to wait for the weight to depart.

That soft rubber prompted a sluggish start for Turkington: extra grip caused the BMW to bog down, and it was only the rear-wheel-drive traction advantage that propelled him into Riches in the lead from Ingram. The Hyundai drew alongside on the

Turkington leads at start of race two, while Jackson sends it outside everyone else



Ingram is greeted by veteran Excelr8 team manager Marvin Humphries in parc ferme

"Should I have pushed harder? On reflection yeah, but I was a bit scared of the unknown"

exit from Wilson, and rubbed doors with the BMW. Ingram then probed around the outside of Agostini. Again they brushed doors, but still Turkington remained ahead.

From then on, it was a cat-and-mouse game of tyre conservation. Ingram set a pair of fastest laps halfway through to close the gap to 0.774s, then backed off, and Turkington eclipsed the fastest lap to race 3.125s clear. Then the four-time champion also began to nurse things, and the final gap was 2.932s. "I knew I had good pace in the car, especially on the soft," said Turkington, who it transpired had finished the race with a left-rear puncture. "Tom was really quick, and I had to push to get fastest lap. I could see Tom managing things, and that was the moment for me to do the same because you think there could be a safety car."

"Should I have pushed harder?" mused Ingram. "On reflection yeah, but I was a bit scared of the unknown and happy to settle for second. Snetterton is a pain for picking up punctures from stones and flints, and I »

SHEDDEN STRIPPED OF POLE

Shedden's joy at pole wouldn't last long

Gordon Shedden's return to the BTCC with Team Dynamics after three years away began with a nightmare at Thruxton. But then team boss Matt Neal pointed out that the Scot's three title-winning seasons have all started with a stall, and that his Honda Civic Type R wouldn't be carrying any success ballast into Snetterton.

It was important, therefore, to make hay while the sun literally shone in Norfolk, and Shedden appeared to be bailing things up nicely when he snatched pole position from Colin Turkington with a last-lap effort on Saturday. Then came more bad news. The Honda had failed scrutineering, and 'Flash' would have to start from the back.

"They found the rear-wing angle was one degree the wrong way," grimaced Neal as he tucked into his evening meal in the Dynamics truck's office. "It was just set incorrectly – a finger problem. Rules are rules, but if it had been one degree the other way [and legal] it would have sod-all difference. If anything it was hindering us, giving us more drag. What can you say?"

Shedden therefore kept his option tyres locked away until the finale. In race one, he moved up to finish 15th; in race two he was 11th. "It's very difficult to overtake here – just the nature of the corners," he explained. "This and Oulton Park are the hardest to overtake at and the easiest to defend, because there are a lot of medium-speed corners that take the aero off."

With no ballast, and on the option tyre, Shedden raced to third in the finale, right behind Ash Sutton. That was despite a first-lap territorial dispute with the BTC Racing Honda of Josh Cook that "bent the steering at 45 degrees – we were just hobbled", and a clash with Ollie Jackson that put the Ford out of the race with suspension damage. "We were trying to roll the dice and do something different to everyone else on strategy – we didn't really have any other option," explained Shedden. "A podium is some salvation, but it just hasn't gone our way so far. You couldn't have written the script any worse."

Cook, who carried 66kg into Snetterton, was another Civic driver on the move in the finale, in which he raced through to fourth. The smooth, flat nature of Snetterton doesn't suit the BTC ballast set-up, and he struggled to 16th on the grid. Cook made no progress in the opener and finished in the same position, and could only move up as far as 14th in the sequel. Like the Dynamics pair of Shedden and Dan Rowbottom (who claimed a Jack Sears Trophy hat-trick), he had the option tyres on for the finale, and battled through nicely. But, as unrelated engineer Mick Cook explained: "Snetterton was the last place we wanted to come, especially with the weight and the temperature, and we just really struggled."

Cook won twice at Thruxton, but struggled for pace this time

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could see Colin's left-rear of was looking the worse for wear. But the times I was doing, I could have done until the end of the race."

Sutton briefly got as high as ninth, but found pre-Snetterton championship leader Jake Hill, driving tremendously with 75kg of ballast aboard his Motorbase-run MB Motorsport Ford Focus, with his elbows out

"Colin was there, but he was never going to get the chance to do anything"

Jelley (12) has just been tapped by Oliphant (centre) but held on from Ingram (left)

to a degree you'd scarcely credit from such a diminutive chap. Sutton was therefore pushed back down to 12th, and recovered only to 11th. Hill, meanwhile, was ecstatic to have qualified the weighty Ford in seventh, far clear of all the other heavily ballasted machinery. He was throwing that thing around in the race, his angles sometimes reminiscent of the Lotus Elan he races from time to time in the Masters Gentleman Drivers series, on his way to ninth.

There was another MB Ford pilot driving well too. Ollie Jackson had lost out in the battle for fourth with the WSR BMW of Stephen Jelley, and he and Hill took their option tyres for the second race, with Jackson on 39kg of ballast and Hill now down to 15kg. What followed was one of the greatest getaways of the NGTC era. Jackson clipped the rear end of Jelley's BMW initially, but kept his foot absolutely pinned to pass him and Rory Butcher's Speedworks Motorsport-run Toyota Corolla, then hung it around the outside of Wilson and demoted Ingram to boot.

Jackson was now second, but was never a threat to Turkington. But a certain great blue-and-white shark was: Sutton. Now carrying no ballast, the Infiniti was on the soft tyres and Sutton was scything through the order. At half-distance, he passed Jackson for second at Wilson, at which point the gap to the leading BMW was 3s. By the end of that lap, it was 1.675s... A lap and a half later, Turkington, on 75kg of ballast, was powerless to prevent Sutton getting down the inside at the Agostini left-hander. At which point, Sutton, with fastest lap in his pocket, decided to play it safe.

"I got told I was a second a lap quicker," related Sutton, "and by the end of the lap I was on Colin's bumper. But the last thing I needed was a slow puncture, so once I got in front it was just pull it all back. I probably could have gone half a second or a second a lap quicker, but it was just a case of managing the situation. Colin was there, but he was never going to get the chance to do anything."

Jackson is becoming increasingly renowned as one of the best hard-tackling defenders in the BTCC, and Ingram »

BUTCHER GETS SOME MEAT ON THE BONE IN TOYOTA

Like his brother-in-law Gordon Shedden, Rory Butcher had endured an accident-plagued opening weekend of the season at Thruxton, on his first race outing in the Speedworks Motorsport-run Toyota Corolla.

At Snetterton, "driver and team were probably a little conservative", in the words of Speedworks chief Christian Dick, but the results were third (a maiden podium for the combo), fifth and sixth, to lift Butcher to sixth in the standings.

The weekend began with a team head-scratch over an apparent lack of straightline speed: Butcher's 138.6mph on the back straight was the fastest Toyota speed; the next worst model was the Vauxhall Astra (Dan Lloyd on 139.8); and the fastest was the Ford Focus (Sam Osborne with an eyewatering 143.0). Butcher confirmed that the problem faded over the weekend, but it was another issue that cost him in the opening race. Here, he had a very solitary run on the option tyres from third on the grid to the same result in the race. "On the warm-up lap the gear-cut broke, so it was full lift on upshifts, and it definitely affected my straightline speed," he reported. "But the car felt quite racey."

Now with 57kg of success ballast aboard the Toyota, Butcher fell back from the leading quartet in race two, and had to use his defensive skills to fend off the BMWs of Tom Oliphant and Stephen Jelley for fifth. That put him down to 39kg for the finale, in which he was sixth ahead of Colin Turkington. "He was wrong-footed by the soft-tyre Hondas coming through," reported Dick, "and he had to get a bit defensive." Still, with Speedworks alumni Ingram and engineer Spencer Aldridge making headlines at Excelr8, at least their alma mater has clawed itself back into the ballpark.

Butcher fends off Jelley during the second race

Sutton (1) fights Hill in race one, but then their days went in vastly different directions

couldn't get a shot over the line to wrest the final podium spot in a Hyundai carrying 66kg of ballast. On the penultimate lap, Ingram squeezed in front at Wilson, but Jackson fought back over the next two turns, while struggling with his soft tyres. "I groaned when my engineer told me there were three laps to go," grinned Jackson. "I just hung on with the left front." If Jackson was struggling, it was even worse for the rest of the Motorbase/MB collective, who were all on the soft tyres. Jackson was on a more conservative set-up than Hill, Jess Hawkins (who impressed in qualifying while standing in for Andy Neate, and could have been top 10 had she not been baulked on her best lap) and Sam Osborne. "It was just severe front tyre wear to the point where for the last two laps I could hear the cords scraping," groaned Hill, who plummeted to 24th. "I think the left-front went flat with two corners to go."

Hill raced strongly through to 12th in the finale, and is now down to fifth in the points. Every cloud has a silver lining and all that though: he'll be down to 39kg ballast for the next round, at his favourite track of Brands Hatch. The real story, however, was up at the front.

Jelley, riding a high since Leicester City's FA Cup final victory, was on much-improved form, and his seventh place in race two gave him pole for the reversed-grid race, while Tom Oliphant made it an all-WSR BMW front row. That was the order in which they ran early doors, while Ingram and Jackson immediately imposed themselves over Butcher for third and fourth.

On the second lap, Jelley appeared to check up early for Agostini. Oliphant, thirsting for a way past, ran into the back of him, and Ingram gratefully accepted second place, while Jackson then spun Oliphant into oblivion. Now it was a case of Ingram working out the safest way past Jelley, which he managed on lap five at the Wilson hairpin. "I could see Stephen was nervous and Tom [Oliphant] was desperate to get past, and there was a certain amount of inevitability about what happened," smiled Ingram after his win. "Tom ran into the back of him, there was a gap and I thought I would fill it. Then I was biding my time to see where Stephen's strengths and weaknesses were. When I passed him, I stopped it on the apex and let Stephen come back at me. That gave him the inside line for the left-hander afterwards, so he could block Ash. That was spot on."

That intelligence arguably won the race for Ingram. The Hyundai was on 48kg of ballast, and pretty soon Ingram found Sutton and Shedden in his mirrors after they'd passed Jelley. By this stage, Sutton, carrying 75kg on the Infiniti, was 2.254s in arrears. He closed it to 1.144s by the flag, while simultaneously stoutly defending from the unballasted Honda of Shedden, but Ingram felt he had pace in reserve: "My head was going, 'Get a 10s lead, get a 15s lead', but another part of my head was, 'Don't be an idiot Tom, you might get a puncture or a safety car.'"

And so, in his first season away from his BTCC childhood home of Speedworks, Ingram is just two points away from new series leader Sutton. But Turkington, who topped the standings briefly after race two, is only five adrift of the reigning champion. The BMW man struggled to seventh in the finale. "We threw our best set of mediums on for race two, and got a good return there," he sighed. "We obviously lacked pace in race three and had a bit more understeer, but you get that when you're in the pack. But anyway, some days you'd kill for a P7 – I always keep reminding myself of that." And that little blip effectively lifted 18kg of ballast out of the BMW for Brands, and added 9kg each to Sutton's Infiniti and Ingram's Hyundai: "It's ideal, not that I planned it..."

Consistent Morgan, here leading Goff, had three strong points finishes

P66 SUPPORTS REPORT
Porsche Carrera Cup GB, Ginetta GT4 Supercup and Mini Challenge join in.

RESULTS ROUND 2/10, SNETTERTON (GBR), 13 JUNE RACE 1 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Colin Turkington** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330i M Sport (27kg)(S)	23m36.287s
2	**Tom Ingram** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N Fastback (33kg)(S)	+2.932s
3	**Rory Butcher** (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla (S)	+9.451s
4	**Stephen Jelley** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330i M Sport (S)	+13.960s
5	**Ollie Jackson** (GBR)	MB Motorsport (Motorbase) / Ford Focus	+16.921s
6	**Adam Morgan** (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / BMW 330i M Sport (S)	+17.572s
7	**Dan Lloyd** (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (S)	+18.049s
8	**Tom Oliphant** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330i M Sport (15kg)(S)	+18.373s
9	**Jake Hill** (GBR)	MB Motorsport (Motorbase) / Ford Focus (75kg)	+21.951s
10	**Chris Smiley** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N Fastback	+22.583s
11	**Ash Sutton** (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50 (48kg)	+22.852s
12	**Jack Goff** (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (9kg)	+23.759s
13	**Dan Rowbottom** (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R (21kg)	+24.993s
14	**Aiden Moffat** (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	+25.415s
15	**Gordon Shedden** (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	+26.015s
16	**Josh Cook** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R (66kg)	+27.736s
17	**Jason Plato** (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (57kg)	+28.663s
18	**Senna Proctor** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R (39kg)	+29.382s
19	**Sam Osborne** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus	+29.942s
20	**Carl Boardley** (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	+32.857s
21	**Tom Chilton** (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / BMW 330i M Sport	+34.464s
22	**Aron Taylor-Smith** (IRL)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+35.358s
23	**Jessica Hawkins** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus	+38.361s
24	**Rick Parfitt** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N Fastback (S)	+40.530s
25	**Jade Edwards** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+41.030s
26	**Jack Butel** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N Fastback (S)	+41.774s
27	**Glynn Geddie** (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (S)	+42.730s
28	**Nicolas Hamilton** (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (S)	+43.230s
29	**Sam Smelt** (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla (S)	+58.734s

Winner's average speed 90.55mph. **Fastest lap** **Turkington** 1m56.559s, 91.69mph.
(S) = used option soft tyre.

QUALIFYING

Q2 **1 Turkington 1m55.371s**; 2 **Ingram** 1m55.700s; 3 **Butcher** 1m56.012s; 4 **Jelley** 1m56.030s; 5 **Morgan** 1m56.156s; 6 **Jackson** 1m56.262s; 7 **Hill** 1m56.403s; 8 **Lloyd** 1m56.492s; 9 **Oliphant** 1m56.826s; EX **Shedden** 1m55.208s.

Q1 **Turkington** 1m55.294s; **Ingram** 1m55.585s; **Oliphant** 1m55.710s; **Butcher** 1m55.905s; **Hill** 1m55.956s; **Jelley** 1m56.076s; **Jackson** 1m56.131s; **Lloyd** 1m56.140s; **Morgan** 1m56.155s; 10 **Rowbottom** 1m56.355s; 11 **Smiley** 1m56.460s; 12 **Chilton** 1m56.543s; 13 **Goff** 1m56.592s; 14 **Osborne** 1m56.711s; 15 **Sutton** 1m56.719s; 16 **Cook** 1m56.809s; 17 **Hawkins** 1m56.860s; 18 **Plato** 1m56.948s; 19 **Taylor-Smith** 1m56.986s; 20 **Moffat** 1m57.033s; 21 **Proctor** 1m57.078s; 22 **Boardley** 1m57.098s; 23 **Smelt** 1m57.501s; 24 **Edwards** 1m57.847s; 25 **Butel** 1m58.220s; 26 **Parfitt** 1m58.319s; 27 **Hamilton** 1m58.458s; EX **Shedden** 1m55.620s; 29 **Geddie** no time.

Lloyd (leading) made top-10 shootout, but team-mate Plato struggled with ballast

Sutton won race two, and now leads the championship points

RACE 2 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

1 Sutton (S) 23m49.604s; 2 **Turkington** (75kg) +0.451s; 3 **Jackson** (39kg) (S) +8.603s; 4 **Ingram** (66kg) +8.769s; 5 **Butcher** (57kg) +10.524s; 6 **Oliphant** (21kg) +10.859s; 7 **Jelley** (48kg) +12.065s; 8 **Morgan** (33kg) +13.364s; 9 **Goff** (S) +13.662s; 10 **Moffat** (S) +16.204s; 11 **Shedden** +16.577s; 12 **Lloyd** (27kg) +16.925s; 13 **Smiley** (9kg) (S) +17.228s; 14 **Cook** +18.605s; 15 **Rowbottom** +21.190s; 16 **Proctor** (S) +22.295s; 17 **Boardley** +22.534s; 18 **Taylor-Smith** (S) +26.536s; 19 **Osborne** (S) +26.720s; 20 **Plato** (S) +39.770s; 21 **Hawkins** (S) +42.017s; 22 **Butel** +42.534s; 23 **Edwards** +42.734s; 24 **Hill** (15kg) (S) +44.681s; 25 **Hamilton** +47.417s; 26 **Smelt** +48.429s; 27 **Parfitt** +56.019s; R **Chilton** (S) 0 laps-accident damage; R **Geddie** 0 laps-accident damage.

Winner's average speed 89.71mph.

Fastest lap **Sutton** 1m56.795s, 91.51mph.

(S) = soft tyre.

RACE 3 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

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

1 Ingram (48kg) 23m56.024s; 2 **Sutton** (75kg) +1.144s; 3 **Shedden** (S) +1.617s; 4 **Cook** (S) +3.217s; 5 **Jelley** (27kg) +6.756s; 6 **Butcher** (39kg) +7.469s; 7 **Turkington** (66kg) +7.768s; 8 **Morgan** (21kg) +8.744s; 9 **Goff** (15kg) +9.916s; 10 **Rowbottom** (S) +10.355s; 11 **Smiley** +11.293s; 12 **Hill** +11.718s; 13 **Lloyd** +12.403s; 14 **Taylor-Smith** +14.118s; 15 **Edwards** (S) +14.575s; 16 **Oliphant** (33kg) +15.262s; 17 **Moffat** (9kg) +16.002s; 18 **Plato** +17.120s; 19 **Chilton** +18.655s; 20 **Osborne** +19.993s; 21 **Butel** +23.054s; 22 **Geddie** +27.350s; 23 **Hawkins** +27.739s; 24 **Parfitt** +38.849s; 25 **Hamilton** +48.741s; 26 **Proctor** +1m57.596s; R **Smelt** 8 laps-phantom oil leak; R **Jackson** (57kg) 2 laps-suspension; R **Boardley** (S) 0 laps-off.

Winner's average speed 89.31mph.

Fastest lap **Shedden** 1m57.910s, 90.64mph.

(S) = soft tyre.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Sutton 80; 2 **Ingram** 78; 3 **Turkington** 75; 4 **Cook** 60; 5 **Hill** 57; 6 **Butcher** 47; 7 **Jelley** 46; 8 **Plato** 38; 9 **Jackson** 36; 10 **Shedden** 35.

NEXT EVENT

BRANDS HATCH 1 JULY ISSUE

Can Sutton build on his slender points lead when the action resumes on the Kent circuit's Indy layout?

O'Ward moves to the top on streets of Detroit

INDYCAR
DETROIT BELLE ISLE (USA)
12-13 JUNE
ROUND 6/15

Sunday winner O'Ward leads the championship by a single point

Pato O'Ward finished last weekend's double-header Detroit Grand Prix with a third place and a victory, and has become the new IndyCar championship leader. He continues to prove exceptional at not only driving fast, but also tempering aggression with an ability to know which risks are worth taking – and now his Arrow McLaren SP Dallara-Chevrolet is faster at more tracks than last year.

Ahead of the penultimate restart in the second race at Detroit, with just 12 laps to go and while lying sixth, O'Ward got a message from Taylor Kiel, AMSP president and his strategy caller. He was informed of his situation but was also urged to remember the team's ultimate quest – the championship.

"I didn't forget the words that Taylor said," recalled O'Ward, "but the two guys that I'm fighting the championship with were in front of me, and I was not going to be pleased if we ended behind them. So if I had the chance I was going to strike. I just had to make sure every strike wasn't like, 'Oh, am I going to get it?' No, it had to be like, 'Boom!' Definite. Once you're on the inside, it's yours."

O'Ward immediately overcame Scott Dixon on the restart, but further around the lap Romain Grosjean's car stopped on track with its front-left brake on fire. Out came the caution flag once more, for four laps.

At the next restart, with eight of the 70 laps to go, O'Ward again nailed a pass at Turn 1, slicing inside Graham Rahal's Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing machine, and so swift and uncompromised was the young Mexican's pace through Turns 1 and 2 that he maintained his momentum to move past Chip Ganassi Racing's Alex Palou down the long drag to Turn 3.

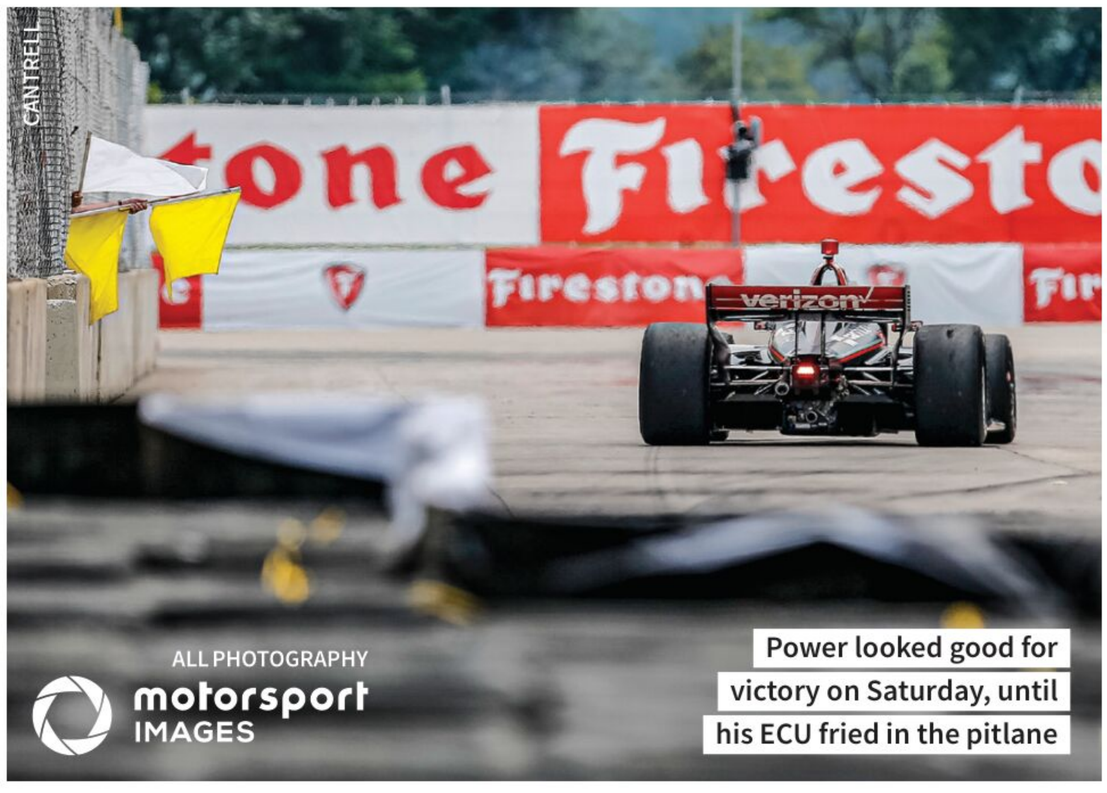
That moved him onto the tail of his former Indy Lights team-mate Colton Herta, who had hitherto seemed the likely winner. Like O'Ward, Palou and Rahal, Herta was running on Firestone's harder-compound primary tyres in this stint, and stalking race-long leader Josef Newgarden, who was on an old set of alternates, which all weekend had taken several laps to reach their prime, but then proverbially fallen off a cliff.

But Herta, unlike O'Ward, was struggling to get temperature into his primaries at restarts, so had not only allowed Newgarden to escape a little but also now had the #5 AMSP car filling his mirrors. The move came on lap 65, O'Ward making just enough room down the inside of the Andretti Autosport machine at Turn 6.

That left him five and a half laps to pass Newgarden, but he didn't need them all. He rocketed onto the twitching tail of the Team Penske car, and sized up his quarry for a couple of laps, while also keeping an eye on Herta, who was now up to speed and looking to retaliate... until skidding long at Turn 3, and ceding position to Palou.

Three corners later, O'Ward saw Newgarden slide too far at Turn 6 and lose momentum, and immediately he pounced, drawing alongside him on the long, curvaceous 'straight'. The pair rubbed up against each other but O'Ward could leave his braking much later for Turn 7. The corner, lead and win were his. Somehow, Newgarden staved off Palou and Herta to the chequered flag, but for the second day in a row, a Penske ace was left gutted.

The previous day it had been Will Power. He led 37 laps of race one, holding off Marcus Ericsson's Honda-powered Ganassi entry, which was clearly faster when they were both on fresh rubber



Power looked good for victory on Saturday, until his ECU fried in the pitlane

Long-time R2 leader Newgarden could not hold back O'Ward

Ericsson became IndyCar's seventh winner of 2021

and seemed destined to win.

But IndyCar race control, which had taken too long to turn a caution period into a race stoppage following Felix Rosenqvist's huge shunt, hit the panic button and waved the red flag when Grosjean bounced off a kerb and struck the Turn 9 wall with six laps to go. Back came the cars to the pitlane and, being the leader, Power had to sit still longest before his crew could come down and turn a cooling fan onto his heat-soaked engine on this hot and humid day on Belle Isle. When the time came to fire up, his car wouldn't, the ECU having toasted itself.

That left Ericsson a lucky but popular victor, after arguably the best drive of his IndyCar career, finishing ahead of two more of 2021's first-time winners, Rinus VeeKay and O'Ward.

The Swede also became IndyCar's seventh different winner in seven races, so that O'Ward next day became the first driver to score two wins this year. The season is now at its halfway point and there have been no wins for Team Penske.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

POWERED BY motorsport STATS

RESULTS ROUND 6/15, BELLE ISLE (USA), 12-13 JUNE, RACE 1 (70 LAPS – 164.500 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Marcus Ericsson** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	1h45m33.1123s
2	**Rinus van Kalmthout** (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.7290s
3	**Pato O'Ward** (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.9105s
4	**Takuma Sato** (JPN)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+8.1688s
5	**Graham Rahal** (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.4645s
6	**Santino Ferrucci** (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.5670s
7	**Alexander Rossi** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+10.3406s
8	**Scott Dixon** (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+10.8956s
9	**Ed Jones** (ARE)	Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser Sullivan / Dallara-Honda	+11.9428s
10	**Josef Newgarden** (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+12.5061s
11	**Sebastien Bourdais** (FRA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.5792s
12	**Simon Pagenaud** (FRA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.8274s
13	**Conor Daly** (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+14.7925s
14	**Colton Herta** (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	+16.0887s
15	**Alex Palou** (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+17.2534s
16	**Jack Harvey** (GBR)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+18.2898s
17	**James Hinchcliffe** (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+19.0114s
18	**Dalton Kellett** (CAN)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
19	**Scott McLaughlin** (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
20	**Will Power** (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
21	**Ryan Hunter-Reay** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-5 laps
22	**Max Chilton** (GBR)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	-5 laps
23	**Romain Grosjean** (FRA)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR / Dallara-Honda	63 laps-accident
24	**Jimmie Johnson** (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	49 laps-mechanical
25	**Felix Rosenqvist** (SWE)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	23 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 93.509mph. **Fastest lap Newgarden** 1m16.6433s, 110.381mph.

Q2 1 O'Ward 1m15.5776s; 2 **Rossi** 1m15.6584s; 3 **Grosjean** 1m15.7433s; 4 **Jones** 1m15.8119s; 5 **Newgarden** 1m15.8697s; 6 **Herta** 1m16.0832s; 7 **Power** 1m16.0877s; 8 **Hunter-Reay** 1m16.1293s; 9 **Pagenaud** 1m16.6606s; 10 **Bourdais** 1m17.4333s; 11 **Dixon** 1m17.8680s; 12 **van Kalmthout** 1m17.8776s.

Q1 – GROUP 1 Rossi 1m15.8507s; **Grosjean** 1m16.6715s; **van Kalmthout** 1m16.8172s; **O'Ward** 1m16.8406s; **Pagenaud** 1m16.9636s; **Power** 1m17.0343s; 13 **Hinchcliffe** 1m17.0691s; 15 **Ericsson** 1m17.1579s; 17 **Daly** 1m17.2904s; 19 **Harvey** 1m17.4180s; 22 **Johnson** 1m19.0944s; 24 **Kellett** 1m19.6697s; 25 **Palou** 1m17.5190s.

Q1 – GROUP 2 Newgarden 1m15.6606s; **Herta** 1m15.8439s; **Jones** 1m15.8696s; **Hunter-Reay** 1m16.1328s; **Bourdais** 1m16.1339s; **Dixon** 1m16.3151s; 14 **Rosenqvist** 1m16.4620s; 16 **Sato** 1m16.4713s; 18 **Chilton** 1m16.6093s; 20 **Rahal** 1m16.6694s; 21 **Ferrucci** 1m16.6880s; 23 **McLaughlin** 1m17.5569s.

RACE 2 (70 LAPS – 164.500 MILES)

1 O'Ward 1h41m30.8814s; 2 **Newgarden** +6.7595s; 3 **Palou** +6.9392s; 4 **Herta** +7.0558s; 5 **Rahal** +7.6952s; 6 **Power** +8.4418s; 7 **Dixon** +8.8324s; 8 **Pagenaud** +9.0641s; 9 **Ericsson** +9.5248s; 10 **Ferrucci** +10.6860s; 11 **Hunter-Reay** +10.9852s; 12 **Sato** +11.5761s; 13 **Rossi** +14.2097s; 14 **Hinchcliffe** +14.9968s; 15 **Daly** +15.1529s; 16 **Bourdais** +15.2726s; 17 **Jones** +16.1183s; 18 **van Kalmthout** +16.8545s; 19 **Harvey** -1 lap; 20 **McLaughlin** -1 lap; 21 **Johnson** -1 lap; 22 **Chilton** -2 laps; 23 **Kellett** -9 laps; 24 **Grosjean** 57 laps-mechanical; 25 **Oliver Askew** 46 laps-mechanical.

Winner's average speed 97.227mph.
Fastest lap Herta 1m16.3434s, 110.815mph.

STARTING GRID 1 Newgarden 1m14.1094s; 2 **Herta** 1m14.4300s; 3 **van Kalmthout** 1m14.8180s; 4 **Palou** 1m14.8432s; 5 **Grosjean** 1m14.9060s; 6 **Dixon** 1m14.9231s; 7 **Rossi** 1m15.3524s; 8 **Daly** 1m15.4162s; 9 **Rahal** 1m15.4187s; 10 **Pagenaud** 1m15.5294s; 11 **Jones** 1m15.9478s; 12 **Ferrucci** 1m16.1146s; 13 **Bourdais** 1m16.5387s; 14 **Hinchcliffe** 1m15.9533s; 15 **Chilton** 1m16.6085s; 16 **O'Ward** 1m16.0805s; 17 **Hunter-Reay** 1m16.6456s; 18 **Harvey** 1m16.1356s; 19 **Sato** 1m16.8947s; 20 **Power** 1m16.4386s; 21 **McLaughlin** 1m17.1815s; 22 **Ericsson** 1m16.5514s; 23 **Askew** 1m19.1486s; 24 **Kellett** 1m16.5805s; 25 **Johnson** 1m17.9838s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 O'Ward 299; 2 **Palou** 298; 3 **Dixon** 263; 4 **Newgarden** 248; 5 **van Kalmthout** 243; 6 **Pagenaud** 243; 7 **Ericsson** 211; 8 **Rahal** 209; 9 **Herta** 202; 10 **Sato** 181.

NEXT EVENT

ROAD AMERICA 24 JUNE ISSUE

Can Team Penske break its 2021 hoodoo and score its first victory of the season?

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LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Chip Ganassi joins winning drivers van der Zande and F1 exile Magnussen

Magnussen ends eight-year drought with Detroit success

IMSA SPORTSCAR
DETROIT (USA)
12 JUNE
ROUND 4/12

Kevin Magnussen and Renger van der Zande drove a perfectly judged race at Belle Isle in Detroit on Saturday evening to take a well-deserved maiden IMSA SportsCar victory for Cadillac Chip Ganassi Racing. All-Brazilian pair Pipo Derani/Felipe Nasr had to settle for a close second place aboard their similar Whelen Engineering/Action Express Cadillac DPi-V.R.

After taking pole in qualifying on Friday, albeit by a scant 0.021 seconds from Harry Tincknell's Mazda, ex-Formula 1 driver Magnussen took immediate control of the 100-minute race, which had been delayed more than an hour after Felix Rosenqvist's terrifying IndyCar crash earlier in the afternoon. Derani jumped Tincknell at the start to move into second, and Magnussen extended his advantage to around 4s before making his one and only pitstop with 46 minutes remaining.

Van der Zande was content to allow Nasr to close in after both teams had made their driver changes, especially given the fact that overtaking is notoriously difficult between such closely matched cars, and even more so on the unforgiving temporary circuit.

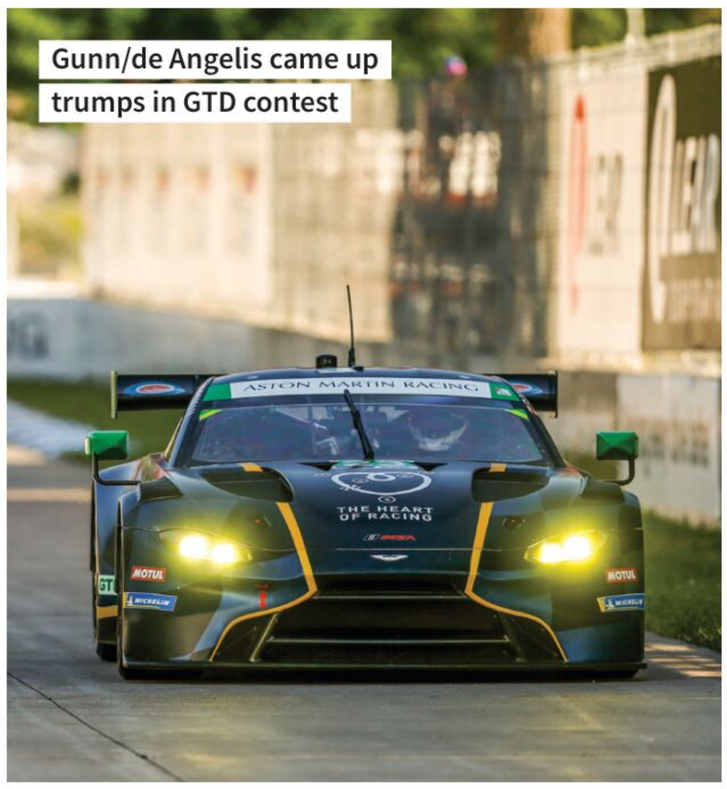
A late full-course caution after the transmission expired on Bill Auberlen's Turner Motorsports BMW M6, which had been running second in GTD, added a little extra spice, but van der Zande kept his cool to take the flag 0.573s clear of Nasr. The victory was van der Zande's 15th in IMSA competition and the first in anything for Magnussen since his Formula Renault 3.5 championship-winning season in 2013.

"It feels great," said Magnussen. "Coming here and knowing that I'm going to be able to fight for wins is a real privilege. To go racing with this organisation and these awesome cars, and these awesome tracks, it's really a dream. I feel very fortunate and blessed to be able to do that. To come out of a weekend like this with a big trophy, it's pretty special. I'm very thankful – back in the winning situation and enjoying it."

Ricky Taylor extended his first stint aboard his father Wayne's Acura a lap longer than some of the other contenders, which allowed Filipe Albuquerque to leapfrog from fifth to third for the final portion of the race. The Portuguese remained under intense scrutiny from both Oliver Jarvis, who had taken over from Tincknell, and the Cadillac of Tristan Vautier/Loic Duval all the way to the line, thereby extending their championship lead to 71 points as the series heads for the altogether different challenge of the Watkins Glen 6 Hours in a fortnight.

Richard Heistand and Jeff Westphal, both previous GTD winners in Detroit, took the flag in only their second race together. But the refuelling system for their Audi R8 LMS GT3 was found to be a little too efficient, delivering at a rate slightly faster than the mandated time. So the car was relegated to the back of the class, leaving the Aston Martin of Roman De Angelis/Ross Gunn to take a maiden win and the lead in the GTD Sprint Cup points chase.

JEREMY SHAW



GALSTAD/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Gunn/de Angelis came up trumps in GTD contest

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR
DETROIT (USA)
DPi Renger van der Zande/Kevin Magnussen
Chip Ganassi Racing (Cadillac DPi-V.R)
GTLM Tommy Milner/Nick Tandy
Corvette Racing
(Chevrolet Corvette C8.R)
GTD Roman De Angelis/Ross Gunn
Heart of Racing Team
(Aston Martin Vantage GT3)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY (USA)
Kyle Busch
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Supra)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY (USA)
John Hunter Nemechek
Kyle Busch Motorsports (Toyota Tundra)

INDY LIGHTS
DETROIT (USA)
Races 1 & 2 Kyle Kirkwood
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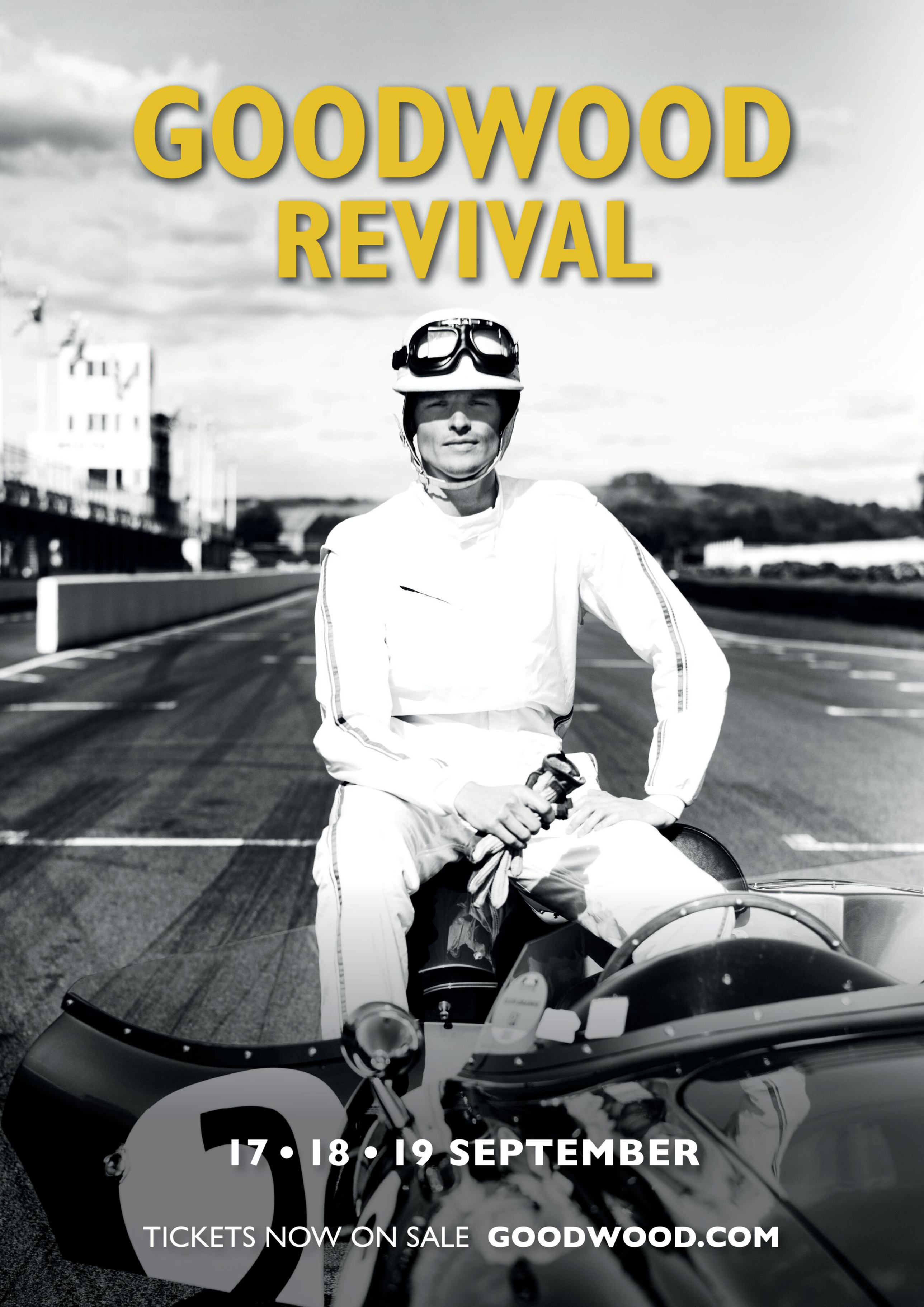
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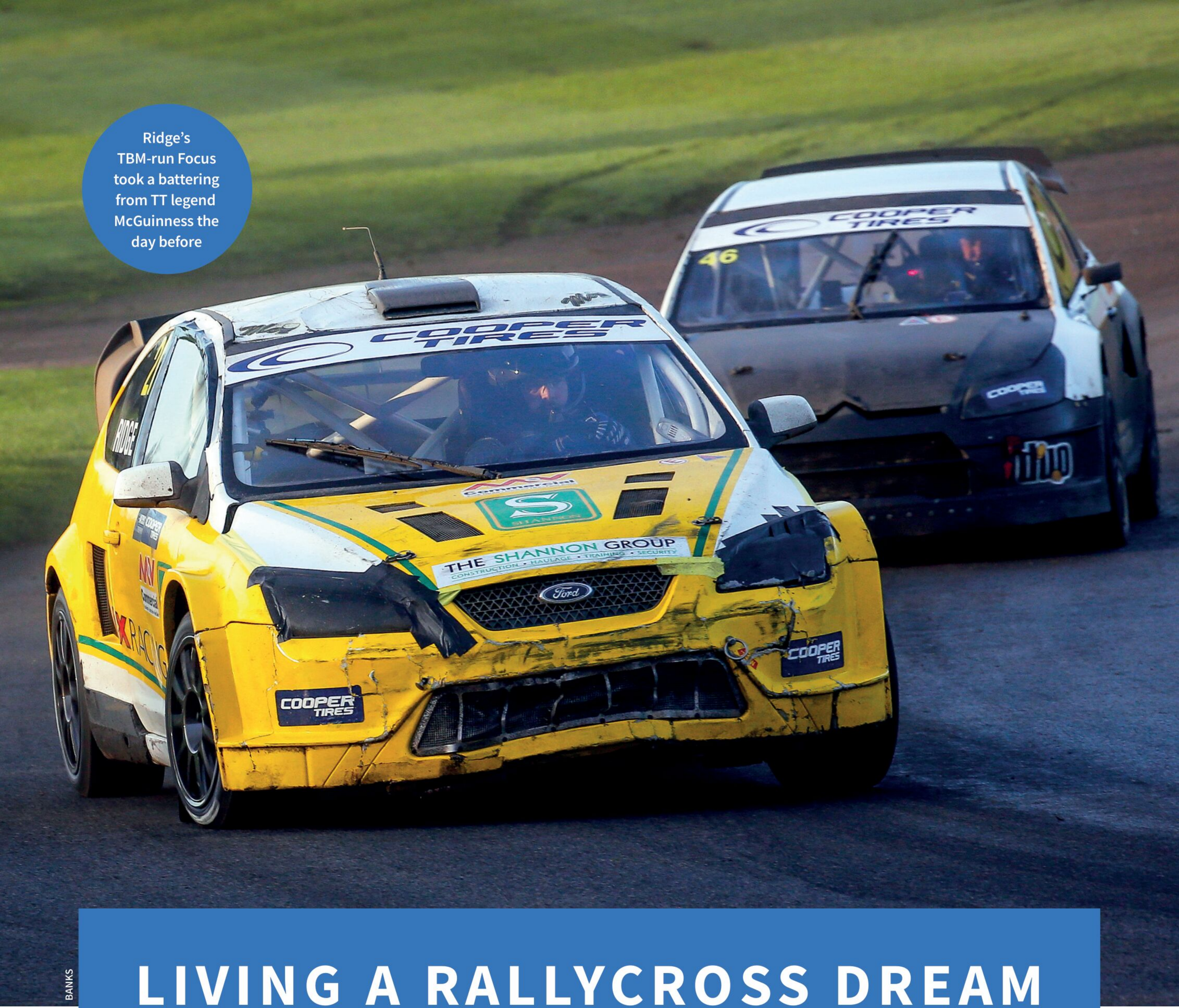

Ridge's TBM-run Focus took a battering from TT legend McGuinness the day before

BANKS

LIVING A RALLYCROSS DREAM

Racing a Supercar is what every budding rallycross driver aspires to do — and it's exactly what our reporter had the opportunity to try out

HAL RIDGE

On 3 July 2005, as an 18-year-old, I made my rallycross debut at Anglesey. With no prior mechanical knowledge and no family history of competing in motorsport, just getting to the event in a self-prepared car was, I felt, a huge achievement.

The main memory I have from that day is actually from the paddock. As I lined up for my first-ever practice session, Ford Escort rallycross Supercar driver Andy Grant pulled onto the pre-grid behind me. I was so excited to even just be lining up beside a four-wheel-drive, 600-horsepower rallycross Supercar. After all, Supercars are the creme de la creme of the discipline, the cars that all drivers aspire to sample.

Fast forward 16 years and, having largely given up competing in my own machines, through my career as a rallycross writer I've had amazing opportunities to undertake track tests in some of the best rallycross cars on the planet. Sebastien Loeb's World RX event-winning, works-built Peugeot 208 in 2018 for Autosport, for example. That test was conducted at Lydden Hill. In December last year I struck a deal to drive another Supercar at the birthplace of rallycross, this time an older-specification Ford Focus, but not as a track test, instead to compete in what would be the final round of the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy — the pinnacle of rallycross in the UK.

The deal came together late. Isle of Man TT legend John McGuinness was making his four-wheeled debut in the same Team RX Racing-owned car on the Saturday of the double-header weekend and, with the seat vacant for the Sunday competition, I struck an agreement with owner Ollie O'Donovan.

Fortunately, because McGuinness needed seat time, the Tony Bardy Motorsport-operated team ran a short test at Lydden on the Thursday before the event, where I also got to drive.

I'm not afraid to admit that my concerns were numerous. Doing track tests and being satisfied with not embarrassing myself while returning a car to its owner in one piece is one thing but, in that »

environment, there's little pressure and nobody else on track to contend with. I was also aware that I'd been spoilt by driving some latest-specification rallycross cars. Take nothing away from the Team RX Focus, but it's a little older, and I expected it to be harder to drive than the works-built Audis and Peugeots.

With Supercar being the aspiration of anyone racing in the discipline, I had to pinch myself at having the chance to actually race one, but was concerned about being seriously off the pace. When I raced in European rallycross with a Super1600 car we'd built ourselves, I knew it was under-developed compared to the others and thus it was all but impossible to know where my own level was at. Now any shortcomings would be highlighted in the biggest domestic arena.

The handful of laps I did at the test, in torrential rain, did nothing to dispel those fears. While sitting alongside Tony Bardy, a hugely accomplished driver himself, for some sighting laps, I genuinely thought, 'I can't do this', as he launched the car at kerbs and rotated it on entry to the turns.

The 600bhp, 0-60 in two seconds acceleration and four-wheel-drive turbocharged sensation of a Supercar will never get old but, as I'd sampled this performance several times before, I forced my attention to be focused on the areas needed to find lap time, mainly braking and maintaining corner speed.

In what felt like monsoon conditions, I kept locking wheels, at one point almost stalling the engine under braking, and struggled to get the car turned in and to control it from getting too sideways on corner exit. O'Donovan, sitting in with me, was satisfied that I was on top of the car, but I got out of the Focus disappointed in my performance. Only after my run did I discover that the tyres were very worn, but that knowledge didn't help. I had no confidence.

Driving home, I called two close friends and aired the contents of my desperately fried brain, including that I was considering reverting to right-foot braking, despite having left-foot braked for years. Fortunately, they talked some sense into me; and even more fortunately, the weather improved considerably for the weekend.

However, in McGuinness's very first race on Saturday, the Focus's right-front driveshaft broke on the jump landing, the car veered into the infield and rolled. Only the hard work of the TBM team meant that McGuinness could finish the event, albeit with the car looking a little second-hand. The Focus was then hurriedly reprepared for me to undertake a brief practice run in the evening.

5 NATIONS BRX

Pre-event test in torrential rain didn't allay Ridge's performance concerns

"PRIMED FOR MY FIRST START, I COMMITTED A SIN THAT I CHASTISE OTHER DRIVERS FOR REGULARLY"

But, with the rest of the field having been out on track all day, I was 4.927 seconds off the fastest British Championship runner (excluding the three World RX cars also in attendance). I felt that I'd been driving well within myself, though, and my pre-event concerns decreased somewhat. I was excited to get racing under way the following day.

In Sunday morning warm-up, I was seventh, just 0.035s off the fastest British Supercar runner's time. The car felt so much more underneath me, I was hustling it into the corners more and gaining confidence with being earlier on the throttle to drive through the apexes. Despite being relatively old technology now, the Focus's double-wishbone suspension rode the rougher loose-surface sections with ease, and the feeling of jumping over the huge kerbs through the final chicane is almost indescribable.

Ridge (r) battles Hill's Mitsubishi in semi-final

BANKS

5 NATIONS BRX

The Supercar class is the pinnacle of rallycross

The conditions were cold and a little damp, but all day it was very much dry tyres only, the soft Cooper crossply rubber generating so much heat that they work well into damp and bordering on wet track conditions.

For years I've watched Supercars do practice starts on their way to the grid, the anti-lag system-assisted engines popping and banging in the process of the handbrake being released and all four tyres spinning up. Now it was my turn, on my way to the grid for Q1. The pre-launch went OK, so there was no need to change the launch settings for the proper start. With a thumbs-up from the start marshal, I dipped the clutch, pulled the sequential lever towards me to select first, turned on the ALS, held the launch button on the steering wheel and pulled the handbrake, before finding the biting point on the clutch and holding the throttle flat to the floor. Primed for my first-ever Supercar start, I committed a sin that I chastise other drivers for regularly. As the 'ready to race' light went out on the start gantry, before the green lights had come on, I reacted – let go of the handbrake and clutch, and jumped the start.

Two joker laps was the penalty, but fortunately the race was stopped for an incident, and I got to do it again, with only one joker this time. I was seventh fastest, and very pleased, despite managing to pull the top of the gear lever off. Fast work by Bardy and his team got the car turned around just in time for Q2, which was to be another learning experience. As I launched away from the grid alongside team-mate O'Donovan, six-time champion Julian Godfrey made an inexplicably good start from the back row, had contact with O'Donovan in a challenge for the lead at Turn 1 and both cars spun. I had nowhere to go, careered into the side of a wayward Godfrey and spun hard into the wall. I'd dipped the clutch, eventually found reverse and got going again, but in my haste forgot to switch the ALS back on, so the throttle was far less responsive than before, and I had difficulty getting the car turned in, without being able to use the responsiveness of the engine to help in rotating the rear. Still, I managed eighth fastest due to the rate of attrition.

I briefly led my Q3 race at the start but was passed by Steve Hill and held on to finish second in a clean run. I'd said pre-event that making the final would be like winning the championship for me, so having amazingly qualified sixth overall and on the front-row for the semis, I got excited and bought four brand-new tyres. That made a huge difference to how sharp the car felt.

Having had Bardy spotting for me for much of the day, and doing a brilliant job, for the semi-finals I had David Mansfield on the radio, renowned for formerly being Andreas Bakkerud and Ken Block's spotter and strategist in World RX.

Starting on the left-hand side of the grid, taking the first-corner joker on lap one was the obvious choice, and when Hill took his joker on lap two we'd done enough to cover him off, Mansfield encouraging me on the radio, calling the gaps to the car behind and making a big difference to the overall performance.

But then, we had an oil surge issue, which put the Focus briefly into limp mode at the North Bend hairpin for an increasing amount of time on every lap. I defended hard but on one tour Hill got up the inside of me down Hairy Hill. On the outside, I braked first and, as Hill ran deep into one of the fastest corners in rallycross and I turned inside his Mitsubishi, I passed Hill back going into the chicane. Watching the video back, I still don't believe it's me pulling that move. Holding on to the finish, ultimately that pass earned me fourth – and a place in the final.

The last race of the weekend, held in fading December light, couldn't really have gone better. Feeling increasingly at one with the car, I pushed hard, benefited from a few issues for others, set my personal best laps of the weekend, just 0.5s shy of O'Donovan's best lap in the team's other car and finished fifth, just ahead of Godfrey and third of the British Championship registered drivers. Returning to parc ferme, I was greeted by friends in the paddock celebrating on my account.

I can't deny that climbing out of the car was pretty emotional. Racing a rallycross Supercar had been a teenager's dream, and the whole experience – the sounds, smells and pure driving pleasure, and competing against some amazing drivers – was a sensory overload. To have made that debut with legendary rallycross preparation outfit Tony Bardy Motorsport and to be far from finishing last exceeded all my expectations. The truncated nature of the schedule made for hard work for the team, so huge thanks to Tony, Sam, Stuart, Paul, Peter and Dave for keeping the car going to such a high level, despite small niggles throughout the day, and of course to team owner O'Donovan for putting the deal on the table for me to do the event in the first place.

Drivers who have achieved amazing success at the highest level in motorsport have described racing a rallycross Supercar as hugely addictive. Now I've had a taste of that drug, I totally understand what they mean.

BANKS

Ridge exceeded all his expectations with fifth

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Jordan will race Olsbergs MSE-built Ford Fiesta Supercar later this year

RIDGE

JORDAN PLOTS RALLYCROSS RETURN WITH HIS JRT SQUAD

BRITISH RALLYCROSS

Ex-British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan is set to return to his roots and embark on a rallycross programme with his family's JRT squad.

The 32-year-old started his career in Junior rallycross racing a Mini, before competing in the headline Supercar category in the UK. He left the discipline in a full-time switch to circuit racing at the end of 2007, winning the 2013 BTCC title.

Jordan has made sporadic appearances in rallycross since 2014, claiming a home podium in the British round of World RX that year. He dropped out of the BTCC in 2020, and has since focused on historic racing with JRT. He will now race an Olsbergs MSE-built Ford Fiesta Supercar in rounds of the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy and European Rallycross Championship.

"I've always been all about the results in anything we race, which is good in a way and bad in another," Jordan told Autosport. "We've got a great bunch of people [at JRT] and we're all mates, so the thought of going and doing European rallycross at Holjes [Sweden] or Hell [Norway] is really exciting. Obviously I want to do well, but it will be a cool adventure."

The JRT team recently acquired the former Euro RX event-winning Fiesta and is currently rebuilding the car.

"The plan is to do the last three rounds of the British Championship at Knockhill, Lydden and Spa this year, to have some fun and learn the car with a view to cherry-picking events next year," added Jordan.

Jordan started his career competing in rallycross

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

"My hopes are to challenge at the front, certainly once we've got our head around the car. It all has to fit in around the historics, because this will be the only thing I do other than the historics.

"I won't commit to doing a full championship; my preference will be to cherry-pick a smaller number of events – some British rounds and some of the races in Europe that I've wanted to do for years."

The third round of the British Rallycross Championship due to be held at Mondello Park on 10-11 July has been "postponed due to Motorsport Ireland's prevailing policy on coronavirus measures", said a 5 Nations BRX statement. The series is working on a replacement date.

HAL RIDGE

IN THE HEADLINES

BURGESS RETURN ON HOLD

Long-time MG Trophy frontrunner Jason Burgess's planned return to racing in the MG Cup at Silverstone last weekend was put on hold after his MG ZR 170's engine failed on the dyno. The car, previously campaigned by son Fred in the MG Trophy, suffered a similar failure last summer, prompting Burgess Jr's switch to his father's ZR 190, which he has campaigned ever since.

WESTON'S POIGNANT WIN

Edd Weston's maiden win in the MG Midget & Sprite Challenge at Silverstone last weekend came poignantly in the Ted Reeve Memorial race. Two-time Midget Challenge champion Reeve, who died in 2018, competed in Midgets for 48 years. His car was regularly prepared by Weston's father, David. "My dad's been mechanicking for Ted Reeve since I was born," said Weston, "so it means a lot to win this."

SWANSONG AT SILVERSTONE

MG Cup competitor Wayne Stirling-Parker called time on his 27-year racing career at Silverstone last weekend, the same venue at which he made his racing debut in the MG Metro Cup in 1994. "So 27 years later, I thought I'd start and finish at the same venue," he said. "It's been a wonderful time." With his own Rover BRM suffering ECU issues, Stirling-Parker borrowed Rod Weston-Bartholomew's MG ZR 170 for his final race in which he won his class, finishing sixth overall.

TANNER-WOOD HITS A TON

Clubmans racer Pippa Tanner-Wood cut a 100mph lap on her open-wheeled debut at Thruxton last Saturday in father Clive Wood's ex-Gaudenzio Mantova Ralt RT1 (below). "I absolutely loved it," said the solicitor, whose second visit to the track followed minimal lappery in the Ralt and the ex-Phil Silverstone Argo JM6 with Lifetime Racing at Donington Park last month.

MAWP+SPORT

Dorlin lands late Carrera Cup GB deal

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Sprint Challenge champion Dorlin initially ran in the top five in opener

PORSCHE

Porsche Sprint Challenge GB champion James Dorlin secured a last-minute graduation to the Carrera Cup with top squad Redline Racing for last weekend's first round at Snetterton.

The former Renault UK Clio Cup and British GT4 frontrunner had been working over the winter to secure the budget to make the move, and it was all finally completed on the eve of the Snetterton opener. Dorlin lacked mileage in the car compared to his rivals, but was running in the top five in the first contest until his rear-view mirror flew off, hampering his defensive efforts and contributing to him falling to seventh.

"It was about Tuesday we managed to get it all pulled together, thanks to FogLDN," said Dorlin. "It was as last-minute as it could've been – I'm just happy to be here. To be up there battling for the top five in my first race weekend, I'm happy with that.

"The competition is the best it's been for a long time so I'm in at the deep end. My mirror fell off and when you're trying to defend from these guys, that makes it very difficult!"

Although he has experience of racing a Porsche 718 Cayman Clubsport GT4, he says the 911 GT3 Cup machine bears no similarity to the car he drove last year.

"It's completely different to anything I've ever driven," said Dorlin. "I'm learning every time I get in the car. Just being rear-engined and no ABS, you've got to be so patient. You've almost got to drive it as slow as you can through the corners."

Dorlin was not the only driver to strike a late deal to join the grid as former British Touring Car racer Will Bratt joined Richardson Racing's line-up. Bratt, who contested a part-season in the series in 2018, took a best result of ninth in Norfolk.

Elsewhere, former Scottish Formula Ford 1600 runner-up Seb Melrose was a late addition to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup entry with Team Hard. He had been due to race in the Carrera Cup last year before COVID-19 struck. Melrose suffered a driveshaft failure in the opener before taking a best finish of 13th in the third contest.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Leaney smashes Castle Combe outright record

F3 CUP

F3 Cup dominator lowered benchmark by nearly a second

CARPENTER

Reigning F3 Cup champion Stefano Leaney smashed the Castle Combe outright lap record, which had stood for more than 16 years, last weekend.

The Welshman dominated both F3 Cup races and in the process broke the previous lap record of 59.387s set in 2005 by Dan Clarke in British F3, despite having never visited the Wiltshire venue before.

Leaney unofficially broke the record with his pole lap – a 58.718s aboard his Dallara F317 – before setting a 58.759s (113.34mph) time in the opener. He went even quicker in race two, lowering the record to 58.596s (113.66mph) before spinning. Such was his dominance, he retained the lead.

"It's my first time here so we've not really had any data to go off," said Leaney. "It's such an experience [the Combe circuit]. It gives you a sense of what it would have been like 30 years ago in F1 and F2. When you've got 11 corners, it comes at you so quickly, it's almost like you get tunnel vision."

STEFAN MACKLEY

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Andersson (inset) won RaceDriver.me prize

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Scholarship winner Andersson scores podium on debut outing

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

RaceDriver.me scholarship winner Alex Andersson scored a class podium during his debut circuit racing weekend in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup at Snetterton.

The Swede's rate of progression during the rounds of the scholarship impressed and led to him winning the prize drive. Andersson, who has previously taken part in drifting events, secured a third place in the Pro-Am category in the final race of the weekend, having improved his lap times by almost four seconds over the course of the Norfolk event with the Preptech UK squad.

"There's so much to take in – I was really nervous!" said Andersson. "I got talking with Rickard Rydell by email and he's given some tips.

"From Friday to race two, I've improved by four seconds. That's given me a lot of confidence and I feel that I can do this. It was amazing [to get a podium] – I had a tear in my eye."

RaceDriver.me founder Adam Lucas added: "The whole reason why I started the scholarship was to take someone who aspired to be a racing driver but didn't know how or didn't have the budget to do so. Every time he gets in the car, he gets better and quicker."

As part of his prize, Andersson will now spend the rest of the season racing in the C1 Challenge as he learns the skills required for endurance competition.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

David Pierre 1945-2021

OBITUARY

A minute's silence was held before last weekend's opening British Formula 4 race at Snetterton in tribute to David Pierre, who died last week.

Pierre served as clerk of the course from British F4's inception until the start of last year, having also officiated for the category's British Formula Ford predecessor before that.

He was a popular figure and carried out a wide variety of roles in UK motorsport over many decades, including as a marshal, rescue unit chief and steward. He enjoyed a long association with the British Racing & Sports Car Club and worked for numerous categories in race control, including for British GT, and W Series when it launched in 2019.

"David was someone who was instrumental in my education and tuition to become a clerk of the course, and it's him I have to thank for playing such a significant part in my career in motorsport," said BRSCC chairman and British GT clerk of the course Peter Daly.

"Not only was he a fiercely loyal member of the club, but he was also a dedicated volunteer, a superb benchmark for all clerks and marshals to measure themselves against."

IN THE HEADLINES

GOULD BETTERS LOTON TIME

Sean Gould bettered his own outright hill record during Sunday's round of the Midland Hillclimb Championship at Loton Park. Despite the high temperatures, Gould pared 0.09 seconds from his 18-month-old standard with a 43.18s climb in the final run of the day in his Gould GR59JB. Earlier in the day, Trevor Willis (OMS 28) took the first run-off by just 0.01s from Gould with a 44.44s best.

WHALES' CANARY CLASS WIN

Nick Whale had his first race in his ex-Mike Bell 'Canary' Ford Escort Mk1 in the Historic Touring Car Challenge at Thruxton last weekend, sharing the car with son Harry to two fifth places and third in the combined results. Whale bought the car after Bell's death and has had it refettled by the Jordan Racing Team. He was back at Thruxton for the first time in many years, having previously raced there in British Touring Cars.

MIDGET RETURNS TO THE TOP

Ian Everett took Tim Cairns's MG Hexagon Midget to victory on its first outing at Cadwell Park in 28 years during the opening Special Saloon and Modsports race last weekend. The car (aka 'Steamroller') last appeared at the circuit in 1983, when Cairns also won with it.

PRIMETT'S CSCC BOW

Eight-time Classic Touring Car Racing Club champion Stephen Primett finished sixth in his first Classic Sports Car Club event at Cadwell Park, entering his Ford Escort Mk1 in the Future Classics race.

ALLAWAY'S ESPRIT IS BACK

After an absence of over seven years for a rebuild, former CNC Heads Sports and Saloons champion Simon Allaway finally made his comeback in his Lotus Esprit V8 (below) at Oulton Park last weekend. After a successful pre-race shakedown at Blyton Park, Allaway had oil pressure problems in qualifying. He started the race but was forced out due to overheating.

WALKER

Maiden event for new club at Thruxton

Williams won second race and topped the combined honours

JONES

CLASSIC RACING CAR CLUB

A capacity field of Formula 2, F3 and FF2000 machinery provided the single-seater content at last weekend's Thruxton Historic event, and marked the auspicious birth of the Classic Racing Car Club.

Founded by long-time racer Rob Manger and associates, the club is a home for competitors wanting to enjoy grassroots racing.

"The sport has evolved on all levels since I started competing [in the late 1980s] and, to many weekend racers, it has forgotten its grassroots," said Manger. "We are here for competitors who want to race a few times a year and have fun.

"It started by accident, when I bought the ex-Pierre Petit F3 Ralt RT3 as a wreck, to rebuild for another go. [Vendor] Paul Smith told me there were lots of F3s doing nothing, and Alan Morgan said some FF2000 owners prefer to race in Holland and Belgium with HMR, [which is] currently difficult to do.

"I mentioned it to [1990s FRenault team-mate, now Thruxton operations manager] Pat Blakeney, who thought it worth a go, then persuaded the resident BARC to use its Jochen Rindt Trophy title as a hook. Duncan Wiltshire of [event co-promoter Historic Promotions] found space on the programme and we were up and running!

"With a nucleus of 25 people, we are at the bottom of Motorsport UK's ladder. But we want to facilitate value-for-money racing. With a little bit of money in the pot, every competitor at Thruxton received a goodie bag containing a commemorative T-shirt and stickers. The camaraderie in the pits and paddock was great."

Matthew Wrigley won the opening race in his March 79B, with Peter Williams's Ralt RT1 coming to the fore in race two and taking the combined honours.

MARCUS PYE

First historic win for Le Mans class victor Smith

Smith shared Lister-Jaguar with Ward

LAWRENCE

STIRLING MOSS TROPHY

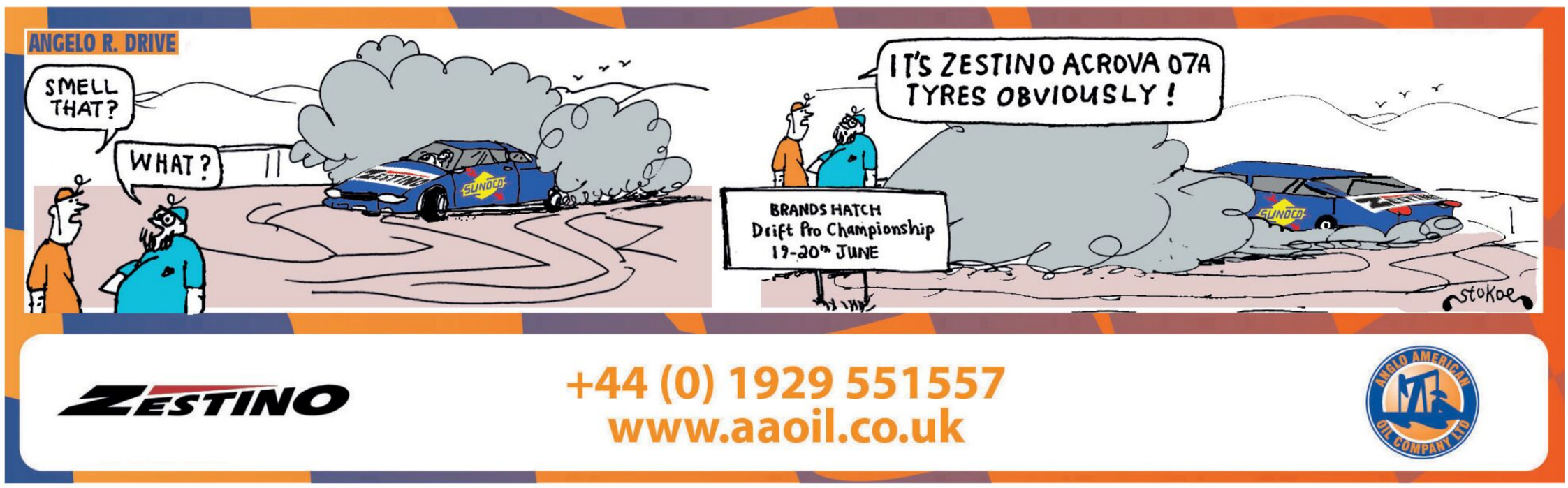
Le Mans 24 Hours class winner Rob Smith has taken to historic racing in style, and recorded his first win at Thruxton last Saturday in the Stirling Moss Trophy in the Lister-Jaguar he was sharing with Chris Ward.

The Lister, one of the continuation models, is tended by ADP Classic Racing, and Smith is keen to do more historic racing while also supporting his 14-year-old son, Sid, in the Fiesta Junior series.

After racing in the Carrera Cup GB, Smith progressed to Europe and took victory at Le Mans by winning the GTE Am class in 2017. "That was my climbing Everest," he said of the 24-hour race. "Now I just want to enjoy going racing and I've never driven anything like this before. I feel like I'm starting racing again and it's great fun.

"This is the exact opposite of what I've done before and I'm finding it very challenging. But I made a big step after my first race in the Lister at Donington."

PAUL LAWRENCE



How to avoid safety car chaos?

Caution periods around the pit window of endurance races have led to pandemonium in the pitlane, meaning it's time for a rethink

STEFAN MACKLEY

The final few laps of the Trackday Championship contest at Castle Combe last weekend were captivating, as Colin Tester – in for Sam Gay – fended off the hard-charging Chris Payne until the chequered flag. The winning margin after nearly 40 minutes of racing was just 0.719 seconds – a close gap by almost anyone's standards – but, as ever with motorsport, there's always more to the story than what the result sheet declares.

After a lengthy stoppage due to barrier at damage at Tower, the race resumed with 38 minutes left on the clock and the mandatory pitstop window looming. But, not for the first time this year during a pitstop race, a safety car created confusion and dangerous scenes.

As competitors circulated behind the safety car while a stranded vehicle was recovered, the head of the field began passing the pit entry on the cusp of the window opening. John Lyne, who had been running third, dived for the pits, with his BMW E36 slowing to a crawl and almost coming to a complete stop in front of the pit entry line, crossing it five seconds too early, for which he would be given a two-lap penalty.

Five cars further down the queue also pitted but were within the window, then on the next lap the rest of the field of around 25 cars dived into the pits. This prompted ridiculous and frankly dangerous scenes as some cars stacked four deep in places, with those who had come in first finding their path out blocked. Amazingly, and thankfully, no one was hurt as cars veered around each other and the team personnel.

> **"We certainly don't want to go back to using Code 60s, which did not work in club motorsport"**

Aside from the obvious safety issue and, as already mentioned, despite the fact the fight for the lead wasn't broken apart – this time – on too many occasions in 2021 this writer has covered races where a safety car has effectively ruined an outright battle for the win during a pitstop race.

The Bernie's V8s/CALM Porsche Trophy contest at Brands Hatch at the start of May was impacted massively when the leading four cars inexplicably failed to make their mandatory pitstops at the first opportunity while under caution, perhaps unaware that the pit window was actually open. As another safety car period was put into action, the wrong car was then picked up at the head of the train, essentially giving the first three drivers a lap on the opposition, which was amplified even more by the length of the Brands Hatch Grand Prix loop.

Andy Middlehurst and Jonathan Bailey were gifted the Historic Touring Car Challenge win at the Donington Park Historic Festival in similar fashion, as the emergence of a safety car at the right moment handed them a lead of nearly a lap. But it must be noted that safety cars by their very nature cause unpredictability, and there will always be winners and losers. It's why fans often crave their intervention during the duller moments of a race.

There's no denying that safety is paramount and the intervention of a safety car, when needed, should always be prioritised to make the removal of vehicles or barrier repairs as safe as possible for recovery teams and marshals. We certainly don't want to go back to using Code 60s, which just did not work in a club motorsport environment. It's also right to point out that, in the heat of a race, making split-second decisions for officials is no easy task and they do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

But there must be ways of making their lives easier while also avoiding the undoubted confusion that occurs when cars pit under a safety car. Why not, for example, close the pits when a safety car is deployed? The majority of endurance races in the UK don't require the need for refuelling so there's no risk of cars stopping out on circuit. And, at any rate, the regulations themselves strongly state no refuelling is allowed at any time in the pits for the majority of the mini-enduro races that have been mentioned above.

There will be those who argue that track time between drivers wouldn't be shared equally if this was implemented, but the same problem exists even if the pitlane were to remain open during a safety car, as one driver would invariably spend more time under caution. Granted, the chaotic and dangerous scenes witnessed at Combe could still happen, as all cars could pit once the safety car had been recalled, but there are always things that can be done to improve safety.

The Britcar Endurance Championship is proof of that after a terrifying near-miss at Snetterton earlier this year, when a car was pushed towards mechanics and officials in the pitboxes after being tagged by another vehicle. Since then, a lower pitlane speed limit, specified pitboxes, restrictions on mechanics, as well as cars parked at a 45-degree angle have been introduced with the aim of making the pits safer.

As ever in motorsport, there's not one solution that will please everyone, but there has to be a way to avoid confusion for drivers, officials and spectators when it comes to safety cars and pitstop windows.

P76 CASTLE COMBE REPORT

TOCA SUPPORTS SNETTERTON 12-13 JUNE

Win and a second for Duckhams-liveried Cammish, but Hanafin and Jewiss also starred in Norfolk

Cammish leads as others star

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Much of the pre-season Porsche Carrera Cup GB attention was focused on past champions Harry King and Dan Cammish, but the opening Snetterton round was the perfect demonstration that this is far from a two-horse race. Young chargers Lorcan Hanafin and Kiern Jewiss both laid down significant markers and showed they cannot be discounted.

Hanafin was elated with his performance in qualifying. His pole time was 0.4 seconds clear of Cammish, while King languished in sixth after a gearbox issue curtailed his session early. "All the publicity went to Dan and Harry and I was lurking in the shadows," said JTR driver Hanafin. "The team's given me such a great car."

Hanafin was eager to make a good start and proved a little too eager as his creeping and then rolling back meant he copped a 10s penalty for being out of position. This left him third in the final classification, little reward after controlling the race with a pace that neither Cammish nor King could match. Cammish inherited the win but said he struggled to perfect the set-up on his car, while King admitted he dropped too far behind Hanafin and Cammish in the early stages to challenge them.

The reigning champion saved his new tyres for the second race and put in a classic King display. He stormed from fifth to first within two laps and it looked like job done. But he was guilty of pushing too hard and was handed a 5s penalty for abusing track limits, dropping him to third – his worst-ever Carrera Cup finish!

King was angry at the penalty but it meant Jewiss's excellent defence from Cammish, who had also made progress through the field, netted him the win. "No, I didn't expect that," said 2018 British Formula 4 champion Jewiss. "This weekend was all about learning, gaining experience and seeing what we could do."

He and Hanafin certainly proved what they can do is give Cammish and King plenty to think about this year.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

McNeilly outfoxes rivals for first win

GINETTA JUNIOR

Liam McNeilly proved at Snetterton that you don't need to represent the R Racing or Elite Motorsport battalions to enjoy Ginetta Junior success by taking his first win with the Fox Motorsport squad.

The 15-year-old, whose dad runs the team, jumped polesitter Tom Edgar at the start of the opener. Edgar muscled his way past at Agostini in a move that dropped McNeilly to fourth, and opened up a large lead. That was until Edgar's R Racing team-mate Callum Voisin got into second. Voisin was slashing the gap when the safety car was called due to Elite's pre-weekend points leader Seb Hopkins, trying to recover from a poor qualifying, crashing at Riches.

The flatbed finally rumbled in from a distant land, and time ran out for a restart, seemingly saving Edgar's victory. But he was penalised to fourth for the move on McNeilly, promoting Voisin to the win from Will Jenkins.

Voisin had a great battle with McNeilly in race two, before fading with a problem at the left-front. McNeilly therefore won from Edgar and Jenkins, and Voisin was excluded due to a discrepancy with his cam timing, giving Hopkins fourth.

Edgar had McNeilly and Jenkins hard on his heels for much of the finale, which was interrupted by a safety car following a first lap that warranted a few detentions being handed out. The Northern Irishman beat McNeilly by just 0.258 seconds, with Elite's Jenkins third.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Double delight for Brown in Minis

MINI CHALLENGE

Lewis Brown took two victories in the entire 2020 Mini Challenge season and he matched that tally after the opening event of the new campaign at Snetterton.

Brown's wins were not straightforward, however, as he had to battle the fast-starting Sam Weller for each. The rookie was instantly on the pace and stormed into the lead from second on the race-one grid before Riches. But his advantage did not last long as polesitter Max Bird grabbed the place back on lap three through Brundle and Nelson, with Brown also pouncing. Brown then made his winning move on the next tour at Wilson and that was how it stayed.

Weller again grabbed the initial lead in race two but this time it lasted less than a lap before Brown fought back out of Murrays to claim another win.

The partially reversed grid for race three set up a battle between Jim Loukes, Brad Hutchison and Ronan Pearson. Hutchison made the defining pass on the second lap, forcing Loukes out wide at Agostini, while Pearson also barged ahead at Oggies. That was how the top three remained but further back Dan Zelos was on a charge. The 2020 runner-up had only managed a pair of fifths, but made a number of well-timed overtakes to claim fourth in the finale.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Brown (39) overcame fast-starting Weller in opening two races

Welsh wizard Rees bags F4 brace

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Matthew Rees's double pole in the opening British Formula 4 race at Thruxton was an impressive achievement for the racing rookie. But an unfortunate wrong call on a 50/50 wet tyre choice left him on the back foot and unable to convert his qualifying pace into victory. But, at Snetterton, he did just that.

The JHR driver made it four out of four with another double pole – and this time he stayed in front. Rees said one area he had been particularly practicing was race starts. That preparation paid off as he made a brilliant getaway in the opener and quickly pulled 1.1 seconds clear. Thruxton star James Hedley grabbed second at Wilson but was unable to escape from McKenzy Cresswell, leaving Rees to scamper away.

Rees is unbeaten in qualifying and is now a race winner, too

And it was the same story in race three. Rees again made a strong start and pulled a gap as Marcos Flack battled past Cresswell.

The reversed-grid second contest was entertaining, with around 10 cars all running line astern in the fight for fourth. Tom Ikin, Kai Askey and Georgi Dimitrov had pulled ahead of these, and Dimitrov grabbed the win with a brilliant double pass around the outside of Turn 3. Zak Taylor worked his way onto the podium with a succession of impressive passes to finish behind Ikin.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Dimitrov won race two with impressive double pass

Smalley misses out on hat-trick

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

It was all going so well for Adam Smalley in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup. Pole position by almost half a second. Two commanding lights-to-flag victories in the opening two races. And then he was challenging for the lead in the partially reversed-grid finale.

His bid for a hat-trick had been aided by polesitter James Blake-Baldwin not starting with a drivetrain problem. Smalley was then up to second after jumping Elite team-mate Josh Rattican off the line. And soon he was challenging Tom Hibbert, who had shadowed Smalley throughout the opening races.

Smalley made a fantastic move down the inside at Riches on lap six of 12, but Hibbert fought back on the exit. He made repeated contact with Smalley around the Wilson Hairpin, for which he was given a formal warning, and retook the place. But they were still side-by-side through Turn 3 and Smalley pulled fractionally ahead into Agostini before Hibbert just tagged his rival, leaving Smalley out. The delayed Hibbert was passed by Rattican, the 2020 Ginetta Junior runner-up going on to take an impressive win on his maiden weekend of senior car racing.

Even with his race-three woe, Smalley is only 18 points behind Hibbert in the standings and already looks to be the driver to beat.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Smalley (r) took two strong wins before contact with Hibbert put him out

WEEKEND WINNERS

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Race 1 (both 14 laps) 1 Dan Cammish; 2 Harry King +3.512s; 3 Lorcan Hanafin; 4 Kiern Jewiss; 5 Will Martin; 6 Lewis Plato. **Fastest lap** Hanafin 1m51.797s (95.60mph). **Pole** Hanafin. **Starters** 22.
Race 2 1 Jewiss; 2 Cammish +0.270s; 3 King; 4 Plato; 5 Hanafin; 6 Jamie Orton. **FL** Cammish 1m52.559s (94.95mph). **P** Plato. **S** 22.
Points 1 Cammish 21; 2 Jewiss 16; 3 King 16; 4 Hanafin 15; 5 Plato 8; 6 Martin 4.

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 (8 laps) 1 Callum Voisin; 2 Will Jenkins +0.157s; 3 Liam McNeilly; 4 Tom Edgar; 5 Aston Millar; 6 Josh Rowledge. **FL** Voisin 2m19.902s (76.39mph). **P** Edgar. **S** 27.
Race 2 (9 laps) 1 McNeilly; 2 Edgar +3.185s; 3 Jenkins; 4 Seb Hopkins; 5 Josh Miller; 6 Millar. **FL** McNeilly 2m20.034s (76.32mph). **P** McNeilly. **S** 27.
Race 3 (8 laps) 1 Edgar; 2 McNeilly +0.258s; 3 Jenkins; 4 Miller; 5 Millar; 6 Rowledge. **FL** Hopkins 2m20.393s (76.12mph). **P** McNeilly. **S** 27.
Points 1 Edgar 134; 2 Jenkins 117; 3 McNeilly 115; 4 Millar 111; 5 Hopkins 95; 6 Miller 92.

MINI CHALLENGE

Race 1 (10 laps) 1 Lewis Brown; 2 Max Bird +0.900s; 3 Sam Weller; 4 Jack Davidson; 5 Dan Zelos; 6 Isaac Smith. **FL** Brown 2m03.964s (86.21mph). **P** Bird. **S** 29.
Race 2 (10 laps) 1 Brown; 2 Weller +2.784s; 3 Bird; 4 Davidson; 5 Zelos; 6 Ethan Hammerton. **FL** Weller 2m03.470s (86.56mph). **P** Brown. **S** 29.
Race 3 (9 laps) 1 Brad Hutchison; 2 Ronan Pearson +1.376s; 3 Jim Loukes; 4 Zelos; 5 Smith; 6 Hammerton. **FL** Hutchison 2m05.972s (84.84mph). **P** Loukes. **S** 29.
Points 1 Brown 134; 2 Weller 120; 3 Bird 115; 4 Hutchison 106; 5 Zelos 105; 6 Pearson 96.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (11 laps) 1 Matthew Rees; 2 James Hedley +5.630s; 3 McKenzy Cresswell; 4 Oliver Gray; 5 Marcos Flack; 6 Abbi Pulling. **FL** Flack 1m53.133s (94.47mph). **P** Rees. **S** 18.
Race 2 (11 laps) 1 Georgi Dimitrov; 2 Tom Ikin +5.395s; 3 Zak Taylor; 4 Kai Askey; 5 Joel Granfors; 6 Dougie Bolger. **FL** Granfors 1m54.246s (93.55mph). **P** David Morales. **S** 18.
Race 3 (10 laps) 1 Rees; 2 Flack +3.771s; 3 Cresswell; 4 Hedley; 5 Pulling; 6 Matias Zagazeta. **FL** Cresswell 1m54.120s (93.65mph). **P** Rees. **S** 18.
Points 1 Hedley 85; 2 Rees 60; 3 Cresswell 53; 4 Granfors 45; 5 Taylor 34; 6 Joseph Loake 33.

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Race 1 (7 laps) 1 Adam Smalley; 2 Tom Hibbert +1.624s; 3 Carlito Miracco; 4 James Blake-Baldwin; 5 Josh Rattican; 6 Steve Roberts. **FL** Smalley 1m56.616s (91.65mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 21.
Race 2 (12 laps) 1 Smalley; 2 Hibbert +0.966s; 3 Rattican; 4 Blake-Baldwin; 5 Tom Emson; 6 Roberts. **FL** Rattican 1m56.880s (91.44mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 21.
Race 3 (12 laps) 1 Rattican; 2 Hibbert +3.422s; 3 Emson; 4 Joe Marshall; 5 Blake Angliss; 6 Roberts. **FL** Rattican 1m58.469s (90.21mph). **P** Blake-Baldwin. **S** 21.
Points 1 Hibbert 90; 2 Rattican 83; 3 Smalley 72; 4 Emson 62; 5 Roberts 54; 6 Miracco 51.

Five podiums for Thruxton star Needell

THRUXTON HISTORIC
BARC
12-13 JUNE

Pick of Needell's podiums was overall Jaguar Classic Challenge win with Spiers

"Five podiums, what a weekend," beamed Tiff Needell, having topped his Thruxton Historic haul with a resounding Jaguar Classic Challenge victory. E-type owner John Spiers' tactical decision to dart in from fourth when the pit window opened made it, as a safety car led the field past the entrance. Unfathomably, nobody followed and, after the mandatory 90 seconds stationary, Needell joined the crocodile's tail without losing a lap.

Hampshire-born Needell won his first race at Thruxton 49 years ago, in his Autosport competition prize Formula Ford Lotus 69. FF2000 and Thundersports successes followed there and Tiff achieved the dream of competing in an F1 World Championship race – the 1980 Belgian Grand Prix, in Mo Nunn's Ensign – and finished third at Le Mans in 1990 (Porsche 962C). Thousands of laps as the white knuckle ride car driver at Britain's fastest circuit have subsequently served him well.

Back to the Jaguar race, in the E-type's 60th anniversary year, and Needell found himself approaching half a minute ahead when pursuers Jon Minshaw and Gary Pearson emerged from the pits. The soloists could not possibly erode that advantage.

Finishing Spiers' Lister-Jaguar – in which John won Sunday's Historic Racing Drivers Club Allstars race, picking off Adrian Willmott's hairy Studebaker Lark and early pacemaker David Smithies' misfiring Daytona Cobra – Needell was third in the Stirling Moss Trophy set in Saturday's 1950s sportscars race. Chris Ward and series newcomer Rob Smith in the latter's Lister and James Cottingham/Harvey Stanley (Ecurie Ecosse Tojeiro-Jaguar) were beyond reach. Fred Wakeman/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards claimed RAC Woodcote Trophy gold in the Equipe Endeavour Cooper-Jaguar T38.

Another result for the versatile Spiers/Needell combo was aggregate victory (and fifth overall) in the Tony Dron Trophy Group 1 1/2 division of the Historic Touring Car Challenge in a Hermetite Capri. Four of the Essex V6 cars were embroiled in this, Needell besting George Pochciol/James Hanson on Saturday, but ex-European Touring Car racer Hanson growled past Spiers when they switched driving order. Rapid Ben Clucas (in Marcus Jewell's) hounded down James Slaughter for third in race one, but missed out by feet on Sunday.

Out front, spectators gasped as the Nissan Skylines of Andy Middlehurst (in Jonathan Bailey's original ex-Suzuki/Aida Kyocera car) and Ric Wood's Calsonic tribute version traversed Allard abreast. Wood retired when a turbo pipe detached – "from 680bhp I was left with 200" – on Saturday, when 1985 Thruxton FF1600 victor Adrian Willmott's mellifluous Ford Cologne Capri-GAA (also Wood-built) took the chequer, evoking memories of recently departed Vince Woodman's wins in his Broadspeed version. Wood blasted from the back to beat Mark Farmer/Willmott on Sunday, the Capri tamers beating Middlehurst/Bailey on aggregate.

Race of the weekend was the HRDC Jack Sears Trophy 1958-66 touring car showcase. Local man Alex Thistlethwayte, driving his 1965 Ford Mustang brilliantly, staved off Neil Brown and Roy Alderslade

Capri of Willmott and Farmer battled with the Nissan Skylines

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

JAGUAR CLASSIC CHALLENGE
John Spiers/Tiff Needell (E-type)

HRDC ALLSTARS PRE-'66
John Spiers (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly)

RAC WOODCOTE/STIRLING MOSS TROPHIES
Chris Ward/Rob Smith (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly)

MRL HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE
Race 1 Mark Farmer/Adrian Willmott (Ford Capri)
Race 2 Ric Wood (Nissan Skyline GT-R R32)

HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY
Roy Alderslade (Ford Lotus Cortina)

MRL PRE-'63 GT
James Cottingham/Harvey Stanley (Jaguar E-type)

MRL PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS
Gareth Burnett/Michael Birch (Talbot AV105)

CRCC JOCHEN RINDT TROPHY
Race 1 Matthew Wrigley (March-BDA 79B)
Race 2 Peter Williams (Ralt-BMW RT1)

HRDC CLASSIC ALFA CHALLENGE
James Colburn (Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GT)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

for lap after lap, their Lotus Cortinas often at opposing angles on full opposite lock. A slow stop cost Brown, but Needell roared Spiers' Cortina into the equation. When Thistlethwayte retired with gear selection problems, Tiff deposed Alderslade, only for his gearbox to fail on the last lap. "I was composing my victory speech when it went brrr, flat in top up Woodham Hill," rued Needell. Alderslade darted past as Needell limped in second. Brown, Mike Jordan and 1991-93 outright lap record holder Dave Coyne, grappling with Adrian Miles' ill-handling Mustang, led the chase.

James Cottingham/Harvey Stanley won the thin Pre-'63 GT race in DK Engineering's powerful E-type roadster, but young Jack Minshaw – an impressive talent – kept both on their toes, clear of dad Jon.

Gareth Burnett/Michael Birch's Talbot downed Oliver and Tim Llewellyn's clutch-troubled Bentley 4 1/2 in the Pre-War race. Clive and Stuart Morley shaded Alan Middleton's Aston Martin Red Dragon for third. Matt Wrigley and Peter Williams won the Classic Racing Car Club's superbly supported debut races – see News – and Greg Robertson (FF2000 Reynard SF79) took second overall.

James Colburn (Giulia) blitzed the Alfa Romeo finale in which Chris Snowdon (Napolina GTV) repassed James Wright (75) on the penultimate lap for second.

MARCUS PYE

ELVA'S UK RACE DEBUT The penultimate of 13 Elva MkVs built by Frank Nichols made its UK racing debut last Sunday, driven by owner James Owen. Supplied to Clayton, Missouri, Cadillac dealer Clint Lindburg, chassis 100/103 was later raced by American footballer 'Clint' Clicquennoi, then by Tim McCann. Owen has substituted a 1216cc Coventry-Climax FWE engine for the original 1100cc FWA, and shook it down in a sprint at Goodwood, where his late father 'Fred' raced an MG TD in period.

BRIEF RUN FOR TURNER A rare Turner-Ardun raced at Goodwood by former Lester-MG driver Reg Croysdill in 1957 graced the Woodcote Trophy field for a lap. One of eight built by Jack Turner, before focusing on small-capacity road sportscars, the transverse leaf-sprung drum-braked tubular-chassised bolide is powered by a Ford/Mercury V8. It was bought as a project by Turner fanatic Ken Prichard-Jones 10 years ago, restored by Geoff Cousins and handed to Cliff Ryan and Nick Crewdson.

WOOD BACK TO F3 Argo JM6s work well at Thruxton, as Formula 3 returnee Martin Wood discovered. As a privateer in 1983, the Clubmans champion punched above his weight in a second-hand Ralt, run by Clive Wood. The opportunity to drive Clive's Argo and relearn Britain's fastest circuit was irresistible. Having switched off when the oil light flickered on Saturday, Wood shot from the back to a class-leading sixth on Sunday, only to be collected by Tom Smith's FF2000 Nomad (sans rear brakes).

The Mini Se7en class victory went to Lewis (41), after close fight with Smith

Lewis wins again, 41 years after Mini Se7en title

SILVERSTONE
MGCC
12-13 JUNE

Forty-one years after claiming the Mini Se7en crown, Jonathan Lewis returned to the championship's winners' circle as the Se7ens and Miglias starred on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit.

Part of the lead pack throughout both races, Lewis was pushed back to fourth after an unsuccessful challenge for the lead at Abbey on the final lap of the opener. Joe Thompson won from Spencer Wanstall but the pair lost out in the sequel – a combined Se7en/Miglia grid of more than 50 cars – when Wanstall slowed with a failed throttle linkage and was collected by Thompson.

Lewis exchanged the lead with Jeff Smith – who had lost out on Saturday when he mistook a lack of grip from oil on track for a puncture and pitted – with Connor O'Brien splitting the pair at the flag.

"I cried on the slowing down lap like a baby," admitted Lewis. "I won the championship as an 18-year-old and the last Mini Se7en race I won was 41 years ago. That's why I decided to come back and have another go in it. It was great, it was fair and it was clean."

The quicker Miglias were equally fair and frantic. Endaf Owens pipped Andrew Jordan in the opener after the pair broke clear. Jordan overcame a missed a gear to challenge on the final lap, but couldn't quite make a move stick around the outside of Brooklands and finished just 0.044s behind. The duo were beaten by Aaron Smith, who survived a brush with a backmarker on the final lap, and Kane Astin – recovering from an engine failure in qualifying – in Sunday's hard-fought multi-class encounter. "That was absolutely epic," enthused Smith.

When Fred Burgess's gearbox cried enough, it left leader Sam Kirkpatrick able to cruise to MG Trophy success on Saturday, but it was a different story the next morning as the pair traded the lead. Burgess hung on around the outside at Stowe to make an inside pass into Vale, only to outbrake himself into Brooklands and allow Kirkpatrick to take his sixth win of the season. Adam Jackson scored two podiums in his similar ZR 190.

Edd Weston secured a maiden victory in the Midget and Sprite Challenge when he edged Richard Wildman in a photo finish having shadowed him for several laps. Weston then notched another win by the more comprehensive margin of half a second! Two wins in the concurrent Cockshoot Cup races went to Ray Collier's MG ZR, the first after a terrific scrap with Karl Green's ZS when the pair traded the lead more than once per lap.

An extraordinary last two laps turned Sunday's Equipe GTS race on its head. Having repelled British GT racer Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke's repeated attacks, including repassing him around the outside at Luffield, Saturday winner Lee Atkins (TVR Grantura) spun away the lead. Gordon-Colebrooke's Triumph TR4 then expired and, with his vision obscured by the TR4's oil on his MGB's windscreen, Tom Smith had an excursion. All this allowed Allan Ross Jones (TR4) to take the flag from the recovering Atkins and Smith.

After an unchallenged success in the first MG Cup race, Mike Williams (Rover Metro) had to work harder for his second win. The fast-starting Rover Tomcats of Matt Simpson and Richard Buckley both had spells in front before Williams eventually made his repeated attempts to pass Buckley at Stowe pay off. Buckley beat Simpson to second, a reversal of Saturday's result when Simpson finally breached Buckley's stern defences at Club on the last lap.

Beighton roared to Equipe Libre win in Sunbeam Le Mans Tiger

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: WALKER

WEEKEND WINNERS

MINI 7 RACING CLUB – SE7EN/S-CLASS/MIGLIA/LIBRE
Race 1 Joe Thompson (Se7en)
Race 2 Endaf Owens (Miglia)
Race 3 Aaron Smith (Miglia)

MG TROPHY
Races 1 & 2 Sam Kirkpatrick (ZR 190)

MIDGET & SPRITE CHALLENGE/ COCKSHOOT CUP
Races 1 & 2 Edd Weston (MG Midget)

EQUIPE GTS
Race 1 Lee Atkins (TVR Grantura)
Race 2 Allan Ross Jones (Triumph TR4)

MG CUP
Races 1 & 2 Mike Williams (Rover Metro VVC, below)

EQUIPE LIBRE
Race 1 Robin Ellis (Lotus Elan 26R Shapecraft)
Race 2 Chris Beighton (Sunbeam Le Mans Tiger)

EQUIPE PRE-63/50s
Races 1 & 2 Nigel Winchester (Shelby 260)

BCV8
Races 1 & 2 Ollie Neaves (B GT V8)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Robin Ellis overcame a clutch problem, which left his heavy Lotus Elan 26R Shapecraft stuck in third gear, to score a first success aboard the car in Equipe Libre after Richard Woolmer's leading Ford Falcon succumbed to suspected fuel pump failure. Chris Beighton's Sunbeam Le Mans Tiger arrived overnight to dominate Sunday's race. Woolmer charged from the back to claim second on countback after a multi-car accident was triggered by a spin at Copse for Larry Tucker's Shelby Mustang in the one-lap dash after a protracted safety car period.

Equipe Pre-63 honours twice fell to Nigel Winchester's raucous Shelby 260, the first after withstanding race-long pressure from Mark Holme (Austin-Healey) and the Jaguar E-type of Roberto Giordanelli. Sunday's win came a little easier after Holme expired in the closing stages.

MARK PAULSON

CHANGING FORTUNES FOR YOUNG CHARGERS

Kirkpatrick has won six from six in the MG Trophy this year

Two rising stars of the MG Car Club experienced contrasting fortunes at Silverstone last weekend.

While 20-year-old Sam Kirkpatrick extended his MG Trophy winning run to six from six and expanded his rear-wheel-drive experience, teenager Morgan Short was sidelined by engine failure on his MG ZS after it overheated in qualifying for the MG Cup.

Short harbours ambitions of reaching the professional ranks while ensuring he has an off-track career to fall back on. The 19-year-old Derby University criminology student is the son of former Le Mans 24 Hours and British GT regular Martin Short, and hopes to emulate his father's rise through club racing to the sportscar scene. With no serious karting experience, he passed his ARDS test at 16, but suffered an immediate setback.

"I went out in a test session in a Toyota GT86, and I crashed it," said Short Jr. "I spun on some oil and my brain didn't have the experience of what to do when you spin."

That prompted a rethink and, after a race debut in the 2019 Citroen C1 24 hours, Short decided that the MG Cup was an ideal location to build his experience at the wheel of a Rover 216 GTI, like the example his father had successfully pedalled in the manufacturer-backed one-make series nearly 30 years ago.

Short has been learning his craft in MG Cup

"It's cheap, good motorsport and the Rover was eligible," he said. "We thought it was a good next step, going from about 70-odd bhp to 120, still front-wheel drive."

Fourth overall and second in class represented a strong debut season ahead of graduating this year to the more powerful ZS, a former trackday car prepared by Martin Slingsby, and a first win came last time out at Oulton Park.

"We've got a really solid car and we've got really good competition with Mike [Williams] – I'm still learning a lot from Mike," he said.

"Being 6ft 3in, there are limited opportunities in single-seaters, so sportscars [is the target destination]. But we're also realistic and know that only 1% – if that – make it."

For Kirkpatrick, who is turning heads with his unbeaten run in the MG Trophy, racing at this stage is purely for fun, having competed in karts since the age of eight. The Junior Saloon graduate also followed his father into racing and hopes to share the family MGB with dad Bill in the future. Kirkpatrick gave the RWD car its first run-out in Equipe GTS last weekend, qualifying an impressive third before retiring with low oil pressure.

"I was quite shocked we were so far up," he said. "It's quite fun sliding around on the old tyres. It's a totally different driving style [from the front-wheel-drive ZR 190 he campaigns in the MG Trophy] but I enjoyed it. We want to do more MGB stuff next year because it's very fun.

"We don't really want to go too mega-serious because I'm still at uni and see racing as more of a fun weekend thing. I don't really want to be going into anything too massive and expensive."

MARK PAULSON

Woolfitt's Spire no thorn for Rose's Saker

OULTON PARK
BARC
12 JUNE

Rose grabbed the lead of CNC Heads Sports & Saloons contest mid-distance and then pulled clear of Woolfitt

It was a second successive win of the season in the CNC Heads Sports and Saloons for Paul Rose, but the Saker driver had to work for his latest triumph at Oulton Park.

Jon Woolfitt's Spire had led from Old Hall, after taking the Locost of Paul Dobson around the outside. Rose had seen off both Dobson and Paul Woolfitt (Lotus Exige) on the opening lap, but it took a while for him to close down Jon Woolfitt's lead. As they passed the pits at the end of lap six of 13, Rose was ahead, only to swap again exiting Knickerbrook, when the Saker driver took to the grass to avoid a backmarker. But Rose came back again to lead into Druids, this time sealing his victory.

Woolfitt remained a comfortable second, with Danny Bird's Spire a clear third. There were a number of changes between Dobson and Dave Harvey (Locosaki) for fourth but, from Lodge on lap seven, Dobson just kept his nose ahead, with Roddie Paterson's Caterham next home, a solitary sixth.

The Praga of Jay Morton and Angus Fender was a double winner in the combined Britcar Endurance and Praga races. From the start, it was a Praga top six, with Richard Wells leading the way from Richard Morris and Chris Bridle. The lead quartet all held station until the pit window, before Alex Kapadia hit the front in the Wells car, with Chris Wesemael (in for Morris) and Fender chasing, before Fender's challenge was aided by a safety car intervention.

Fender was on the attack from the green flag, and with eight laps to go he was out in front before securing the win. Jack Fabby/Charlie Martin completed the top four in their Praga, followed by the McLaren GT3 of Will Powell/Dave Scaramanga, comfortable Britcar Championship winners.

Wells led throughout the first half of the second race too, from Gordie Mutch and Martin. With Abbie Eaton taking over from Mutch, she held on to the lead for eight laps, before Fender got past and claimed a second win. Eaton was still comfortably second from Kapadia and Fabby, with Powell and Scaramanga again victorious in the Britcar element in fifth overall.

Michael Clark's RXC Spyder had eased clear in the first of the Radical Summer Cup races, with Elliot Goodman's SR3

Giantkilling win for Mazda MX-5 racer Smith

CADWELL PARK
CSCC
12-13 JUNE

A giantkilling victory in Future Classics for Sam Smith was among the highlights of an eventful Classic Sports Car Club meeting at a very warm Cadwell Park.

Smith's Mazda MX-5 was underpowered compared to the opposition, but a combination of cavalier driving and problems for his rivals paid dividends for the 28-year-old. The TVR Tuscan of Aston and Tony Blake was withdrawn with transmission woes after qualifying second fastest. Then Martin and Oliver Pratt's Morgan +8 was wheeled off pole position after leaking fuel on the grid.

Wolfe almost caught a pheasant in Classic K

This left Martyn Ellis's Talbot Sunbeam Lotus, third fastest in qualifying, on 'pole', and he soon started to build a lead. Smith, though, was quickly past Ryan Mone (Porsche 944) into second and, by the mandatory two-minute pitstops, had doggedly kept within eight seconds of the Ellis Sunbeam, which had an additional 30-second success handicap to serve.

As it emerged with Ellis's son Matthew at the wheel, it was now 18s down on Smith and the chase was on. Both drivers put everything into it, but the Sunbeam's extra oomph told and, on the penultimate lap exiting Mansfield, Ellis reclaimed the lead from Smith to go on and win on the road.

Officials, though, later gave the Ellises a 30.9s penalty for too short a pitstop (by 0.9s) and this promoted the shocked Smith to first in the result – his maiden win on the CSCC scene.

In spite of just six cars, both Modsports races produced close outcomes. Ian Everett's MG Midget survived an airborne clash over the Mountain with Neil Duke's Ford Anglia to pass the Escort Mk2 of Martin Reynolds and win race one. Craig Percy skilfully used his Moggy V8's extra power to fend off Reynolds and Tim Cairns's Midget in the second encounter.

Jon Wolfe (Lotus Elan) survived a late scare – a pheasant flying over his bows at the Mountain – en route to Classic K victory ahead of the chasing David Morrison's MGB Roadster.

There was an emotional win for Ian Staines (MG Midget), who dedicated his Swinging Sixties Group 1 victory to his late father Eric. "That's for 20 years ago here at Cadwell – the only time he got to see me race," he said.

Staines was under pressure from Chris

WALKER

Fender leads, and was electric on his way to two victories
WALKER

escaping in a clear second too, before Clark slowed with two laps to go, handing Goodman the win. Behind them, Jason Rishover snatched third after Chris Short got sideways at Shell on lap six of 13, before Short was hit in the rear by Chris Preen at Lodge, promoting Peter Brookes to fourth.

It was a lights-to-flag victory for Clark in race two, but Goodman's and Short's duel for second went right to the wire. Goodman held on, while Rishover pitted following a first-corner spin.

David Kirkpatrick had a race-long battle with Ian Slark in the Super Mighty Minis. Kirkpatrick led from the opening lap, but Slark grabbed the place on lap seven. Kirkpatrick reclaimed the advantage on the final tour, and only 0.168 seconds split them at the flag, with Neven Kirkpatrick a solitary third.

Slark had the race-two lead from the second lap, when Neven Kirkpatrick dropped out of the race. David Burns and Greg Jenkins duelled for second, before Jenkins consolidated the place as Slark sealed victory. David Kirkpatrick just held on to third from Steven Rideout.

PETER SCHERER

Smith was a surprised winner after penalty for Talbot Sunbeam duo
JONES

Watkinson as they made their pitstops. But the brakes on Watkinson's Mini became stuck on, leaving Staines free to win from Tim Cairns's Turner. With his brakes repaired, Watkinson rejoined and set fastest lap. By comparison, Jamie Keevill's Lotus Elan was untouchable in the Group 2 event.

Prior to his fuel-leak dramas, Oliver Pratt had romped to victory in the earlier opening Morgan race. Roger Whiteside was an easy winner of the second contest.

Ben Simonds (Caterham) celebrated a Magnificent Sevens double, leading both races throughout and aided by late retirements for closest challengers David Watson and John Cutmore respectively.

Oliver Smith recovered from a slow start to take New Millennium honours after the similar BMW M3 of early leader Bryan Bransom retired following a grassy moment.

Russell Thomson led home fellow Renault Clio driver Tom Mensley in the Tin Tops, but both were at near-collapse at the end due to the heat. Thomson also survived a late tangle with a lapped car, which caused rear-end damage.

CARL McKELLAR

WEEKEND WINNERS

WALKER

OULTON PARK

CNC HEADS SPORTS & SALOONS
Paul Rose (Saker RAPX S1-400)

BRITCAR ENDURANCE & PRAGAS
Races 1 & 2 Jay Morton/Angus Fender (Praga R1T)

RADICAL SUMMER CUP
Race 1 Elliot Goodman (SR3 RSX)
Race 2 Michael Clark (RXC Spyder)

MIGHTY MINIS
Race 1 David Kirkpatrick (Super)
Race 2 Ian Slark (Super, above)

CADWELL PARK

FUTURE CLASSICS
Sam Smith (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)

SPECIAL SALOONS & MODSPORTS
Race 1 Ian Everett (MG Hexagon Midget)
Race 2 Craig Percy (Moggy V8)

CLASSIC K
Jon Wolfe (Lotus Elan)

SWINGING SIXTIES
Group 1 Ian Staines (MG Midget, below)
Group 2 Jamie Keevill (Lotus Elan ST)

MORGAN CHALLENGE
Race 1 Oliver Pratt (+4)
Race 2 Roger Whiteside (+8)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS
Races 1 & 2 Ben Simonds (Caterham CSR)

NEW MILLENNIUM & OPEN SERIES
Oliver Smith (BMW M3)

TIN TOPS
Russell Thomson (Renault Clio Cup)

MODERN CLASSICS
Dave Griffin (BMW M3 E36)

TURBO TIN TOPS
Phil Briggs (SEAT Leon)

JONES

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

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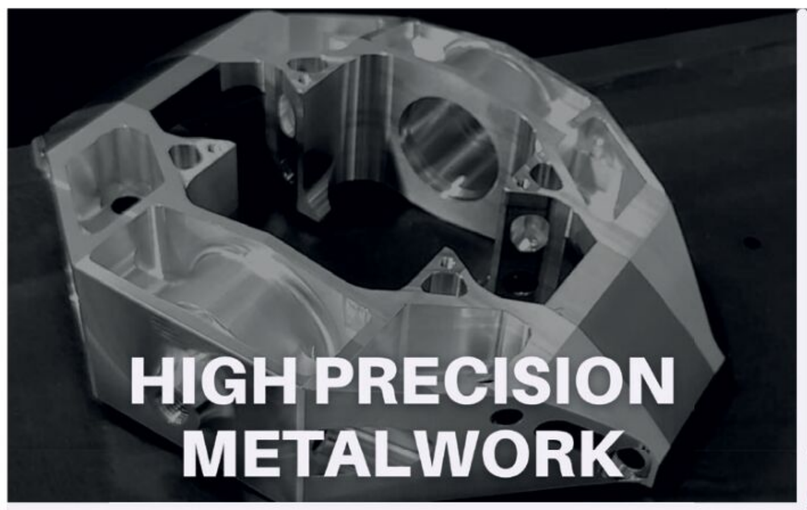

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Weekend of ups and downs for Morgan and Dear

Morgan missed out on Classic Stock Hatch hat-trick after getting a penalty for track-limits abuse

HAWKINS

BRANDS HATCH
750MC
12-13 JUNE

Both Ryan Morgan and Chris Dear experienced the joys and frustrations that motorsport can provide as they shared the Classic Stock Hatch wins between them.

Morgan claimed the first of three races in his Ford Fiesta XR2 after throttle gremlins forced poleman Dear into a pitlane start aboard his Peugeot 205 GTI. Andy Philpotts, making his return to the series after missing the most recent round, battled his way through to second in his Fiesta XR2i, ahead of the charging 205 GTI of Matt Stubington.

A fine outbraking move by Morgan at Paddock Hill on lap five of 15 appeared to be decisive in race two, but a five-second time penalty for exceeding track limits left him disgruntled and handed Dear victory. Martin Cayzer came home an unchallenged third in his XR2i.

Morgan fought back to win the third encounter following another race-long lead battle with Dear, but Cayzer's hopes of claiming another podium finish vanished when he clashed with Philpotts at Paddock and rolled. The incident was enough to bring the race to a premature end.

A race stoppage also disrupted the second of three Hot Hatch encounters, but it could not prevent Alistair Camp from claiming another win in his Honda Civic ahead of Phil Wright's similar car. Wright ended Camp's winning run in the third event, though, after powering ahead at Druids on the final tour. Junior Saloon Car Championship graduate Olivia Martin in her BMW Compact also inflicted the first class defeat of the season on reigning champion David Drinkwater in race one.

Lee Morgan was another driver to enjoy a brace of wins in the trio of F1000 contests. Dan Gore hounded 2013 champion Morgan throughout the first event, but a big slide at Clearways from Gore eased the pressure on Morgan in the final two laps.

Rob Welham, third in the opener, stormed through to win race two after usurping early leader Paul Butcher at Surtees. Reigning champion Dan Clowes completed the podium, despite the close attentions of Morgan and Elliott Mitchell.

The third race was another event to be interrupted by a red flag following an incident at Druids involving Nikita Abramov and Billy Styles. Morgan won the restarted race from Gore and Welham.

The opening pair of Toyota MR2 races did not escape being red-flagged, either. After Nick Emmony's beached Roadster was recovered from Paddock, multiple champion Shaun Traynor claimed the spoils ahead of Graham Malings.

Traynor spun at Clearways in race two as he pursued race leader Aaron Cooke, but it was a hefty shunt for Tom Malings at Paddock seconds later that brought a further halt to proceedings. Cooke continued where he left off when the action resumed, leading home a relieved Traynor and Cam Walton. Reigning champion Cooke dominated race three ahead of Walton, while Dan Silvester claimed third.

Two strong moves at Paddock helped Ben Powney claim both wins in the Ma7da double-header. Silverstone double victor Danny Andrew claimed second in race one after Jonathan Lisseter was forced to pit with front wheel arch troubles.

Niall Bradley and Brad Sheehan shared the spoils in the two BMW Car Club Championship races after some fierce battling in their E46 M3s.

MARK LIBBETER

WEEKEND WINNERS

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH
Races 1 & 3 Ryan Morgan (Ford Fiesta XR2)
Race 2 Chris Dear (Peugeot 205 GTI)

HOT HATCH
Races 1 & 2 Alistair Camp (Honda Civic)
Race 3 Phil Wright (Honda Civic Type R)

F1000
Races 1 & 3 Lee Morgan
Race 2 Robert Welham

TOYOTA MR2
Race 1 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)
Races 2 & 3 Aaron Cooke (Roadster)

MA7DA
Races 1 & 2 Ben Powney

BMW CAR CLUB RACING
Race 1 Niall Bradley (E46 M3)
Race 2 Brad Sheehan (E46 M3)

ROADSPORTS
Chris Mills (BMW E36 M3)

BIKESPORTS
Race 1 Joe Stables (Radical PR6, below)
Race 2 Scott Mittell (Mittell MC-41RR)

CLUB ENDURO
Carl Swift/Robert Baker (SEAT Leon Eurocup)

HAWKINS

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

Fiesta Zetec battles headline Mondello's opening meeting

MONDELLO PARK
MPSC
12-13 JUNE

Experience helped Michael Barrable fight his way to the front of the Fiesta Zetec field as circuit racing got back under way in Ireland.

In a highly entertaining contest, Barrable held on for the race one win despite close attention from most of the grid. In race two, Ulick Burke led a six-car train for the duration, with James Fleming and Barrable shadowing him across the line. When Burke's car was found to be underweight, Fleming inherited the win.

Michael Cullen led the Stryker grid away from pole and, when Dave Reynolds retired at mid-distance, he was unchallenged en route to another win. A delighted Adrian Deasy was second, with Vinny O'Rourke recovering to third after a disastrous start. Cullen dominated in race two for the double, despite early pressure from O'Rourke.

Foley won both HRCA encounters at Mondello
CHESTER

The Formula Vee opener was a cracker, with Mark Reade's works Leastone getting the jump on poleman Dan Polley and leading the early stages via two safety car interruptions. It was reigning champion Anthony Cross, driving a Sheane, who finally breached Reade's defences, with Jack Byrne and Gavin Buckley following him through. In race two, Polley's Sheane got away from a hectic battle for second to take a strong win, with Cross edging Reade and Jordan Kelly for the runner-up spot.

Bernard Foley blasted his V8 MG past polesitter Bill Griffin's Lotus 7 to grab the HRCA lead and was unchallenged thereafter en route to a strong win. Griffin slowed in the latter stages and was ousted by Val Thompson (TMC Costin) and Noel Collins (Escort), with Thompson taking second after a good battle. Foley repeated the win in race two, with early leader Griffin hanging on for second this time.

Shane Murphy took his customary double in the SEAT Supercup races, with Burke (Honda Integra) doing the same in the concurrent Irish Touring Car bouts, despite late race pressure from the Civic of Jay O'Reilly in both. Gary Corcoran and Paul Parr shared the Irish Supercar spoils, both having to work hard for their wins.

Poleman Richie Kearney eased away from Philip Sheane in the first Formula Sheane race but, when he slowed on the final tour with broken suspension, it was Paul McLoughlin who capitalised after Sheane retired a few laps beforehand. In race two, Sheane made the most of a hectic battle between Kearney and McLoughlin

Cobbold and Barnes share Heritage FF1600 wins

CASTLE COMBE
MSVR
12 JUNE

It may have only been a one-day meeting at Castle Combe, but 11 races provided plenty of action, with the best of the day's battles coming courtesy of Heritage Formula Ford.

David Cobbold (Van Diemen RF89) came out on top of a thrilling opener, having traded places with 2006 Combe FF1600 champion Matt Rivett (Van Diemen RF91) a number of times, the winning move coming at Quarry three laps from home. Paul Barnes conceded the final podium spot to Mark de Rozarieux on the last tour, but would more than make amends in race two.

Cobbold and Rivett continued their personal duel, with Cobbold leading for the majority, but he and Rivett came together on the final lap exiting Bobbies, eventually recovering to finish eighth and seventh respectively. Barnes in his Swift SC92 was left to come through as the winner, ahead of a six-car train that was headed by de Rozarieux and Stephen Bracegirdle. "The last time I took the chequered flag first was in 2007," said a delighted Barnes. "I forgot what it felt like!"

Rivett (left) and Cobbold came together in race two
CARPENTER

Sam Gay and Colin Tester won the 45-minute Trackday Championship contest in their Honda Integra, Tester holding off the hard-charging Chris Payne (Caterham Supersport) in the final stages.

A red flag in the opening minutes for barrier damage at Tower prompted a long delay, before a safety car on the cusp of the pit window in the restarted race created chaotic scenes in the pits as cars stacked four-deep in places. John Lyne looked to have put himself in prime position when the safety car pitted, with a lead of more than 10s, but the BMW E36 driver had made his mandatory stop five seconds too early and was given a two-lap penalty. He finished third on the road, having already been demoted by Tester and Payne after a second caution period was needed to recover a stranded car at Bobbies.

Championship leader Scott Parkin was forced to retire with a mechanical problem for his VW Golf, moving Rob

CHESTER

Barrable leads Fleming as both took Fiesta Zetec wins during the meeting

to ease clear for an impressive win.

Aidan Byrne's Toyota Celica held off the close attentions of Kevin Cahill (Fiat) to take Future Classics honours, with Donal Culloty's Honda Civic first of the smaller class home. In race two, Byrne assumed the lead when Brian Sexton's MX-5 retired and held off Paddy Howley and Cahill to the flag.

Paul O'Connell led the BOSS Ireland race away from pole but Mondello newcomer Gerard O'Connell was soon on his tail – driving Paul's old World Series Dallara! When the leader's GP2 car faltered, Gerard was through and away for an impressive win. With Paul O'Connell not making the grid for race two, it looked like an easy double for Gerard, but Sylvie Mullins (Dallara F305) made him work hard for the win in the closing stages.

Eddie Peterson was first across the line in the Fiesta ST series but was excluded for being underweight, handing the win to Graham McDonnell. Michael Cullen took race two, fending off the charging McDonnell in the closing stages.

LEO NULTY

CARPENTER

Tester just held Payne off in Trackday Championship

Ellick and Craig Fleming aboard their Golf up a spot and onto the podium.

Stefano Leaney dominated both F3 Cup races aboard his Dallara F317, and in the process set a new outright lap record at the Wiltshire venue of 58.596s (see news).

Simon Rudd won the first Focus Cup race from Rob Gaffney and Lewis Ryan after taking the lead on lap three at Quarry. Championship leader Parkin, who finished the opener in fifth, took a lights-to-flag victory in race two, defending throughout from Ryan and Rudd.

A broken driveshaft on the way to the grid for polesitter James Drew-Williams's Lola left Lee Fern to comfortably win the Monoposto F3 opener in his Dallara F301. He won race two, again from M1400 class winner Jason Timms, as Drew-Williams finished third from 14th on the grid.

Nigel Davers just held on to win the opening Monoposto 1000 contest aboard his Jedi Mk6, capitalising on the absence of championship leader Dan Gore. Being stuck in fifth gear prevented him from doubling up, so Myles Castaldini (Van Diemen RF94) took top spot from Bruno Costa and Davers.

Ben Stiles (Van Diemen RF82) and Will Cox (Van Diemen FVJ) respectively took both 1800 and 1600 class wins.

STEFAN MACKLEY

WEEKEND WINNERS

MONDELLO PARK

IRISH FIESTA ZETECS
Race 1 Michael Barrable
Race 2 James Fleming

IRISH STRYKERS
Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

IRISH FORMULA VEE
Race 1 Anthony Cross (Sheane)
Race 2 Dan Polley (Sheane)

HRCA CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1 & 2 Bernard Foley (MGB GT V8)

IRISH SUPERCARS/ITCC/SEAT SUPERCUP
Races 1 & 2 Shane Murphy (SEAT Leon)

FORMULA SHEANE
Race 1 Paul McLoughlin
Race 2 Philip Sheane

IRISH FUTURE CLASSICS
Races 1 & 2 Aidan Byrne (Toyota Celica)

FORMULA BOSS IRELAND
Races 1 & 2 Gerard O'Connell (Dallara World Series)

IRISH FIESTA STs
Race 1 Graham McDonnell
Race 2 Michael Cullen

For full results visit: timing.ie

CASTLE COMBE

HERITAGE FF1600
Race 1 David Cobbold (Van Diemen RF89)
Race 2 Paul Barnes (Swift SC92)

TRACKDAY CHAMPIONSHIP
Sam Gay/Colin Tester (Honda Integra)

F3 CUP
Races 1 & 2 Stefano Leaney (Dallara F317, below)

FOCUS CUP
Race 1 Simon Rudd
Race 2 Scott Parkin

MONOPOSTO – F3, 2000, CLASSIC & 1400
Races 1 & 2 Lee Fern (Dallara F301)

MONOPOSTO – M1000, 1800 & 1600
Race 1 Nigel Davers (Jedi Mk6)
Race 2 Myles Castaldini (Van Diemen RF94)

CARPENTER

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Caterham Academy White Group races were won by James (leading) and George

James and George top thrilling Caterham battles

KNOCKHILL
BRSCC
12-13 JUNE

As racing apprenticeships go, there's perhaps no sterner test than the twisty confines of Knockhill, which welcomed the second round of the Caterham Academy Championship last weekend.

None of the novices had raced at the Fife circuit before, but the quality in both the Green and White Group races over the weekend belied any indication that they were short on wheel-to-wheel experience.

The White Group races were sensational, with William James prevailing in a "pretty brutal" opening race battle with Harry George. George led the early stages after jumping polesitter Gareth Lucas, but soon had James for company for the bulk of the 20-minute encounter. The pair exchanged the lead frequently, with James narrowly beating George by just over a tenth.

Race two was fought in similar fashion, with James taking an early lead. This time, Lucas was in the mix and led either side of a brief safety car intervention after Benja Hedley spun into the gravel at Leslie's. James then hit the front following a superb double pass between Duffus and McIntyres, but George retaliated at the Hairpin before fending off his rival for the win, again by just over a tenth.

Despite a "terrible start", Geoff Newman claimed his second Green Group victory of the season following a ferocious race-long scrap with Freddie Chiddicks. Chiddicks took the points lead by winning a twice red-flagged second race as a heavy crash at the exit of Clark's took out Newman and fellow title contenders Chris Fraser

MG magic for Moore and Eales

MALLORY PARK
CMMC
13 JUNE

Jon Moore just held on from a majestic Mark Eales comeback drive in the MG Metro Cup at the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club's Mallory Park meeting.

Eales and Dan Willars had been duking it out for the lead when an off at the Esses for the pair gifted Les Tyler the advantage from Moore and Ben Williams, who was in his first-ever car race. Moore made the crucial pass on Tyler with an inside sweep at Gerard's on lap 13 of 21, before Tyler slowed with problems.

Meanwhile, double Oulton winner Eales, who rejoined seventh after his grassy excursion, was making imperious progress back through the field, snatching second from Williams at the Devil's Elbow two laps from home. He was denied by Moore at the flag by just 0.35 seconds as Willars recovered to fourth.

Moore wasn't able to make it two from two, and instead Eales grabbed the winner's champagne by the finish. Moore was mugged from pole into Gerard's first time around by Eales, who used the opportunity to escape out front. Moore was demoted two laps later by Willars, before Tony Howe's Metro Turbo then scythed past at the end of Stebbe Straight, and championship leader Tim Shooter followed him through to complete the top four. Moore arrested the decline and held on to fifth.

Multiple Intermarque Silhouette champion Malcolm Blackman took two last-gasp victories in the heavily shortened races, as both effectively became five-minute sprints. Fellow Vauxhall Tigra runner Steve Burrows, who won a week earlier at Brands Hatch, had been staunchly defending until Blackman stamped on the brakes marginally later at the end of Stebbe Straight on the final lap to secure first.

Second time around, Ray Harris found himself Blackman's prey. Harris made his

Moore held on to win opening Metro Cup race

race-leading move on Colin Smith but Blackman, having surged through from mid-grid, took a tighter line behind the Ginetta G40R at Shaw's Hairpin. That gave him the momentum all the way through Devil's Elbow to pass on the last lap.

Darrell Woods in his Staride Mk3 enjoyed an opening race win in one of the busiest 500 Owners Association grids assembled outside of Goodwood, but had to contend with the backmarkers that largely eradicated his lead of more than 5s. That allowed Chris Wilson (Cooper Mk10) and

Jones prevented Dailly from taking all three wins in BMW Compact Cup

MOIR

and Paul Woodman.

Two wins out of three helped Henry Heaton trim Stephen Nuttall's Seven UK Championship margin to just five points. Despite a 360-degree pirouette on the opening lap of race one, Nuttall eventually finished second to Heaton, after leaders Gordon Sawyer and William Smith collected each other at Leslie's when Smith attempted to pass around the outside.

Heaton won race two after successfully breaking the tow ahead of James Murphy, despite both being given a 10-second penalty for a jumped start. Sawyer recovered to third in race two, before winning the finale ahead of Heaton and Nuttall.

Scottish racer Blair McConachie withstood severe pressure to win both 270R bouts, beating Rob Keogh each time. McConachie qualified fourth for race one and had enough raw pace to escape the tow of a chasing pack too often caught up fighting each other.

In the 310Rs, Lewis Thompson secured back-to-back wins in the pair of 30-minute races, while Hugo Bush did likewise in the Roadsport Championship.

Another local driver to end the weekend happy was Steven Dailly, who increased his BMW Compact Cup points lead with two wins and a third place. Dailly was rarely challenged in the opening two races, beating Ben Huntley and Mikey Doble each time, and charged through from ninth to finish third in race three as Ian Jones took the win.

Chris Jones moved into the lead of the ST-XR Challenge following a pair of hard-fought victories. Jones finished second behind Michael Blackburn in the first outing, before staving off Sam Beckett in races two and three. Alex Causer was denied an XR clean sweep in race two when he was disqualified for an underweight car.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

Blackman (right) won both Intermarque Silhouette contests at Mallory Park

BOURNE

championship debutant Tom Waterfield (Cooper-Norton Mk9) to catch up and challenge, but Woods held on to the flag. He then went on to double up in race two.

Local driver Joss Ronchetti's Talbot Sunbeam Lotus was cantering out front with a 15s lead in the combined Super Saloons, Tin Tops and Welsh Sports and Saloon Car Championship opener, which ended early when racing newcomer Jacques Whitehead dropped it out of Devil's Elbow.

Ronchetti made it a clean sweep in race two, but the contest was headlined by an altogether different display as Rod Birley, who had won every Super Saloons race this season heading to Mallory, made a superb recovery from the back of the grid in 26th to fourth. A rear differential failure on his Ford Escort WRC part way through qualifying left Birley unable to take part in the first race at all after securing a front-row slot. But those gremlins were resolved by the second encounter, during which he made impressive progress through the field.

JASON NOBLE

WEEKEND WINNERS

KNOCKHILL

CATERHAM ACADEMY – WHITE GROUP
Race 1 William James
Race 2 Harry George

CATERHAM ACADEMY – GREEN GROUP
Race 1 Geoff Newman
Race 2 Freddie Chiddicks

CATERHAM SEVEN UK
Races 1 & 2 Henry Heaton
Race 3 Gordon Sawyer

CATERHAM SEVEN 270R
Races 1 & 2 Blair McConachie

CATERHAM SEVEN 310R
Races 1 & 2 Lewis Thompson

CATERHAM ROADSPORT
Races 1 & 2 Hugo Bush

BMW COMPACT CUP
Races 1 & 2 Steven Dailly
Race 3 Ian Jones

ST-XR CHALLENGE
Race 1 Michael Blackburn (ST 150)
Races 2 & 3 Chris Jones (ST, below)

MOIR

MALLORY PARK

METRO CUP
Race 1 Jon Moore
Race 2 Mark Eales

CMMC INTERMARQUE SILHOUETTES
Races 1 & 2 Malcolm Blackman (Vauxhall Tigra)

500 OWNERS ASSOCIATION
Races 1 & 2 Darrell Woods (Staride Mk3)

CMMC SUPER SALOONS/CMMC TIN TOPS/ WELSH SPORTS AND SALOON CARS
Races 1 & 2 Joss Ronchetti (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus)

MODIFIED FORD SERIES
Races 1 & 2 Dave Cockell (Escort Cosworth)

CMMC CLASSIC CHALLENGE
Eike Wellhausen (Lister Knobbly, below)

BOURNE

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Career mode takes players up through the dirt ranks before graduating to the SRX Series

SRX

START OF A NEW AMERICAN RACING ADVENTURE

VIDEO GAME
SRX: THE GAME
RRP £39.99

Prior to the launch of the Superstar Racing Experience Series last week, an officially licensed video game was released to coincide with the new category's inaugural season.

SRX is based in the US and is headed by long-time NASCAR team owner and championship-winning crew chief Ray Evernham, alongside three-time NASCAR Cup champion Tony Stewart.

SRX: The Game, created by Monster Games and available on PlayStation 4, Xbox One and PC, shares many aspects with Stewart's *All-American Racing* released last year, while also bringing a brand-new series and race car into the homes of gamers.

In an effort to hype up the new series, *SRX: The Game* puts the player into a career mode where they can progress through the dirt ranks, utilising a 305 Wingless Midget to start, before moving up to stadium trucks, a dirt late model and finally graduating into the SRX Series.

Drivers such as Stewart, four-time Indianapolis 500 winner Helio Castroneves and two-time Daytona 500 winner Bill Elliott are a part of the season, and therefore the game. Players can choose to pilot one of the Superstars' cars or create their own. While a fully customised paint scheme is out of the question, the ability to pinpoint colours, textures and logo/number size, rotation and placement, mean uniquely styled vehicles are achievable.

As far as race car optimisation goes, it's akin to EA Sports' *NASCAR Thunder 2004* in many ways. The car has a rating that's based on the different custom parts being used. They each have a performance and durability level, so cheaper parts that perform well will tend to cost more to maintain. There are multiple part levels based on the shop status, and damaged parts will slow down the race car. This delivers an added level of immersion.

While this is an officially licensed game, surprisingly a lot of the content is fictional. In fact, most of the included tracks don't actually exist, but they are fun to drive. However the real content, mainly the six tracks on the SRX schedule, could have been executed better. In testing at Lucas Oil, it felt like the track was oversized. Nashville Fairgrounds looked acceptable visually, but the SRX car seemed to have way too much grip even with all driving aids removed.

The 305 Wingless Midget felt manageable and fun to drive. The stadium trucks felt like tanks ready for war. And the dirt late model was very twitchy. Overall, this writer doesn't think any real-life drivers will be plugging in to get any real feeling. Realistic this is not, but it can still be enjoyable.

If anything, an SRX DLC pack would have sufficed as an add-on

Stewart has fingers in real-life SRX and virtual-racing pies

to the existing *Tony Stewart's All-American Racing*, but it's understandable that SRX and Monster Games will likely profit more and promote the series more effectively with a new release. People who own both games might be cursing, however.

American broadcaster Allen Bestwick's voiceovers plus accurate sounds from the cars are both fantastic. Having a full replay to rewind is refreshing, unlike other efforts by Monster Games where you are forced to watch highlights that the game thought worthwhile, such as the initial start in five different camera angles. The replay now allows for some decent in-game photography, too.

SRX: The Game is a great introduction for gamers and fans to learn about the real-life Superstar Racing Experience. For those who are unlikely to care about SRX, though, you can get a very similar experience from any previous *NASCAR Heat* or Tony Stewart game.

JUSTIN MELILLO

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

French Grand Prix
Formula 1 World Championship
Round 7/23
Circuit Paul Ricard, France
20 June
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355
TV **Highlights** Sky Sports F1, Sun 2000, Channel 4, Sun 1830

Formula E
Rounds 8-9/15
Puebla, Mexico
19-20 June
TV **Live** Eurosport 2, Sat 2130, Sun 2130
Available via BBC Red Button, iPlayer and BBC Sport website

IndyCar Series
Round 7/15
Road America, USA
20 June
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1730

Super Formula
Round 4/7
Sugo, Japan
20 June
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sun 0600

FIA Formula 3
Round 2/7
Paul Ricard, France
19-20 June
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 0900, Sat 1545, Sun 1030

DTM
Round 1/7
Monza, Italy
19-20 June
TV **Live** BT Sport ESPN, Sat 1215, BT Sport 3, Sun 1215

International GT Open
Round 2/7
Spa, Belgium
19-20 June

Euroformula Open
Round 3/8
Spa, Belgium
19-20 June

GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup
Round 2/5
Zandvoort, Netherlands
19-20 June
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0800, Sun 0800

TCR Europe
Round 3/7
Zandvoort, Netherlands
19-20 June
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1610, Sun 1155

Formula Regional European by Alpine
Round 5/10
Zandvoort, Netherlands
19-20 June

Australian Supercars
Round 5/11
Darwin, Australia
19-20 June
TV **Live** BT Sport ESPN, Sat 0630, BT Sport 3, Sun 0300, BT Sport 1, 0630

NASCAR Cup Series
Round 17/36
Nashville, USA
20 June
TV **Live** Premier Sports 1, Sun 2000

NASCAR Xfinity Series
Round 15/33
Nashville, USA
19 June
TV **Live** Premier Sports 1, Sat 2000

NASCAR Truck Series
Round 12/22
Nashville, USA
19 June
TV **Live** Premier Sports 1, Sat 0030

MotoGP
Round 8/19
Sachsenring, Germany
20 June
TV **Live** BT Sport 2, Sun 1230

French Grand Prix returns after COVID-enforced hiatus

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park BRSCC
19 June
CityCar Cup, Ford Fiesta, Fiesta Junior, Northern FF1600/Super Classic, Track Attack

Cadwell Park VSCC
19 June
Frazer Nash/GN, Pre-1935 Grand Prix Cars, Pre-War MGs, Pre-War Sports Cars, Vintage & Pre-1961 Racing Cars, VSCC Specials

Silverstone BRSCC
19-20 June
ClubSport Trophy, Fun Cup, Mazda MX-5 (Championship, Clubman, Mk4 Trophy, Supercup), National FF1600, Zeo Proto Cup

Knockhill KMSC
19-20 June
Junior Saloon Car, Modsports, Pickups, Scottish Legends, Super Lap Scotland

Brands Hatch CTA
20 June
Civic Cup, Time Attack, Touring Car Trophy/TCR UK, VW Racing Cup

British Hillclimb*
Doune, Scotland
19-20 June

***Behind closed doors**

SUTTON

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

Hughes's lost F1 test chance

WARREN HUGHES

Not too many drivers go from one-make national racing to getting a call-up to test for Williams, but that was the situation facing Warren Hughes in 2000. The British Formula 3 stalwart had previously driven a Formula 1 car for the moribund Lotus team in 1994, but this was a different story. Unfortunately, his big chance was thwarted by the most mundane of obstacles – logistics.

Having resorted to the MGF Cup – which he won – in 1999 to keep his name out there after an abortive move to the International F3000 series, Hughes rebounded strongly the following year in Italian F3000 with Christian Horner's Arden team. He was dominant at Imola, then a charging victory in the next race at Monza prompted an invitation from Jonathan Williams, son of Sir Frank, to do some straightline testing at Keevil airfield.

"I did some really interesting electronic diff work for them there," recalls Hughes, who would go on to lead MG's assault on the Le Mans 24 Hours and the British Touring Car Championship in subsequent seasons. "It was all top-secret stuff at the time and the test went well."

Next on Hughes' F3000 schedule was Enna, but Williams wanted him for an official test at Valencia – "all the F1 teams were there, it wasn't just a private test" – the following day, which could require his attendance on Sunday evening. Cue an awkward conversation with Horner...

"Bearing in mind this was 2000, getting in and out of Sicily was difficult, there wasn't a huge amount of flights," says Hughes, who would finish that F3000 campaign as runner-up. "I put it to Christian and he said, 'No chance, you're not going to miss the race'.

"At the time I didn't have the connections or the money to get a private flight out of Sicily, so I had no way of getting there on the Sunday evening."

Although Williams offered to arrange another test, his moment had gone and another date never materialised.

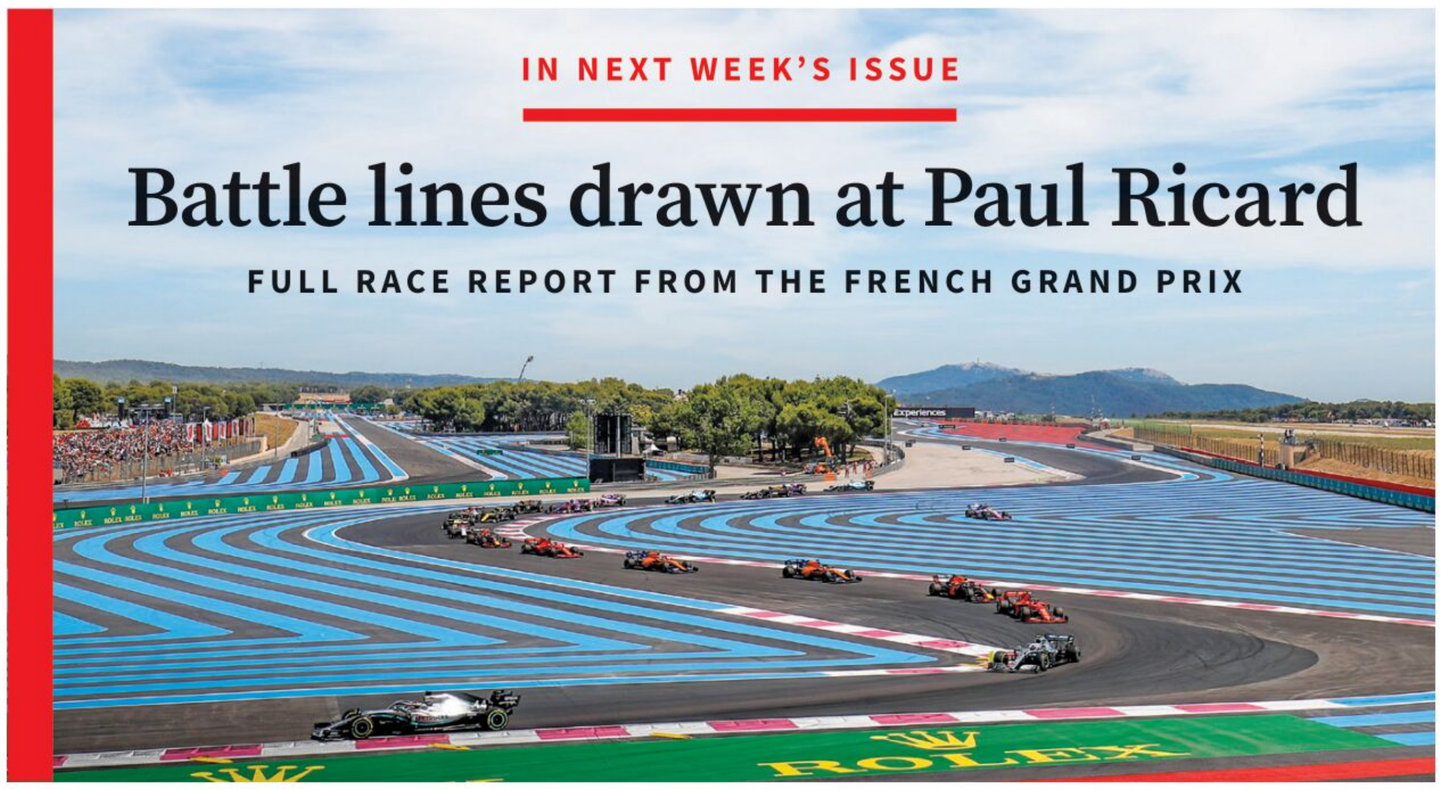
"After it was clear nothing was going to come, I gave up the F1 ambitions," he says. "It was always going to be a long shot, but to get a call from Williams, I thought, 'Maybe it's not over!' A test driver role was very much a thing to have at the time. They were doing quite a lot of mileage and that would've been a really good gig."

JAMES NEWBOLD

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Battle lines drawn at Paul Ricard

FULL RACE REPORT FROM THE FRENCH GRAND PRIX



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Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG
Tel +44 (0) 20 3405 8100 **Email** autosport@autosport.com
Individual email firstname.surname@motorsport.com
Website www.autosport.com **Twitter** @autosport

SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK +44 (0) 344 848 8817 **Overseas** +44 (0) 1604 251451
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Head of Print Advertising **Ben Fullick**
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RECRUITMENT
Tel +44 (0) 20 3405 8105
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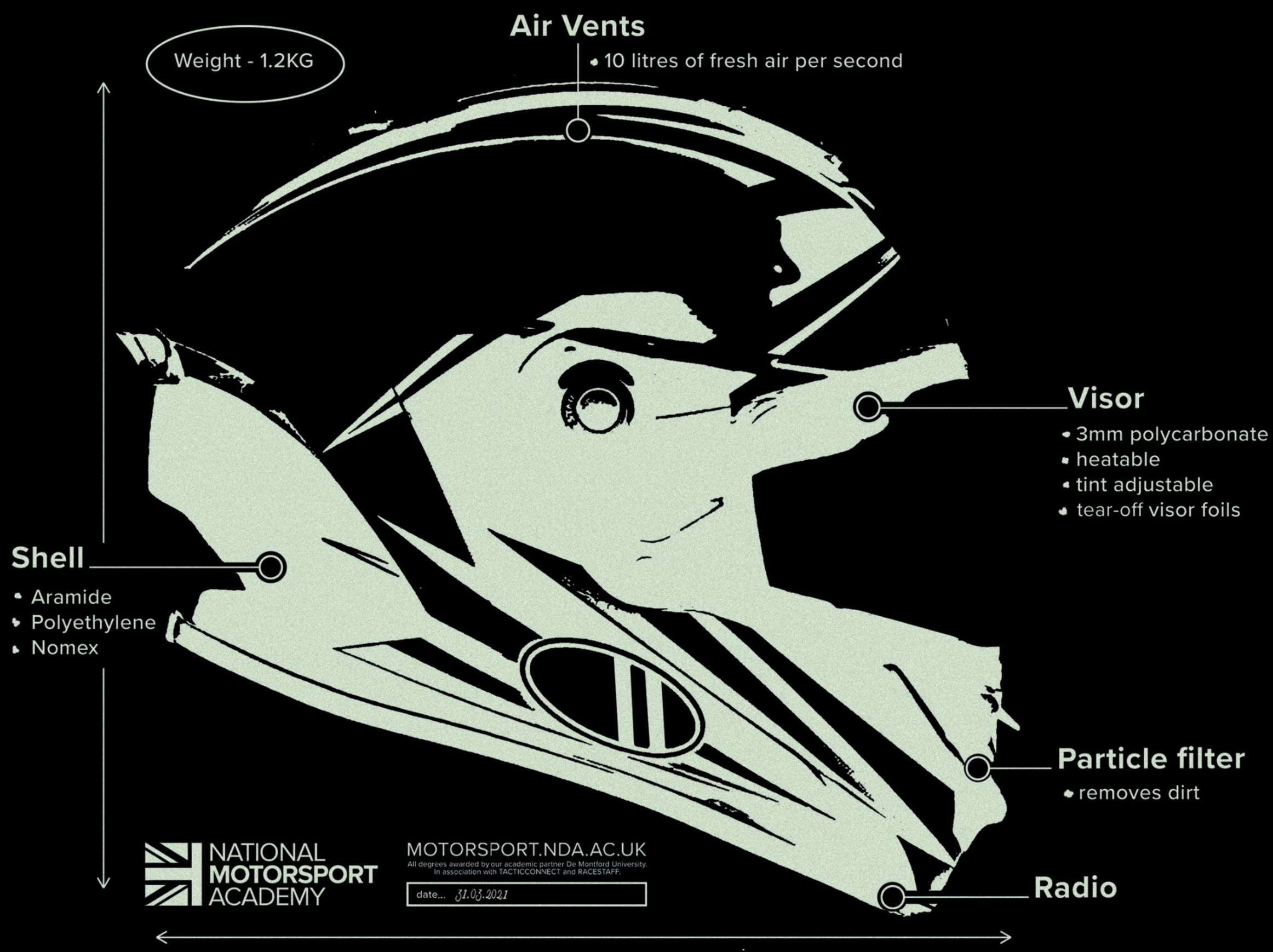

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