

F1 Russell joins Hamilton in Merc superteam

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Verstappen moves back ahead as Mercedes makes its 2022 call

It wasn't a classic race, but there was a feel-good factor around the return of the Dutch Grand Prix. The atmosphere was palpable even when watching on TV, the circuit had some welcome and unusual characteristics, and the home fans got what they wanted.

The race wouldn't have existed without Max Verstappen, so it was somehow fitting that he took victory – and with it moved back into the lead of the world championship. As Matt Kew shows in our report on page 16, Mercedes tried everything it could to overcome the slightly faster Red Bull, but Verstappen always looked in control.

Lewis Hamilton's refusal to give up and to keep pushing kept the Dutchman honest and showed that we still very much have a title fight on our hands. A 100th Hamilton win this weekend at Monza, scene of one of his finest victories in 2018, would keep things on the boil nicely.

And the excitement over next season has also increased with the long-awaited confirmation that George Russell *will* be Hamilton's team-mate in 2022 (p4). How he gets on – and how Hamilton, now 36, responds to yet another challenge from a young charger – will provide a fascinating subplot as F1 starts a new rules era (p14).

Going back a decade and a half, the Maserati MC12 changed the game in sportscar racing and James Newbold explains how it all happened on p38, while the story of Mercedes' recent success in Formula E is the main thrust of our season review on p46.



Kevin Turner

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Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK
16 SEPTEMBER**

Bumper report issue
Italian GP, WRC and
IndyCar reports, plus
Goodwood preview



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George Russell
will likely be asked
to do a lot of this at
Monza this
weekend...



RUSSELL JOINS HAMILTON IN ALL-BRIT MERCEDES LINE-UP

FORMULA 1

Mercedes has finally ended months of speculation by announcing its all-British superteam for 2022, with George Russell partnering seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton.

Russell was informed shortly before the end of the summer break that he would be racing for Mercedes next year and replace Valtteri Bottas, who will join Alfa Romeo.

Russell, 23, has been part of Mercedes' young driver programme since late 2016, and has raced for Williams in F1 since 2019 following title wins in GP3 and Formula 2. While he has recorded just three points finishes in F1, his performances for Williams have won him widespread acclaim, making his case too strong for Mercedes to ignore as his contract with Williams entered its final months.

Russell said he was "absolutely buzzing" to join Mercedes, recognising it as a "huge opportunity" as he enters a long-term contract with the team.

"I'm under no illusions as to the scale of the challenge; it's going to

be a steep learning curve," said Russell. "My target must be to reward the trust that Toto [Wolff, team principal], the team and the board have placed in me by ensuring I play my part in continuing [their] success and I want to do my new team-mates proud."

Russell got a taste for life with the German manufacturer when he deputised for a COVID-struck Hamilton at the Sakhir Grand Prix last year. He qualified second before dominating the race, only for a strategy miscue and a late puncture to deny him a likely victory.

A maiden points finish for Williams – which he has helped lift from the nadir of 2019, when he spent his rookie year adrift from the pack alongside Robert Kubica – did not arrive until last month's Hungarian GP, when Russell finished eighth. He followed this up with a majestic wet-weather lap at Spa to secure second on the grid, which paid off to hand him a first F1 podium following a two-lap 'race' behind the safety car.

Russell will now step into a car that will allow him to display his talents at the front, and

potentially take the fight to Hamilton across the garage.

"He has been a winner in every racing category, and the past three seasons with Williams have given us a taste of what the future could hold for him in F1," said Wolff. "Now, it is our challenge together to help him continue learning within our environment and alongside Lewis, the greatest F1 driver of all time. I am confident that as their relationship grows, they will form a strong team and deliver for Mercedes on and off the track in the years ahead."

Bottas's move to Alfa Romeo on a multi-year deal – something he never enjoyed at Mercedes – was announced on Monday, one day ahead of the Russell confirmation.

"The potential of the set-up in Hinwil is clear, and I am relishing the opportunity to help lead the team forward up the grid, especially with the new regulations in 2022 giving the team a chance to make a leap in performance," said Bottas.

"I'm grateful for the trust the team has put in me, and I cannot wait to repay their faith. I'm as hungry as ever to race for results and, when the time comes, for wins."



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The deal means Bottas links up again with Alfa Romeo team boss Frederic Vasseur, who ran the Finn in the Formula 3 Euro Series and GP3 with his ART Grand Prix squad, with Bottas claiming the 2011 GP3 title.

Wolff said that Bottas “would absolutely have deserved to stay” at Mercedes for next year, conceding: “This hasn’t been an easy process or a straightforward decision for us.”

Hamilton paid tribute to Bottas following news of his departure, calling him “the best team-mate I’ve had the pleasure of working with”.

“Your speed and resilience has been impressive but where you truly stand out to me is the human being you are,” said Hamilton. “You are greater than you know and I know there’s a bright future ahead for you.”

LUKE SMITH

➔ P14 OPINION

RAIKKONEN TO HANG UP HIS HELMET

FORMULA 1

Days before Valtteri Bottas’s announcement at Alfa Romeo for 2022, fellow Finn Kimi Raikkonen announced that he will retire from Formula 1 at the end of this year.

The 2007 world champion made his F1 debut 20 years ago with Sauber, and went full circle by returning to the team – now under the Alfa name – in 2019 after stints with McLaren, Ferrari (twice) and Lotus.

Raikkonen announced his exit via social media, revealing that he made the decision last winter that 2021 would be his final season. He informed the team owners at the time



that he was “95% sure” of the decision.

“I’m not really making any plans right now,” said Raikkonen. “I want to enjoy the time without the schedule. The schedule can be our family’s schedule, and I’m happy with that.”

Shortly after the announcement, Raikkonen

was forced to miss last weekend’s Dutch Grand Prix when a positive test for COVID-19 ruled him out from Saturday morning. That paved the way for Alfa reserve Robert Kubica to deputise. On his first F1 start since the end of 2019, Kubica finished 15th.

LUKE SMITH



Merc’s Albon Williams quibble

FORMULA 1

Mercedes would be happy to work with Alexander Albon at customer team Williams next year, as long as he is free from his Red Bull contract.

Albon lost his Red Bull race seat at the end of 2020, but could be set to make an F1 return next year, with both he and the team favouring a seat at Williams.

But Red Bull team principal Christian Horner fears that Mercedes may block any move for Albon, who is in competition with Mercedes’ Formula E champion Nyck de Vries for the seat.

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff said it would be “tricky” to have a Red Bull-linked driver using a Mercedes engine,

adding: “[We are] happy to work with him, as long as they let him free from his Red Bull contract.” Horner described Wolff’s stipulation as “slightly unusual”, but was “assured that Williams choose the drivers that they wish to drive their car” without restrictions.

Should Albon miss out at Williams, he could partner Valtteri Bottas at Alfa Romeo while retaining Red Bull backing, and has been lined up as a potential replacement for Antonio Giovinazzi.

Albon’s former team AlphaTauri, meanwhile, confirmed on Tuesday that it will retain 2020 Italian Grand Prix winner Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda as its driver line-up for 2022.

LUKE SMITH

Prema set to add LMP2 programme

WEC

Single-seater powerhouse Prema Powerteam is expanding into sportscar racing for the first time. The Italian operation will move into the LMP2 class of the World Endurance Championship next year as part of its tie-up with the Iron Lynx Ferrari GT squad.

The new superteam created earlier this year when DC Racing Solutions – the owner of Iron Lynx – took what is understood to be a majority shareholding in Prema will field at least one ORECA-Gibson 07 in the 2022 WEC.

“The idea from the beginning was to bring drivers from karting to F1, which is what Prema has been doing for a long time,” said Iron Lynx team principal Andrea Piccini. “But not

everyone can make it to the top of single-seaters, so we want to offer an extra solution in prototypes.

“The plan is to do the WEC because it is the most important championship and the best place to learn. It’s too early to say how many cars we will run and whether we will do the European Le Mans Series or maybe some extra races.”

Rene Rosin, who runs the Prema team established by his father Angelo in the mid-1980s, described the P2 programme as an “incredibly exciting development” that he hopes “will only be the start of a successful future in endurance racing”.

Piccini also admitted interest in the Hypercar division of the WEC, which from 2023 will be open to LMP2-based LMDh



Prema WEC programme could provide opportunities for its F2 stars if F1 proves elusive

machinery as well as the current Le Mans Hypercars. “We are at an important moment in sportscar racing, so now was the right time to jump into prototypes,” he said.

Asked if Iron Lynx and Prema have aspirations to run a Ferrari LMH should the Italian manufacturer make

customer cars available, Piccini said: “Ferrari is our strategic partner in GT racing, so for sure we have our eye on that situation.”

Piccini has stressed that both Prema and Iron Lynx will continue their existing programmes next year.

GARY WATKINS

Mouton doubts ‘discriminating’ W Series

W SERIES

Rally legend Michele Mouton has been criticised for describing W Series as a “limited and discriminating” championship.

Mouton, head of the FIA Women in Motorsport Commission, said in an interview with *Le Figaro* that there was a “limited level” in the all-female series “since the best performers don’t participate”.

“If the W Series can be seen as a detection/selection channel to attract more young women into motorsport and allow them to move up to the higher mixed categories to continue their progression, as our Girls on Track karting programme does, then I’m all for it!” said the 1982 World Rally Championship runner-up. “If not, this championship will remain, in my eyes, limited and discriminating with women only allowed to compete against each other.”

“The best drivers who are already in professional teams of course don’t want



to race in the W Series, which also explains the limited level of the Series since the best performers don’t participate.”

“Personally, I believe that as long as they will not be confronted with the competition of the boys of their generation, it will be difficult to emerge in Formula 1, where it is no longer a question of being one of the best women, but one of the best drivers in the world, and for that the road is still long.”

Mouton’s remarks precipitated a reaction from W Series circles. Current championship leader Alice Powell tweeted: “I feel [Mouton] may need to check her facts. Getting out driving will help create

opportunities! Some of these drivers, who are in professional drives, wanted to do W Series but couldn’t due to clashes.”

W Series commentator David Coulthard previously said he was surprised that some notable women in motorsport had not been very supportive of the series, while CEO Catherine Bond Muir said the series had built “fantastic platforms”. “Because I was involved in the evolution of it, I think a lot of the criticisms were based on one, that we would be patronising women, and I think we’ve demonstrated that we haven’t: it is about promoting women,” she said.

MEGAN WHITE

Rowland gains Mahindra berth

FORMULA E

George Russell to Mercedes hasn't been the only poorly kept secret in the British driver market: scarcely had that been owned up to when Oliver Rowland was revealed as Alexander Sims's team-mate at Mahindra Racing for the 2022 Formula E season.

Rowland made his series debut in 2015 at Punta del Este for the Dilbagh Gill-owned Anglo-Indian squad when he deputised for an injured Nick Heidfeld. He finished 13th, and held tentative talks about signing full-time for the team before opting for an FIA Formula 2 tilt.

Now the 2020 Berlin E-Prix victor has reunited with the team, which finished ninth last season, following his departure from Nissan e.dams (10th) after three seasons. He comes in for the final year of the Gen2 cars and will play a critical role in developing the forthcoming Gen3 machine for the 2022-23 campaign.

"Moving to a new team, there will of course be a transition, but I think that, with the combination of my experience in Formula E and the team's results last season, we have the potential to achieve some great things together," said Rowland. "I'm really happy to have Alexander as my team-mate and look forward to working with him on extracting the most from the car and



GALLOWAY
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IMAGES

getting some strong results for the team."

That move likely ends the FE career of London winner Alex Lynn, who is linked with a move to the DPi division of the IMSA SportsCar Championship. Strong qualifier Lynn comfortably beat Sims and Rowland this season, but loses out from having signed only a one-year deal at Mahindra.

Rowland's seat at Nissan e.dams has been filled by Maximilian Guenther, who joins 2015-16 champion Sebastien Buemi. Guenther was a free agent after BMW's

withdrawal from the series and has now split with the Andretti Autosport race team.

That leaves space at Andretti alongside Jake Dennis, with current Indy Lights runner-up Kyle Kirkwood in the frame, although Antonio Felix da Costa is an outside bet to return after new investment for the Techeetah team fell through. Da Costa and team-mate Jean-Eric Vergne have endured long spells of not being paid as team owner SECA tightened its wallet.

MATT KEW



McKLEIN

Lappi to get Toyota return in Finland

WRC

Esapekka Lappi will return to the World Rally Championship with Toyota on next month's Rally Finland in what appears to be a dress rehearsal for a 2022 seat.

The Finn, who won the event with Toyota in 2017, will pilot a fifth Yaris at his home event from 1-3 October and will run in a privateer colour scheme, albeit managed by the factory team.

Lappi drove for Toyota in 2017-18, and is hotly tipped to rejoin the Japanese marque next year for a partial campaign in its third car, as seven-time world champion Sebastien Ogier looks to scale back his WRC commitments in 2022.

"I hope this will help, but that's why I need to be smart," said the 30-year-old. "I want it to help me and not to destroy these negotiations, so that's why I don't want to push

myself too much."

Meanwhile, fellow Finn Teemu Suninen, who has been linked to the Toyota seat, will return to action at Rally Finland in a WRC2 Volkswagen Polo entry after leaving M-Sport Ford. Suninen's 2022 plans remain unclear at this stage.

Toyota, Hyundai and M-Sport are all yet to confirm their full driver line-ups for next season.

TOM HOWARD

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BLACK/IMS

Ilott set for IndyCar debut as he eyes US future

INDYCAR SERIES

Ferrari protege Callum Ilott will make his IndyCar Series debut this weekend at Portland as he eyes a move to the US scene.

Ilott, the 2020 Formula 2 runner-up, will drive for Juncos Hollinger Racing, and spent last Thursday learning the car on the Indianapolis road course (above) as the team prepares its IndyCar comeback. Team owner Ricardo Juncos, who last month announced a partnership with Brad Hollinger and continues to run his successful junior formula team, has not run an IndyCar since Kyle Kaiser famously bumped Fernando Alonso's McLaren entry out of the 2019

Indy 500. The team is entering the final three races of 2021 in preparation for a full-time one-car campaign next year.

Asked if he might be the Juncos Hollinger driver next year, Ilott said: "Anything's an option at this point. I'm here in IndyCar to experience it. Hopefully I'll have a great time and it will attract me more to do it... This is my decision to be here and to give this a go, but there is still potential in the F1 side as much as there is potential here."

"I'm enjoying it a lot here. It's attracting me more and more to do this in the future."

Meanwhile, Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing will run 2019 Indy Lights champion Oliver Askew in its 'extra' #45 car for the

last three rounds of the 2021 season.

The car has been run part-time this year, with Santino Ferrucci for five races and Christian Lundgaard for one.

Askew, who had his rookie IndyCar season with Arrow McLaren SP marred by late-diagnosed concussion incurred in an accident at Indy, has made two starts this season, subbing for his AMSP replacement Felix Rosenqvist in the second Detroit race, and for the injured Rinus VeeKay at Ed Carpenter Racing in Road America.

AJ Foyt Racing has also revealed that it will run Charlie Kimball in a third car at the season finale in Long Beach.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

Gerry Ashmore 1936-2021

OBITUARY

Gerry Ashmore, who has died aged 85, was a highly capable racer among the multitude of privateers in Formula 1 in the early 1960s.

The Briton's best achievement in F1 was arguably his pole position and second place to debutant Giancarlo Baghetti's Ferrari in the 1961 Naples Grand Prix at the wheel of his Lotus 18. Weeks earlier, Ashmore had qualified third on his F1 debut at Aspern in Austria. Of his four world championship race entries, his

best result was 16th in the 1961 German GP at the Nurburgring.

With the Climax four-cylinder engines becoming outclassed, Ashmore – who had started his career in a Jaguar D-type – returned to sportscar racing. He stayed faithful to the Lotus marque, wringing good results from the notorious Type 30 and Type 40.

He then developed a Modsports Elan Plus 2 with fellow Midlander Max Payne, in which Ashmore won races in 1971 before retiring from the cockpit following the birth of his first daughter.



Ashmore presses on in updated Lotus 18/21 at Monza in 1962

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Ratel was ready to drop GT3

WEC/GT WORLD CHALLENGE

Stephane Ratel was seriously considering switching the Spa 24 Hours to GT2 rules had the move to GT3 regulations for the Le Mans 24 Hours and World Endurance Championship incorporated a professional category. The Frenchman believes that the decision to have only a pro-am GT category when the WEC moves away from the current GTE rulebook in 2024 is essential for the health of GT3.

Ratel has repeatedly described his decision to create GT2 as an “insurance policy” in case of an escalation of the costs involved in the GT3 category that provides the bedrock of his series around the world. He believed that there was a real danger of that happening had a GT pro class aimed at factory teams been maintained in the WEC.

“If Le Mans had announced a pro category with GT3 for 2024, I would really have considered forgetting GT3 altogether and to do Spa with GT2,” he said. “The moment I do Spa with GT2 only, I can tell you people will buy GT2 cars. They are cost-effective and I would have a grid of 70 cars.”

That tactic would have been a likely

precursor for the adoption of the new class, which has its own stand-alone series this year with the GT2 European Series, for the championships he runs under the World Challenge banner around the globe.

Ratel believes that a pro class for GT3 at Le Mans could have been the final nail in the coffin for the category that was adopted by the DTM for this season and will form the basis of the GT Daytona Pro category in the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

“The combination of IMSA, the DTM and Le Mans would have been too much for GT3,” he explained. “GT3 is well balanced between the marketing return the manufacturers get from competing in the big races such as the Spa and the Nurburgring 24 Hours and sales of cars to customers. If you throw in a race like Le Mans with a big marketing attraction, you are going to destabilise it. You only need one manufacturer to screw it up.”

Ratel made a thinly-veiled reference to Chevrolet, which is considering producing a GT3 Corvette. “You have manufacturers unfortunately, especially at Le Mans, and I don’t want to name them, that don’t understand the concept of customer racing, at least for the time being,” he said.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

HUGHES, FITTIPALDI IN F2

FIA Formula 3 race winner Jake Hughes gets a second shot at FIA F2 action this weekend at Monza. Hughes will line up with HWA Racelab in place of Jack Aitken, who is recovering from his Spa 24 Hours injuries. He contested one F2 event with HWA last year. Also in F2, Enzo Fittipaldi is stepping up from F3 for the rest of the season with Charouz Racing System, where he replaces David Beckmann.

GHIOTTO REPLACES AITKEN

Aitken’s replacement in the Emil Frey Racing Lamborghini team for last weekend’s GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup round at the Nurburgring was fellow F2 veteran Luca Ghiotto. The Italian went on to finish fifth along with co-drivers Arthur Rougier and Konsta Lappalainen.

MORRIS BACK IN A LAMBO

Former British GT champion Seb Morris returned to the Lamborghini Super Trofeo last weekend at the Nurburgring. Morris joined Sebastian Balthasar at Leipert Motorsport and the duo finished sixth in race one, before being denied victory on the final lap of the sequel when fading tyres meant he could not keep Loris Spinelli at bay. The plan is to contest next month’s Super Trofeo World Finals at Misano.

VINALES STARTS AT APRILIA

MotoGP maverick Maverick Vinales will make an early start to his Aprilia liaison by contesting the rest of the 2021 season, beginning with this weekend’s Aragon GP, following his split with Yamaha. Meanwhile, Jake Dixon gets another outing with the Petronas SRT Yamaha team.

GREEN, TREGURTHA ON TOP

Britons Ben Green (BMW) and William Tregurtha (Mercedes) were the winners in the GT4-based DTM Trophy at the Red Bull Ring last weekend. Green leads Tregurtha by 10 points in the standings.

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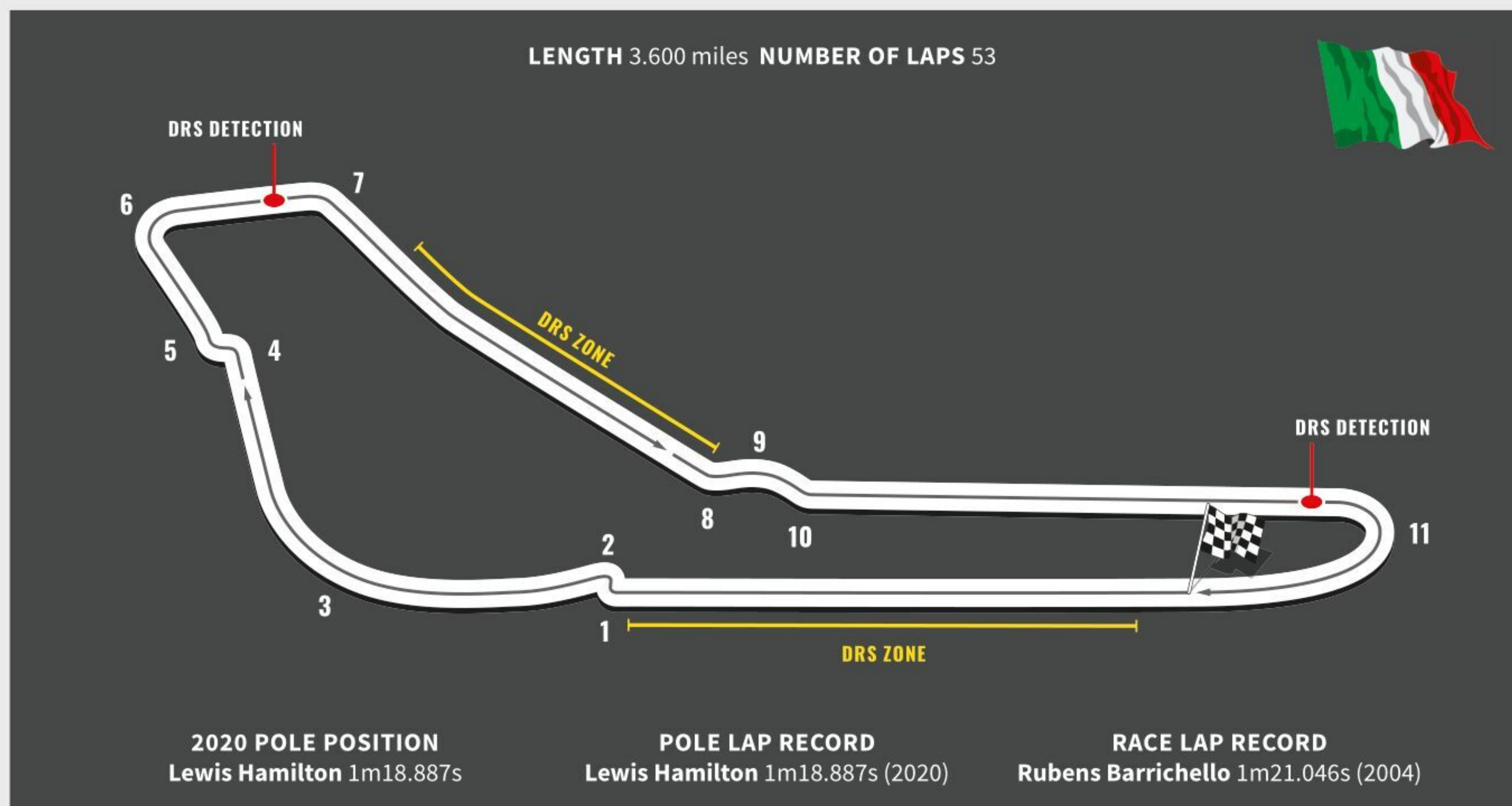
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F1 ITALIAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



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Saturday 11 September
FP2 1100
SPRINT QUALIFYING 1530

Sunday 12 September
RACE 1400

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CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	224.5
2	Hamilton	221.5
3	Bottas	123
4	Norris	114
5	Perez	108

Constructors

1	Mercedes	344.5
2	Red Bull	332.5
3	Ferrari	181.5
4	McLaren	170
5	Alpine	90



RACE STATS

Previous winners

2020	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri
2019	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari
2018	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2013	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2012	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2011	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull



Best results

Hamilton	1st x 5
Vettel	1st x 3
Alonso	1st x 2
Gasly	1st x 1
Leclerc	1st x 1
Raikkonen	2nd x 2
Bottas	2nd x 2
Perez	2nd x 1
Sainz	2nd x 1
Stroll	3rd x 1

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A triumphant return

Zandvoort's staging of the Dutch Grand Prix for the first time since 1985 staked a claim to be one of the classics of the Formula 1 calendar

MATT KEW

There were two Dutch Grands Prix on display at Zandvoort last weekend. One was a decent enough Formula 1 race won comfortably by Max Verstappen and in part decided by Mercedes' slightly tepid crack at an undercut. It wasn't a contest that will go down in history as one of the all-time greats. Although Verstappen's opening lap just might...

The second Dutch GP was one to be remembered as a sporting event – orange smoke billowing from countless flares to obscure the view on track, cheers to almost drown out the turbo hybrids, and an overwhelmingly positive buzz that was every bit the match for a packed Wembley during the 10 minutes leading up to kickoff for the Championship playoff final.

Possibly the loudest outbreak of noise from the 70,000-strong attendance arrived in FP2 when Lewis Hamilton pulled over with an oil-pressure irregularity aboard his W12. But that pleasingly didn't set the tone. Booing was almost non-existent come race day. Any hostility towards the seven-time champion, the home favourite's fiercest rival, was pretty much undetectable.

Even Hamilton, who had to briefly check his words, went some way to conceding that the support inside the circuit for F1 was a step beyond even his beloved Silverstone. "It looks great," he said in deference to the flares. "There was a period when you couldn't see much through [Turns] 11 and 12. The crowd has been insane

"Turn 3, Hugenholtz, is absolutely a match for any other single corner in F1"

all weekend. I don't think I've seen... I mean the British crowd is naturally my favourite but these guys, the energy here has been crazy. I think where this track is probably better than Silverstone is that at the Silverstone circuit, the grandstands are so far away. They need binoculars to see where we're going round. Here, they're right on the track like the olden days. We need that."

The appetite from the crowd was simply sensational. Verstappen and team-mate Sergio Perez didn't follow the race build-up convention of jumping on the back of a lorry for the driver parade. Instead, they rode round on a garish Red Bull-branded golf cart dressed up to resemble a Hummer. From the paddock, with no view of the circuit, you could accurately plot where they were on track as the roars passed from one bank of seating to the next. It was close to the clichéd 'festival atmosphere'. That, bear in mind,

came on a day when Verstappen wasn't particularly active in playing to his fans by whipping them up into more of a frenzy. He was a touch detached as he zeroed in on the race start.

A few grumbles over dodgy wifi and poor signage on approach to Zandvoort aside, the organisation was stellar. Traffic was minimal given the size of the event, with only 2% of visitors arriving by car. F1's statistics quote 34% turning up by bicycle and the overwhelming majority making use of the upgraded infrastructure at the local train station.

Thanks to the global health crisis, however, it wasn't all sweetness and light. Fan attendance was capped at two thirds – a directive that came less than a month before the race and at a cost of £8.5million in refunds and deferred tickets. Viewers might not have cottoned on, however, as the global TV feed made use of cute camera angles to ensure that the vacant grey seats blended into the sea of orange and gave the impression of a capacity crowd.

Jan Lammers, the 1988 Le Mans 24 Hours winner and Dutch GP sporting director, made it clear that the return of the race to the calendar for the first time since 1985 arrives without a penny of government funding. While that's commendable, the future of the event is dependent on maximum attendance being permitted for what is initially a three-year contract.

After only three days of use, though, it's already clear that losing the extraordinary multi-line banked rollercoaster that is Turn 3, Hugenholtz, from the schedule would be a crying shame. It's absolutely a match for any other single corner in F1. Although the confines behind are incredibly tight, it's almost worthy of a grandstand of its own so fans can appreciate the widely contrasting approaches taken by Fernando Alonso, Verstappen and Lando Norris.

Event director Robert van Overdijk was completely right to declare the weekend as a triumph. "The Netherlands, and Zandvoort in particular, have really been put on the map internationally," he said. "I stand here as proud as a peacock that we, together with our fans, partners, suppliers, have achieved something that many thought would be impossible. Thanks to Dutch entrepreneurship and organisational skills, everything comes together at this event and together we have made history."

In short, it was an astonishing start to Zandvoort's second life in the top flight. Not only was last weekend enough to entice repeat business from those who were there, but it should now become a destination race for overseas fans to want to attend having been jealous not to this time around. Long may Zandvoort continue for the suspected 15-year shelf life it possesses while box-office draw Verstappen is still competing at the pinnacle. 🏁

P16 DUTCH GP REPORT



Challenge to Hamilton's legacy

Next year we will see how George Russell measures up against Mercedes' talisman, on what represents the start of a new era for the team

LUKE SMITH

For only the third time since returning to Formula 1 with a works team in 2010, Mercedes will enter next season with a change in its driver line-up. George Russell is the first recruit Mercedes has actively sought to bring in since Lewis Hamilton replaced the retiring Michael Schumacher for 2013. The only other change came for 2017, when Nico Rosberg's shock retirement prompted the arrival of Valtteri Bottas.

It therefore makes the decision to sign Russell a significant one. Mercedes F1 boss Toto Wolff acknowledged, when Bottas's move to Alfa Romeo was confirmed, that the Finn "deserved" the seat for 2022, so instrumental had he been in the team's success. Russell's arrival marks a sea change for the team, and is set to have a big impact on Hamilton. His final chapter with Mercedes will be largely defined by how the partnership with Russell goes.

Hamilton has made no secret of his admiration and respect for Bottas during their time together. Following the fractious nature of his final years alongside Rosberg, to have an amicable and open working relationship was a relief to both Hamilton and Mercedes. There was a desire from Hamilton to keep the partnership going into 2022, having signed his own Mercedes extension a few months ago. Referring to the Mercedes line-up for next year in June, Hamilton said he didn't "necessarily see that it needs to change". As recently as two weeks ago, Hamilton was talking up

"This is a driver who wants to establish himself as a generational talent"

their working relationship as being "better than ever". And he had hardly been raving about Russell as a possible team-mate. But his tune was very different at Zandvoort last week, by which point the plans for Russell and Bottas were, of course, already in place.

Hamilton was highly complimentary of Russell, noting his humility and his ability: "[George is] the future, he's one of the members of the future of the sport. He's already shown incredible driving so far, and I'm sure he's going to continue to grow."

We know Russell has what it takes to race and win for Mercedes. His stunning race for the team last year at the Sakhir GP, where he twice almost won before a late puncture dropped him back, proved as much. As he grows and gets increasingly comfortable with life in a top team, will he become a threat to Hamilton?

That has rarely been a consideration during Bottas's period

at Mercedes. He has pushed Hamilton at times, especially in qualifying, but Hamilton has been head-and-shoulders clear across the course of a season in all of their five years together.

Russell's arrival provides a new dynamic. This is a driver who wants to establish himself as a generational talent, up there with Max Verstappen, Charles Leclerc and Lando Norris. He'll face a tough challenge going up against one of F1's all-time greats within the same team, but that also provides a huge opportunity. Only two drivers have ever beaten Hamilton across the course of a season: Jenson Button in 2011 and Rosberg in 2016. Adding your name to that list would be an impressive achievement.

Were Russell to do that, most anticipate tension. It could also lead to revisionism over Hamilton's achievements. Much as Leclerc's arrival at Ferrari led many to review how good Sebastian Vettel had been with the team, success for Russell may prompt Hamilton's accomplishments in recent times to be viewed through a slightly different lens. Russell is likely to be Hamilton's final F1 team-mate. Hamilton has a deal with Mercedes running to the end of 2023, after which it would be little surprise to see him call it quits. It means that the way this partnership plays out will be decisive to how we come to remember Hamilton's final years in F1.

But what is different to the Hamilton-Rosberg era is that both Mercedes and Hamilton have been through that experience before. They know how damaging it can be when team-mates fall out. They also now face a far greater external threat, given the new regulations coming next year and the anticipated might of Red Bull and Ferrari. Everyone is that much older and wiser.

The unity Mercedes has displayed in the past five seasons will take a lot to break. The team has stayed strong in the face of Ferrari's challenge in the early part of the current regulation cycle, and continues to do so against Red Bull. Russell's arrival can help invigorate Mercedes and mark the start of the next era at Brackley.

That is something Wolff has always been keen on: "A successful sports team is not something that you can freeze. It's something that needs to evolve, because it needs to adapt. And it is a mixture between seniority and young enthusiasm and curiosity."

That is exactly what Hamilton and Russell will provide next year. It will arguably be the strongest line-up on the grid, and gives Mercedes the best possible shot at winning next year's titles and furthering the dynasty it has forged since 2014.

For Hamilton, while he may face a new challenge, it's one he can embrace. He should relish the fight against Russell, knowing that he is the man who will succeed him as Mercedes' great hope in F1, regardless of the threat he could pose. This is a move all about writing the next chapter of Mercedes' F1 legacy, ensuring that the post-Hamilton era can be as successful as the heyday he has been at the heart of over the past eight years. *✍*

YOUR SAY

It's not so easy just to postpone an event for 24 hours – it might be OK for drivers, teams and a few permanent officials and staff, but you couldn't run a GP just like that

ANDREW BEINT

Volunteer staff have jobs to go to

I've just been out and picked up a copy of Autosport (2 September) and got as far as the letters page. One factor that no one has mentioned yet, either on the radio and TV coverage or in the print press, in regard to running a delayed race on a Monday, is that many of the workers at the circuit would be volunteers and probably needed to go back home to go to jobs on a Monday.

Certainly in the 1990s when I was involved in organising and officiating at race meetings in the UK, all our track, paddock and spectator marshals were unpaid volunteers, not to mention the car park attendants and first aiders.

Then you would have all the arrangements with the local police and other emergency services, plus having local hospitals on standby.

It's not so easy just to postpone an event for 24 hours – it might be OK for the drivers, the teams and a few of the FIA permanent officials and a handful of circuit staff, but you could not run a GP just like that.

I suspect that IndyCar and NASCAR races in the States must have provision for all their workers to be on standby for a rain delayed race, like the major events, the Indy 500, Daytona, etc. In the States too, they have long had a policy of not racing in the rain, particularly on ovals, so they would have procedures in place to accommodate this.

Andrew Beint

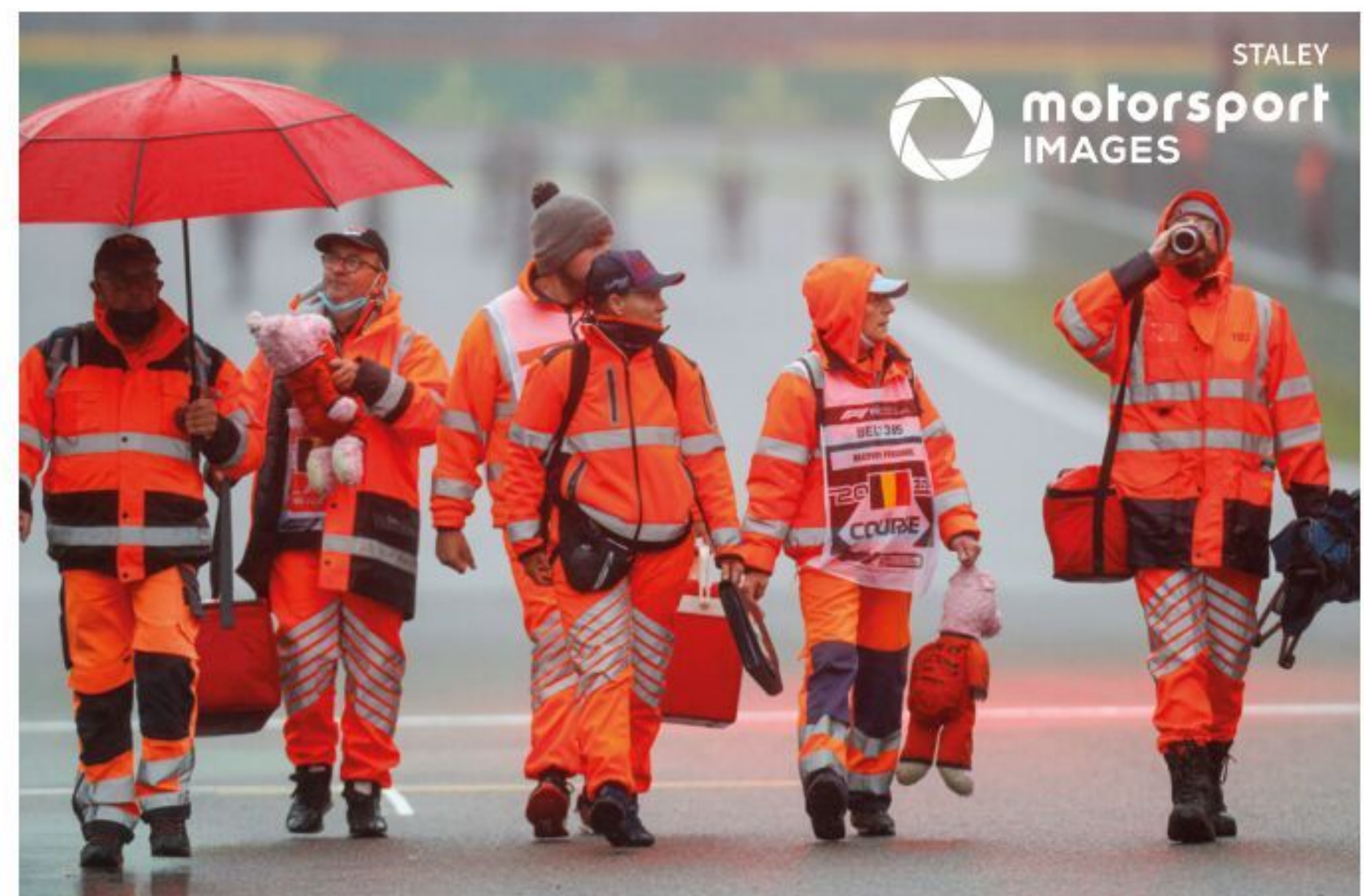
Chippenham, Wilts

Let's hear it for Spa's marshals

I am incensed that absolutely no one mentioned the fact that the band of volunteer marshals in Belgium were out in that awful weather waiting as well as the crowd of fans.

No team member, no commentator, no driver even acknowledged that the marshals were there in the cold and wet waiting for the debacle to find a conclusion. What a shabby lot they all are.

I have had the honour of assisting with the marshals at Spa several times and can attest to their dedication and fine standards. They do not get paid, and many have to make



their own overalls. So, come on, give them three cheers for sticking it out over the weekend!

Ann Blair (a British marshal)

By email

Of course it's all about the money

Ref Lewis Hamilton's comment following the Spa Formula 1 debacle that "it's all about the money", well of course it is. Where does he think the multi-million-dollar retainer he earns comes from, except from the whole financial structure that makes F1 possible, like all major world sports? Let's not be naive about this. But I agree that the spectators deserve some compensation.

Mike Blanchet

Diss, Norfolk

Best looking F1 car? No question

Just catching up on a couple of back issues having been away, and reading the Mick Schumacher test of the Jordan 191 (19 August). Is it the best looking F1 car ever, you ask? Yes, absolutely!

Rob Barnett

East Sussex

HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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Deliriously
happy home
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their hero a fitting
ovation



MAX GIVES THE HOME FANS WHAT THEY WANTED

*Mercedes tried to throw him off his game, but Verstappen
and Red Bull were too fast as F1 returned to Zandvoort*

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES



The RB16B's superiority in Verstappen's hands is obvious right from the start



M

ax Verstappen did not have the first Dutch Grand Prix held for 36 years won by the end of lap one. But his untouchable performance during those opening 2.65 miles at Zandvoort proved to Mercedes that only a roll of the strategic dice would offer a chance of vanquishing the imperious Red Bull star.

After briefly bogging down at the initial getaway, 10-time polesitter Verstappen short-shifted to third and hogged the middle line into the first turn, Tarzan. His front-row rival Lewis Hamilton opted for a wide angle and that gave the leader breathing space of 1.2 seconds into

the second sector. Come the end of lap one of 72, he was 1.734s to the good aboard what had been demonstrably the fastest car all weekend.

"[Max] was a rocket off the start," said Hamilton. "He was gone. There was literally nothing we could do to answer that. They've made a big step forward this year with their engine. We saw last year, they weren't the greatest with their starts. They have improved, their whole power unit is massively better on all aspects. Naturally, the driveability and the starts... they're the quickest starters this year."

From FP2 on, the W12 had shown itself to be no match for the RB16B on Verstappen's home soil. Hamilton was benched by an

oil-feed irregularity early on Friday afternoon, leaving the long runs of Valtteri Bottas to reveal the true competitive order. Despite running with less fuel, in comparable engine modes he was three tenths per lap adrift of Verstappen's race simulations. As confirmed by Mercedes trackside engineering director Andrew Shovlin, most of that loss was felt at the second and third turns (Gerlach and Hugenholtz), as the Finn took his time to find a preferred line through the banked bowl. Verstappen, who hadn't managed a simulator session in the rush from Spa, barrelled in immediately with the high line to great effect.

If in terms of sheer speed the Mercedes duo could not match Verstappen, then it would have to make do with a pitstop gamble to ensure the pressure was applied. Hamilton shipped another four tenths to the leader on lap two of the race before the gap grew to 3.3s by the ninth tour. When the seven-time champion complained that with "these tyres, we're going to struggle to keep this pace", it gave the first indication that Hamilton would soon split from Pirelli's prediction that a one-stop strategy was the sweet spot.

Calling time on the early procession, he dived into the pitbox at the end of lap 20 for a switch from softs to mediums, but was delayed by a slow front-right change. Red Bull covered off the threat, with Verstappen smoothly swapping over to the yellow-sidewall mediums a lap later to emerge in second place with a 1.9s margin over Hamilton.

That left Bottas out front, the Finn having been a touch fortunate



to initially hold onto third after a slow getaway. He had maintained position when Charles Leclerc couldn't squeeze his Ferrari through the gap created by a fast-starting Pierre Gasly in fourth before the AlphaTauri driver locked up at Tarzan. Taking his turn in the lead, Bottas was up to 2.2s per lap slower than Verstappen and a 10s cushion was quickly eviscerated.

In response, Bottas was given the instruction to defend "for the race win" after the previous dispiriting radio message that "at this pace, Valtteri, we're not going to interact with the leaders".

Verstappen continued to close the gap despite trailing in the dirty air and, when the Mercedes driver ran wide into the chicane on ageing tyres, the Red Bull could pounce with DRS down the main straight to retake the overall lead on lap 30. Having been unable to seriously make life difficult enough for Verstappen to possibly put the power in Mercedes' hands, Bottas immediately moved aside at Gerlach to gift Hamilton second place with a 1.5s deficit to Verstappen. »

"THEY'VE MADE A BIG STEP FORWARD WITH THEIR ENGINE. THEIR WHOLE POWER UNIT IS MASSIVELY BETTER"



Gasly harries Bottas for third place on the opening lap



But it would be the second round of stops where Mercedes conceded that it had got its strategy wrong. Hamilton was again the first in, settling down on a used set of mediums from lap 39, before Verstappen was put on the unfavoured hard compound next time around.

Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff said: “We had, I think, a sniff of an undercut there. [But] we didn’t expect [Red Bull] to go on the hard tyre because it was an unknown. We didn’t drive the hard tyre on the Friday, and we thought we might be pushing them early with the softs.”

Over the next 10 laps, fastest lap holder Hamilton couldn’t bring the gap consistently below 3s bar a few incidences of Verstappen passing lapped traffic, although Hamilton reckoned he would call Verstappen “Noah from now on. Every time he got traffic, they just moved out of the way.” Hamilton would later find a rhythm as the fuel load lightened to close to 1.8s. But stuck in the wake on a narrow track, he didn’t have enough of a swing to mount a serious charge for the victory.

“They just did a better job all round,” was Hamilton’s assessment. “They definitely were faster today. There wasn’t really a lot that I could do to answer the lap times that he was putting in from stint one. It was very, very hard to keep up. I was flat out just trying to stay as close as possible. I think today, we probably needed everything to be perfect to even have the slightest chance of getting past him. The pitstops needed to be on point, the strategy needed to be on point and traffic also, but none of those three were ideal.

“I definitely think that wasn’t our best strategy, but it was really hard out there. At the end of the day, they were just too quick. I just think we stopped too early in that second part and there could have been a part when we got through traffic. Then I came out behind traffic so I couldn’t actually implement, and I don’t know how they didn’t see that.”

With Verstappen running supreme out front and Mercedes looking ever more assured of a double podium ahead of Gasly and Leclerc, the battle for fastest lap became an unlikely source

of drama and an unnecessary headache for the Black Arrows.

Five laps from home, Bottas was called in for a “precautionary” fit of scrubbed softs on grounds of “safety” to resolve vibrations. This completed a three-stop attack. Then on healthier rubber, he lit up the timing screens with the fastest first and second sectors of the race, despite leaving the pitbox with the thinly veiled instruction that “we’re not going for fastest [lap]”, held at the time by Hamilton.

Strategy director James Vowles then had to jump on the radio to say “please abort the fastest lap attempt before the end of the lap”, which prompted a sizeable lift through the final banked

“THAT WAS A BIT CHEEKY, BUT UNDERSTANDABLE. VALTTERI IS ALWAYS ON THE RECEIVING END”

Arie Luyendijk Bocht. Bottas’s somewhat wry reply was, “I know, I’m just playing around” as he still set the quickest time.

In the context of the days counting down until George Russell was inevitably announced in the second seat alongside Hamilton for 2022, Wolff tried to downplay matters: “That was a bit cheeky, but understandable. Valtteri is always on the receiving end because this championship is so tight. It could have ended up in a loss of a point for Lewis, and it would have also been not right, because he had fastest lap until then. But you have to understand also at that point, there’s a certain degree of frustration of Valtteri, and at the end, everything is good. We’re going to talk about it, but in a most amicable and professional way.”

The stop for Bottas had created clear space for Hamilton to also make a last-minute visit to the pits, coming in on lap 70 for used softs. On the final tour, he snared the bonus point with a 1m11.097s

QUALIFYING

Max Verstappen didn't need the DRS aid across the line to snare a mightily popular 10th pole, the seventh of his most potent Formula 1 season to date. The rear-wing flap had yawned open on the run to the chicane but remained shut for the second zone on the main straight. What's more, that wasn't the only malady to blunt his final flier.

The Red Bull driver moved to the top of the charts on each of his three runs in Q3, crossing the line with an eventual yardstick of 1m08.885s that hoisted him 0.038 seconds clear of Lewis Hamilton. The free practice indication had been that a chasm might open between the title rivals.

Verstappen's focus in FP3 could solely be on qualifying, while Hamilton had to split his stints as he recovered lost ground from an oil-feed problem that benched him for much of Friday afternoon. Team boss Toto Wolff admitted that Hamilton had "outperformed" the capabilities of the Mercedes to close the gap, with the W12 having consistently conceded two tenths to the RB16B in the first sector.

But Verstappen was further stymied on his last Q3 effort by a bump on the exit of the banked Hugenholtz hairpin. The polesitter and Q2 pacesetter, who had thumbed the DRS button and was unaware of its fault, revealed: "I had a double shift. I was two tenths up on my lap and I lost like 0.15s all the way to Turn 7." The two issues were thought to add up to a 0.25s loss.

"I HAD A DOUBLE SHIFT. I WAS TWO TENTHS UP ON MY LAP AND I LOST LIKE 0.15s ALL THE WAY TO TURN 7"

Sergio Perez was unable to play rear-gunner, the Mexican eliminated in Q1

when he missed the timing line for a second lap after being delayed at the pit exit. But Pierre Gasly assumed the role. He guided his AlphaTauri brilliantly to fourth, matching his best performance of the year from Baku.

Sebastian Vettel was another Q1 casualty thanks to the two Haases tripping over one another and blocking the Aston Martin. But the German helped talk Nikita Mazepin and Mick Schumacher out of penalties.

George Russell's Q3 credentials were ended when he pushed too hard and dropped it at the penultimate turn, although a second red flag in Q2 triggered by team-mate Nicholas Latifi dipping a wheel on the grass and shunting heavily allowed the Brit to keep his Williams in 11th.



flier — 1.452s quicker than Bottas's abandoned effort and 2.178s faster than Verstappen's best.

While Hamilton was able to walk away with a three-point deficit to restored championship leader Verstappen rather than four, he reckoned he would have been happy to play a team game. "If Valtteri had got it, it would have been fine," said Hamilton. "At the end of the day, we needed to get the fastest lap, as many points as we can as a team. So if Valtteri gets it or I get it, it doesn't really make a huge difference. I didn't even know that Valtteri stopped. I was completely unaware of that. It was my choice to stop. I needed that extra point. So I did. It was fine."

The final twist in the tactical tale meant Verstappen could pick his way through the orange smoke of the countless flares on the final lap and romp to his first famous home F1 triumph by 20.932s. He's back at the top of the tree following the scores shipped by the tyre failure in Baku, the controversial crash with Hamilton at Silverstone, and the Bottas-induced first-corner shunt at the Hungaroring.

After donning an orange cape for the podium, Verstappen kept his celebrations somewhat muted for the circumstances. He briefly engaged with the remaining spectators from the capped two-thirds capacity crowd as he made his way onto the main straight for a team photo. But, the global health crisis withstanding, there was no Hamilton-esque crowd surfing or anything of the sort, which would have been entirely justified given his historic achievement.

"I know that I have to focus on the driving," Verstappen said. "That has been quite straightforward but of course naturally there are more distractions, especially when you are on the grid and drive out, there is more of a crowd. I think we are professional enough to just focus on our job once we are in the car."

"Of course, I'm very satisfied already with pole, but then also to win the race... What was crucial today was first of all the start, and then throughout the race, just managing that gap that they couldn't undercut us."

Hamilton acknowledged that Mercedes "needs to nail the >>





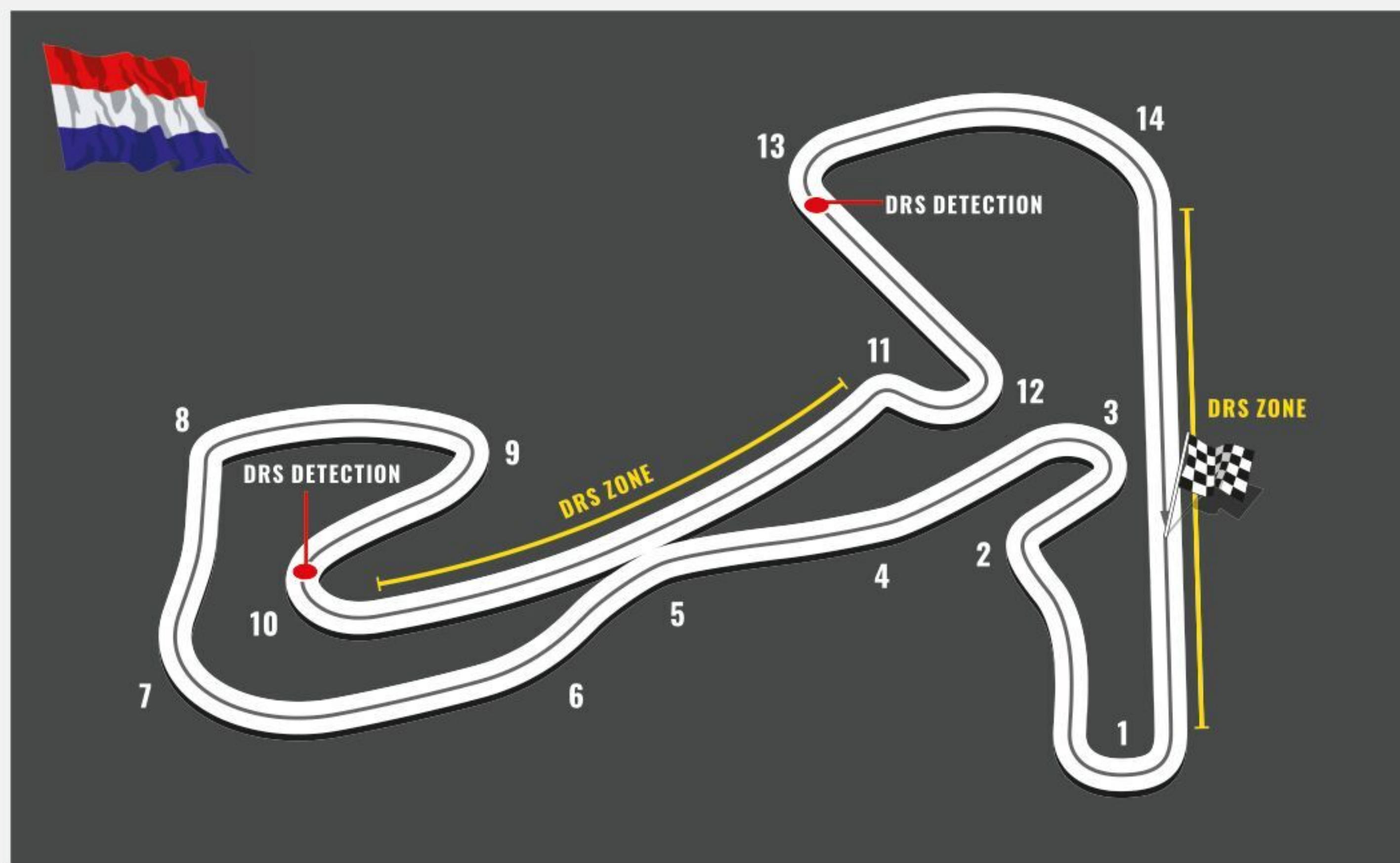
TRACKSIDE VIEW

Grandstands at Zandvoort may well be limited to two-thirds capacity, but the blue-and-white seating soon becomes a mass of cheering orange. Inside this circuit – which sits on the edge of a seaside town that’s a doppelganger for Eastbourne – Mexican waves run to a soundtrack of pounding bass blared out by the public address system. It does a fair job of ramping up the anticipation on Friday morning.

Autosport feels a touch short-changed by Sebastian Vettel’s stoppage in first practice, though, as it robs almost 37 minutes of the one-hour session. But even with the truncated running, there’s plenty of evidence that the banked Turn 3 has thrown a real curveball.

The left-hander, named in honour of former circuit director John Hugenholtz, has an angle of just 4.5 degrees at its foot. But it’s a full 19 degrees at its steepest point. By comparison, Avus had a 43-degree incline, Indianapolis just nine degrees.

The turn is like a bowl, and the same principles apply as they do to a motorbike rider tackling the ‘wall of death’. The higher the driver ventures, the more speed they carry, the more the car is pressed into the asphalt. But that increases the distance travelled, so there’s a considerable divergence in lines.



“THE SAME PRINCIPLES APPLY TO A MOTORBIKE RIDER TACKLING THE ‘WALL OF DEATH’”

This is not ‘one size fits all’.

As Esteban Ocon rides it high to leave room for Sergio Perez on the inside, it’s apparent that passing is possible – although not incredibly likely – through the corner, unlike the flat-out, banked final turn. The Alfa Romeos show a skittish

back end as rear axles go light over the crest before the sharp descent into the apex. Inside wheels are also left unloaded, so lock-ups are plentiful throughout the field.

It’s the line of Lando Norris that’s most curious. He barrels in, rides the corner very high, and the McLaren appears stable. But given the severity of the banking, sparks from the outer edge of his front wing fly as it drags across the asphalt. Norris sticks to this line lap after lap.

The lengthy red flag allows a brisk walk over to the sandbank that sits high above the protracted Turn 10 hairpin. The loose surface adds a degree of entertainment to the stroll as a twisted ankle becomes a realistic proposition.

Although only six minutes remain when the session finally resumes, here is the Formula 1 that’s been expected. One line, hit by all the drivers with scalpel-like precision, save for those unwieldy Alfas.

MATT KEW



Banked Hugenholtz corner inspires a divergence in ‘optimum’ lines



Red Bull's man has seven wins this year to Hamilton's four

details" for the next race at Monza. Although the dominant straights have prevented the Italian venue from being a friend to Red Bull in recent years, the team has been strong almost everywhere this season. Save for the unexpectedly rapid FP2 showing in Hungary before the first-corner melee, Mercedes hasn't found genuine race-winning

"THERE ARE A LOT OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF TRACKS COMING UP, SO IT WILL DEFINITELY SWING BOTH WAYS"



Verstappen fans' off-the-scale enthusiasm creates an incredible atmosphere

pace since May's Spanish GP. But that hasn't stopped Verstappen from pushing his squad as he aims to deliver on his best shot at the title to date and come out on top in this battle for the ages.

"I felt in the break that we really needed to speed things up because otherwise [Mercedes] are going to run away with it," he said. "I think we did pick it up a bit, but I feel we still need a little bit more. But it's heading in the right direction. There are a lot of different kinds of tracks coming up, so it will definitely swing both ways."

Two kinds of Dutch GP were predicted. One in which the short lap, the tight confines bordered by gravel traps and a lack of obvious overtaking zones that forced do-or-die lunges bred safety cars or additional red flags to the five already deployed during practice and qualifying. The second scenario forecasted, a result of those same three factors, was a follow-the-leader affair. It was the latter that came to pass but, thanks to the strategy high jinks that played out up front, it was no dull contest.

Verstappen fired his warning shot on the very first lap and, to a degree, almost single-handedly forced Mercedes' hand from there. On a day when the incredible fans created the spectacle, it was a tactical grudge match that bore the headlines. Verstappen overcame the threat, regained the lead of the standings, and walked away with the pride of a nation. 🏆

NEXT F1 REPORT

ITALIAN GRAND PRIX 16 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Monza may not be regarded traditionally as a Red Bull stronghold, but Verstappen's title challenge possesses real momentum...

'PURE LUCK' SAVES ALONSO FROM CRASH

Fernando Alonso's late charge to sixth for Alpine almost ended in tears, the Spaniard admitting that only "pure luck" prevented a wipe-out in the closing stages.

Alonso and team-mate Esteban Ocon made light contact on the opening lap as they jostled for position through the second and third turns before settling into seventh and eighth. Ocon soon asked to be allowed to pass his "extremely slow" stablemate, but Alonso responded that he had been tyre saving, and he then opened a six-second gap over the first stint.

While Ocon finished down in ninth after struggling with blue flags, slipping behind Red Bull's Sergio Perez late on, medium-tyre runner Alonso recovered a 10s gap to Carlos Sainz Jr's hard-shod Ferrari, which allowed him to launch an overtake at the banked Hugenholtz turn. But it almost ended in tears.

"I locked the fronts, and I ran wider than normal," said Alonso. "I was outside of the circuit, but obviously there is about two metres from the banking to the wall, and I was about 10cm or something from the wall with both front tyres locked up. It was just pure luck, as I was not in control of the car. I got lucky there."

Alonso eventually completed the pass on Sainz on the final lap, sweeping past into the first turn, Tarzan.



McLaren team orders rescue point for Norris

McLaren dropped to fourth behind Ferrari in the constructors' standings, with Lando Norris scoring its only point at Zandvoort thanks to a team-orders switch with Daniel Ricciardo.

Norris struggled through much of the weekend, slumping to 13th in qualifying in what was his first Q2 exit of the season. While Ricciardo made it through to Q3, he could only qualify 10th.

Ricciardo's start was compromised by an issue with his clutch, forcing him to use his less-favoured left hand for the start procedure. Despite a close run-in with Antonio Giovinazzi, the Australian rose to ninth, but struggled to keep up with the Alpines once they increased their pace.

After Ricciardo pitted to switch from soft to hard tyres, team-mate Norris came into the picture for McLaren as he gained time in clean air ahead after starting on mediums. Ricciardo's pace dropped to back up George Russell and Lance Stroll,

allowing Norris to jump both drivers before then being waved past Ricciardo thanks to his tyre advantage.

"It was obviously a straightforward decision because of the tyre delta we could create for Lando compared to the cars around him," explained team principal Andreas Seidl. "We wanted to wave him through as quickly as possible and see if it's actually possible to attack cars in front and maximise the team result. Unfortunately, after 10 laps for Lando, the pace was not there anymore. We couldn't achieve more than a single point today."

Norris had a late dice with Sergio Perez, who was left annoyed by the McLaren driver's "unnecessary" aggression in the fight for ninth at Tarzan (above). Norris said: "I'm not going to make his life easy, because I want those points just as much as he does. I squeezed him a little bit but I didn't force him all the way off the track or anything like that."

"WE ALL NEEDED A SETTling RACE" MICHAEL MASI

That was the verdict from "relieved" FIA race director Michael Masi. He reckoned 72 uninterrupted laps, against expectation, provided a welcome tonic to the controversies of Silverstone, the Hungaroring and Spa.



Q&A

**PIERRE GASLY
ALPHATAURI
DRIVER****What's your reaction to another stellar performance?**

I'm really happy for the team and myself.

P4 behind the two Mercedes and Max is pretty much the best we can hope for. It's a small win for AlphaTauri finishing in front of both Ferraris, both McLarens. It's been a fantastic weekend: strong qualifying, a very good start, very good pace through the race. I've enjoyed it a lot because when the car is flying like that, it's very special.

**Recall the slick pass around the outside of Alonso after your first pitstop...**

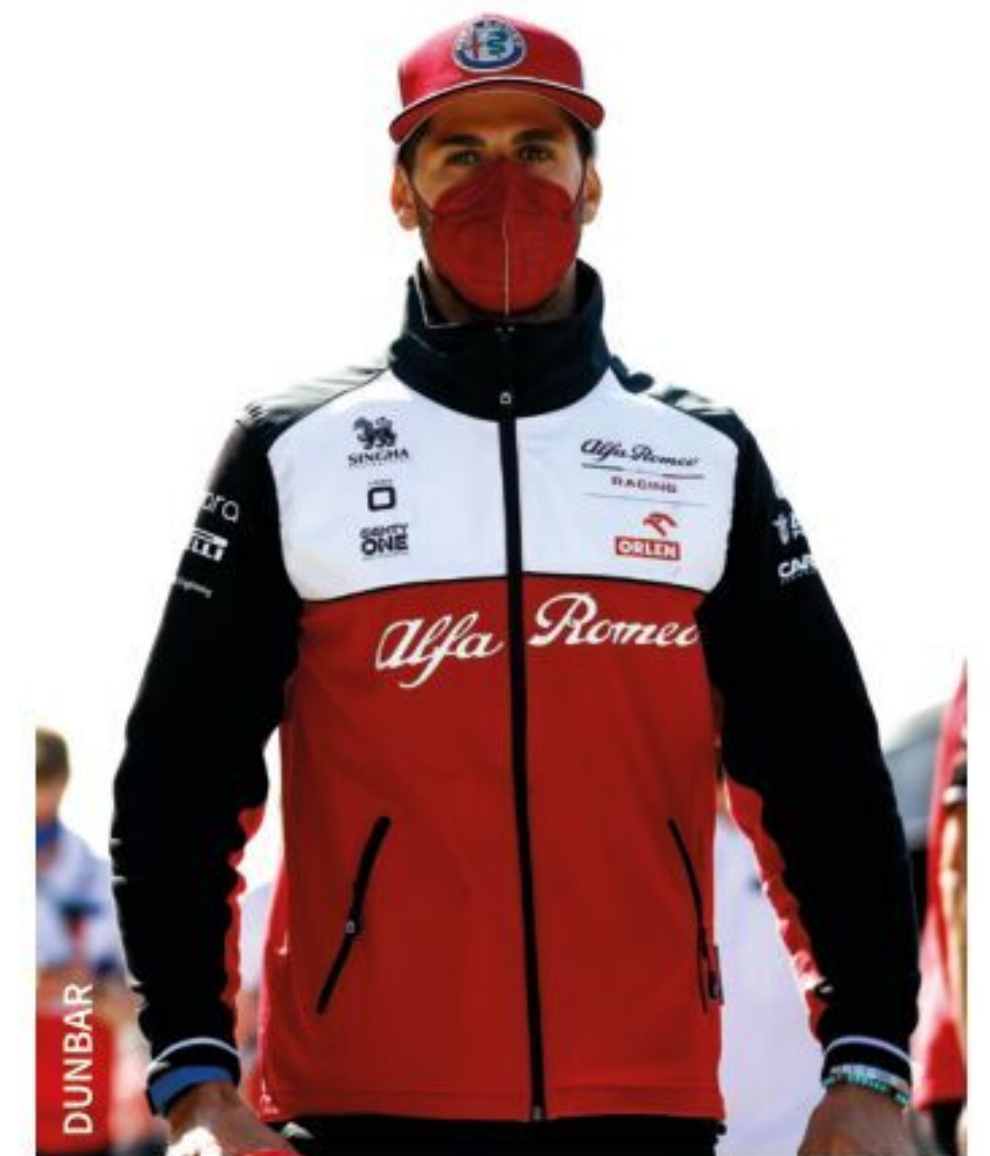
It was really nice. The lap before, I saw that I was much faster than him in Turn 1 and I wanted to surprise

him as I knew there wouldn't be many chances to pass him. I saw I gained so much time and almost tried something without really wanting to do it. That next lap, even though I was really far back, I just thought, 'OK, I surprise him.' I knew I could not wait and waste time. I don't think he expected me to go around the outside there.

Why is the team hitting such a strong run of form?

The car seems to work everywhere in all conditions – dry and wet – and there is a really good mojo in the team, mentality, attitude and energy as we are fighting Alpine. It's probably the best season the team has had. They are really pushing hard, and it's really enjoyable. Now we go to Monza. It's going to feel quite special to go back there one year after my win. But we can't go there and say, 'OK, we need to win' otherwise it's going to be a disappointment.

P30 DRIVER RATINGS

**PUNCTURE HURTS
QUALI STAR
GIOVINAZZI AS
KUBICA SHAKES
OFF THE RUST**

Antonio Giovinazzi's sensational seventh place in qualifying, which arrived at a critical time for his Formula 1 future, was undone by a rear-right puncture that dropped him to 14th – only one spot ahead of supersub Alfa Romeo team-mate Robert Kubica.

Kubica was drafted in from FP3 onwards after a positive COVID-19 result for Alfa regular Kimi Raikkonen, and proved deft in combat against Sebastian Vettel and with a last-lap pass on Nicholas Latifi.

Team principal Frederic Vasseur said: "Sadly, Antonio suffered contact in the opening stages and lost a few positions. His race was further compromised when he had a puncture just a few laps after his pitstop and had to return for a fresh set of tyres. After that, he was good to recover a few places but the top 10 remained out of reach. We finish 14th and 15th on a weekend where we deserved more."

Thanks to the non-score in the Netherlands, Alfa Romeo remains 17 points behind eighth-placed Williams in the constructors' championship.

At the time of going to press it was not clear if Kubica, whose previous F1 start came in the 2019 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix for Williams, would also sub for Raikkonen at this weekend's Italian GP at Monza.

**Haas plans driver crunch talks**

Haas team boss Gunther Steiner plans talks with Nikita Mazepin and Mick Schumacher after tensions flared in qualifying and the race at Zandvoort.

A "f***** off" Mazepin accused Schumacher of deliberately ruining his qualifying on Saturday after the German passed him in their preparations for their final Q1 laps, but Schumacher claimed he had permission from the team to overtake.

Both were sent to the stewards after getting in the way of Sebastian Vettel, only for no action to be taken after it was agreed by all three drivers that the impeding had not been deliberate and was unavoidable.

In the race, Schumacher tried to pass Mazepin on the main straight, only for the Russian to move at the last moment and squeeze his team-mate towards the wall. Schumacher backed out but suffered minor front-wing damage, forcing an early stop.

Schumacher felt "very angry" about the move, calling it "dangerous". But Steiner refused to place blame, saying it "takes two to tango", and that he would look to sit the drivers down before Monza. He continued: "We will work on it until we get it sorted."

Mazepin said that there were "no problems" with Schumacher but added: "I want to be in front."

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DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA

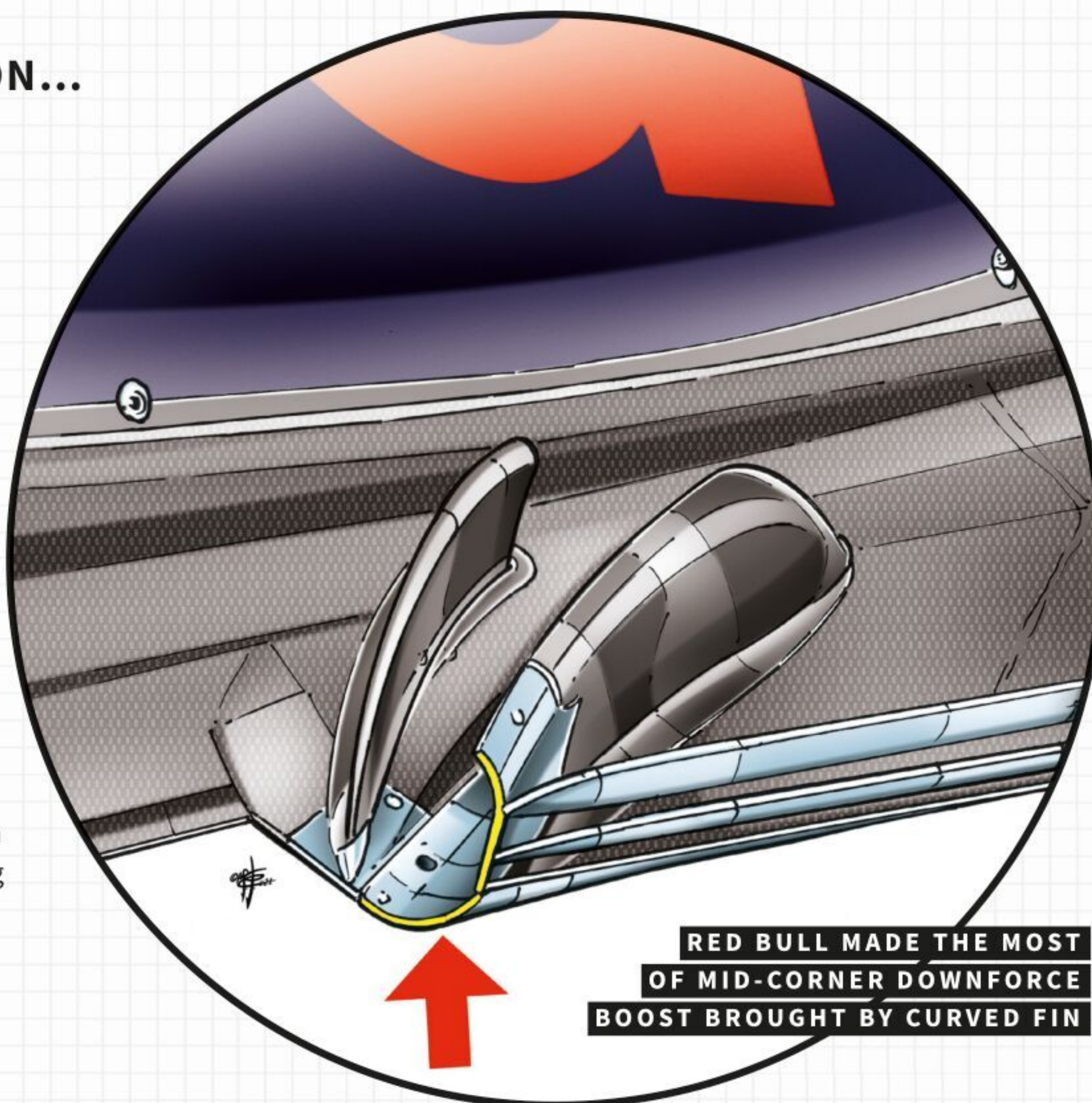
RED BULL 'FLOORS' THE OPPOSITION...

Although the majority of Formula 1's development focus has switched to 2022's new regulations, the arms race over floor designs has ceased to abate. A running theme across the 2021 season has been the convergence towards the exposed corner floor layout that seems to yield assistance in sealing the floor, which was lost in the off-season thanks to the banning of the slots and cuts along its edge. Red Bull has introduced a very curious new version of this, attaching a curved front fin that produces a channel between it and the fin behind. This seems to be doing two different jobs, firstly to improve airflow expansion while the car is in yaw to improve downforce, and also to shape any vortices produced at the corner into a tighter circulation. Doing that improves the seal to the

floor, ensuring that less turbulence sneaks underneath the car to reduce the effectiveness of the diffuser.

Around Zandvoort, having a set-up that generates more mid-corner downforce on the banking is important to carry more speed, and Red Bull's update seemed to do the business straight off the bat. Max Verstappen surged to a controlling pole position at his home race, putting the Mercedes duo in the shade, and converted it into victory in front of a boisterous Dutch crowd.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



RED BULL MADE THE MOST OF MID-CORNER DOWNFORCE BOOST BROUGHT BY CURVED FIN

...AND ASTON MARTIN CONTINUES ITS PUSH

Aston Martin also continued its development of the AMR21, reworking the exposed floor corner with a new array of fins. Previously, there were two collections of them, one sitting on the corner itself and the other just behind. The squad reverted to just one bank of fins, but reduced the chord length of those

at the rear to squeeze more in and turn the prevailing airflow around a greater angle.

Knocked by the regulation changes at the start of the season, when the loss of floor span hit the low-rake cars harder, this has been an area of concerted Aston Martin focus over the year, especially

with the team wishing to rise higher than the seventh place it currently occupies in the constructors' championship.

Despite the team's work, Zandvoort proved to be a difficult weekend. Sebastian Vettel was suffocated by traffic on his final Q1 lap and suffered a spin at Turn 3

during the race, hinting at a smidgen of rear-end instability. But as the season passes its halfway mark, it would not be unfathomable for Aston Martin to be winding down its new developments this month and throwing its lot in with next year.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



TWIN COLLECTION OF FINS DROPPED IN FAVOUR OF ONE



20 Perez #11
1m10.530s

19 Latifi #6
1m11.161s

18 Mazepin #9
1m11.875s

17 Schumacher #47
1m11.387s

16 Kubica #88
1m11.301s

15 Vettel #5
1m10.731s

14 Tsunoda #22
1m11.314s

13 Norris #4
1m10.406s

12 Stroll #18
1m10.367s

11 Russell #63
1m10.332s

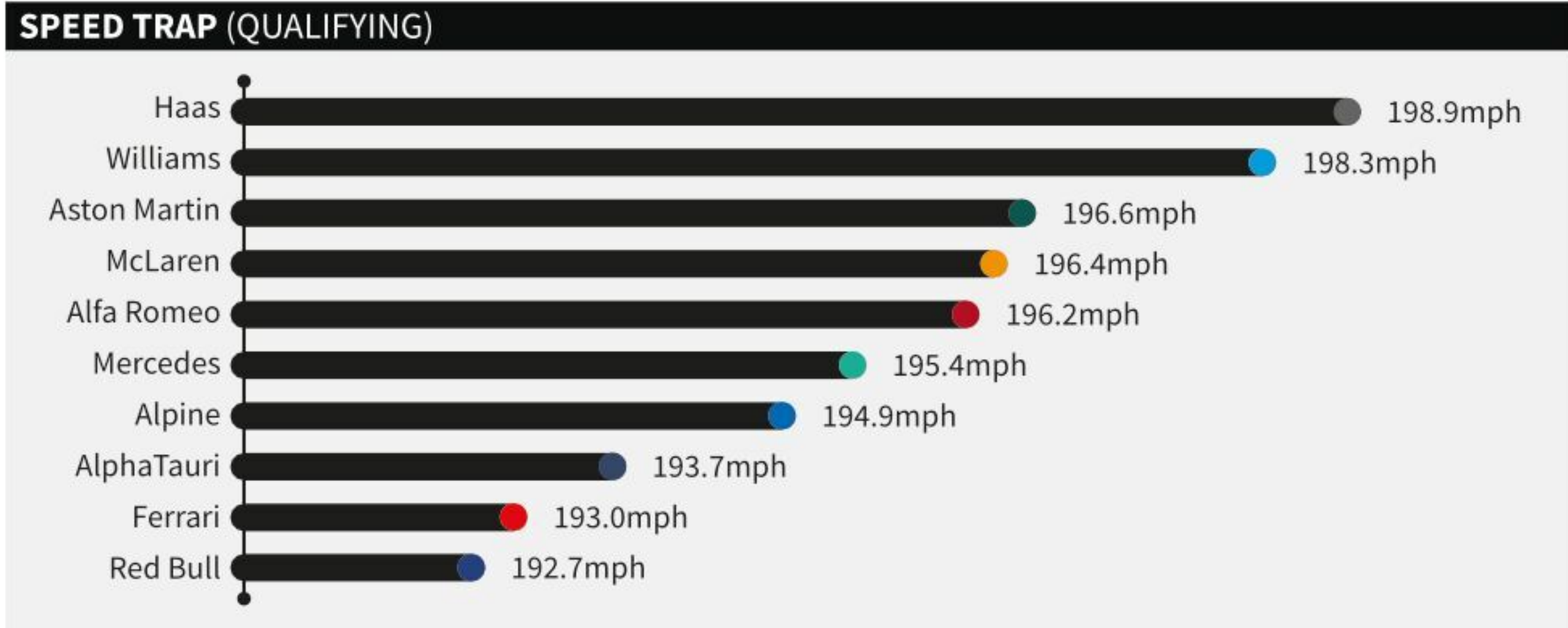
FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m11.500s	1	Leclerc	1m10.902s	1	Verstappen	1m09.623s
2	Verstappen	1m11.597s	2	Sainz	1m11.056s	2	Bottas	1m10.179s
3	Sainz	1m11.601s	3	Ocon	1m11.074s	3	Hamilton	1m10.417s
4	Leclerc	1m11.623s	4	Bottas	1m11.132s	4	Perez	1m10.526s
5	Bottas	1m11.738s	5	Verstappen	1m11.264s	5	Alonso	1m10.670s
6	Alonso	1m12.158s	6	Alonso	1m11.280s	6	Norris	1m10.781s
7	Ocon	1m12.231s	7	Gasly	1m11.462s	7	Stroll	1m10.842s
8	Giovinazzi	1m12.359s	8	Norris	1m11.488s	8	Vettel	1m10.872s
9	Stroll	1m12.431s	9	Giovinazzi	1m11.678s	9	Leclerc	1m10.896s
10	Gasly	1m12.515s	10	Vettel	1m11.713s	10	Gasly	1m11.005s
11	Norris	1m12.679s	11	Hamilton	1m11.911s	11	Ricciardo	1m11.013s
12	Latifi	1m12.907s	12	Perez	1m11.946s	12	Latifi	1m11.083s
13	Raikkonen	1m13.053s	13	Tsunoda	1m12.096s	13	Ocon	1m11.180s
14	Ricciardo	1m13.081s	14	Stroll	1m12.136s	14	Russell	1m11.274s
15	Russell	1m13.181s	15	Ricciardo	1m12.157s	15	Giovinazzi	1m11.299s
16	Perez	1m13.328s	16	Raikkonen	1m12.206s	16	Sainz	1m11.940s
17	Mazepin	1m13.516s	17	Schumacher	1m12.607s	17	Tsunoda	1m11.980s
18	Schumacher	1m13.847s	18	Latifi	1m12.610s	18	Mazepin	1m12.136s
19	Vettel	1m15.984s	19	Mazepin	1m12.835s	19	Kubica	1m12.162s
20	Tsunoda	no time	20	Russell	1m12.855s	20	Schumacher	1m12.366s

WEATHER Sunny, air 18-20C track 23-29C

WEATHER Sunny, air 20-22C track 33-36C

WEATHER Sunny, air 17-18C track 27-32C

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	224.5	1	1
2 Hamilton	221.5	1	1
3 Bottas	123	2	1
4 Norris	114	3	2
5 Perez	108	1	2
6 Leclerc	92	2	1
7 Sainz	89.5	2	4
8 Gasly	66	3	4
9 Ricciardo	56	4	4
10 Alonso	46	4	9
11 Ocon	44	1	5
12 Vettel	35	2	5
13 Tsunoda	18	6	7
14 Stroll	18	8	10
15 Russell	13	2	2
16 Latifi	7	7	12
17 Raikkonen	2	10	13
18 Giovinazzi	1	10	7
19 Schumacher	0	12	15
20 Mazepin	0	14	18
21 Kubica	0	15	18



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m09.829s	1	Verstappen	1m09.071s	1	Verstappen	1m08.885s
2	Sainz	1m10.022s	2	Leclerc	1m09.437s	2	Hamilton	1m08.923s
3	Verstappen	1m10.036s	3	Gasly	1m09.541s	3	Bottas	1m09.222s
4	Giovinazzi	1m10.050s	4	Hamilton	1m09.726s	4	Gasly	1m09.478s
5	Latifi	1m10.093s	5	Bottas	1m09.769s	5	Leclerc	1m09.527s
6	Hamilton	1m10.114s	6	Ricciardo	1m09.865s	6	Sainz	1m09.537s
7	Ocon	1m10.179s	7	Sainz	1m09.870s	7	Giovinazzi	1m09.590s
8	Bottas	1m10.219s	8	Ocon	1m09.919s	8	Ocon	1m09.933s
9	Ricciardo	1m10.255s	9	Alonso	1m10.020s	9	Alonso	1m09.956s
10	Gasly	1m10.274s	10	Giovinazzi	1m10.033s	10	Ricciardo	1m10.166s
11	Russell	1m10.382s	11	Russell	1m10.332s			
12	Alonso	1m10.435s	12	Stroll	1m10.367s			
13	Stroll	1m10.438s	13	Norris	1m10.406s			
14	Tsunoda	1m10.462s	14	Latifi	1m11.161s			
15	Norris	1m10.489s	15	Tsunoda	1m11.314s			
16	Perez	1m10.530s						
17	Vettel	1m10.731s						
18	Kubica	1m11.301s						
19	Schumacher	1m11.387s						
20	Mazepin	1m11.875s						

WEATHER Sunny, air 19-20C track 34-35C

NEXT RACE

12 SEPTEMBER

ITALIAN GP

Monza

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	
1 Mercedes	344.5
2 Red Bull	332.5
3 Ferrari	181.5
4 McLaren	170
5 Alpine	90
6 AlphaTauri	84
7 Aston Martin	53
8 Williams	20
9 Alfa Romeo	3
10 Haas	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Hamilton	10	3	Bottas
Perez	1	12	Verstappen
Ricciardo	5	8	Norris
Vettel	8	5	Stroll
Alonso	6	7	Ocon
Leclerc	10	3	Sainz
Gasly	13	0	Tsunoda
Kubica	0	1	Giovinazzi
Raikkonen	3	9	Giovinazzi
Mazepin	2	11	Schumacher
Latifi	0	13	Russell
Qualifying head-to-head taken from usual Q1/Q2/Q3 session, not the result of sprint races			
WINS		FASTEST LAPS	
Verstappen	7	Hamilton	4
Hamilton	4	Verstappen	4
Ocon	1	Bottas	2
Perez	1	Gasly	1
		Perez	1

POLE POSITIONS		Pole scores taken based on qualifying results, not the result of any sprint races (official F1 scores would be Verstappen 7, Hamilton 3)
Verstappen	6	
Hamilton	4	
Leclerc	2	
Bottas	1	

STARTING GRID

10 Ricciardo #3 1m10.166s	9 Alonso #14 1m09.956s	8 Ocon #31 1m09.933s	7 Giovinazzi #99 1m09.590s	6 Sainz #55 1m09.537s	5 Leclerc #16 1m09.527s	4 Gasly #10 1m09.478s	3 Bottas #77 1m09.222s	2 Hamilton #44 1m08.923s	1 Verstappen #33 1m08.885s
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RACE RESULTS ROUND 13/22 (72 LAPS - 190.51 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	1h30m05.395s	64	Su, Mn, Hn
2	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+20.932s		Su, Mn, Mu, Su
3	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	+56.460s	8	Su, Mn, Su
4	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	-1 lap/+11.788s		Su, Mn
5	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	-1 lap/+16.780s		Su, Hn
6	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+45.469s		Su, Mn
7	Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP)	Ferrari	-1 lap/+47.501s		Su, Hn
8	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda	-1 lap/+48.084s		Hn, Mn, Sn
9	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+49.070s		Su, Mn
10	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+52.330s		Mn, Hn
11	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+1m04.927s		Su, Hn
12	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-2 laps/+17.322s		Sn, Hn
13	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-2 laps/+19.546s		Sn, Hn, Mn
14	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-2 laps/+27.777s		Su, Mn, Hn
15	Robert Kubica (POL)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-2 laps/+1m00.458s		Mn, Hn
16	Nicholas Latifi (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps/+1m02.350s		Mn, Hn
17	George Russell (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	69 laps-gearbox		Mn, Hn, Sn
18	Mick Schumacher (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-3 laps/+1m02.801s		Sn, Hn, Mn
R	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda	48 laps-transmission		Sn, Mn
R	Nikita Mazepin (RUS)	Haas-Ferrari	41 laps-hydraulics		Mn, Hn

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Hamilton	1m11.097s	-	72
2	Bottas	1m12.549s	+1.452s	69
3	Verstappen	1m13.275s	+2.178s	60
4	Perez	1m13.461s	+2.364s	59
5	Vettel	1m13.958s	+2.861s	63
6	Norris	1m14.236s	+3.139s	48
7	Alonso	1m14.323s	+3.226s	60
8	Ocon	1m14.675s	+3.578s	54
9	Leclerc	1m14.780s	+3.683s	58
10	Gasly	1m14.818s	+3.721s	57
11	Ricciardo	1m14.920s	+3.823s	59
12	Giovinazzi	1m15.125s	+4.028s	66
13	Sainz	1m15.260s	+4.163s	45
14	Kubica	1m15.442s	+4.345s	44
15	Stroll	1m15.611s	+4.514s	57
16	Russell	1m15.628s	+4.531s	57
17	Tsunoda	1m15.783s	+4.686s	44
18	Latifi	1m15.790s	+4.693s	25
19	Schumacher	1m15.927s	+4.830s	36
20	Mazepin	1m16.066s	+4.969s	35

WEATHER Sunny, air 21-23C track 35-37C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 126.88mph. **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 134.01mph

TYRES



RACE BRIEFING

DRIVERS

KUBICA replaced **KIMI RAIKKONEN** at Alfa Romeo after Raikkonen tested positive for COVID-19

GRID PENALTIES

PEREZ Required to start

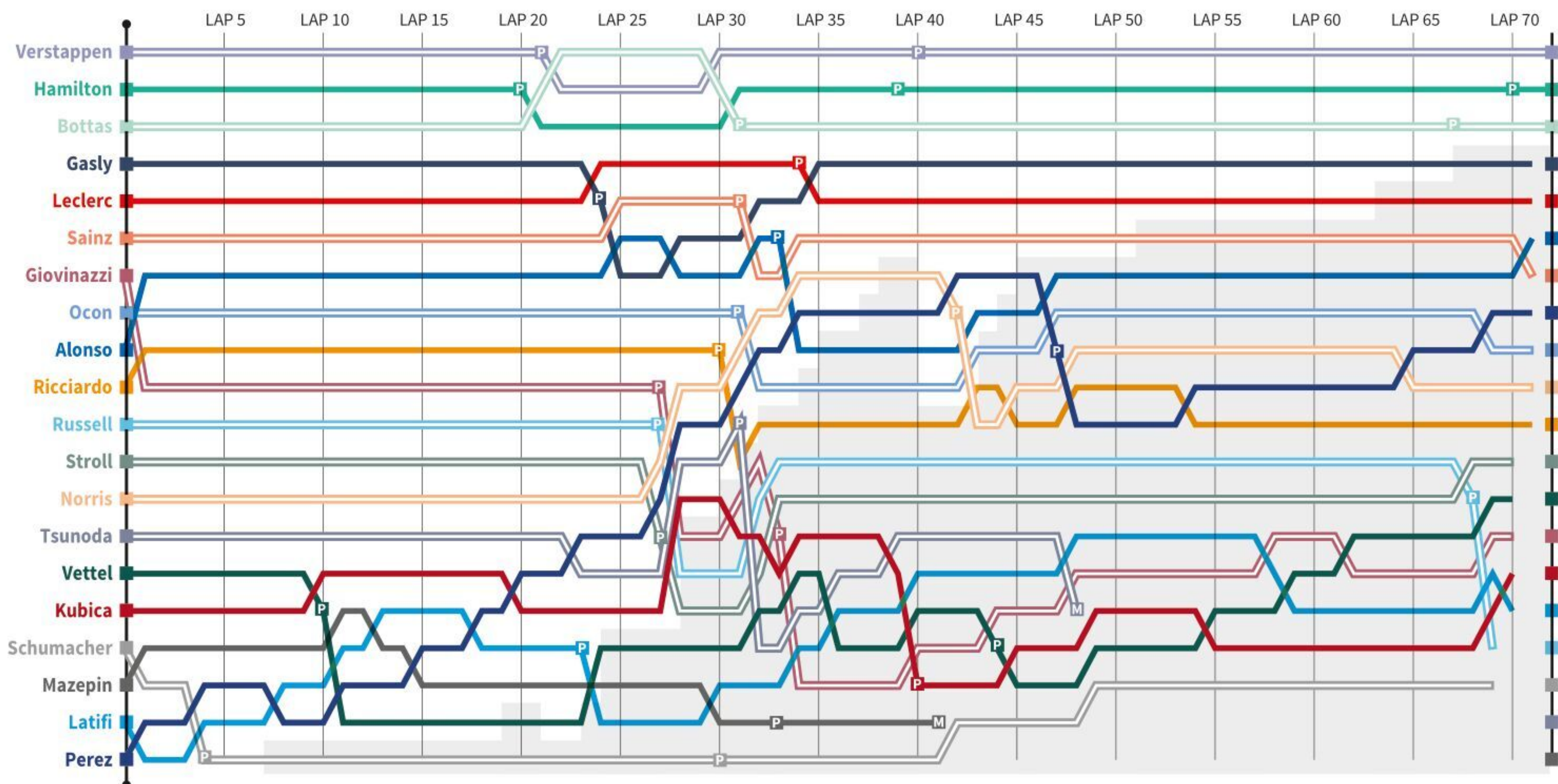
from pitlane – additional power elements used and car modified under parc ferme conditions
LATIFI Five-place penalty for replacement gearbox, then required to start from pitlane as car modified

under parc ferme conditions

RACE PENALTIES

RUSSELL Five-second penalty for pitlane speeding

LAP CHART What happened, when



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

IT'S ONLY VERSTAPPEN WHO SCORES THE MAX

Red Bull's star shines brightest, followed by Hamilton and Gasly, and there's a big points haul for Alfa Romeo duo Giovinazzi and super stand-in Kubica

MATT KEW

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **2nd** — Result **2nd**

9 As Toto Wolff said, Hamilton "outperformed" the car to miss pole by just 0.038s. Misses full marks as he didn't defy the odds in a race in which he was always expected to finish second. Ultimately, Hamilton couldn't quite put himself in a position to seriously challenge Verstappen.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **3rd** — Result **3rd**

6 Three tenths off pole was a fair reflection of the W12's pace, most of the deficit arriving through Hugenoltz alone. Race pace paled in comparison to Hamilton's, and he was a distant third. Gave his team an unnecessary headache with his tilt for fastest lap despite massively lifting to the line.

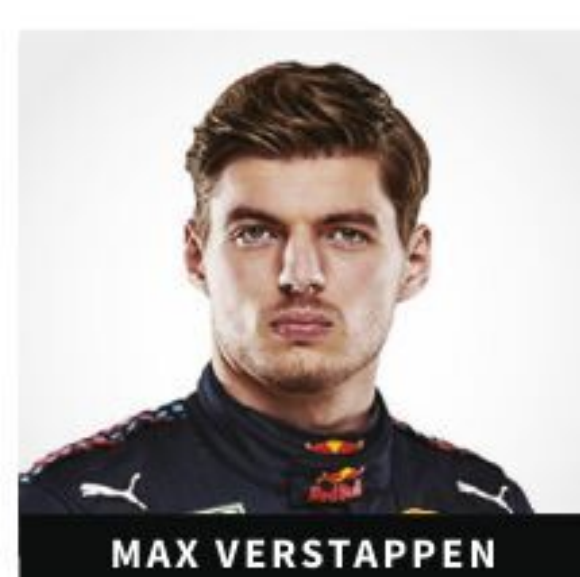
RED BULL



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **pit** — Result **8th**

5 Leisurely out-lap prevented a final Q1 flier after getting trapped behind Hamilton at the pit exit. His banker also wasn't strong enough and he was eliminated. Outside pass on Norris stood out on a climb to eighth, but not good enough when the Red Bull was the fastest car.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

10 Still gains a maximum score for excelling, despite running wide at Hugenoltz on final Q3 lap, which bumped him over the exit kerb, and the jolt caused a double upshift to cost 0.15s. That said, his execution of the race was masterful, and he never came under genuine threat.

McLAREN



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **10th** — Result **11th**

6 Strong in Q1 and Q2, but lost a little car balance for the final run to land 10th. At the start the right-hand clutch paddle failed, but only lost one place to Russell despite launching with the 'wrong' hand. Was deemed slow enough compared to Norris for McLaren to ask him to move aside.



LANDO NORRIS

Started **13th** — Result **10th**

8 Took too much out of the tyres on his first Q2 lap and lost a second shot at Q3 due to red flags. But proved exceptionally kind to his mediums to stretch them to lap 42 and make a one-stop work. Norris ran well on fresher hards to force Ricciardo to step aside and nabbed a single point.

ASTON MARTIN



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Started **15th** — Result **13th**

5 Unfortunate to abort his final Q1 run when the Haases tripped over one another, but slow start to the session left him prey and he was out. Loses a mark for spinning when proximity to Kubica unsettled the car. That cost three places, but he recovered to finish just behind his team-mate.



LANCE STROLL

Started **12th** — Result **12th**

5 Pace in practice suggested he should have qualified higher, but a decent performance was undone by red flags in Q2. Got stuck behind Russell in the race and didn't have enough in the tank to pass. Ultimately, finished where he started in a subdued showing.

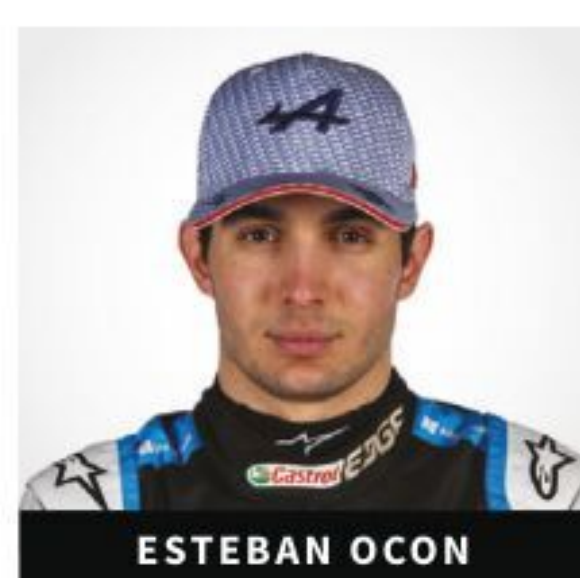
ALPINE



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **9th** — Result **6th**

7 Outqualified by his team-mate, and a decision to save a set of softs in Q1 didn't pay off due to red flags that brought everyone else back in the game. Was slower than Ocon for chunks of the race and nearly binned it at Hugenoltz with three laps to go. Then pulled a pass on Sainz as part of a three-place climb.

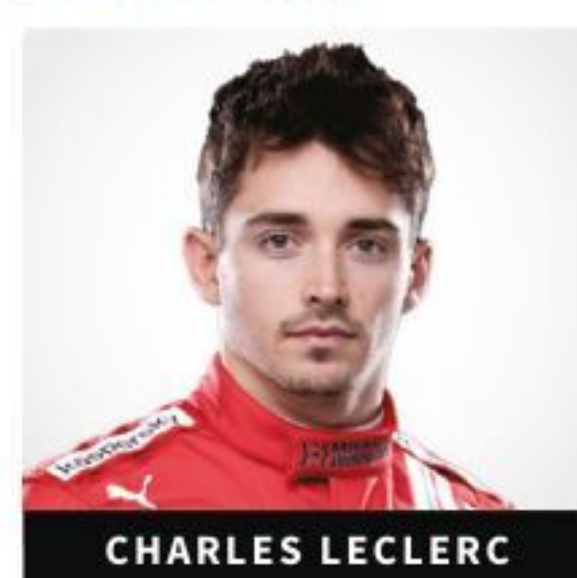


ESTEBAN OCON

Started **8th** — Result **9th**

7 Pounced on the qualifying woes of McLaren and Aston Martin, and found 0.023s over Alonso. Just avoided contact with his team-mate on lap one and was the stronger of the pair until a late fade on declining medium tyres. Unlucky with blue flags, and couldn't find a reply to Perez's late speed on softs.

FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **5th** — Result **5th**

7 Oversteer at Turns 3 and 10 dropped him behind Gasly and ensured Sainz was only 0.01s in arrears in qualifying. Both Ferraris were a lot slower in the race than Gasly, as a conservative strategy left Leclerc out for a 34-lap run on soft tyres. Then settled in for a quiet remainder on the hards.



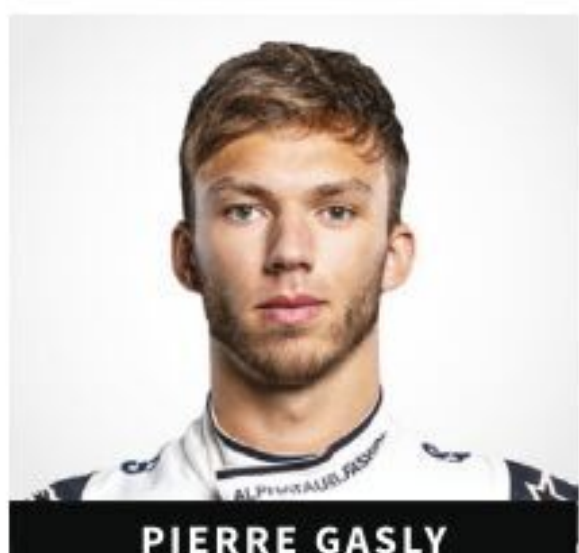
CARLOS SAINZ JR

Started **6th** — Result **7th**

6 Sheds a mark for binning the car in FP3, which meant he went blind into qualifying. But he improvised well to complete a Ferrari third row. Like Leclerc, he was put on a risk-free one-stop strategy, switching to hard tyres just before half distance. That let Alonso close and pull off a slick late pass.



ALPHATAURI



PIERRE GASLY

Started **4th** — Result **4th**

9 Missed ideal Q3 lap by 0.15s after three lots of oversteer, but smashed his team-mate and Perez to qualify a brilliant fourth. Didn't put a foot wrong in the race. Stretched his mediums for 47 laps, kept Leclerc at arm's length, and passed Alonso to snare his second-best result of the term.

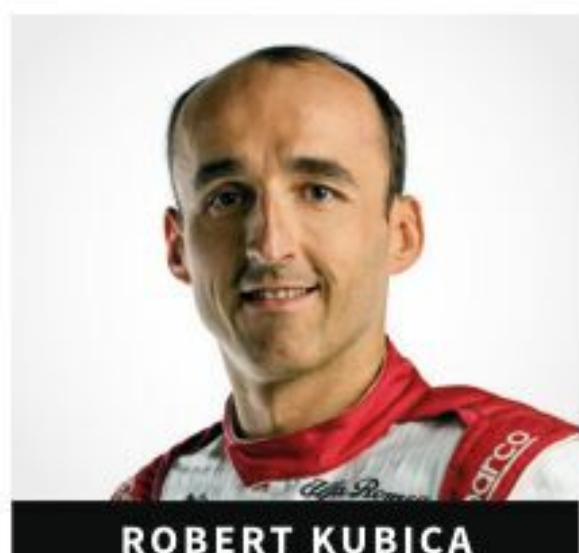


YUKI TSUNODA

Started **14th** — Result **R**

4 An outside bet for Q3 until the red flags in Q2 meant he missed the chance to set a flying lap on new softs. Fell back from 14th before his power unit gave up the ghost. Couldn't get close to Gasly over a lap or on race pace. So based on that, Tsunoda can't climb higher than four out of 10.

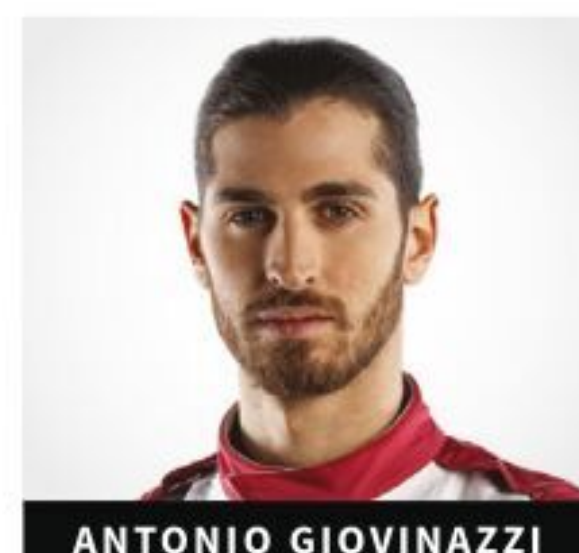
ALFA ROMEO



ROBERT KUBICA

Started **16th** — Result **15th**

8 Drafted in for FP3 after Raikkonen's positive COVID test, and was only considerably adrift of Giovinazzi into Tarzan. Despite spell on the sidelines, he proved sharp in combat with Vettel and Latifi, who he dispatched with DRS in the closing stages. High marks for an impressive cameo.



ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

Started **7th** — Result **14th**

8 Star qualifier was second only to Verstappen in sector one and nailed his ideal fastest lap on a final Q3 charge. Was roughly squeezed out by Sainz and dropped three places to 10th. The victim of a rear-right puncture, his strategy was compromised, and he slipped to an unrepresentative 14th.

HAAS



NIKITA MAZEPIN

Started **18th** — Result **R**

3 Tough to find a redemption arc on a weekend when he was half a second slower than Schumacher in qualifying and then the two blocked the track while they squabbled over track position. Retiring with a power loss stopped him shedding any more points from this rating.



MICK SCHUMACHER

Started **17th** — Result **18th**

5 Outqualified his team-mate by a healthy chunk, but was equally to blame for blocking Vettel in Q1. Relationship with Mazepin is at an all-time low after a probable pass on him was aggressively blocked and they collided, forcing a front-wing change for Schumacher.

WILLIAMS



NICHOLAS LATIFI

Started **pit** — Result **16th**

5 Climbed into Q2 thanks to fastest Williams lap of the weekend, but clumsily crashed. New gearbox and different-spec front wing resulted in a pitlane start. Decent first stint was lost to ragged driving when under late pressure from Kubica. Shed time obeying blue flags.

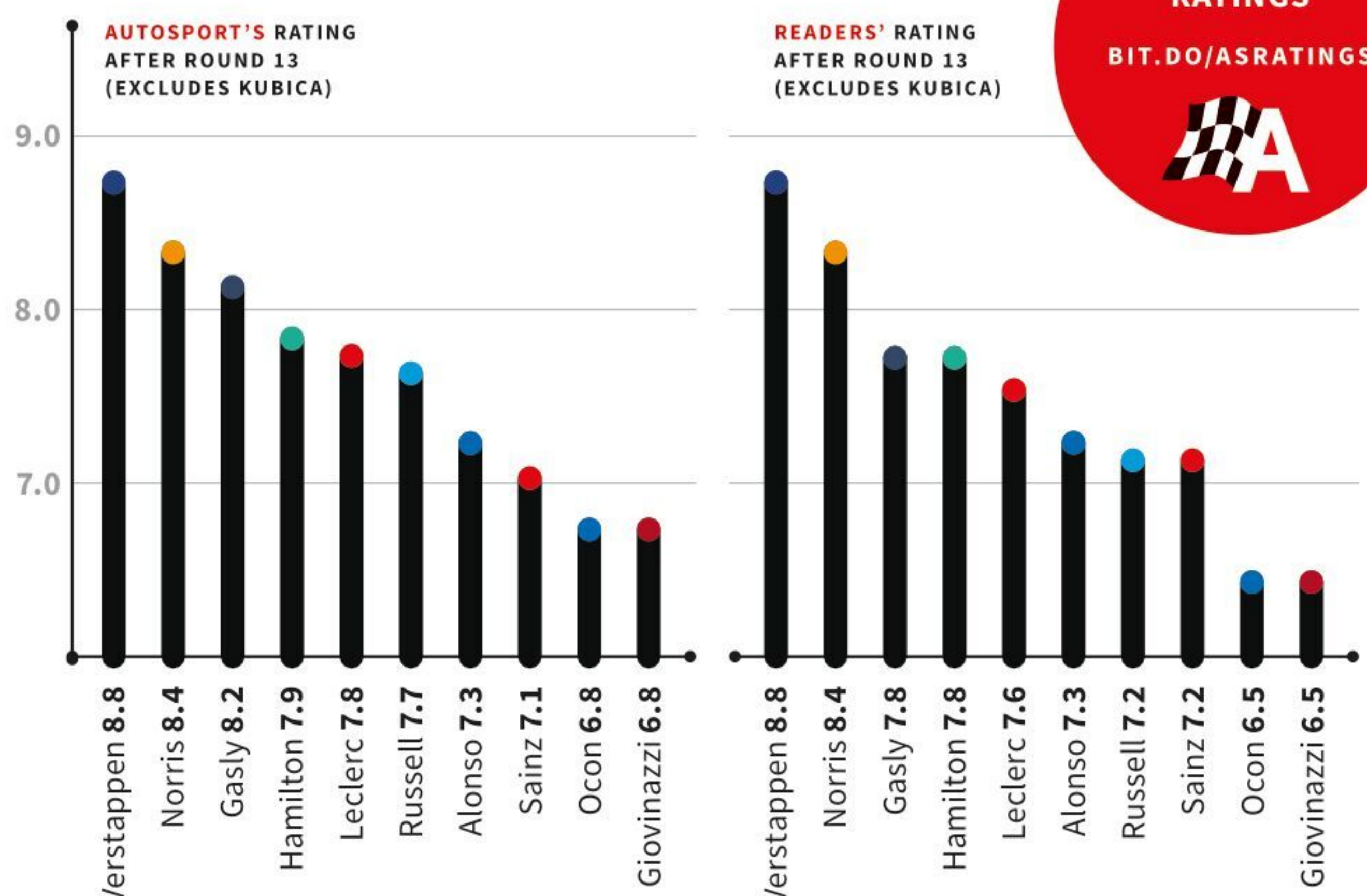


GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **11th** — Result **17th**

6 Beat Latifi in qualifying, but possible Q3 progression was denied by pushing too much into penultimate turn. Couldn't match the Alpines, but held position until his switch to hard tyres on lap 27. Was too hot into the pitlane and earned a speeding penalty before retiring with gearbox trouble.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



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Exciting Hauger has won three of the six FIA F3 feature races this season



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Supreme Hauger moves closer to the crown

FIA FORMULA 3
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
4-5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 6/7

Dennis Hauger bounced back from a disappointing weekend at Spa to claim his fourth FIA Formula 3 win of the season, one that puts him within touching distance of the title. The Prema Racing ace's Zandvoort success leaves him sitting 43 points in front of his only title rival, Jack Doohan, ahead of the season finale at Sochi, with 65 available.

Hauger led the feature race all the way from a pole position he earned in the final moments of qualifying, when he eclipsed David Schumacher's best by just over 0.1 seconds. While Trident driver Schumacher pressured Hauger at the start, the Norwegian soon began to pull away and was 5.2s in front after 21 of the 24 laps.

Schumacher was busy holding off Victor Martins for second, but this battle

ended in disaster for the German. The MP Motorsport-run Alpine F1 protege tried a late lunge into the banked Hugenholtzbocht hairpin, but misjudged it, and contact flicked Schumacher into the barrier on the outside. For his part, Martins admitted his fault straight away on the radio, and was hit with a 10s penalty.

Clement Novalak took advantage of that collision to move up to second in his Trident machine, while Martins' penalty dropped him from third on the road to 10th in the results. That allowed Alexander Smolyar, who had started his ART Grand Prix car from eighth, to finish third, with Doohan in his wheeltracks. The Australian had an eventful opening lap from fourth on the grid, losing a position to Novalak off the line and then another to Smolyar when he was nerfed wide by Jak Crawford at Hugenholtz.

Crawford, in turn, lacked the pace of the leading contenders. First he fell prey to the charging Caio Collet, who ended up fifth

with the imposition of MP team-mate Martins' penalty, and then to the Charouz Racing System car of Logan Sargeant.

The second sprint race was also crucial to the title battle, with Martins capturing his first FIA F3 victory while Doohan and Hauger failed to score any points after incidents in the final two laps. From fifth on the reversed grid, Martins worked his way into the lead on lap 16 of 24 when he passed Novalak around the outside into Tarzanbocht.

Martins was almost 2s to the good of Novalak when the second safety car period of the race was called, thanks to Amaury Cordeel's car beached in the Tarzan gravel. When the green flags flew, there was time for two more laps of racing, with Martins leading Novalak, Frederik Vesti, Hauger and reversed-grid polesitter Ido Cohen. Carlin-run Israeli Cohen continued his slide down the order at the restart when Olli Caldwell got past him, but Cohen then sailed around the outside of the Brit at Hugenholtz, only to clip the back of Hauger at the corner exit, puncturing the series leader's right-rear tyre.

While Hauger retired to the pits, Doohan was on course for a point for eighth place when he speared off the road around the back of the circuit, dropping to 18th in the results. The dramatic final lap also featured a Schumacher pass on Caldwell to claim fifth behind Martins, Novalak, Vesti and Collet.

The first race of the weekend ended with Arthur Leclerc taking his second F3 victory. From third on the reversed grid, he surged ahead of front-row starter Sargeant and Cordeel to snatch the lead at Tarzan, and then the Prema driver held off huge pressure from the American throughout the race. Ayumu Iwasa was third throughout from Crawford and Collet. Hauger, meanwhile, made excellent progress on a tough-to-pass circuit from 12th on the grid to seventh, behind Doohan.

MEGAN WHITE



No petering for Powell's title charge

W SERIES

ZANDVOORT (NLD)

4 SEPTEMBER

ROUND 6/8

With just two rounds to go, the W Series battle of the Brits has reached boiling point, with Alice Powell and Jamie Chadwick now even on points in the standings. Powell took her third win of the season at Zandvoort on Saturday to draw level with pre-event series leader and reigning champion Chadwick, although a superior victory tally puts ex-Formula Renault BARC champion Powell in front on countback.

Fresh from her win at Spa, Emma Kimilainen claimed her second W Series pole – and her first of 2021 – in Friday qualifying at the Dutch circuit, edging out Powell by just 0.074 seconds. The Finn survived dipping a wheel into the gravel on the formation lap to lead at the start from Powell and Chadwick. She pulled over 1s ahead, but then appeared to be struggling for pace around the high-speed sweeps at the back of the circuit. Powell took advantage on the fifth lap with an opportunist sweep up the inside of Kimilainen into the left-hander that leads onto the back straight. Just half a lap later, Chadwick got the slipstream onto the pitstraight and moved up to second.

Chadwick looked sure to catch Powell at first, but by two-thirds distance the gap had gone out to over 3s. It then ebbed and flowed around that interval before Powell crossed the line 2.871s in front at the end of the 20 laps. Kimilainen was a distant third,



and is the only other driver in contention for the title with two rounds remaining, albeit 34 points adrift.

"I'm so happy with that victory," said Powell. "It was a good move to get past Emma – I was quite pleased with that one. It's the business end of season so I knew I had to move forward, and I knew I had the pace to do that because of what happened in qualifying when Emma just pipped us. It was a great job by the team today, so thanks to them for all their help."

"Hopefully there are more wins to come for me this season. I'm level on points with Jamie now and the plan is the same as it's been all season – I'll just try to be consistent. It will be a hard fight with Jamie and Emma for the rest of the year and the gaps between the field are closing at every race, so you can't rule out more people joining the battle at the front."

Nerea Marti held her fourth position on the grid to the flag ahead of Jess Hawkins and Abbie Eaton.

Belen Garcia got ahead of Powell's protegee Abbi Pulling for seventh on lap two, but on the final lap Pulling – in just her second W Series start – took advantage of a slip by Garcia at the Hugenholtzbocht hairpin to reclaim the position. After missing the previous race at Spa following her huge qualifying shunt, Beitske Visser finished her home race in 12th, struggling all weekend with sore ribs and engine problems.

MEGAN WHITE

WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA FORMULA 3

ZANDVOORT (NLD)

Race 1 Arthur Leclerc

Prema Racing

Race 2 Victor Martins

MP Motorsport

Race 3 Dennis Hauger (below)

Prema Racing

W SERIES

ZANDVOORT (NLD)

Alice Powell

Racing X



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After three poles, FFF
Lambo finally took a win

SRO/PATRICK HECC

Bortolotti takes flag after nervous final hour

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
ENDURANCE CUP
NURBURGRING (DEU)
5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 4/5**

At last. After their third Endurance Cup pole of the season, and with the frustration of the Spa 24 Hours firmly behind them, Lamborghini's factory FFF Racing trio of Marco Mapelli, Andrea Caldarelli and Mirko Bortolotti finally delivered on their potential to take a first GT World Challenge Europe victory of 2021 in the three-hour Nurburgring race.

Amid the relieved celebration from the Lambo camp, Team WRT Audi was also jubilant: Charles Weerts and Dries Vanthoor wrapped up the overall title with two rounds to spare, despite an up-and-down weekend for the Belgian pair.

The fact that FFF had dominated all race didn't necessarily calm the team's nerves. After all, its Huracan GT3 Evo had been equally in charge of the season

opener at Monza until it conked out with electrical drama after the first pitstop, and then at Paul Ricard the car dropped pace dramatically in the final hour. This time, two late safety car interventions looked like they might derail FFF's hopes again but, with Bortolotti at the helm, the Lambo finally took the flag first, by 1.228 seconds from the Akka ASP Mercedes of Jules Gounon, Raffaele Marciello and Felipe Fraga.

Audi was noticeable by its absence from the podium after a difficult weekend for its crack WRT squad. Vanthoor and Weerts, who were joined in the team by Formula E regular Robin Frijns (deputising for DTM points leader Kelvin van der Linde) finished sixth following a typically efficient recovery from 12th on the grid.

Mapelli kicked proceedings off by taking the early lead ahead of Marciello, before opening up a steady if not slender 2s advantage over the Mercedes. Caldarelli then took over at the first round of stops, and the Lambo's advantage ballooned to over 20s by the end of the second hour,

which was interrupted by the briefest of full-course yellows for debris on the main straight.

The final hour had all the drama. First Jens Klingmann's Boutsen Ginion BMW ground to a halt at the chicane, bringing out the second FCY. The safety car followed, before the race was again neutralised when Antonio Fuoco crashed his Iron Lynx Ferrari at the Schumacher Esses, which were littered with gravel off-line. The scene was further polluted when Mathieu Jaminet also slewed off track on the gravel while trying to pass the Emil Frey Lamborghini of Arthur Rougier. The GPX Racing Porsche hit the barrier, forcing another safety car period with 25 minutes remaining.

Bortolotti's lead, which had been a whopping 34s, was now down to nothing, but he comfortably re-established his margin over Gounon to take the win. "I tried to manage as good as possible," said Bortolotti. "It was only a matter of time that we would turn the pole into the win and finally it was today."

Completing the podium was the HRT Mercedes of Maro Engel, Luca Stolz and Nico Bastian, which narrowly fended off the Emil Frey Lambo of Albert Costa, Norbert Siedler and Giacomo Altoe.

Lamborghini also picked up the two sub-classes. Silver Cup honours went to Emil Frey trio Alex Fontana, Rolf Ineichen and Ricardo Feller, while FFF's Phil Keen, Stefano Costantini and Hiroshi Hamaguchi took Pro-Am spoils.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

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ASP Mercedes chased
hard to take second

SRO/DIRK BOGAERTS

Awesome Lawson wins a double

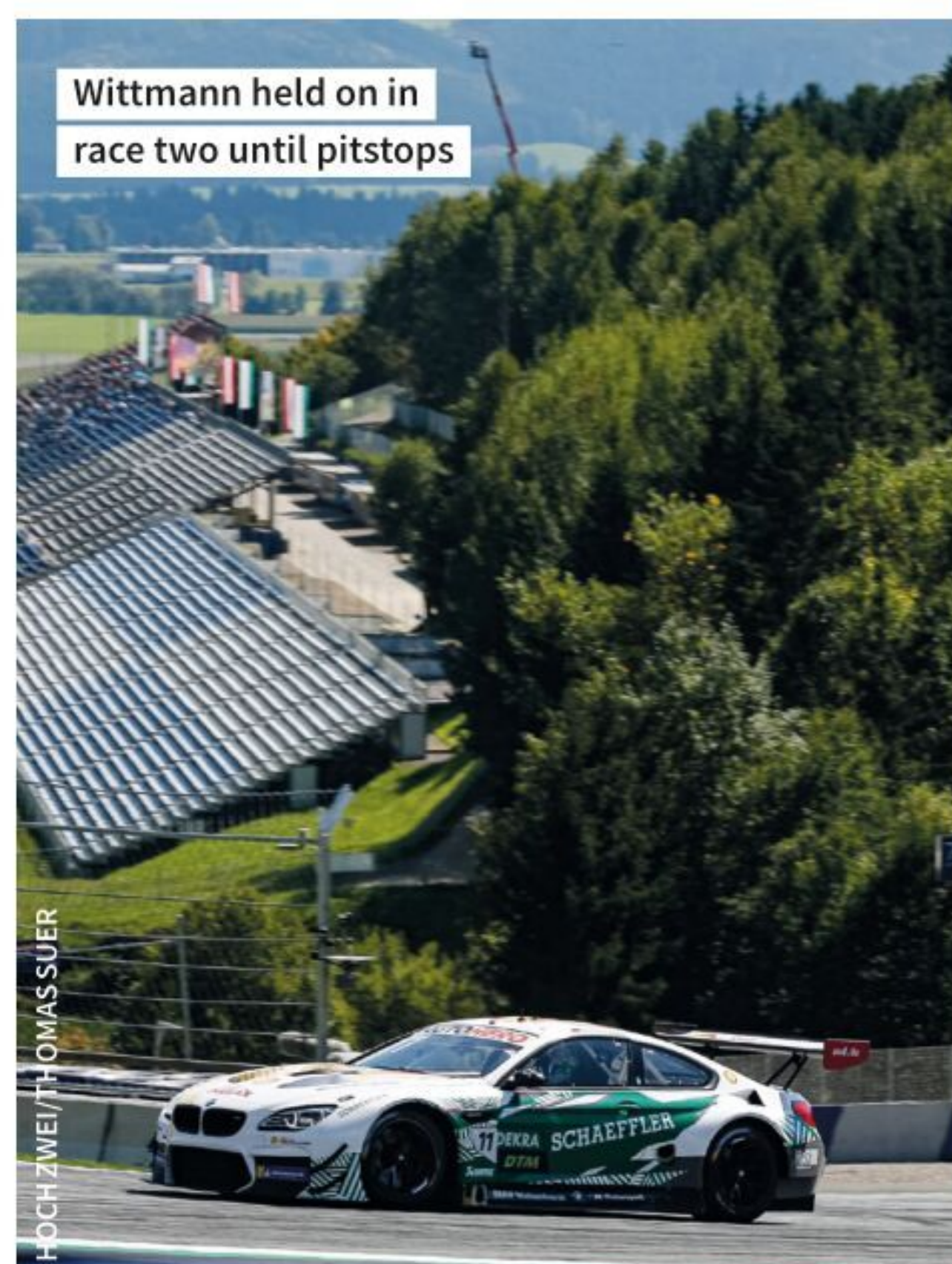
DTM
RED BULL RING (AUT)
4-5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 5/8

Liam Lawson bounced back from a torrid weekend at the Nurburgring to clinch a double victory on Red Bull's home turf and reignite his hopes of winning the DTM title.

The Kiwi was in fine form all weekend at the Red Bull Ring, from setting the fastest time on Friday before putting his AF Corse Ferrari on pole position in first qualifying. The 19-year-old had little trouble remaining at the front of the field in the race, with the HRT Mercedes of Maximilian Gotz never closing the gap enough to attempt a move to deny Lawson a first win since the season opener at Monza.

Winning the second race at the Austrian venue proved to be a much more difficult task for Lawson, who now had to manage 25kg of success ballast. Lawson started second on the grid, and had little chance of overtaking Marco Wittmann in the opening stages after the two-time champion made a clean getaway from pole position. But a lap after the Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW driver had completed his pitstop, Lawson peeled into the pits himself and pulled off a spectacular overcut to return to the track in the net lead.

This was made possible by AF Corse timing the pitstop to absolute perfection, releasing him just in front of the Mercedes of Arjun Maini, whose pitbox was located further down the pitlane. A delay of even a single second would have forced the team to hold Lawson until Maini's car was clear, and



that would have most certainly cost him the chance to snatch the lead from Wittmann.

After exiting the pitlane, Lawson was hounded by Wittmann in a thrilling duel until the finish, with the BMW ace closing to within half a second of the Ferrari multiple times. But every time Wittmann got to within striking distance, Lawson was able to respond to his pace and extend the gap back up to one second. He resisted a final attack from Wittmann on the very last lap, winning the drag race to the finish line by just 0.215s to become the first driver to complete a clean sweep at a DTM round this season.

The double win came at the perfect time for Lawson, with championship leader Kelvin van der Linde off the pace on a track that is considered the Achilles' heel of the Audi R8 LMS. While the South African delivered two impressive drives over the weekend and was the only Audi driver to finish inside the points, fifth and sixth places meant Lawson was able to cut his advantage to just 12 points with three rounds to run.

Gotz also carved into the lead of van der Linde by securing his fifth podium of the season on Sunday, and is now just 16 points behind him in the standings.

While Lawson enjoyed a perfect weekend at the Red Bull Ring, team-mate Alex Albon slipped to sixth in the championship after a relatively difficult outing. While the Anglo-Thai did well to finish fourth in race one, given he was dealing with 25kg of success ballast from his Nurburgring win, an early puncture in Sunday's race ended his chances of repeating that result and he trailed home in 17th position.

RACHIT THUKRAL

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE SPRINT CUP NURBURGRING (DEU)

Marco Mapelli/Andrea Caldarelli/
Mirko Bortolotti
FFF Racing (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo)

DTM RED BULL RING (AUT)

Race 1 Liam Lawson (below)
AF Corse (Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo)
Race 2 Liam Lawson
AF Corse (Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo)

24H SERIES
BARCELONA 24 HOURS (ESP)
Robert Renauer/Alfred Renauer/
Daniel Allemann/Ralf Bohn
Herberth Motorsport (Porsche 911 GT3-R)



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Hansens' handsome advantage

WORLD RALLYCROSS
LOHEAC (FRA)
4-5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 3/7

Timmy and Kevin Hansen continued their incredible streak of 1-2 finishes for a third round in a row as the World Rallycross circus headed to France, with older sibling Timmy taking his second win on the trot.

Once again the Hansen squad had to work hard through qualifying, with Niclas Gronholm topping the order on Saturday and reigning champion Johan Kristoffersson ahead on Sunday morning. But with set-up changes to his Peugeot 208 ahead of Q4, and new tyres, Timmy Hansen climbed onto the front row for his semi-final.

Up front, Kristoffersson was delivering the comeback performance he needed after issues in the opening two rounds. All was looking good until the second half of the race, when the Swede's EKS JC Audi lost pace with a broken driveshaft. Timmy Hansen went through to win from Timo Scheider's SEAT, while Kristoffersson covered the inside line to defend third from Kevin Abbring's Renault Megane.

Kevin Hansen capitalised on a poor start



Hansen siblings ran side by side to defend track position

for Gronholm's Hyundai in the second semi to claim the win and make it a third straight Hansen front-row lockout for the final.

EKS JC delivered a remarkable turnaround to fix gearbox damage from the driveshaft failure on Kristoffersson's car, but just missed the race start cut-off, meaning first reserve Abbring took his place. Once again, the Hansen brothers ran side by side through Turns 1 and 2 to

defend track position, then ran line astern throughout. Third went to Gronholm, the Finn scoring his first podium of the season by staying out on track until taking a final-lap joker and managing to gap Abbring, who was slowed by clutch issues.

Gronholm's GRX team-mate Krisztian Szabo yet again made the final and finished fifth, ahead of Scheider.

HAL RIDGE

Rookie Heinrich supreme in uber-Huber race

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 6/7

While Max Verstappen delighted the crowd with victory in the main event, compatriot Larry ten Voorde – eight times a winner this season across the

Supercup and German Carrera Cup – got nowhere near victory in the Porsche curtain raiser to the Dutch Grand Prix. Instead, 19-year-old Porsche Supercup rookie Laurin Heinrich took his maiden victory in the marque's flagship one-make series.

Heinrich lined up on pole ahead of Nebulus Racing by Huber team-mate Leon Kohler, and the two young Germans ran 1-2

from start to finish in close formation, with Heinrich's margin of victory just 0.470 seconds. What's more, it was the first Supercup win for the Huber squad, which itself is in its maiden season in the series. "As far as I'm concerned, both are winners today," said team boss Christoph Huber. "We've steadily improved since the beginning of the season and now we've been rewarded with a 1-2 result – I'm mega-proud of my squad."

Reigning and two-time Italian Carrera Cup champion Simone Iaquinta upheld honours for the Dinamic Motorsport squad by holding off Ayhan Guven for fourth, with ten Voorde next up.

Ten Voorde lined up fifth, but lost a place to Dylan Pereira at the start. He then pulled off a fine move on the Luxembourger on the fourth lap to reclaim the spot. Still, he gained ground on his only title rival Jaxon Evans, who lacked pace and finished 10th. Harry King was involved in the midfield fight and nabbed 15th spot on the final lap.



Heinrich soaked up the pressure from Kohler

PORSCHE/HOCHZWEI

Hamlin gets his first of the season

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
DARLINGTON (USA)
5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 27/36

Kyle Larson tried his best to deny it, but Denny Hamlin earned his first NASCAR Cup Series victory of the season at a most opportune time.

Larson threw his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet into the Turn 3 wall on the final of 367 laps in an attempt to catch Hamlin, but to no avail as Hamlin's Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota edged across the finish line 0.212 seconds ahead of Larson to win the Southern 500.



Larson (5) threw everything into trying to pass Hamlin

EARP
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Hamlin has been one of the most consistent performers all season, and his win automatically advances him to the Round of 12 of the Cup Series playoffs. "He drove it in past the limit of the cars and the tyres – I knew he was coming," Hamlin said of Larson. "I was a little bit conservative on that last lap because I had that four-car-length lead. I didn't think it was going to

go that deep, but yeah, still a great race."

The win is the fourth at Darlington for Hamlin and his third in the famous Southern 500.

Ross Chastain finished third, Martin Truex Jr rallied from a late-race pitroad speeding penalty to finish fourth, and Kevin Harvick rounded out the top five.

JIM UTTER



Macdonald/Bowers McLaren leads from sister car in race two

SRO/DIRK BOGAERTS

United pair nearly there for title

GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES
NURBURGRING (DEU)
4-5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 5/6

A pair of second places at the Nurburgring lifted United Autosports McLaren pair Charlie Fagg and Bailey Voisin to the brink of the main GT4 European title, but it was team-mates Dean Macdonald and Gus Bowers who took their first win.

Voisin led the Zakspeed Mercedes of Jan Marschalkowski through the opening stint of race one. But when Fagg hit traffic on his out-lap after taking over the McLaren, that delayed him sufficiently for Theo Nouet to emerge in front once he was installed in the Mercedes. Fagg did his best to squeeze ahead, but Frenchman Nouet rebuffed him and held on to take victory.

Macdonald crossed the line third in

the other United car, fending off the V8 Racing Chevrolet of Jop Rappange.

Macdonald led the way in the second race from Fagg, with the Pro-Am-class pacesetter ASP Mercedes of Jim Pla keeping the Silver Cup-contending Brits in sight during the opening stint.

Fagg was in first to hand over to Voisin, but the ex-Ginetta Junior ace was still behind Bowers once he had taken over from Macdonald. Bowers kept things under control and crossed the finish line 0.328s in front of Voisin. An early retirement for the CMR Toyota of Antoine Potty and Stephane Lemeret completed a disastrous weekend for the title-fighting Belgian crew, almost cementing the crown for Fagg and Voisin.

Marschalkowski completed the final stint for the Zakspeed Mercedes to ensure two podiums for himself and Nouet, ahead of the Rappange/Thijmen Nabuurs Chevy.

WEEKEND WINNERS

WORLD RALLYCROSS
LOHEAC (FRA)

Timmy Hansen
 Hansen World RX Team (Peugeot 208)

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
ZANDVOORT (NLD)

Laurin Heinrich
 Nebulus Racing by Huber

NASCAR CUP
DARLINGTON (USA)

Denny Hamlin
 Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
DARLINGTON (USA)

Noah Gragson
 JR Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)

GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES
NURBURGRING (DEU)

Race 1 Theo Nouet/Jan Marschalkowski
 Team Zakspeed (Mercedes-AMG GT4)

Race 2 Dean Macdonald/Gus Bowers
 United Autosports (McLaren 570S GT4)

TCR EUROPE
NURBURGRING (DEU)

Races 1 & 2 Mikel Azcona
 Volcano Motorsport (Cupra Leon)

SUPER TC2000
BUENOS AIRES (ARG)

Leonel Pernia/Antonino Garcia
 Renault Castrol Team (Renault Fluence)

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INSIGHT

THE UNWANTED GT CAR THAT CHANGED SPORTSCARS FOREVER • FORMULA E SEASON REVIEW

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WHEN MASERATI STARTED A SPORTSCAR REVOLUTION

GT overlord Stephane Ratel didn't want the MC12 on his grid. Max Mosley told him he had to. Cue the invention of Balance of Performance — the key to sportscars' success today

JAMES NEWBOLD



T ALL STARTED above an ice-cream shop in Maranello. The Maserati MC12, a car that won titles in five consecutive years, claimed three Spa 24 Hours victories in five attempts and came to define its era – and which could have fallen through the cracks of history without Max Mosley’s intervention – started life in a discreet apartment building in 2002.

“The first time we had a meeting with them, basically Maserati Corse was just three guys,” recalls Nicola Scimeca, who headed up the racing version’s development at Dallara.

“We went to this residential building and on the label there was ‘MC’, which was Maserati Corse, but nobody knew it. That was where they started.”

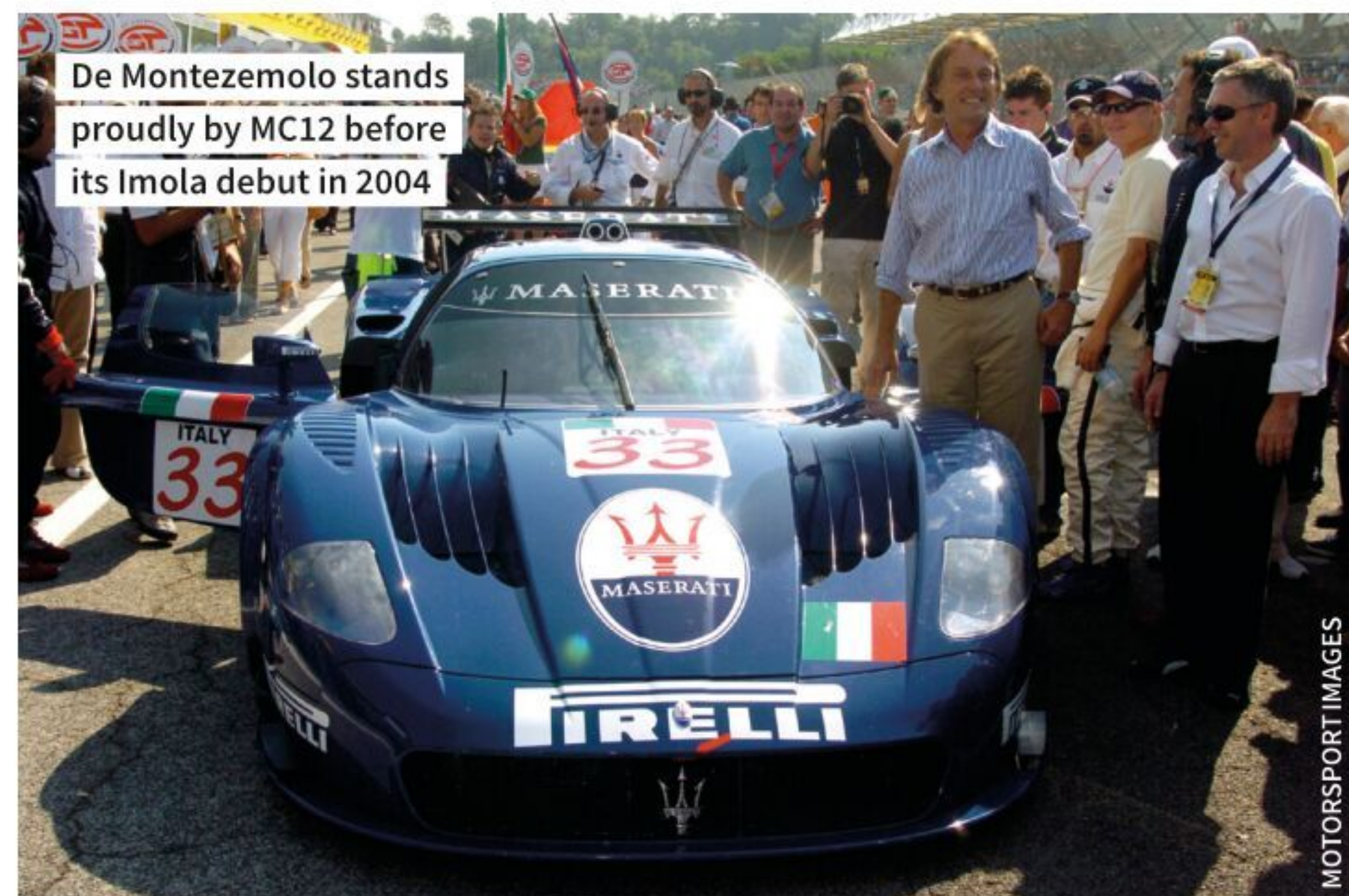
Prior to 2004, Maserati had been absent from the forefront of international motorsport for many years, its disastrous 1987 World Touring Car Championship assault doing no justice to the storied 250F and Tipo 61 that had gone before. But that all changed when Ferrari assumed control in 1999. Chairman Luca di Montezemolo planned to restore Maserati to its former glory and appointed three trusted lieutenants – Claudio Berro, Giorgio Ascanelli and Maurizio Leschiutta – to lead the new MC division that would turn Ferrari’s Enzo supercar into a GT1 icon in the FIA GT Championship.

“At the beginning it was Giorgio, Claudio Berro and myself,” says Leschiutta, who joined after 13 years on Ferrari’s F1 engine programme. “We were the ones who really believed in this project and were very enthusiastic about it. It was more than a job; it was a vocation we shared.”

But for all the trio’s dedication and the support of Ferrari in developing the production MC12, Maranello’s F1 focus meant another partner was needed to develop the carbonfibre-chassis racer. Enter Dallara. “In-house, we started with three people that were working in an office above an ice-cream shop in Maranello, that’s the truth,” says Leschiutta. “We couldn’t take on something as big as this programme by ourselves; we needed an expert technical partner in endurance racing used to building cars of this type with carbon chassis. The choice of Dallara was a natural one.”

Dallara had a fairly free hand on styling – “We had freedom to do what we wanted,” says Scimeca – which meant it could work on creating the optimal design for racing and then work backwards for the road model. This no-compromise ethos explains the bodywork’s extreme overhangs, and why plans to keep the MC12 as close as possible to the Enzo soon changed. Beyond the crash structure, suspension components, gearbox and V12 engine, little was carried over.

Maserati’s choice of MC12 road and race development driver was also significant. Andrea Bertolini was known to the group from its collaboration with Ferrari’s Corse Clienti division on racing-derived electronic engine controls and a new sequential gearbox for the 360 GTC, and would prove a fixture in the car’s life until 2010, scoring its first win and four titles along the way. That’s why Leschiutta views Bertolini as “more than a driver” in the MC12 story. “Andrea was a partner,” he says. “He was sensitive to car changes and an all-round excellent development driver.”



Testing wasn’t all plain sailing, Scimeca recalling an “embarrassing” failure on the MC12’s first shakedown caused by “a 50-cents piece” in front of the watching di Montezemolo. But once clear of its teething issues, the car proved to be reliable and fast in equal measure. It won on its 24-hour race debut at Spa in 2005, despite never having completed a 24-hour simulation. “The car was so reliable from the first minute on,” says Michael Bartels, who won titles in each of the four seasons he spent alongside Bertolini and five as the team boss of foremost MC12 squad Vitaphone Racing. “From my first test in the car, Paul Ricard 2005, my feeling was this car is completely bulletproof.”

THE MC12’S BIGGEST HURDLE

The MC12’s carbon chassis made it innately stiffer than rivals such as the Ferrari 550 Maranello and Aston Martin DBR9 GT1, or various iterations of the Chevrolet Corvette. “Every driver who drove the car, you can ask, they felt really comfortable about the handling,” Bertolini says.

It was a car that moved the goalposts, although that’s perhaps unsurprising given its basis as a racer reverse-engineered for the road – much as the Ford GT would be a decade later. This would pose significant problems for FIA GT boss Stephane Ratel, who had been bitten before by an obviously superior car not built to the spirit of the rules. The all-conquering 1997 Mercedes CLK-GTR had benefited from a last-minute rule change that meant cars did not require road-approval until the end of their first season, rather than before. It blew the doors off existing competitors and prompted a mass walkout at season’s end, resulting in the death of GT1 at the end of 1998.

What had been known as the GT2 class was promoted to become the main attraction, and it was a long road to get the series back to good health again by 2004, with independent tuners such as Prodrive and Reiter Engineering, who respectively developed Ferrari and Lamborghini machinery to run in what was now known simply as the GT class, before



Larbre
defeated
Vitaphone in 2005
after appealing its
fuel-sample DSQ
in Bahrain

being renamed GT1 in 2005. Therefore, Ratel was reluctant to allow their investments to go to waste. “I really didn’t want the car,” he recalls of the Maserati. “It was exactly the same story repeating itself, so my view was to say, ‘It’s absolutely impossible, I’ve worked very hard and we had to go convince many people to develop GT cars, we are not going to accept it.’”

But the decision was out of his hands. The late Mosley, as FIA president, made that crystal clear, and set in motion the Balance of Performance system, one of the cornerstones of modern sportscar racing. “Max told me, ‘No, you’re not going to ban it, forget it,’” says Ratel. “He said, ‘We’re going to balance it.’ The concept of BoP came from the MC12.” Peter Wright, formerly of Team Lotus, was the FIA man entrusted with leading what Ratel initially regarded as “this bizarre new approach” of tinkering with aerodynamic surfaces, weight, engine restrictions and rideheight. Ratel was eventually sold on the idea, but faced a challenge to convince the teams to agree.

An Autosport feature on MC12, headlined ‘Is this car the death of GT racing?’, reflected the mood as the 2003–04 title-winning Scuderia Italia squad defected to the Le Mans Endurance Series. But Maserati received dispensation to enter the final four FIA GT rounds of 2004, although the car was ineligible for points.

The two AF Corse-run de facto works MC12s finished second and third on their debut at Imola, despite trimmed rear wings that made the car a handful over the kerbs. The winner that day by 43 seconds was a Konrad Saleen driven by Uwe Alzen and Bartels, the latter receiving an attractive ‘buy one get one free’ proposition from Berro to run two cars in 2005. Vitaphone Racing – named in deference to Bartels’s long-time sponsor – was born.

GT WINNER

Bertolini and Mika Salo took the car’s maiden win at Oschersleben – a circuit that would become a fortress for the MC12 in years to come –

“MAX TOLD ME, ‘NO, YOU’RE NOT GOING TO BAN IT, FORGET IT’. HE SAID, ‘WE’RE GOING TO BALANCE IT’”

in 2004, and followed it up by winning the Zhuhai finale, leading Fabrizio de Simone and Johnny Herbert’s sister car in a Maserati 1–2.

Bertolini regards the original spec as his favourite iteration. “The 2004 was the best one,” he says. “The first version with full downforce was – pfft – really fast!” But the MC12 that was admitted to race in the full 2005 FIA GT championship was very different to the one that ended 2004. To Bertolini, “they were two different cars”.

“We changed completely the car to go to five metres,” says Scimeca of the now 180mm shorter machine, the aerodynamic potency of its overhangs much reduced. “We couldn’t go to Le Mans because basically the car was too long and too wide [by 66mm].” The MC12 would never race at the Circuit de la Sarthe in period, surely making it one of the best sportscars not to race in the 24 Hours (see p44). One car was permitted to enter the 2005 American Le Mans Series, albeit without success.

The MC12 was subjected to what Scimeca describes as “really extreme” BoP restrictions in 2005 – “The rear wing was so low that it was completely behind the roof so it didn’t work,” he says – with Leschiutta recalling “a constant battle” trying to stave off changes that included 10kg of ballast and a 100mm rear-wing-width reduction for Monza, and an extra 40kg for Zhuhai. Added to success weight, it meant “the trio of well-driven MC12s were running either 140 or 150kg heavier” than the rival Larbre Ferrari 550, Autosport reported.

Any one of the three could have won the 2005 crown. MC12s finished 1–2 four times and twice locked out the podium, only to lose out to >>



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Switch to Michelin tyres
for 2007 helped to earn
Vitaphone's second title

Larbre's Gabriele Gardel, who shared for much of the season with Pedro Lamy. Bartels and Timo Scheider scored the car's maiden Spa 24 Hours victory alongside Eric van de Poele, and were only denied the title after Larbre successfully appealed its Bahrain disqualification for not having the required three litres of fuel to provide a sample at scrutineering, on a point of procedure. "We started to celebrate and were feeling like champions," says Scheider, who still regards the final outcome as "very weird". "Then we were the losers somehow. It was feeling wrong."

The sister Vitaphone crew of 2003 FIA GT champion Thomas Biagi and Fabio Babini had led the points after Imola after the first four rounds, but were forced into a supporting role by a Spa gearbox failure, while JMB drivers Bertolini and Karl Wendlinger led by a point going into the finale, but were denied by a similar fault.

Wendlinger recalls "a high-quality racing car" that "would have been seconds faster than the rest" without the restrictions. "You could feel in the DNA this was a real racing car," says the Austrian, who especially singles out its traction control system. "All the adjustments you did you could feel millimetre by millimetre. Even with all the restrictions, it was still working well on the aero and the mechanical side."

Vitaphone was the sole full-season MC12 entrant in 2006, as JMB stepped down to GT2. With Scheider returning to the DTM, Bartels



Bartels (in helmet) and
Bertolini won all four titles
they contested as a pair



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

“I DECIDED FOR THE COMPETITIVE WAY AND NOT THE FINANCIAL WAY, AND IN THE END IT PAID OFF”

and Bertolini teamed up and atoned for their near-misses the previous year by sealing the crown with a round to spare. Their close victory over Scuderia Italia's Aston Martin at Spa – van de Poele again the third driver – is Bertolini's favourite memory of the MC12 years. Like Scheider's effort the year before, where the German drove for “around 14 hours”, it came after a marathon drive that included two night-time double stints either side of an hour's rest, Ascanelli overruling the team doctor who had ordered Bertolini to rest.

A significant change occurred in 2007, when Bartels made the call to switch Vitaphone away from long-time Maserati tyre supplier Pirelli to Michelin. While this would mean a financial outlay to ensure support from a rival firm, Bartels was concerned that another MC12 running Michelins would steal a march. His decision was spectacularly vindicated as Biagi won the car's second title. “I decided for the competitive way and not the financial way, and in the end it paid off,” explains Bartels.

Playteam, which had made a cameo the previous year at Mugello, would uphold Pirelli honour, and gained Bertolini to partner Babini. For Leschiutta, now technical director after Ascanelli's return to F1 with Toro Rosso, the season became “a delicate balancing act” of supporting a proven customer in league with a rival technical partner. “Michelin had a technical advantage on Pirelli,” Leschiutta concedes. “We struggled to help them develop a tyre that could be competitive against the Michelin.”

The 2007 campaign started poorly for Biagi and Bartels at Zhuhai, where Bartels didn't complete the mandatory 35-minute minimum drive time and wasn't eligible to score. This made it easier for Bartels to decide to undergo a kidney operation, but meant Biagi would have a rotating cast of co-drivers for the next two events. Victory at Silverstone alongside MC12 returnee Salo preceded a disastrous Bucharest, where Fabrizio Gollin made two errors at a cost of two laps.

Still, Biagi flourished in his team leader role and, despite an >>

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ALL MAJOR SERIES**



uncharacteristic off for van de Poele in a late rain shower at the Spa 24 Hours, Biagi led the finely poised title race into the Zolder finale and duly delivered under huge pressure.

Bertolini's 2007 title hopes unravelled with eighth at Zolder, but he maintains that the damage was done at Zhuhai. Spun out by team-mate Alessandro Pier Guidi at Turn 1, he then ran out of fuel after "the engineer made a big mess of the calculation". He also incurred a drivethrough penalty at Silverstone for improving his best lap time under yellows – protestations that it was his first lap free of GT2 traffic fell upon deaf ears.

CONSOLIDATION OF DOMINANCE

With Vitaphone the only MC12 runner in 2008, Bertolini rejoined Bartels as Biagi joined Ferrari's GT2 roster. Playing the percentages and consistent scoring meant the 2006 champions carried on where they left off, leading an MC12 1-2 at Spa together with van de Poele and Stephane Sarrazin. Their 100% title conversion rate as team-mates continued into 2009 and 2010.

In the second of those years, FIA GT morphed into the FIA GT1 World Championship. The dawn of this new era, intended for a new breed of cars, should have been the end of the MC12 story. But not enough of the new machinery was produced, and Ratel's fallback was to allow in the previous generation of car in lightly modified form. The MC12 was granted a one-year waiver – the Aston Martin DBR9 and Chevrolet Corvette C6.R were given two years – with a plank fitted to the floor, plus more weight and spec electronics that hurt its traction advantage.

Bartels says his relationship with Bertolini was one of "blind understanding", and was one of the most formidable elements of a team that became operationally "stronger and stronger until the last lap in San Luis", Bartels setting fastest lap at the 2010 finale on the Argentinian circuit around a volcanic lake in his final competitive kilometres aboard an MC12. Undoubtedly, from 2008 Vitaphone also benefited from being the focal point of Maserati support, which far outweighed that received by other manufacturers' customer teams. Leschiutta recalls "a symbiotic relationship with Vitaphone". Still, it wasn't all plain sailing.

The 2009 title had come amid controversy given the ongoing (but unenforceable) FIA ban on team orders. A third car entered for Pier Guidi and Matteo Bobbi aided the team leaders at the Hungaroring, Algarve and Paul Ricard races "in what looks from the outside like



a clear and blatant manipulation of the results", according to Autosport's correspondent. The Italian pair's victory in the Zolder finale denied PK Corvette drivers Mike Hezemans and Anthony Kumpen.

For 2010, manufacturers were obliged to field four cars from two teams. To Vitaphone's two cars were added a pair entered under the banner of Altfried Heger's Hegersport operation, but also operated by Bartels with significant works support. Leschiutta stresses that all four cars in 2010 "were technically equivalent", even if the battle-hardened crew behind Bartels and Bertolini was "the most well-oiled machine". Despite the best efforts of Pier Guidi and Alex Muller, Hegersport

FIVE OTHER GREAT SPORTSCARS NEVER TO RACE AT LE MANS



LANCIA D24

Legendary designer Vittorio Jano's 3.3-litre V6-engined D24 appeared at the end of 1953 and claimed a 1-2 in the gruelling Carrera Panamericana. Lancia skipped Le Mans in 1954, but finished second in the world sportscar championship as Alberto Ascari and Piero Taruffi respectively won that year's Mille Miglia and (non championship) Targa Florio.



MERCEDES CLK-GTR

Pole on its debut in the 1997 FIA GT Series hinted at what was to come, although the CLK-GTR took until round four to beat the Schnitzer-run McLarens. Thereafter, Bernd Schneider claimed six of the remaining eight races and the title. Its successor, the CLK-LM of 1998, was undefeated in FIA GTs, but engine failures caused a Le Mans early bath.



EAGLE-TOYOTA MKIII

Twice a winner of the Sebring 12 Hours, the MkIII produced by Dan Gurney's All-American Racers dominated the IMSA GT Championship in 1992, winning the last seven races against opposition that included Nissan and Jaguar. It cleaned up with victories in all of its 10 races in 1993, the last hurrah of the GTP class that was IMSA's Group C equivalent.



STALEY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

“THE FACT IS, IT WAS THE BEST CAR. IT WAS THE ONLY GT PROTOTYPE IN THE FIELD”

he says. Wendlinger, who had joined Nissan, agrees that the MC12's success “shows how much they still had in the pocket”.

“The fact is, it was the best car,” agrees Ratel. “BoP could make the racing more interesting, but at the end the best car wins. It was the only GT prototype in the field. It had an aerodynamic advantage, even if it was balanced, and it was well run by a team which had huge experience, so it was the best package.”

To Leschiutta, it remained strong because it was “essential in all its aspects”, a car designed for endurance racing and “basically less compromised than other cars we were racing”.

“In 2010, I didn't fear that the window was closing, not at all,” he says. “I think we would have been competitive in 2011 had we participated.”

Leschiutta is confident that the Maserati would have been allowed to race on into 2011. The call to stop, he says, was “entirely financial” since the Fiat group “was gradually closing” all its racing operations. “The money that the company was willing to spend was just not enough to field four cars,” he says.

“It was sad,” says Bertolini of the MC12 programme's conclusion, “but honestly it was the right decision.” Bartels adds: “We stopped when we arrived on the mountain on the top.”

The ultimate GT1 racer doesn't look its age, and is still capable of giving onlookers goosebumps, its six-litre V12 soundtrack “music every time” to Biagi and many others besides. Controversy was never far away, but the MC12 achieved a great deal beyond its on-track success. As the guinea pig for BoP, it proved that cars could triumph despite handicaps imposed by the governing body, and laid the foundations for successful equalisation formulas – GT3 is the most famous success story, and has ushered in unrivalled manufacturer involvement. Without the MC12, sportscar racing would be much poorer.

“The Maserati could be the catalyst that takes GT racing to new heights or it could kill it stone dead,” wrote Autosport in 2005. It was most certainly the former. ❧

never graced the top step of the podium, a factor in Maserati's defeat to Aston Martin in the manufacturers' standings.

For Bartels, his and Bertolini's 2010 crown was “the peak moment” in the MC12's competition life and revealed just how “ahead of time” the car was. In hot conditions it truly came into its own and was much kinder on its tyres than rivals, even with ballast. Bartels raises these points as the car's strengths, along with Vitaphone's “really specialised” pitstops that year. Even if it wasn't the most powerful car on the grid, around 100bhp down on the Matech Ford GT, the MC12 was still vastly superior. “We were everywhere good to medium, the car had no really weak points,”



BMW

BMW M3 GTR V8

As with the CLK-GTR, the absence of a production version of the V8-powered M3 GTR for much of 2001 attracted controversy as American Le Mans Series rival Porsche was vanquished. Entered an enforced retirement when homologation requirements changed for 2002, but cobwebs were blown off for Nurburgring 24 Hours victories in 2004-05.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

JAGUAR XJR-14

It's a crying shame that the car that beat Peugeot to the 1991 world sportscar championship was only ever treated as a mule to win pole at Le Mans and never considered a serious prospect for the race. True, Ross Brawn hadn't designed it with the 24 Hours in mind, but it would have been fascinating to see how the 3.5-litre ‘atmo’ car would have fared beyond the one qualifying

attempt permitted to Andy Wallace, who was not a regular in the car that year. “I think we just didn't have the balls to do it,” says TWR engineer Steve Farrell. “We would have done OK”. It was raced in modified form at Le Mans by Mazda as the MXR-01 in 1992 and later formed the basis for the open-top Porsche WSC95 that claimed back-to-back wins in 1996 and 1997.

SEASON
REVIEW

MERCS CARRY ALL IN MERCURIAL SEASON

Formula E's most unpredictable and random campaign ended with Mercedes starlet Nyck de Vries claiming the drivers' crown, and helping seal manufacturer glory

MATT KEW

 PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

The pandemic created a sliding doors moment for Mercedes. There's what happened in reality, in which it snared the drivers' and teams' Formula E title double. But what took place on the other side of the glass was almost certainly less prosperous.

In either case, Daimler likely would have announced its plan to kill the electric programme at the end of next season.

The pivotal point in question came as a result of the High Performance Powertrains site at Brixworth being repurposed to manufacture breathing aids to support the battle against COVID-19. Engineers fully switched over to assist the hugely commendable venture and, understandably in the circumstances, the Formula E effort ground to an absolute halt.

Although the exact start date of the 2021 calendar was in doubt for some time due to the cancellation of the Santiago and Mexico City rounds, Mercedes had a critical decision to make as its attention returned to racing. Its personnel were split down the middle. Should it rush the development of a new powertrain in time for the start of term, or make use of revised cost-saving homologation rules to carry over the machine that won the final round of 2019-20?

"There were those who said a new car was too risky," reflects team principal Ian James. "But we took the decision and bit the bullet. We knew we could just about deliver the new car in time from a hardware perspective. The question was, could we ensure the reliability was going to be there? That was the question we needed to answer. It was really bloody tight."

A gamble to rapidly usher in the Silver Arrow 02 successor looked to have paid off the moment the competition commenced in Saudi Arabia in late February. For the first of a record-breaking 15 rounds, eventual champion Nyck de Vries was beyond reach. He topped both practice sessions, group qualifying and superpole, before winning the race at a canter. And team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne took fastest lap. "That was really quite masterful," recalls James. "It was a massive boost to the team, a really significant proof point in terms of making sure that we delivered on our targets."

But the jubilation was snuffed out only hours later. On the Sunday morning, Edoardo Mortara lined up to complete his practice start, but his Mercedes-powered Venturi Racing customer car never slowed, and he dived head-first into the TecPro barriers. He was taken away for further checks in hospital and, until Mercedes could satisfactorily prove to the FIA that it had fixed the software code >>

GALLOWAY



that caused the rear-brake failure, the works and customer cars were chunked out of qualifying in what was the “right decision”. “We wanted to make sure that we were 100% sure we resolved the issue and it couldn’t happen again,” continues James. “Otherwise, we’d never have thought about competing.”

Resolve it they did, and de Vries climbed from 20th to bag ninth place, albeit after five cars ahead of him were given at least one 24-second penalty for either failing to use attack mode fully, speeding under the virtual safety car or breaching throttle-map limits.

But on that day, it was the Saudi skyline that dominated headlines. Sam Bird was victorious even as a military coalition intercepted missiles supposedly fired at the paddock by Yemen’s Houthi rebels in what *The Sun* lazily described as “racetrack terror” (those on the ground were oblivious). Meanwhile, Alex Lynn somersaulted through the air after contact with Mitch Evans, requiring another driver to be escorted away in the back of an ambulance.

Rome was an almost relaxing weekend by comparison, save for Oliver Turvey failing to adhere to the practice start procedure and careering into the back of stationary cars on the dummy grid. Mercedes again proved the pick of the litter as Vandoorne claimed pole and held first place before he was swiftly turned around by Andre Lotterer in one of many a clumsy moment for the vastly experienced Porsche racer.

But a double retirement lay in wait for the team. When new leader Lucas di Grassi suffered a random driveshaft failure, a recovering Vandoorne took avoiding action and ran over a proud drain cover to smear into the wall. An unsighted de Vries clattered into his team-mate and the Dutch charger was in the wars the following day also, colliding with Bird on the penultimate lap. But with Vandoorne claiming the race-two win, Mercedes had earned the spoils at the last three tracks it had visited, stretching back to Berlin in 2020.

This was a car that proved super-fast whether doing its business on rough concrete in Germany, the smooth roads of Diriyah, or on a ‘proper’ Formula E street circuit in Italy. As the season wore on, the group qualifying format and operational team blunders would do their best to hide the car supremacy for the factory squad. But the potency of the Venturi Racing charge, led by Mortara, proved the Mercedes powertrain was the benchmark.

The success that arrived in the form of a 1-3, led by de Vries, at Valencia was a touch less meritocratic in a race James refers to as “energy-gate”. A flurry of safety cars and subsequent kWh reductions by the FIA took their dramatic toll when reigning



ROUND BY ROUND

Diriyah 1

1 de Vries

2 Mortara

3 Evans

After Audi and BMW reveal at pre-season testing that they will quit at the end of the year, and the Santiago and Mexico City rounds are canned, de Vries kickstarts what will be his title-winning term in untouchable form. The Merc driver tops all sessions.

Diriyah 2

1 Bird

2 Frijns

3 da Costa

Third-starting Bird beats polesitter Frijns in a fine dice. Only de Vries scores points from the four Mercedes-powered cars after they are kicked out of qualifying following Mortara's brake failure. Lynn somersaults into the air to bring out the red flags.

Rome 1

1 Vergne

2 Bird

3 Evans

Vandoorne is spun by Lotterer; new leader Rowland is handed a penalty. Di Grassi moves into first until a driveshaft error. Vandoorne attempts to miss the Audi and hits a drain cover. He crashes and is collected by de Vries. Vergne picks up the pieces.

Rome 2

1 Vandoorne

2 Sims

3 Wehrlein

Cassidy spins from his maiden pole, then Wehrlein slides past new leader Nato. As the Venturi driver drops back, Wehrlein moves for attack mode to fall behind Vandoorne for the win. Wehrlein is caught napping at a restart and Sims finishes runner-up.

Valencia 1

1 de Vries

2 Muller

3 Vandoorne

Da Costa controls wet race over de Vries as series debuts on permanent track. Flurry of safety cars leads to several energy reductions. In farcical scenes, on final tour, nearly whole field slows to a crawl and de Vries wins.

Valencia 2

1 Dennis

2 Lotterer

3 Lynn

Predicted peloton-style train that paves way for frenetic passing on final lap never materialises. Instead, rookie polesitter Dennis soaks up pressure to win. Lynn loses second after he is tagged by Nato, who clocks 5s penalty to drop off rostrum behind Lotterer.

Monte Carlo

1 da Costa

2 Frijns

3 Evans

Series returns to its best with one of its finest races. Evans makes stunning pass on da Costa through Beau Rivage for lead. But da Costa snares win with last-lap dive into Nouvelle Chicane as Evans tries to save energy. Frijns pounces for second place.



De Vries and Vandoorne
celebrate Mercedes'
double title triumph



Dennis looked in line for
sensational rookie crown
until mechanical woes struck

champion Antonio Felix da Costa crossed the timing line with 15s to spare and created an unexpected extra lap, which was his prerogative. The result, as cars sipped the last dregs of their useable energy, was farcical. Just six drivers finished at anything close to racing speed.

De Vries, running in second, laid a decent claim to the victory he would inherit. But Vandoorne had been chucked off pole when his car's technical passport was wrongly recorded. Starting last, to all intents and purposes, he was out for the count and could do nothing but save energy for the duration. That he finished third when so many others got it wrong was not a masterstroke of strategy, just good fortune. It left Mercedes caught in a crossfire as it tried to celebrate a somewhat fortunate but mesmeric result, while Formula E and the FIA had created a major public image problem as the season hit its nadir.

The run of form for the Three-Pointed Star would stop in its tracks for some time, however. Over the next six races, the team bagged just eight points, including five non-scores. A thrilling series debut on the full Monaco Grand Prix circuit, decided in da Costa's favour by a brilliant last-lap dive on Evans, was a "painful" day for Mercedes. De Vries scuppered his qualifying hopes by

**"A MAJOR PUBLIC IMAGE
PROBLEM HAD BEEN CREATED
AS THE SEASON HIT ITS NADIR"**

knocking the car out of full power mode, while Vandoorne retired with ailing rear brakes, though that disguised a genuine lack of pace.

The bad days that followed in Puebla and New York City were more circumstantial as the qualifying format and a litany of punctures welded the team to the midfield train. As James explains in deference to a mid-season tinker with car set-up: "You can sometimes take a more aggressive approach, which on paper should result in an increase in performance. But in reality, for a number of reasons, it doesn't. That's where we found ourselves."

Mercedes had to sit back and watch its 23-point lead evaporate into a deficit of 33 by the time London made its long-awaited calendar return in the form of the novel and partially indoor configuration around the ExCeL Centre. James says: "I remember saying to the team on Thursday night in London, there >>

Puebla 1

1 di Grassi

2 Rast

3 Mortara

Wehrlein takes control from pole. Rapid rise from fifth to second for Guenther falls flat when he runs over grass to give Wehrlein space to take win. But he is disqualified for wrongly declared tyres, and di Grassi heads Rast for Audi 1-2.

Puebla 2

1 Mortara

2 Cassidy

3 Rowland

Rowland holds first at start. Mortara dives past Wehrlein for second then hits front. Rowland tags wall to gift place to Wehrlein, but he can't pass Mortara. Wehrlein's fraught weekend ends with 5s penalty for Fanboost error to hand Cassidy fine podium.

New York City 1

1 Guenther

2 Vergne

3 di Grassi

Guenther gains a spot when Lynn runs deep at Turn 1, but loses third to Buemi. Takes 15 minutes before Guenther can dive past. Vergne dives down inside of Cassidy at hairpin, which delays lead pair and Guenther sneaks through to victory.

New York City 2

1 Bird

2 Cassidy

3 da Costa

Bird recovers from Saturday practice shunt to land pole and lead what looks to be inevitable Jaguar 1-2. But Evans glances wall three laps from home and is passed by chasing train. In melee, Cassidy jumps a place to second while da Costa rises from seventh to third.

London 1

1 Dennis

2 de Vries

3 Lynn

Lynn holds pole from Dennis in battle for home-soil triumph. Mahindra's hefty powertrain cooks Lynn's tyres, which helps Dennis to delay attack-mode runs and still rejoin ahead. De Vries climbs from ninth to second to mark Mercedes return to form.

London 2

1 Lynn

2 de Vries

3 Evans

Vandoorne keeps Rowland at bay from pole until the Nissan driver smashes both out. Di Grassi uses safety car to hit pits, and gains seven places to take shock lead before black flag for not serving drivethrough. Lynn nurses his rubber to maiden win.

Berlin 1

1 di Grassi

2 Mortara

3 Evans

No fewer than 18 drivers can win title going into final double-header. Clunky team orders cost DS Techeetah from 1-2 on grid, Vergne ahead of da Costa, to give di Grassi spoils. De Vries retains narrow points lead when key rivals fail to capitalise on Mercedes driver qualifying 19th.

Berlin 2

1 Nato

2 Rowland

3 Vandoorne

Third-on-grid Evans can become champion, but car fails to launch and he's collected by Mortara in huge shunt. Rookie title runs away from Dennis when rear axle locks. On attack mode, Nato passes polesitter Vandoorne. De Vries wins crown with eighth.



Squad hopes to stay on after next season with private backing

Four key elements will define the future success of Formula E: the technical roadmap, the financial rules, the marketing opportunities, and the sporting format. Presently, Daimler has found fault with the full quartet, meaning Mercedes will quit at the end of next season.

On the technical side, the Gen3 package arriving in 2022-23 will mark the advent of 470bhp cars and in-race rapid-charging. It's a sizeable step forward on the current 335bhp maximum, even in the context of the near-700bhp tin-tops plying their trade in Pure ETCR.

But generational rules that last for four years at a time now exist in a world where governments are preparing to ban the sale of petrol and diesel cars. It's led a plethora of manufacturers, including Mercedes, to commit to all-electric road-car line-ups by 2040. As the automotive market goes through arguably the most seismic shift in its history, the rate of development is beyond steep, and Formula E's periods of protracted stability are now out of sync.

Then there are the financial rules. While a €20-25million cost cap is tabled, it won't coincide with the first year of Gen3. Meetings of the Technical Working Group are under way, and new-car data has been accessed. It's too late for that initial R&D spending to be undone. This leaves Mercedes vulnerable as the biggest spender, reckoned to be writing cheques above £50m for the current two-season homologation cycle. That appears as a big blip on Daimler's radar.

Some coins are recovered by the race team. Set aside the powertrain development and factor in deals with partners Vestas (wind turbines), NEOM (Saudi Arabian city project), SAP (software) and Modis (digital technology), and the squad is known to be comfortably profitable.

While that model works, the commercial opportunities aren't so rosy. TV audiences aren't where they need to be to make Formula E overcome its technical limitations in favour of being a series designed around entertainment.

And then the sporting format... The FIA rules have come under fire throughout 2021. The persistent frustration lies with the group qualifying format, which sends the top six in the points out on a 'green' circuit and tends to put them at the back of the grid. If Anthony Joshua loses a boxing match, it might be because he's having a bad day, is ill or his opponent is simply better. But it's not because of the rules themselves – unlike in Formula E at present. The by-product of this unpredictability, or randomness, is that Mercedes has little guarantee that its massive spending will be rewarded. That doesn't safely hit the desired 'return on investment'.

There is, however, cause for optimism. Those involved day to day in the Mercedes team, despite the headaches, love competing in the series. That goes some way to explaining why bosses Ian James and Toto Wolff are seeking private investment to ensure the ensemble can remain for Gen3 as a rebranded entry.

“FORMULA E’S PERIODS OF PROTRACTED STABILITY ARE NOW OUT OF SYNC”

was no reason that we shouldn't have that belief in ourselves – but still with a good dose of humility. We shouldn't shy away from the fact that we've got a package that can perform and can win.”

The car that turned up was the one that had proved so deft in the early races. De Vries snared a brace of second places; Vandoorne was on pole for race two and likely would have won before he was punted out by Oliver Rowland. A double podium hoisted de Vries into the championship lead ahead of the Berlin season finale. But as he admitted to Autosport, a qualifying system designed to hurt his prominence meant he was likely 'screwed' for Germany. In fact, he used less polite language.

That no fewer than 18 drivers rocked up at Tempelhof Airport with a mathematical shot of the crown reflected a season that many likened to a school sports day when everyone wins a medal. This was a year with no narrative, no clear barometer of who had the quickest car and who was the standout driver. Perhaps, then, it was apt that the lottery of car unreliability would play the final role in deciding who should be king.

Mercedes botched its qualifying strategy on both days. Vandoorne and de Vries cooked their tyres and hit traffic, which dropped de Vries behind his chief rivals on the grid for the decider. Attention turned to third-starting Evans, who had put his costly wall tap that dropped him out of second place in New York City behind him. The Jaguar Racing driver had his best shot at electric glory when he formed up on the startline in third place. De Vries was down in 13th, and had a slender five-point cushion to defend.

But for the second season in succession, title contender Evans was let down by his Big Cat in Berlin. The Kiwi lurched an inch or two out of his grid box at the start before a suspected inverter glitch caused his car to “trip”. He sat stationary on the grid, eyes darting towards his mirrors until they screwed tightly shut when an unsighted Mortara rocketed into his rear. De Vries's two biggest rivals had been wiped out, but he could have gone the same way.

He had to slice his Mercedes to the inside and cut between the pitwall and the wreckage under a spray of carbonfibre.

Attention then switched to breakout rookie sensation Jake Dennis. The BMW Andretti driver needed to overturn a four-point deficit to land a remarkable title and defy expectations one last time. On the second lap of the restarted contest, while running in eighth, he pulled his regen braking paddle and suffered a technical failure, and speared into the wall.

Now, de Vries was certain of the title so long as he kept his nose clean. But he began trading paint and taking unnecessary risks – including pinching with his team-mate – in the final laps. Fortunately, it was an aggressive strategy he would not come to rue. De Vries became the deserved recipient of the first *world* championship FE title, while Mercedes clinched the teams' spoils over Jaguar Racing by just four points. “It's phenomenal to have achieved that,” James concludes. “We certainly didn't take the easy route. It went right down to the wire. Do I want to repeat that next year? Absolutely, in terms of winning the double. But God, do I want to do it a lot earlier in the season, in a much more straightforward manner...”

Already setting the target of back-to-back titles might appear premature from James. But a two-year homologation tenure means the Silver Arrow 02 yardstick returns next season. It also comes from a team used to consecutive championships in Formula 1. More than that, as Mercedes already prepares to pack its bags at the end of 2022, for James and his colleagues, it's very much a case of 'if not now, then when?'. ❧

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
POS	TEAM	PTS
1	Mercedes	181
2	Jaguar Racing	177
3	DSTecheetah	166
4	AudiABT	165
5	Envision Virgin Racing	165
6	BMW Andretti	157
7	Venturi Racing	146
8	Porsche	137
9	Mahindra Racing	132
10	Nissan e.dams	97
11	Dragon Penske Autosport	47
12	NIO 333	19

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



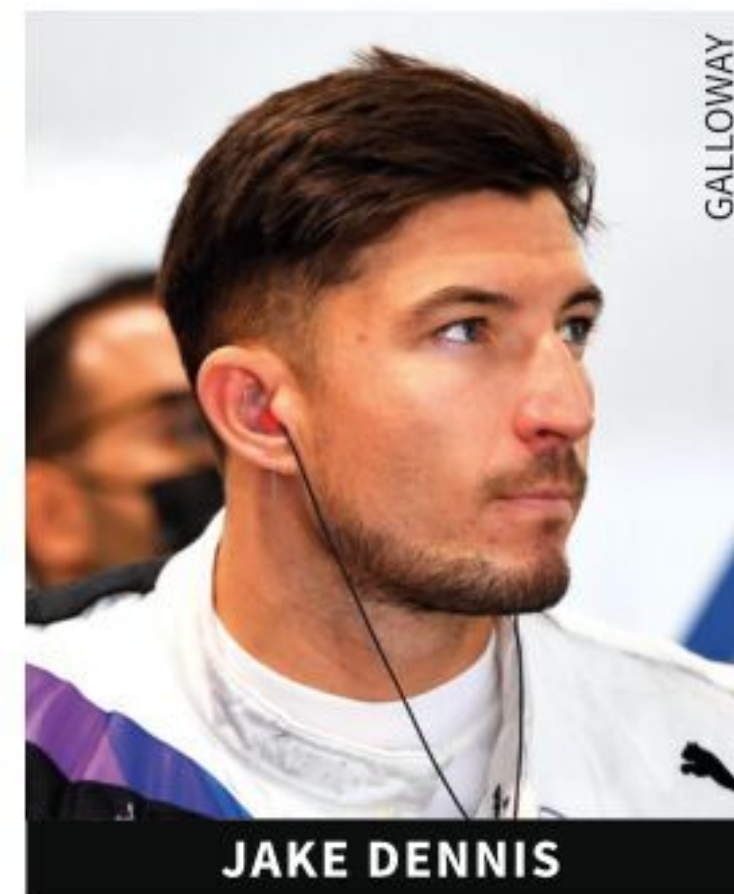
MITCH EVANS

1 A wall tap in New York City that cost second didn't end his best shot at the title, thanks to the qualifying format. But Evans was cruelly denied by the grid failure in Berlin. With an unmatched five podiums, he found a very rare commodity this term: high consistency.



NYCK DE VRIES

2 Utterly imperious in Saudi Arabia, and only gained one place artificially in the Spain madness to win again. Made a crucial qualifying error in Monaco and was quiet in NYC. Absolutely a deserving champ with more peaks than Evans, but more troughs too.



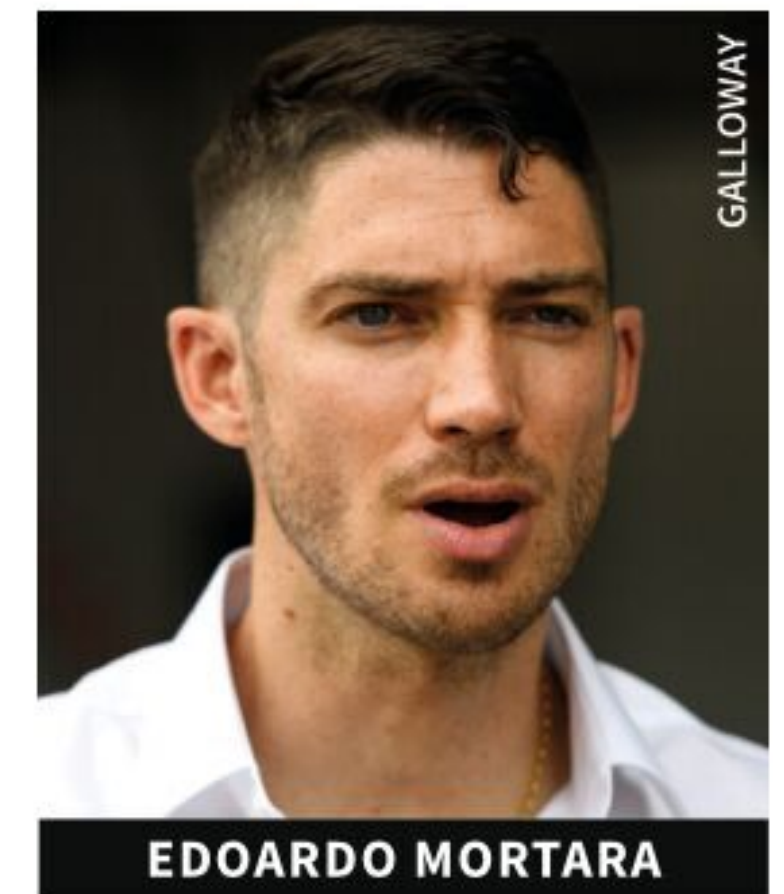
JAKE DENNIS

3 The best-ever rookie season. Dennis took just six races to win, and then triumphed again in London. Soundly beat his team-mate and maximised an average car. He might have landed a remarkable title were it not for a technical failure in Berlin.



ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA

4 A contrived qualifying format, a new car that lost all its supremacy, being another of Lotterer's victims, and losing the 'energy-gate' win in Valencia. They all undid a title defence while da Costa's driving was stellar. But loses marks for a tepid Berlin opener.



EDOARDO MORTARA

5 Brilliance with a customer Merc engine also hurts de Vries's ranking. Win and podium in Puebla was the strongest weekend by anyone. Huge shunts bookended his year and dashed title hopes along with average Monaco, NYC and London outings.



ROBIN FRIJNS

6 Was on course to take the crown without a win, reflecting a solid campaign that cut through the folly. While Frijns could repeatedly climb eight or more places to defy the odds, that was needed when his one-lap pace was lacking, with only four top-10 starts.



STOFFEL VANDOORNE

7 Lost pole at Valencia, so his 'charge' to third in the energy debacle can't be held up as a paragon of good strategy when he was all set to be out for the count. But he was still the one-lap king with three poles, and proved exceptional in Rome, London and Berlin.



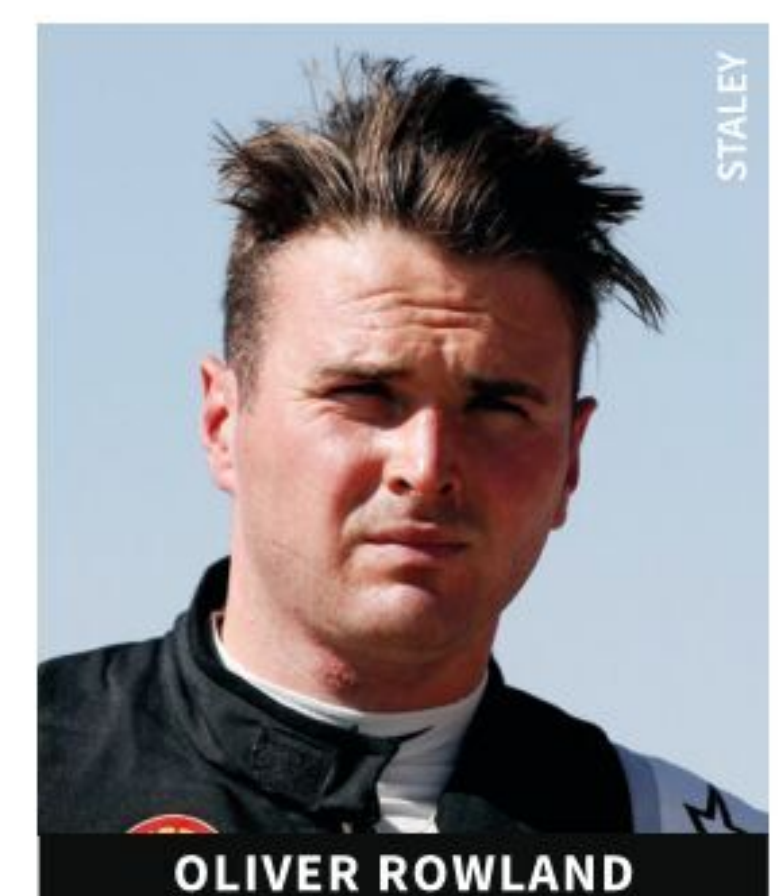
LUCAS DI GRASSI

8 Win inherited in Puebla made up for one lost to a driveshaft failure in Rome. A second victory in Berlin proves his value to the grid beyond being a series ambassador. But, as with last season, the experienced operator was involved in too many needless clashes.



SAM BIRD

9 Moved to Jaguar to win the title. That didn't happen at the first time of asking. Win in Saudi was sublime. Crashing on Saturday to win on Sunday in NYC was this crazed season in a nutshell. But Evans had the better of Bird overall to limit his climb up this list.



OLIVER ROWLAND

10 Jumps ahead of Rast, who was beaten by his team-mate, by the tiniest margin. Outperformed an undercooked Nissan and rues a lost title thanks to a penalty while first in Rome, clashing with Vandoorne in London and being a Valencia casualty.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	PTS
1	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mercedes	Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	1	9	R	R	1	16	R	9	R	13	18	2	2	22	8	99
2	Edoardo Mortara (ITA)	Venturi Racing	Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	2	NS	R	4	R	9	12	3	1	14	17	9	11	2	R	92
3	Jake Dennis (GBR)	BMW Andretti	BMW iFE.21	12	R	R	13	8	1	16	5	5	R	16	1	9	5	R	91
4	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing	Jaguar I-TYPE 5	3	R	3	6	R	15	3	8	9	R	13	14	3	3	R	90
5	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Envision Virgin Racing	Audi e-tron FE07	17	2	4	18	6	19	2	16	11	5	8	13	4	15	12	89
6	Sam Bird (GBR)	Jaguar Racing	Jaguar I-TYPE 5	R	1	2	R	EX	14	7	R	12	9	1	R	R	R	7	87
7	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi	Audi e-tron FE07	9	8	R	R	7	10	10	1	18	3	14	6	EX	1	20	87
8	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	DS Techeetah	DSE-Tense FE21	11	3	R	7	EX	22	1	6	R	12	3	8	R	7	R	86
9	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	Mercedes	Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	8	13	R	1	3	R	R	7	13	R	12	7	15	12	3	82
10	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah	DSE-Tense FE21	15	12	1	11	9	7	4	R	8	2	R	12	12	6	11	80

11 **Pascal Wehrlein** (Porsche 99X Electric) 79; 12 **Alex Lynn** (Mahindra M7Electro) 78; 13 **Rene Rast** (Audi e-tron FE07) 78; 14 **Oliver Rowland** (e.dams Nissan IM03) 77; 15 **Nick Cassidy** (Envision Virgin Racing Audi e-tron FE07) 76; 16 **Maximilian Guenther** (BMW Andretti BMW iFE.21) 66; 17 **Andre Lotterer** (Porsche 99X Electric) 58; 18 **Norman Nato** (Venturi Racing Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02) 54; 19 **Alexander Sims** (Mahindra M7Electro) 54; 20 **Nico Muller** (Dragon Penske Autosport Penske EV-5) 30; 21 **Sebastien Buemi** (e.dams Nissan IM03) 20; 22 **Sergio Sette Camara** (Dragon Penske Autosport Penske EV-5) 16; 23 **Oliver Turvey** (NIO 333 001) 13; 24 **Tom Blomqvist** (NIO 333 001) 6; 25 **Joel Eriksson** (Dragon Penske Autosport Penske EV-5) 1.

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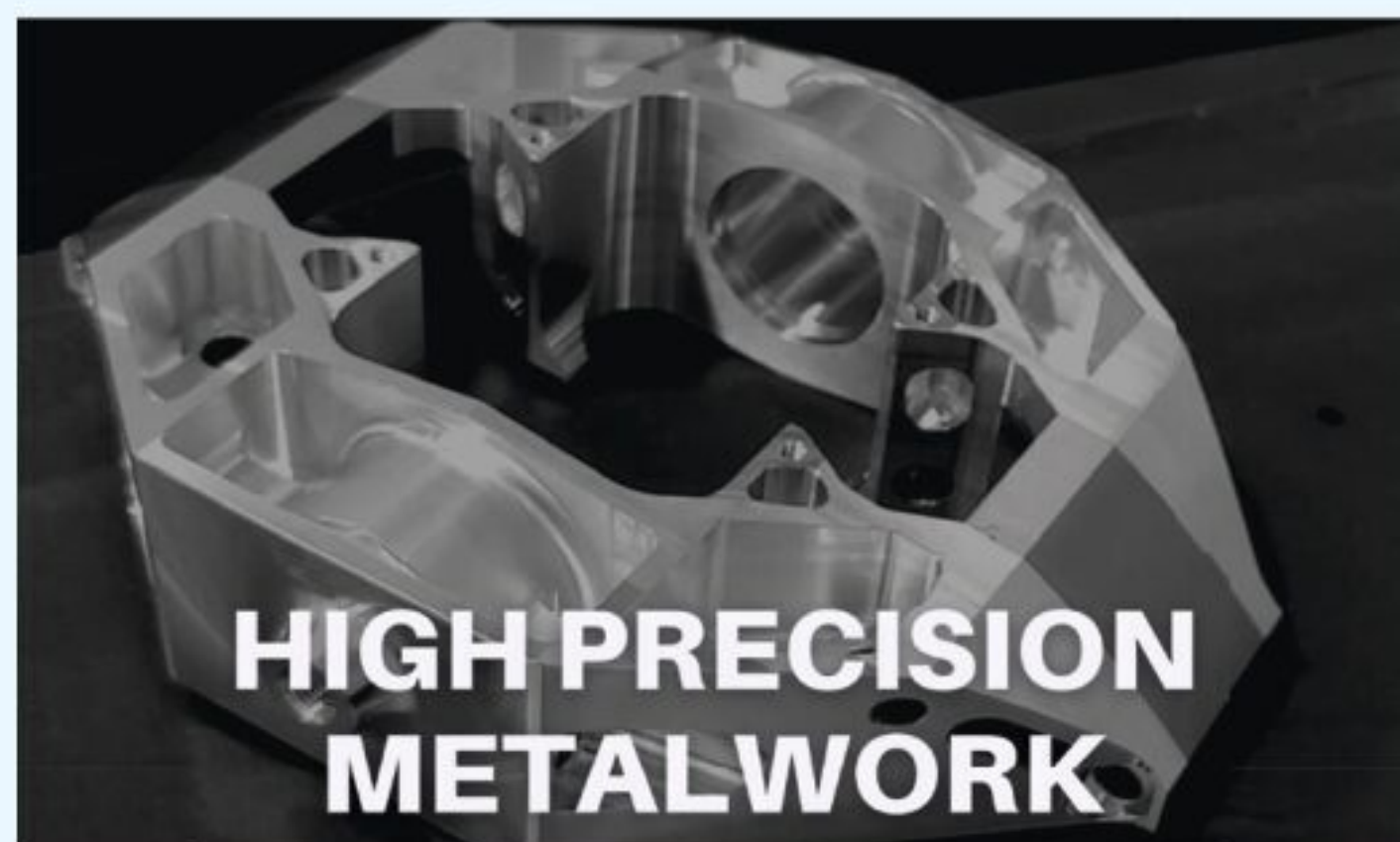
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- Review, understand and implement methods from state-of-the-art literature in the areas of Linear Algebra, Optimization, Statistics, Machine Learning
- Write reusable libraries to be shared with other team members
- Develop and work with modern containerisation and orchestration frameworks
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GB4 Palmer launches new entry-level single-seater series

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NEW SINGLE-SEATER SERIES CREATED BY MSV FOR 2022

GB4

A new single-seater series, the GB4 Championship, is to be launched in the UK next year as an entry-level category for young drivers.

The concept has been created by MotorSport Vision, which already operates the newly renamed GB3 Championship – formerly BRDC British F3 – and has a history of running affordable single-seater series such as Formula Palmer Audi, Formula 2 and BRDC Formula 4.

GB4 will compete on the same bill as British GT and GB3, consisting of a 21-race calendar (minus the traditional trip to Spa), in order to keep costs down for teams that decide to run cars in both series. Driver budgets are expected to be between £120,000–£150,000, with a £50,000 prize awarded to the champion.

The new championship will use the existing Tatuus F4-T014 chassis, a mainstay of F4 categories in Italy, Germany and Spain, along with a large majority of components from the current GB3 car, which will be replaced by a tub fitted with a halo for next year.

The 1.4-litre turbocharged engine, capable of 160bhp, will be supplied by Autotecnica Motori and be maintained by current GB3 partner Mountune, while

the cars will run on the same specification of Pirelli tyre used in GB3.

The announcement comes as Motorsport UK, the sport's governing body, has taken over the running of British F4 for next year, when it will introduce a halo-fitted Tatuus, with costs expected to be significantly higher than that of GB4.

MSV chief executive Jonathan Palmer said: "Some drivers are going to find that budget but, for others, it's going to be too big a barrier – I think there will be a lot of kids that won't get the opportunity to start at a professional level in single-seaters.

"I think it's even more important these days with the importance of diversity and inclusion. One of the biggest barriers for minority groups is still costs of getting involved in these things. I think George [Russell, 2014 BRDC F4 champion] will provide a lot of inspiration for young drivers to think, 'We can do it, we have got a chance if there's an affordable championship.'"

The GB4 Championship has yet to be approved by Motorsport UK, with all new series required to gain a permit, but Palmer is confident that there will be no issue ahead of the deadline at the end of October and "it's not designed to compete with British F4". He also hopes that 15-year-olds will be allowed to drive in the series.

STEFAN MACKLEY

OPINION



It's apt that the same day George Russell should be announced as a Mercedes Formula 1 driver, a

new entry-level single-seater championship is launched in the UK.

Long before he received backing from the German manufacturer, Russell began making a name for himself in BRDC F4. He won the title in 2014 during its second season and, just as that category acted as an affordable step on the single-seater ladder for young drivers, MotorSport Vision's newest series promises to do the same.

On paper, it all makes sense. A spot on the British GT support bill will not only bring exposure but also means that teams competing in the GB3 Championship can feasibly field cars in the newly created series without breaking the bank.

The fact that the 'new' car is an affordable and proven entity helps, as does the ability to mothball parts from the current GB3 cars. Shared test days and same specification of tyres are all minor details but will serve to really drive the costs down.

Yes, £120k–£150k isn't affordable for a lot of people but, in the context of single-seater racing, it certainly is and that can only be a good thing. With £50,000 up for grabs for the winner and a natural progression into GB3, without a doubt it's going to be an appealing prospect for many young drivers.

A potential stumbling block could be that it still needs approval from Motorsport UK – normally a general formality, except that the sport's governing body is also now the promoter of the British F4 Championship. While MSV chief executive Jonathan Palmer insists his new series is not a threat to British F4, the governing body might not see things that way. At almost half the cost and with the GB3 Championship also under MSV's remit, there may well be rumblings behind the scenes.

Even so, it could well offer the chance for the next George Russell to come through the ranks via a much needed entry point for the next generation. And that surely can't be a bad thing for anyone.

STEFAN MACKLEY

New Classic date creates Gold Cup clash

HISTORICS

The Silverstone Classic will be run over the August Bank Holiday weekend next season, several weeks later than its traditional slot, pitching it against the Oulton Park Gold Cup, which the Historic Sports Car Club also organises.

The catalyst for the fixture change is a MotoGP calendar reshuffle, in which Britain's world championship round will be moved forward to the weekend previously reserved for the Classic, two to three weeks after the British Grand Prix.

"By switching The Classic to the August Bank Holiday weekend, we are expanding what's already an incredible family festival to create a fabulous end-of-summer celebration," said Nick Wigley, CEO of promoter Goose Live Events.

HSCC CEO Andy Dee-Crowne remains positive, despite the calendar congestion. "From an operational point of view, I'm not unduly worried [about the clash]," he said. "As far as the club is concerned, I have already put a plan in place to have two teams

[of senior officials] working in parallel.

"We will have to change the content of the Gold Cup because Historic Formula 2 [together with Thundersports and another grid to be decided] will be at Silverstone, with Formula Junior. Some F5000 owners have multiple cars, thus are likely to be there too.

"The HSCC wants to provide a quality Gold Cup, but I'm going to have to cut my cloth to suit my pocket. We have options

and will be working with MSV [Oulton circuit operator], but it may mean greater focus on sportscars and saloons for 2022."

An important aspect to be considered is a logistical one on the ground. Because of the large number of marshals required to run a Silverstone GP circuit event, and the loyalty of the orange army to the HSCC, the clash will inevitably split the volunteer workforce.

MARCUS PYE



Collins's Audi R8 tops Brighton Speed Trials

SPRINT

A twin-turbocharged Audi R8 V10+ supercar, with around 1000bhp on tap, set best time of the day at last Saturday's Brighton National Speed Trials, the logistics of which were pulled together in record time following a late reprieve for the event first staged in 1905.

Alex Collins streaked down Madeira Drive, covering the standing-start quarter mile in 9.68 seconds in the class runs

and 9.81s in the Top 10 Run-Off – with a top terminal velocity of 159mph – in the Ingolstadt rocket (right), prepared by the family's QSTuning concern.

Second in the run-off was Damien Bradley (Subaru Legacy), whose 1.86s for the first 64 feet represented the best acceleration, with finish figures of 10.01s/141.5mph. Simon Paul (Nissan Skyline GT-R) completed the podium with 10.63s/137.2mph.

Granted an event permit



by Motorsport UK in mid-August, organiser Brighton & Hove Motor Club's members and contractors put the logistics in place and built the course in two days prior to the meeting.

Due to the late go-ahead, around 110 car competitors

entered, while barrier changes meant the Auto Cycle Union refused to licence the course for motorcycles. Should this remain the case, the option of running with an expanded 200-car entry in 2022 will be explored.

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Whorton-Eales to race Subaru TCR car with Jamsport in 2022

TOURING CAR TROPHY

Former Mini Challenge champion Ant Whorton-Eales is set to return to racing next season, driving one of two Subaru Impreza WRX STI TCR cars Jamsport has acquired to run in the Touring Car Trophy.

Whorton-Eales has enjoyed a long association with Jamsport, winning the Renault UK Clio Cup and Mini Challenge titles with the team before finishing third in the standings last year on his return to the Mini series, but has not raced in 2021.

"I'm really excited about the prospect of competing in a TCR car in the UK," he said. "I've watched the championship develop over the course of this season and seen how competitive it is."

"I know I'll be working with a good team in Jamsport and the Subaru looks and

sounds fantastic. I'm really looking forward to help develop the car into a competitive package – I can't wait to get started."

The Subaru were last raced in TCR Australia and Jamsport boss Jamie Going expects them to arrive in the UK in the next three to four weeks. "We'll then pull them to bits, go testing, and make improvements," he said. "It's an exciting challenge and there's a massive following for Subaru over here."

Going engineered race winner Max Hart in the series this year and was impressed by the work Stewart Lines has done since taking over TCR UK and moving it to the Time Attack bill. "I think TCR is really taking off now – putting it on the package it's on means it's getting 20,000 to 40,000 people spectating," he added.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Treatment fundraiser for Pearson

GINETTA JUNIOR

A fundraising page has been set up to help cover the costs of former Ginetta Junior racer Joel Pearson's cancer treatment.

The teenager was due to graduate to British Formula 4 this season with Argenti Motorsport but his racing plans had to be put on hold following his diagnosis during the winter.



Although Pearson's tumour has shrunk after chemotherapy, his rare form of bone cancer cannot be fully eradicated without expensive carbon ion therapy treatment, which is not available on the NHS. Instead, he is due to travel to Germany to one of the tiny number of centres that offer the treatment, and his sister Abi has set up a fundraising page to help with the costs.

"The Heidelberg centre in Germany is where, with your help, Joel will receive specialist treatment that will take over seven weeks to complete while needing daily treatment together with more chemotherapy during his stay," said Abi on the fundraising page. "Costs to cover the treatment start at £270,000 and will increase with any additional MRI/CT scans/chemotherapy and blood transfusions."

As Autosport closed for press, £10,000 of the £100,000 target had already been raised. To donate, head to gofundme.com/f/help-joel-get-overseas-treatment-and-beat-cancer.

IN THE HEADLINES

HUNT'S FUN CUP JOY

Freddie Hunt, son of 1976 world champion James, made his Fun Cup debut at Croft last weekend, sharing the GT Radial car with Ellis Hadley and finishing 10th. "I hadn't sat in the car until Friday's test, but this was proper racing, much harder than LMP and GT and great fun," he said. "No driver aids, you just get on with it and it's so close. Given the chance, I would love to do it again, it's one of the best things I have ever raced in."

LASER TOOLS AND HANNAH

Logan Hannah will make her Formula Ford 1600 comeback this weekend after teaming up with British Touring Car sponsor Laser Tools for the National FF1600 meeting at Oulton Park, driving a Graham Brunton Racing-prepared Ray. "After not being able to race in 2021 due to difficult circumstances, I am very ready to head to Oulton," she said. GBR will also run regular driver Michael Gray this weekend.

GREYSTONE GT'S EXPANSION

New GT Cup squad Greystone GT will expand to run a fourth McLaren 570S GT4 car in next weekend's Donington Park round. The additional entry will be piloted by former British GT racer Michael Broadhurst and novice Phillip Carter, who has undergone a coaching programme. "This is yet more validation that our focus on driver development is doing exactly what we hoped," said team boss Mark McLoughlin.

CAROLINE IN FOR McKENNA

Reigning British GT4 champion Jamie Caroline will return to the series this weekend at Oulton Park, replacing Scott McKenna at Speedworks Motorsport. Caroline has been competing in the GT4 European series in 2021, but will now race the Toyota GR Supra (below) in place of McKenna, the first member of Toyota Gazoo Racing UK's young driver programme. A Speedworks statement attributed his absence "to unforeseen personal circumstances".





MASS DRIVES EX-BELLOF PORSCHE 956

Formula 1 and Le Mans race winner Jochen Mass was guest of honour at the Brands Hatch Festival of Porsche last weekend, driving a handful of laps in a 956 from 1983, chassis 007, now restored to its original Rothmans livery. The demonstration was limited by battery problems, but was enough to prompt Mass to recall that “these were wonderful cars, and this takes me back to the 1980s”. “He [current owner Chris Crawford] is tall and slim and I’m short and squat, and some changes would be needed for me to do fast laps, but thank you for letting me drive it.” The car was driven and crashed by Stefan Bellof after setting a record-breaking lap at the Nurburgring, and had a somewhat chequered history thereafter, including a spell in an American museum. **Photo by Gary Hawkins**

Historic Rally series back after 23 months

HISTORIC RALLYING

The British Historic Rally Championship finally resumed last Sunday, 23 months after the previous round following the impact of COVID-19 on UK rallying.

The shortened three-event season opened on the closed roads of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire on the second running of the Three Shires Stages. Short, sharp special stages on narrow lanes

greeted contenders in the 14 special stages that made up 66 competitive miles.

Although on-event timing problems meant final results were not published by the time Autosport went to press, it is likely that Nick Elliott and Dave Price took a narrow win over Ben Friend and Cliffy Simmons in a battle of Ford Escort Mk2s. Neither driver is an asphalt expert but are set to be the key title contenders as the series moves to gravel for the final two events in the



forests of Yorkshire and Kielder.

Elliott grabbed a nine-second margin over the opening loop of stages. Friend kept up a determined pursuit and the gap was only around six seconds heading into the final stage. However, an overshoot cost

Friend crucial time, with the final margin reckoned to be just eight seconds.

“If we have won it, I’m over the moon,” said Elliott. “It has been a really tough, hot, fast and tricky day.”

PAUL LAWRENCE

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Tony Broster's racing legacy

Fifty years of racing experience as competitor, car preparer, engine builder, mentor and promoter enabled others to follow in his wheeltracks

MARCUS PYE

I have said it before, and it's worth reiterating, that it's not until somebody is gone that you reflect, and begin to fully appreciate, the depth of positive impact they had on your life. From a personal perspective, my old mate Tony Broster, who died last month at 80, was a profound influence.

The first time I met Tony was at Thruxton in the early 1970s. He was competing in his yellow Newbridge Racing Dulon Formula Ford; I was a British Automobile Racing Club junior race assistant scouring the paddock. We had a brief chat about the car, and he autographed my programme.

In his early thirties, he'd been around the scene for a few years, a tough guy who raced for the hell of it, as opposed to the young bucks hell-bent on reaching F1, irrespective of ability or whether it would bankrupt their families getting more than a couple of steps up the ladder. An alumnus of the school of hard knocks, and proud of it, Broster had worked at sea, toiling in the engine room of the Queen Mary, before serving an apprenticeship with celebrated Brooklands racer and car constructor Commodore Hector Hobbs, who owned the Riley agency in Southampton.

Broster enjoyed the early days of FFord, campaigning a Titan at home and abroad – in the Johnson Wax Euroseries – in 1968–69, with Max Samuel-Camps as his mechanic. They saw plenty of action, particularly as Englishmen abroad, going race to race

“He did not suffer fools, had an irreverent sense of humour, and was a wonderful raconteur”

stretching 'glider' fuel budgets. Several seasons passed and Broster, using a Brian Hart Lotus Ford twin-cam engine belonging to buddy John Fenning (of Willans Harness fame), shared a Dulon with fellow Hampshireman and future F3 racer Bev Bond in 1971 for Formula Atlantic's debut season, and assorted FLibre races.

Reverting to FF1600, he remained a fixture at the sharp end of club races, particularly at Thruxton and Castle Combe, within striking distance of the garage business he ran with ex-Mini racer Sean Wiles at Timsbury, near Romsey, where a succession of cars were prepared.

Newbridge Racing – named for the hamlet between Cadnam and Ower where Tony had lived with his mother Monica – attempted to go Monoposto racing in 1968, with the NRD BW7 based on Tecno components. Broster won

the 1981 title, driving Lyncar 001, Martin Slater's design originally Mike 'XTrac' Endean's and later Peter Venn's.

Fast forward to 1985 and Broster, concerned about rising costs, sought a route into Mono for impecunious enthusiasts. He asked my opinion and I suggested older FF2000 cars, the earliest around for a decade and obsolete. Despite reflecting the club's ethos, it was rejected.

'Bros', as by then I knew him, was gobsmacked. Having uttered some choice comment, he said: "Marc, if they don't want us what else can we do?" Using the same model, we looked at F3, revolutionised by Ron Tauranac's Ralt RT3. The answer was staring us in the face.

Dozens of great cars were out there gathering dust and worth nothing. With Jackie Stewart and Jody Scheckter's F1 Tyrrell crew chief Roy Topp, based nearby, advising on technical regulations, we decided upon 1980 as the cut-off point and founded the Classic F3 Association for 1986.

Take-up was strong as this was technology for peanuts. I'd always loved Argo JM6s, and Anglia Cars' Jo Marquart found me one of Thierry Tassin's works cars in Sweden for £6000 complete! As a single guy with some savings, I also subbed Tony for half of his ex-Patrick Gaillard Chevron B43 and we helped others find steeds. Most had Toyota/Novamotor 2T-G engines. Buying Toyota GB's David Ewles – a rally man – a pub lunch, asking nothing other than could we call the category Toyota F3 and keeping an eye on it, proved a masterstroke. The following year a £10k fund was offered.

The fast-growing promotion split from being a sideshow within its Open Series to a championship in 1987 and was recognised with the Bert Lampkin Trophy. 'Bros' won the inaugural title and I wiped out my second Argo (ex-David Sears) chasing him, running 1-2 at Castle Combe, when a front wishbone joint broke.

An excellent engineer/preparer, Tony rebuilt it on a new monocoque that dear old Jo supplied affordably, then raced it to victory at Brands Hatch while I watched Martin Donnelly win the Macau Grand Prix. I burst into tears in Hong Kong's post office when news reached me the following day.

To service the CF3/TF3 category, 'Bros' and Wiles bought Novamotor's UK engine business from John Penistan, who got them up to speed. In later years, operating solo in North Devon, Broster built FF1600 Kent engines under the Newbridge banner, which had served the sport for 50 years.

He did not suffer fools, had an irreverent sense of humour, and was a wonderful raconteur and mentor. Without his guidance many, including Paul Quinn (who bought his Chevron), Thruxton circuit boss Pat Blakeney ("I owe my career to Tony") and myself would never have been able to share his passion for racing at first hand. Thank you 'Bros'. 🏁

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MOTORSPORT.COM/PRIME

Gore (80) leads away but wouldn't take a victory over the weekend, despite moving to the top of the points

Gore back to the fore in F1000 as title rivals suffer problems

OULTON PARK
750MC
4 SEPTEMBER

The complexion of the 2021 F1000 Championship changed dramatically at Oulton Park, with the two leading contenders enduring a day to forget and Dan Gore claiming two podiums to leapfrog to the top of the standings.

Lee Morgan headed to Cheshire atop the table, but the 2013 champion's woes started in qualifying when his chain snapped. A rush to prepare for the opening race was rewarded with fifth from the back, but he had to drive around clutch problems and his team couldn't ready the car for race two.

Elliott Mitchell started the day 10 points behind Morgan and went from 10th, but completed just three laps before retiring with engine concerns. He started the second race from the back, but couldn't shake off the issues and again pulled out.

Gore, who was 13 points behind Morgan pre-event, left Oulton 16 points ahead, but his position could have been better still. He led the first race from pole, but was constantly threatened by 2019 Locost

champion Tom Gadd, returning to the fray after a bout of COVID-19. Gadd pulled off a brilliant move around the outside at Cascades to grab the initiative, with Rob Welham following through to second. Gore could not get back on terms, although he did bag the points for second after Welham was penalised 15 seconds for a false start and track-limits infringement. Gadd was delighted with the win, though — the best result of his fledgling F1000 career had been been ninth beforehand.

Welham's startline enthusiasm was his downfall again in the second race. He reeled out a convincing on-the-road victory over Matthew Booth, only to have 10s added to his time. Gore would have claimed second again, but Welham set fastest lap on the final tour to get a couple of tenths clear on adjusted times.

Ryan Morgan claimed the Classic Stock Hatch title at his second attempt after transferring from the ovals, with third and fourth-position finishes being enough to secure the crown with a meeting to spare.

Andrew Thorpe's Citroen AX assumed the lead from Morgan's father Pete on the opening lap in race one, but multiple champion Lee Scott (Fiesta XR2i) got ahead of both at the start of lap four of five. Morgan Jr passed his dad's similar Fiesta XR2 for the final podium place at Cascades.

Chris Dear led the second race initially in his Peugeot 205 GTI, but Morgan Sr took the lead at Old Hall on lap three of six, hanging on to the win by 0.27s with Thorpe third.

Joe Stables took his Radical PR6 to victory in the Bikesports opener, he and Scott Mittell (in the eponymous MC41RR) lapping five seconds faster than anyone else. They weren't that close together in race

WEEKEND WINNERS

F1000

Race 1 Tom Gadd

Race 2 Matthew Booth

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Race 1 Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i)

Race 2 Pete Morgan (Ford Fiesta XR2)

BIKESPORTS

Race 1 Joe Stables (Radical PR6)

Race 2 Scott Mittell (Mittell MC41RR)

BMW CAR CLUB RACING

Race 1 Niall Bradley (E46 M3)

Race 2 Brad Sheehan (E46 M3, below)

HOT HATCH

Race 1 Ryan Polley (Honda Civic Type R)

Race 2 Philip Wright (Honda Civic Type R)

MA7DA

Race 1 Ben Powney

Race 2 Danny Andrew



For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

one, but Mittell pushed Stables hard in the second race until the Radical suffered a driveshaft failure. Mittell was left clear, and along with newly crowned Class B champion Leon Morrell (Radical SR3) he goes into the Snetterton finale just three points adrift of Stables — after dropped scores — for the overall title.

Niall Bradley and Brad Sheehan shared the BMW Car Club spoils, as they have done for most of the year in their E46 M3s. Sheehan made the decisive move to get ahead of Michael Pensavalle's version amid traffic on lap nine of 11 in race two.

IAN SOWMAN

Ryan Morgan took Classic Stock Hatch crown a round early





Lyall was able to resist multiple attacks to claim both Caterham 270R victories

Lyall's double win all the sweeter after close Caterham 270R scraps

**CROFT
BRSCC
4-5 SEPTEMBER**

Stephen Lyall celebrated a hard-fought double Caterham 270R victory at Croft, his first wins in the category.

Blair McConachie was the initial race-one pacesetter, joined by Lyall in an early break. Carl Jones and Harry Eyre then made it four, before Lyall hit the front into Tower on lap seven of 20. While Jones and Lyall then alternated for the lead, McConachie was down to third and missed a gear at the chicane. He was out with a buzzed engine, and so was Eyre after colliding with him. It remained close onto the penultimate tour, when Jones slipped up at the chicane to leave Lyall clear, while Wes Payne followed them to the flag after ousting William Brunt on the last lap.

Lyall and Jones tried to make a break again in race two until Payne split them at the Complex and made it three for the lead from lap five. It remained close for the whole race, with Payne only 0.302 seconds down on Lyall at the finish.

With championship leader and four-

time winner UVio Hofmann's Lotus out of contention with a hub failure early in the Fun Cup race, a new winner looked a strong possibility. Paul Rivett led from the start for Tachosys with RAW Motorsport, but his hopes of building a lead were thwarted by two safety-car interventions.

After two of the four hours, reigning champion Team Olympian led by 8.9s from GCI Racing, with 11 cars still on the lead lap. With Chris Dovell handing to Kristian Rose, Olympian got stronger and stronger, putting Riley Phillips in to bring the car to the flag.

Marcus Clutton and Harry Mailer were his main rivals for Enduro Motorsport and DespatchBay, and they began to work together to try to reduce Phillips's lead. The plan failed and Phillips took the win by 6.889s, but the duel for second went down to the wire. Mailer dived ahead into Clervaux on the last lap but, exiting Tower, Clutton came back and was ahead through the Jim Clark Esses. Clutton held on with inches to spare, while GCI's Craig Butterworth snatched a late fourth from Viking's Mark Holme into Sunny.

Lewis Thompson was another double winner, continuing his dominance of the Caterham 310R category. He led for most of race one, but couldn't shake off his rivals and swapped the lead a couple of times with David Yates. The race was red flagged just after Yates managed to nose back ahead, only to overshoot at Tower, but he was still a safe second. James Wingfield and Pete Walters completed the top four, after contact when Harry Cook clipped the chicane.

There was a constant squabble between Thompson, Yates and Wingfield in the second contest. On the final lap, Thompson retook Yates at Tower and Wingfield had to



WEEKEND WINNERS

CATERHAM 270R

Races 1 & 2 Stephen Lyall

FUN CUP

Team Olympian
(Chris Dovell/Kristian Rose/Riley Phillips)

CATERHAM 310R

Races 1 & 2 Lewis Thompson

CITYCAR CUP

Races 1 & 2 Nic Grindrod (Citroen C1, below)

CATERHAM ROADSPORT

Race 1 Taylor O'Flanagan

Race 2 Dominique Mannsperger

CATERHAM ACADEMY

White Charlie Lower

Green Freddie Chiddicks



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

settle for third. Just 0.785s covered the trio, who were well clear of fourth-placed Cook.

Nic Grindrod headed Steve Laidlaw and Richard Bliss in a three-lap CityCar Cup restart and was a lights-to-flag winner in the second race too, despite Laidlaw keeping the pressure on throughout.

Taylor O'Flanagan managed to fend off Dominique Mannsperger in the Caterham Roadsport opener but, after battling for the whole of race two, Mannsperger turned the tables and sealed victory.

PETER SCHERER

Clark tightens grip on Porsche title with brace

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR FESTIVAL OF PORSCHE
5 SEPTEMBER

Reigning Porsche Club champion Simon Clark strengthened his grip on the 2021 title with wins in his Cayman in both races at Sunday's Festival of Porsche, an event that was postponed last year and boosted by perfect conditions and a healthy crowd.

Chris Dyer's Cayman had pole and looked a winner of race one after Clark slithered on some dropped fluid, but Clark mugged him on lap 20 of 29 as they blasted either side of a backmarker in front of the pits. Kevin Harrison (996) had a relatively quiet ride in third, but fourth down to eighth was anybody's, depending on how they encountered traffic in a field of more than 30 cars. Peter Morris finished fourth, defending against Mark and Jake McAleer, Kevin Molyneaux and James Caley.



Reigning champion Clark was on form as Festival of Porsche event returned

Clark led throughout race two with Mark McAleer (997) in pursuit. The chasing pack reshuffled with Jake McAleer heading Caley, Morris, Dyer and Harrison.

The same cars filled the top three in each race for the new-for-2021 911 Challenge, but with different drivers on board two of them. David Burke won race one and Brian Saunders race two in their RSR, and the Nathan Luckey and David Harrison 964 was

third. James Neal (964) was twice second.

Adam Southgate (Boxster) nailed the start of the All Porsche Trophy and only looked back to see where the rest had gone. He finished almost a lap ahead of the next three, who were bunched together with local expert Colin Tester (Boxster) second, and the Trevor Lewis/Harry Mailer car grabbing third from Colin Gillespie's Cayman.

BRIAN PHILLIPS

Menzies breaks another record as he edges closer to crown

PRESCOTT
BRITISH HILLCLIMB
4-5 SEPTEMBER

Wallace Menzies was the hero of Prescott on Sunday when he added another victory in the British Hillclimb Championship with a sensational new outright hill record of 34.65s, a massive 0.8s of a second inside Sean Gould's two-year-old mark at the Gloucestershire venue.

With Menzies and Alex Summers sharing the top 12 run-off victories,



Previous Prescott record was shattered by nearly a second

the title race remains mathematically open, but it is now clearly advantage Menzies with four rounds to go.

"I didn't see that coming," said Menzies after the first sub-35s climb in Prescott history. "I knew that a low 35s was possible from the data but I had a bit of luck there as well. I went into Pardon a bit too hot, but luckily the car rotated perfectly and that catapulted me out of the hairpin."

Summers took the first run-off with a 35.50s climb, just 0.04s better than Menzies, while Scott Moran set a Prescott personal best of 35.84s to secure third from Dave Uren.

But, as the high ambient temperatures reduced a little towards the end of the afternoon, Menzies was peerless in the second class runs and cracked Gould's record by nearly 0.3s to leave it at 35.12s.

But the best was yet to come on the final run of the day when Menzies strung it all together superbly and stunned onlookers with a 34.65s. Summers dipped under the old record to take second with 35.40s, and Moran and Uren again rounded out the top four.

PAUL LAWRENCE

WEEKEND WINNERS

BRANDS HATCH
PORSCHE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1 & 2 Simon Clark (Cayman S)

PORSCHE CLUB 911 CHALLENGE
Race 1 David Burke (911 RSR)
Race 2 Brian Saunders (911 RSR)

ALL PORSCHE TROPHY
Adam Southgate (Boxster)

PRESCOTT
ROUND 23
1 Alex Summers (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Firestorm) 35.50s; 2 Wallace Menzies (3.3 Gould-Cosworth GR59M) 35.54s; 3 Scott Moran (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59J) 35.84s; 4 Dave Uren (3.5 Gould-NME GR55B) 35.88s; 5 Trevor Willis (3.2 OMS-RTE 28) 36.17s; 6 Sean Gould (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59JB) 36.36s; 7 Richard Spedding (1.3s GWR-Hayabusa Raptor 2) 37.02s; 8 David Warburton (1.6 Gould-Suzuki GR59) 37.07s; 9 Jack Cottrill (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Dallara) 37.46s; 10 Darren Gumbley (1.7 Force-Hayabusa TA) 37.78s.

ROUND 24
1 Menzies 34.65s; 2 Summers 35.40s; 3 Moran 35.75s; 4 Uren 35.89s; 5 Gould 36.45s; 6 Will Hall (2.0t Force-Xtec) 36.66s; 7 Spedding 36.96s; 8 Paul Haimes (1.3t Gould-Suzuki GR59) 37.18s; 9 Cottrill 37.58s; 10 Warburton 37.60s.

POINTS
1 Menzies 204; 2 Summers 190; 3 Gould 164; 4 Moran 149; 5 Willis 103; 6 Uren 73.

Historic content is appealing, but the likes of Colin McRae's 1997 Subaru are premium extras



AN EPIC RALLY EXPERIENCE DESPITE SOME ROUGH EDGES



VIDEO GAME
WRC 10
RRP £49.99

WRC 10 is an important milestone, not only for the official video game of the FIA World Rally Championship, but also developer KT Racing. Last year's WRC 9 was a breakthrough success, finally providing a driving experience that many WRC fans, such as this writer, had been yearning for. Ultimately, the core vehicle handling is key to any rally game's longevity.

For 2021, the main attraction is a 50th Anniversary Mode that allows you to play through pivotal moments in the WRC's, well, 49-year existence. Its 50th season is actually 2022, but the theory is that WRC 10 will be the current WRC game for the majority of next year, so this is the title to receive historic content.

In this section you play through various scenarios using a suite of classic cars, returning stages and new-to-the-game environments of Sanremo (Italy) and Acropolis (Greece).

On the surface, this mode will appease loyal WRC fans and introduce new fans to the sport's illustrious story. Scratch a little deeper, however, and the content here is a little thin on the ground. Many of the big-ticket items, such as Colin McRae's 1997 Subaru or Tommi Makinen's 1998 Mitsubishi, are premium extras.

If you've played previous WRC games, then sadly you've driven too many of the cars and stages here

already. For the later events with modern machinery, you are simply playing a rehashed version of WRC 8.

The obfuscation of your goals is frustrating, too. You're meant to beat a target time, but you can complete a stage with green splits all the way through, finish first and still fail the challenge. The game does not tell you by how much you failed, either, as the leaderboard doesn't include timing.

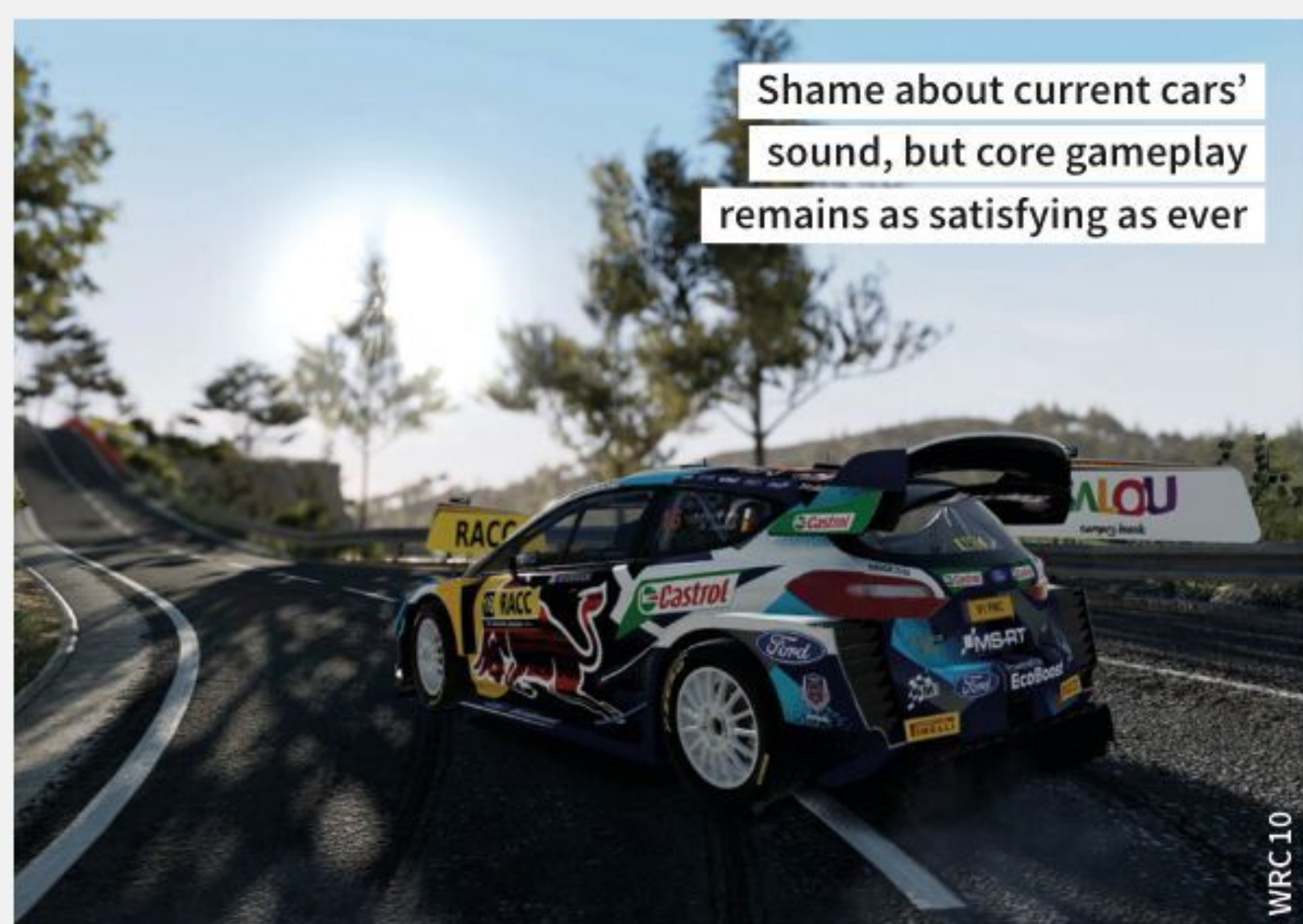
Still, driving the fearsome Group B Peugeot 205 Turbo 16 or Group A Toyota Celica ST185 is enjoyable across the retro stages.

The main reason for playing a WRC game remains the contemporary recreation. Most drivers, co-drivers and teams from the 2021 season are present. You can play split-screen local multiplayer, online, join clubs and complete a lengthy single-player career, rising through the ranks from Junior WRC to overall world champion status.

New for this year is the option to create your own team, manage sponsors and design a car livery. All are welcome additions, but the car development and personnel management are a little staid when compared to the F1 games that lead the charge in this respect.

The core gameplay of driving a top-spec car at breakneck speed through a forest remains as satisfying as ever, thankfully.

Apeing actual rally events, there is now a detailed tyre selection process and distinct handling characterises across the different compounds. This includes cross-mounting, allowing you to mix dry and studded ice tyres for the Monte Carlo *a la* Sebastien Loeb.



The sound of the cars has been recreated from the ground-up for *WRC 10* and the results are a little hit and miss. The 1987 Lancia Delta HF 4WD delightfully gurgles, but the current WRC cars feature an egregious monotone sound.

The new Ypres Rally Belgium event and further Greek stages will be added post-launch alongside new online modes and extra Anniversary events. Sweden remains in lieu of the last-minute COVID-19 related substitution of Arctic Rally Finland. You could argue that the roads are lacking in ultimate visual finesse, but they more than make up for it in diversity of corners, environments and stage length.

The overall impression is that the game is still in its embryonic stages of development. As it stands, the Anniversary Mode feels a little tacked on, lacking in both content and polish. During our testing too, both the PC and PS5 version were experiencing visual hitches and frame rate dips.

But I'll be damned if a clean run through an Estonian stage as Ott Tanak isn't one of the best virtual rallying experiences there is.

Available for PlayStation, Xbox and PC.

For daily racing game news, visit traxion.gg

THOMAS HARRISON-LORD

FINISHING STRAIGHT

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Italian Grand Prix

F1 World Championship Round 14

Monza, Italy

12 September

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355

TV Highlights Sky Sports F1, Sun 1800, Channel 4, Sun 1830

IndyCar Series

Round 14/16

Portland, USA

12 September

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 2000

Rally Greece

World Rally Championship Round 9/12

Lamia, Greece

9-12 September

TV Live BT Sport 1, Sun 0730, BT Sport 2, Thu 1600, Sat 1600, BT Sport 3, Sun 1100, BT Sport Extra 1, Sat 1100
TV Highlights BT Sport 1, Sat 0400, BT Sport 2, Sat 2300, Sun 2300, Red Bull TV, Fri 2000, Sat 2000, Sun 2000, ITV4, Wed 2000

FIA Formula 2

Round 5/8

Monza, Italy

11-12 September

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 0745, Sat 1330, Sun 0915

Porsche Supercup

Round 7/7

Monza, Italy

11-12 September

TV Live Eurosport 1, Sun 1115, Sky Sports F1, Sun 1130

International GT Open

Round 5/7

Red Bull Ring, Austria

11-12 September

Formula Regional European by Alpine



TEE/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

Round 7/10

Red Bull Ring, Austria

11-12 September

TV Live on motorsport.tv, Sat 1125, Sun 1140

Euroformula Open

Round 6/8

Red Bull Ring, Austria

11-12 September

NASCAR Cup Series

Round 28/36

Richmond, USA

12 September

TV Live Premier Sports 1, Sun 0000

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 25/33

Richmond, USA

11 September

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sat 1900

IMSA SportsCar

Round 9/12

Laguna Seca, USA

12 September

Super GT

Round 5/8

Sugo, Japan

12 September

TV Live on motorsport.tv, Sat 0600, Sun 0530

MotoGP

Round 13/18

Motorland Aragon, Spain

12 September

TV Live BT Sport 2, 1230

TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park MSVR

11-12 September

British GT, Caterham 420R, Heritage FF1600,

GB3, National FF1600

Pembrey BARC

11-12 September

C1s, Caterhams (Sigma 135/Sigma 150/Sigmax), Hyundai Coupe Cup, Mini Miglia, Mini Se7en, Welsh Sports & Saloons

Brands Hatch 750MC

11-12 September

116 Trophy, 5Club MX-5s, 750 Formula, Armed Forces Challenge, Clio 182s, Formula Vee, Historic 750 Formula, Locost, MR2s, Sports Specials, Sports 1000

Mondello Park MPSC

11-12 September

Fiesta STs, Fiesta Zetecs, Formula BOSS, Formula Sheane, Formula Vee, Future Classics, Ginetta Junior, Historics, Irish Superkarts, ITCC/Irish Supercars/SEAT Supercup, Martin Birrane Trophy, Strykers

Snetterton MGCC

11-12 September

BCV8s, Cockshoot Cup, Equipe GTS, Equipe Libre, Equipe Pre-'63/Pre-'50, Metro Cup, MG Cup, MG Trophy, Morgan Challenge

Cadwell Park SMRC

12 September

C1s, Classics, Fiesta STs, Minis

Santa Pod Drag Racing (Euro Finals)

10-12 September

British Hillclimb

11 September

Craigantlet

FINISHING STRAIGHT



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Richie Ginther slides his front-engined Ferrari Dino 246, pursued by the rear-motivated Lotus-Climax 18 of Jim Clark, during the 1960 Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort. The race was held

on Monday 6 June, with practice and qualifying taking place on Saturday and Sunday, in the then unfamiliar circumstances of just a week separating it from the preceding event in Monaco. Ginther collected

a point by finishing in sixth place, a lap down on dominant winner Jack Brabham's Cooper-Climax T53, while grand prix debutant Clark retired with transmission failure after an impressive showing.

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WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

When a career-changing move goes begging

VITANTONIO LIUZZI

Under different circumstances, Vitantonio Liuzzi could have joined Robin Frijns and Antonio Felix da Costa's overachieving-with-spec-powertrains club when Formula E allowed open competition in 2015-16. But whereas Frijns and da Costa are now FE fixtures, ex-Formula 1 driver Liuzzi disappeared from the grid when Jarno Trulli's squad elected not to follow the lead of Frijns's Andretti team in reverting to the original McLaren Applied powertrain after a tough pre-season and withdrew after missing the first two races.

Liuzzi's Formula E involvement began by coincidence – he was holidaying in Miami when Trulli sounded out his availability to replace Michela Cerruti for the Miami E-Prix. In borrowed gear and without testing, Liuzzi showed well and was kept on for the rest of the season.

His best performance came in Berlin, rising to fifth prior to the car swaps when an issue starting his second machine dropped him down the order. "I always had a pretty good pace, especially in the race," he says of his five outings in FE's inaugural season.

Liuzzi was optimistic that "we were

looking strong for the future", but it was soon dispelled: Trulli's Motomatica JT-01s were hopelessly unreliable.

"Everything that could have gone wrong – it was going even worse!" he says. "We were not even able to drive one metre out of the garage."

Instances of feeling electrical current in his leg upon pushing the throttle in the garage – "Luckily when I jumped out, nothing happened" – tell the story.

Liuzzi believes the team made the wrong move in sticking with its Motomatica units. Delays in shipping yielded customs issues that prevented its participation in Beijing, before failing scrutineering requirements in Putrajaya. The writing was on the wall and Jaguar bought out the entry for 2016-17, leaving Liuzzi sidelined.

"It was a really big shame because most of the seats were already taken at that stage," says Liuzzi, now a regular FIA steward at F1 and Formula E events. "I thought it could have been a really good second life of my career after F1. I was mature enough, experienced enough, fast enough to stay there for a longer period."

JAMES NEWBOLD



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