

F1 2022 Is Ferrari finally ready to win again?

 **AUTOSPORT**

FERRARI

3 FEBRUARY 2022

Why Leclerc and Sainz make F1's sleeping giant dangerous for 2022



**'They are pushing each other
– it's a competitive advantage'**

LAURENT MEKIES

PLUS

**Brits Jarvis and Blomqvist
storm Daytona 24 Hours**

**Mercedes dominates
Formula E opener**





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Are the ingredients now right for Ferrari's next title challenge?

The wait is becoming a long one. Ferrari fans will remember the sometimes painful 21 years between Jody Scheckter's 1979 Formula 1 world title and the start of Michael Schumacher's remarkable run of success for the Italian team. This October will represent 15 years since Kimi Raikkonen managed to snatch the crown from under the noses of McLaren's Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso to take the most recent of Ferrari's 15 drivers' championship successes.

There are, however, reasons to be cheerful. And not just thanks to F1's new regulations. As Alex Kalinauckas points out on page 13, Ferrari made good gains for 2017, the last time there was a significant rule change – and it made progress after its dismal 2020 showing.

Ferrari also believes that its driver line-up of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz Jr – probably the strongest of 2021 – is pushing it forwards. We hear from the key figures about how the competitive rivals have learned to work together to provide the team with what it needs to fight for championships once again (p18).

• Another, not quite so long, wait ends this weekend with the return of the Autosport Awards. We remind you of the four Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award finalists on p26 and will cover all the winners on Autosport.com on Sunday and in next week's magazine.



Kevin Turner

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Chief Editor

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NEXT WEEK
10 FEBRUARY

The pitfalls of F1 2022
The new traps that could catch out teams this season

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S Bloxham/Motorsport Images; FIA Pool

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Engines for
Verstappen and co
will continue to come
from Japan



SUTTON

U-TURN MEANS HONDA STAYS ON TO END OF 2025

FORMULA 1

In a dramatic change of plan, Honda will continue to supply engines to Red Bull directly from Japan until the end of the current Formula 1 regulations.

Honda ended its official works involvement in F1 at the end of last season, but had already planned to continue to work with Red Bull through 2022 as a transition year before the newly formed Red Bull Powertrains took over the reins from 2023. The engine division would simultaneously work on the existing power units and prepare for the next generation of engines set for introduction in 2026.

But Red Bull motorsport boss Helmut Marko has confirmed that the plan has changed, and the intention now is that Honda will continue to supply complete engines from Japan to Red Bull Racing and its sister team, AlphaTauri, until the end of 2025. The decision removes any concerns about issues such as quality control that might result from moving the building

of the power units to the UK, while also freeing up Red Bull Powertrains to focus on its 2026 project.

The change also ensures that Red Bull Powertrains will be considered as a new participant when its own engine is introduced in 2026. This means that it would benefit from the concessions — such as a higher power-unit budget cap — that are being discussed mainly to help encourage the Volkswagen Group to finally commit to F1. Porsche, a VW Group marque, has been linked as a potential future engine partner for Red Bull should it enter the series.

“We have now also found a completely different solution to the one originally envisaged,” Marko told *Autorevue* magazine. “The engines will be manufactured in Japan until 2025, we will not touch them at all. That means that the rights and all these things will remain with the Japanese, which is important for 2026 because it makes us newcomers.”

It is understood that details of the new arrangements have yet to be finalised, and it's not clear yet whether the engines will be badged as Hondas until 2025, although such a move would be logical given the desire to ensure that Red Bull Powertrains is a new participant in 2026.

Marko suggested that winning the 2021 world title with Max Verstappen had encouraged Honda to remain closer to F1 than had been expected. “In the course of our ever greater successes, a certain rethinking has taken place among the Japanese, and also that they could of course use the battery knowledge for their electrification phase,” he said. “It was initially planned that they would only make our motors for 2022. Now it has been decided that this will continue until 2025, which is of course a huge advantage for us. This means we only have to make fine adjustments and calibrations.”



Marko (right)
revealed the
change of plan

SUTTON



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Yamamoto will be
'bridge' from Japan
to Milton Keynes

YAMAMOTO TO WORK FOR RED BULL

Former Honda F1 managing director Masashi Yamamoto has stepped down to form his own consultancy that will support Red Bull's ongoing work with the manufacturer.

"We have established a new company," Yamamoto told Autosport. "We want to do something that makes people happy, and if we win in F1 then fans will be happy with that. We've signed a contract with the company at Red Bull Powertrains. The company has me, at the request of Red Bull's Christian Horner and Helmut Marko, to support them. It's a contract between companies, so it's difficult to speak about details, but as one of the members of Red Bull Powertrains I will undertake work that will help them."

Yamamoto's main focus in his new role will be to act as a conduit between Red Bull Powertrains and Honda to ensure that engine progress is as smooth as possible. "If, for example, they want to understand Japanese culture and Honda's culture, and have a closer and better relationship with Honda, we can support it," he said. "Basically it's a bridge between Red Bull and Japan."

ADAM COOPER, NORMAN FISCHER & KEN TANAKA



Masi (left) will
be made to sweat
on it for a while

Masi could be on the way out, admits FIA bigwig

FORMULA 1

Senior FIA official Peter Bayer has admitted that Formula 1 race director Michael Masi could be replaced, while also expressing his support for the Australian following the 2021 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix controversy.

Masi's position has been in question since the controversial ending to the Yas Marina series finale, when the lapped drivers between leader Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen were waved past the safety car deployed after Nicholas Latifi's crash.

An investigation into the events in Abu Dhabi, as well as an analysis of how to improve FIA procedures, is still ongoing.

Among the options under discussion are reducing the workload on the race director – which built up when Masi's late predecessor Charlie Whiting took on multiple roles – and having more than one race director, and rotating them during the season.

Bayer serves as the FIA's secretary general for sport, and took over the single-seater department back in December in a move planned prior to Abu Dhabi, making him a key figure in the investigation.

Speaking to journalist Gerhard Kuntschik, Bayer said that Masi had done a "super job", but acknowledged that his position was at risk. "We have told him that, but also that there is a possibility that there will be a new race director," he said.

"I can only make suggestions to the World Council, and they will definitely include him."

Bayer also gave an insight into how Masi, who did not speak to the media after the Abu Dhabi race, has dealt with the criticism he has faced, and said that he had the FIA's backing in handling it. "He has developed a relatively thick skin against the attacks of individual teams," said Bayer. "When you work at the FIA, you have to be aware that you are working for the sports police. The policeman rarely gets sympathy, as in daily life. What has become unbearable is reactions on social media – they will stop at nothing, as you saw with the death threats against Latifi."

"Michael doesn't have a social media account, but the hostility in other channels really hit him. I assured Michael of the federation's backing in our discussions and let him know 'we want to continue working with you, but I also need your understanding that we have to deal with the issue'."

The FIA confirmed last week that it has no plans to fast-track its response to the Abu Dhabi investigation, despite convening an Extraordinary Meeting of the World Motor Sport Council. It has scheduled the virtual gathering for today (Thursday) as a direct result of changes that have followed the election of new president Mohammed Ben Sulayem last December, addressing various housekeeping matters.

ADAM COOPER & NORMAN FISCHER

GTP name revived for next IMSA heyday

IMSA

IMSA is going “back to the future” by adopting the GTP name from its 1980s heyday for the new top prototype class to be introduced next year. That’s how series president John Doonan billed a move that he described as at once celebrating the past and pointing to the future.

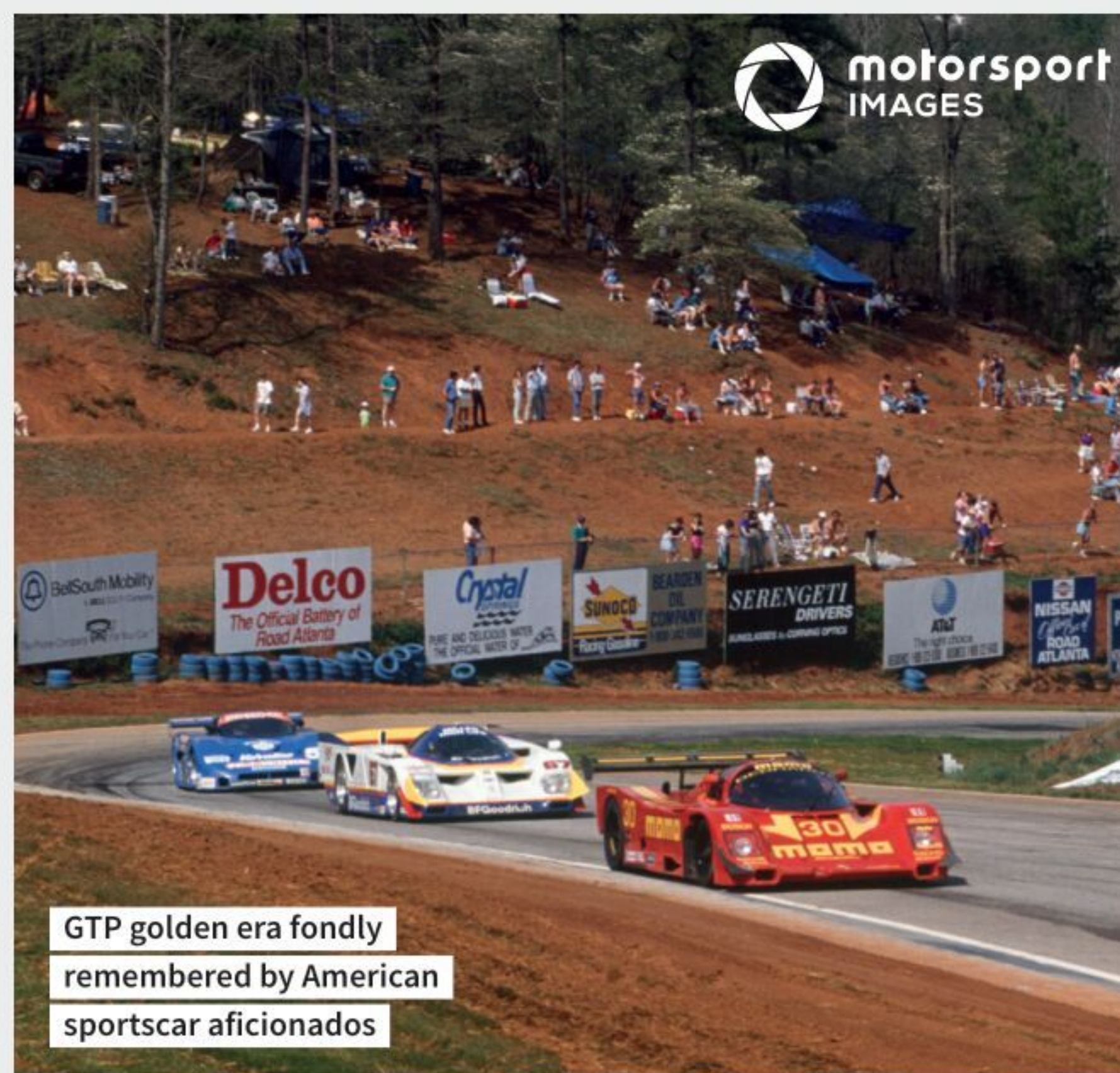
Doonan explained that IMSA wants to tip its hat to what many believe is the greatest era in its history as it moves into one that threatens to transcend it. So far eight bona fide car makers are committed to racing either an LMDh prototype or a Le Mans Hypercar from 2023, when they can compete on equal terms in the IMSA SportsCar Championship and the World Endurance Championship.

“I was sitting on the hill

at Road America, Mid-Ohio and Brainerd [in the 1980s] watching what we felt was the absolute heyday of our sport; we would like to celebrate that,” he said. “We are also opening up what I would say will be the next heyday, maybe the biggest ever.”

IMSA explained that GTP – which stands for Grand Touring Prototype – is also appropriate because the LMDh and LMH regulations allow manufacturers to incorporate design cues from road cars into their racing machinery.

The Automobile Club de l'Ouest, promoter of the World Endurance Championship, is publicly supportive of the move despite having its own name for the combined LMDh-LMH class. It adopted the Hypercar tag when LMH machinery came on stream



GTP golden era fondly remembered by American sportscar aficionados

last year and will maintain it through into 2023 on the arrival of LMDh, although ACO president Pierre Fillon didn't rule out a drive for a common name in the future.

They may have different names for the same thing, but the spirit of cooperation between the ACO and IMSA

was underlined last week when the two bodies named corners after each other's biggest race: the first chicane on the Mulsanne Straight will become the Daytona Chicane, and the Bus Stop at the US venue has been renamed the Le Mans Chicane.

GARY WATKINS

Work on Jeddah track to improve visibility

FORMULA 1

The Jeddah Corniche Circuit that hosted the inaugural Saudi Arabian Grand Prix last December will undergo small revisions ahead of the 2022 race next month following criticism from drivers.

The circuit delivered a spectacular event last year, but a number of drivers expressed safety concerns about the high-speed final section of the street track. Grand Prix Drivers' Association director George Russell called for changes to be made to the layout,

saying it created “unnecessary risks”. The biggest worry was that the nature of the barriers limited visibility in some of the fast sections, which posed a safety risk in terms of drivers not being able to see far enough ahead of them if there was an incident.

Speaking about the latest developments at the track, race CEO Martin Whitaker explained that work will be done to address these concerns and improve visibility.

“We have been striving to improve on some areas for our second event,” said Whitaker. “Firstly, there are going to be one

or two slight changes to the track. These tweaks are directly related to a driver's sight-line from the cockpit. It's minimal work, but it will help improve forward visibility in a couple of corners. Secondly, we will make some small modifications to the barriers that will favour the lines the drivers take around the course.”

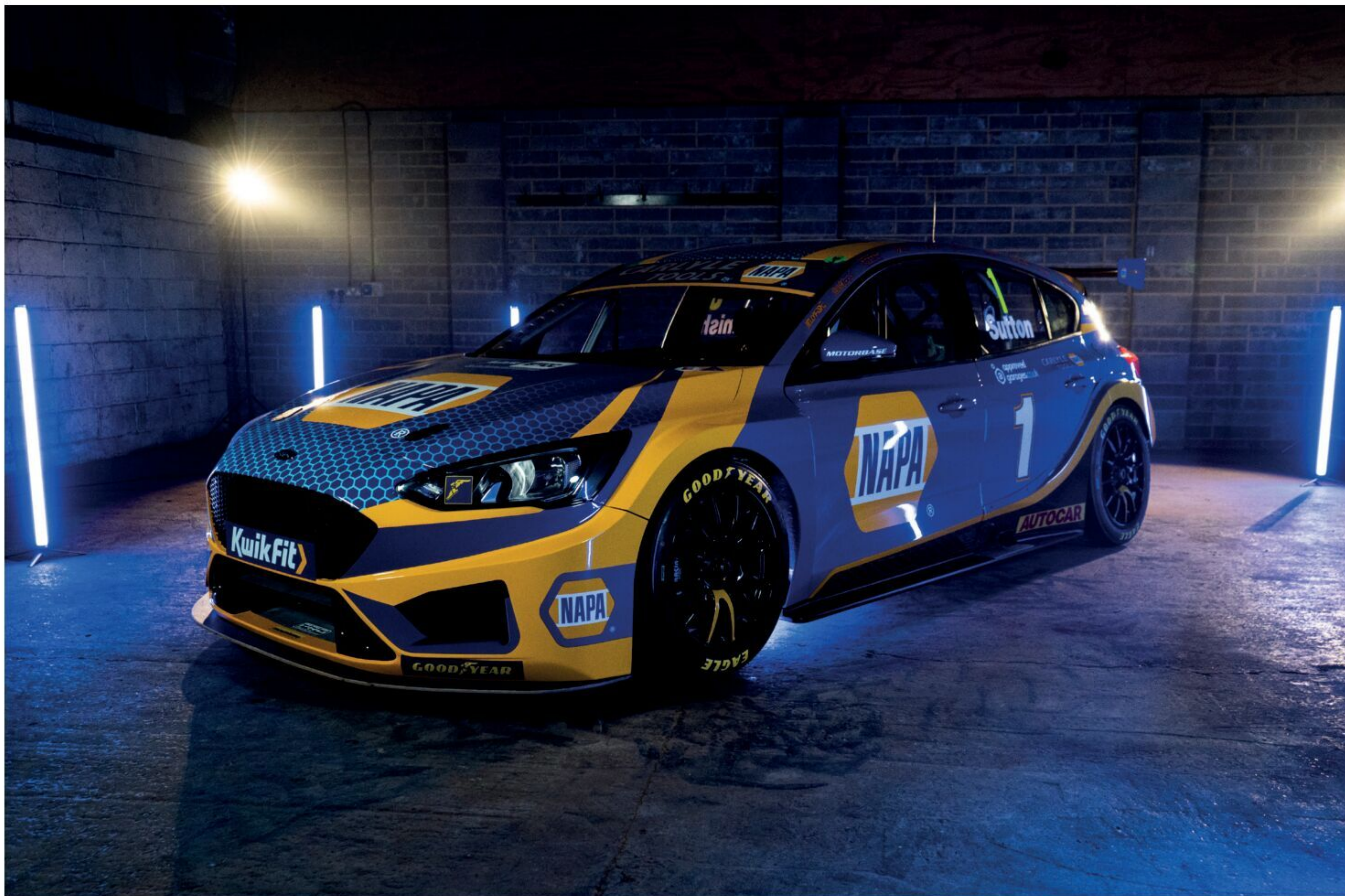
With much of the infrastructure surrounding the venue not finished in time for last December's race, more recent work should ensure that things are much improved this time around, especially for spectators attending the event.

In other circuit news, plans are moving rapidly for the first Australian Grand Prix since 2019 to go ahead on 10 April after organisers announced plans to install five new grandstands following unprecedented ticket sales. Some of the added seating has been placed between Turns 8 and 9, which will form a new high-speed section as part of the track changes at Albert Park.

Meanwhile, the Singapore Grand Prix is set to remain on the calendar until 2028 after signing a new seven-year deal that was announced by F1 last week.

JONATHAN NOBLE & LUKE SMITH





BTCC Well, we reckon this looks pretty purposeful... Motorbase has unveiled the livery of the two-car NAPA Racing Ford Focus superteam it will field in this season's British Touring Car Championship. Reigning and three-time champion Ash Sutton carries the #1, while Dan 'Chase Elliott' Cammish switches from his regular #27 to the #9 also sported by the 2020 NASCAR Cup champion's Hendrick Motorsports machine. **Photograph by Alex Wood/Momentum**

Ogier joins reigning champ for full WEC season

WEC

World Rally Championship legend Sebastien Ogier will contest this year's Le Mans 24 Hours as part of a deal to join Richard Mille Racing to contest all six World Endurance Championship rounds in the LMP2 class.

Ogier will pilot the Signature-run RMR ORECA-Gibson (right, below) with reigning class champion Charles Milesi and 20-year-old Frenchwoman Lilou Wadoux, a race winner in last season's Alpine Europa Cup.

Eight-time WRC champion Ogier revealed last year his ambitions to race in the WEC and at Le Mans after confirming plans to scale back his WRC commitments to a partial season with Toyota. The 38-year-old Frenchman has already tested Toyota's GR010 HYBRID Hypercar twice – he participated in last November's WEC rookie test in Bahrain, then had an outing last week at Motorland Aragon after finishing second in the Monte Carlo Rally.

Ogier's first race in the WEC will be the 1000 Miles of Sebring on 18 March, with the Spa 6 Hours following on 7 May before the big one at Le Mans on 11-12 June.

"I know it's a big challenge, but I have been looking for a programme that motivates me more than the easy option," said Ogier. "Up until now, I have focused on my rally career, but it has been on my mind for a long time that endurance racing could be a good challenge."

"LMP2 is a fantastic category and the best way for me to reach the highest level of endurance racing and improve in this discipline. I am a novice for sure, but I want to enjoy myself while assessing what's possible and seeing how close I can get to the best."

Ogier's plans for the remainder of the WRC season are yet to be confirmed, although it is expected that he will contest as many as five rallies. Rally Portugal in May could be the next time he jumps aboard the GR Yaris, with Esapekka Lappi set to drive the majority of events in the car.

"Portugal is always in my mind and you know I have a special relationship with Portugal [scene of his first WRC win in 2010]," said Ogier before the Monte. "I can say it is on the potential list for this season."

TOM HOWARD



Ford back in GT racing for 2024

Multimatic was key in previous Ford GT project, which ended in 2019



IMSA/WEC

Ford will make a return to international sportscar racing in 2024 when a new GT3 racer developed out of its Mustang by Multimatic Motorsports comes on stream. There will be a factory programme run by the Canadian organisation in the GT Daytona Pro class of the IMSA SportsCar Championship and further works assaults across multiple series, the World Endurance Championship included, are under consideration.

The other technical partner on the project is British rally specialist M-Sport, Ford's long-time factory entrant in the World Rally Championship. M-Sport, which produced both generations of the Bentley Continental GT3, will be in charge of development of the Mustang's V8 engine for racing.

"Together with Multimatic and M-Sport we think we have got great partners to develop the Mustang GT3 car for competition around the world," said Ford Performance motorsport director Mark Rushbrook. "Everyone knows the importance of the Mustang as one of our street vehicles, but it also belongs on the race track.

"We've had a lot of success with the Mustang in many different programmes, but as we go forward we want to elevate that and have even more global presence with the Mustang on the race track. The important thing is to have the Mustang racing around the world as a customer entry, and that is the great thing about GT3."

Joey Hand, who was part of the Multimatic Ford GT programme in 2016-19 and a GTE Pro class winner of the car at the Le Mans

24 Hours, has been announced as the development driver for the Mustang GT3. The focus in 2022 will be on design, before the car hits the track for a year's worth of testing prior to its homologation for 2024.

Asked about other factory programmes with the new car, Rushbrook admitted that everything was under evaluation, but insisted that nothing was confirmed beyond a two-car IMSA assault. "There's a lot under consideration but nothing we are prepared to admit," he said, mentioning both the Le Mans 24 Hours and the Intercontinental GT Challenge. He described the extension of the GT3 platform to Le Mans and the WEC for 2024 as "a great opportunity" for Ford even if there is no pro class as envisaged by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest.

GARY WATKINS

Wickens claims podium on comeback at Daytona

TCR

Robert Wickens insisted before his first race since suffering life-changing spinal injuries at the wheel of an IndyCar in 2018 that he is not competing again to make up the numbers. He backed up that intent with a class podium finish on his comeback in the IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge at

Daytona last week.

The sometime Marussia Virgin Formula 1 test driver took third spot in the four-hour race together with Mark Wilkins at the wheel of a Hyundai Elantra N TCR run by Bryan Herta Autosport. Wickens completed 90 minutes of the four-hour race and was firmly established in the top five in the TCR class throughout



his double stint.

"It was good to find out that my racing instincts haven't gone

away," said the Canadian, whose mount is fitted with a system of hand controls. "I'm not just

here for a media tour, to tick a box and then move on with my life. This is a great opportunity for me to see what is possible: if we can compete and win championships, then I think anything is possible."

The race was won by the Alfa Romeo Giulietta of Roy Block and Tim Lewis Jr.

GARY WATKINS



Porsche drops hints on engine

WEC/IMSA

Porsche has offered up the first technical details of the engine in the back of its and sister marque Audi's LMDh prototypes. It has described the combustion engine as "a large capacity twin-turbo V8 unit", at the same time suggesting that it is a production-based unit.

The only other details of the engine in the car that will carry Porsche's hopes in both the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar Championship from 2023 were that it revs to 10,000rpm and weighs at least 180kg as per the regulations. The lack of clarity was exacerbated at the Daytona 24 Hours when Volker Holzmeyer, boss of Porsche Motorsport North America, suggested that the idea that the engine is road car-based "needs to be corrected".

His remarks will only increase speculation that the engine at least has its roots in the normally aspirated V8 that powered the ultra-successful Porsche RS Spyder LMP2 in the American Le Mans Series in the second half of the 2000s. This 3.4-litre normally aspirated race engine was developed into the 4.6 that powered the 918 Spyder plug-in hybrid supercar of 2013-15,

which suggests that the statement from Porsche might not be entirely misleading.

If the engine, which will be mated to a spec hybrid system developed by Bosch, Williams Advanced Engineering and Xtrac, really has been developed out of a production powerplant, then it can only be based on the four-litre unit found in the Cayenne SUV and the Panamera four-door sports saloon. That's the only V8 currently in the marque's range.

The German manufacturer has also revealed that the factory team in both the WEC and IMSA will run under the Porsche Penske Motorsport flag. The roll-out of the LMDh at the Weissach test track last month was the first outing for the new entity, which will run the WEC programme out of premises in Mannheim, where the Penske dealer group has a Porsche outlet.

"The squad worked well together right from the start: this shows a high level of professionalism in all areas," said Urs Kuratle, project manager of the LMDh programme at Porsche. "After all, the operational requirements for the safe running of a hybrid vehicle are very high."

GARY WATKINS

GB3 CONTENDER USHIJIMA AMONG F3 RECRUITS

FORMULA 3

GB3 race winner Reece Ushijima is among the latest deluge of driver confirmations for the FIA Formula 3 Championship.

The American-born Japanese, fourth in GB3 last year, will make the step up with Van Amersfoort Racing, which is new to the series. He drove with VAR on two of the three days of last year's post-season Valencia test.

"He impressed us," said team CEO Rob Niessink. "It will be both his and our first season in this car, so for sure there is lots to be learned, but Reece's determination excites us."

Ushijima (below) will be joined by Rafael Villagomez. The Mexican switches from HWA (which VAR replaces in F3 this year), and also shone last year with VAR in Euroformula Open.

Czech Roman Stanek joins champion team Trident after a year at Hitech GP, while Spanish Formula 4 ace and current Formula Regional Asian contender Pepe Marti makes the jump with Campos Racing, where he will be joined by 2020 US F4 champion Hunter Yeany.

Francesco Pizzi, the 2020 Italian F4 runner-up who raced in FRegional European last year, has joined Charouz Racing System, as has 2021 F3 backmarker Laszlo Toth.

MARCUS SIMMONS



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WRT's Rast deal gives away its Audi LMDh programme

WEC

Rene Rast's name listed against a car run by WRT is hardly something new – team and driver won the 2014 Spa 24 Hours together, for example. But there's a real significance to the announcement that the 35-year-old will be racing one of the Belgian squad's ORECA LMP2s in the World Endurance Championship this year. It is further confirmation, if any were needed, that WRT will be flying the flag for Audi with its new LMDh prototype from 2023.

Longtime Audi factory driver Rast will team up with Robin Frijns, another member of the German manufacturer's roster and the reigning P2 WEC champion. They will be joined in the lead WRT ORECA-Gibson 07 by Indonesian Sean Gelael, who has moved over to the title-winning squad after finishing second last year with Jota.

That WRT will be Audi's factory representative in the WEC when its LMDh arrives is a well-grounded assumption that is generally accepted in WEC circles. The signing of Rast for a return to the WEC for the first time since 2016 is further evidence that the deal is already done.

Ferdinand Habsburg, co-champion with Frijns and Charles Milesi last year, returns to the team in its new second entry run under the RealTeam by WRT banner. He joins Norman Nato, part of the TDS-run RealTeam squad in 2021, and the already-announced Rui Andrade.

WRT boss Vincent Vosse said: "We

are delighted to reveal our complete WEC line-ups and to add such heavy names; all drivers with great CVs, great skills and familiar with the team."

WRT made its announcement ahead of the publication on Tuesday of the entry list for the opening round of the 2022 WEC, the belated second edition of the Sebring 1000 Miles on 18 March.

Romain Dumas and Ryan Briscoe will drive the solo full-season Glickenhaus Racing Hypercar entry in the day-night race on the Sebring 12 Hours undercard together with Olivier Pla. The likelihood is that Dumas and Pla will do the full season aboard the #708 Glickenhaus-Pipo 007 LMH, but the team is reserving judgement on its line-up until it finds out whether it has landed a second entry for the Le Mans 24 Hours in June.

Luca Ciarretti, who manages the Glickenhaus WEC programme from Podium Advanced Technologies in Italy, explained that "Romain and Oli will probably do the full season", while confirming that the six drivers who raced for the team at Le Mans last August are all set to return.

Ciarretti revealed that Pipo Derani, who will be racing for the Action Express Cadillac team in the IMSA race over the Sebring weekend, will likely race #708 alongside Dumas and Pla for the Spa WEC round in May. Should the Glickenhaus team's additional entry be accepted for Le Mans, then it is planned that Briscoe, Richard Westbrook and Franck Mailleux will race it.

GARY WATKINS

Gen3 to need faster circuits

FORMULA E

Formula E may revise the layout of some of its established circuits to suit the more powerful incoming Gen3 regulations, series CEO Jamie Reigle has said.

The new-for-2023 ruleset, which will feature a 350kW drive motor at the rear of the car, is expected to cut lap times by around five to seven seconds. This means that some of the smaller, tighter circuits will now be largely unsuitable to accommodate the more powerful cars.

Reigle explained that the series was conducting discussions with promoters – including Paris, which hosted races between 2016-19 on a layout 1.2 miles in length – to increase the size of the circuits to allow higher speeds.

"All things being equal, [the Gen3 cars are] going to go faster and there's going to be much more opportunity for overtaking," said Reigle. "Clearly there are some circuits within Formula E that there's going to be challenges with acceleration and [showing the] improvement in the quality of the cars."

"So the one that people talk about a lot actually is Paris, with lots of 90-degree turns. It's very much a city circuit, but that's going to be a challenge. We're having a conversation with Paris around 'can we change the configuration of the track?' as we'd still love to race there, and we plan to do so in 2023 onwards."

Reigle pointed to the example of FE's transition to the full-size Monaco circuit (below) for 2021. "There was an interesting discussion last year when we raced on the full track for the first time," he said. "What we saw was 65 overtakes, six lead changes, and an incredible car race. And so what we think will happen with the Gen3 is more of the same, except we'll go five, six, seven seconds a lap quicker."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



IN THE HEADLINES

W SERIES GOES TO JAPAN

The W Series has revealed its eight-round Formula 1-supporting calendar for 2022, and it includes a maiden trip to Asia. Action begins at the inaugural Miami GP in May, before events at the Spanish, British, French and Hungarian GPs. Then it's off to Japan for a round at Suzuka, before finishing at the US and Mexican GPs.

MAGNUSSEN FOR SEBRING

Kevin Magnussen's return to the Chip Ganassi Racing IMSA team has been extended before Peugeot begins racing its new 9X8 in the World Endurance Championship. An outing at the Sebring 12 Hours has been added to what was initially a one-off at last weekend's Daytona 24 Hours IMSA series opener. It has yet to be decided which of the two Ganassi Cadillac DPi-V.Rs the Dane will drive in the race on 19 March.

FARFUS GETS ELMS SEAT

Stalwart BMW factory driver Augusto Farfus will make his prototype debut in the European Le Mans Series this season with the Anglo-Italian BHK Motorsport squad. The Brazilian, who will also race in the GT300 class of the Super GT Series in Japan with a Team Studie M4 GT3, will share the BHK ORECA-Gibson 07 with team owner Francesco Dracone, who may ring a bell as a former IndyCar part-timer.

BAGUETTE OFF TO NISSAN

Japanese-based Belgian Bertrand Baguette's swap with Formula 2 race winner Nobuharu Matsushita for Super GT has been confirmed. Baguette has moved from Honda to Nissan to share the Team Impul car with Kazuki Hiramane, while Matsushita joins the Real Racing Honda squad alongside Koudai Tsukakoshi. Matsushita was backed by Honda throughout his junior career but becomes a full factory driver for the first time, and will also stay with Honda-powered B-Max Racing in Super Formula.



Lloyd gets Excelr8 Hyundai drive

BTCC

Highly rated British Touring Car Championship racer Dan Lloyd has joined Hyundai squad Excelr8 Motorsport to partner Tom Ingram this season.

Lloyd, 29, made his BTCC debut as long ago as 2010 and scored a race win in 2018, but only got his first full season in the series last year with the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra team, after two years as a frontrunner in TCR Europe. The Yorkshireman scored four podiums across the last three race weekends (above) to elevate himself to 11th in the standings.

"It's really exciting," said Lloyd, who is the second of the drivers to be confirmed for Excelr8's four-car Hyundai i30 N squad. "Last year was my first full season in the BTCC, and that's just an achievement in itself really, so getting a deal signed this early is just fantastic. The amount of years where you think, 'What the hell am I doing?', it's just a breath of fresh air."

"I'm making a big decision to switch from PMR to Excelr8 – there are many reasons in the background, but I'm joining a really strong outfit, and I think me and Tom will be quite strong together. I get on

really well with him and I respect him. I'm going to learn a lot from him while I get to grips with the car, and I hope we can push him. My goal for this season is definitely to be more of a consistent frontrunner."

Lloyd has floated around on the driver market over the off-season and has been in conversations with numerous teams, but said of the reason to join Excelr8: "They seemed to really want me, which is a big thing. They worked really hard with me to make the deal work. And just the fact that I think it's a strong car and I'll have a strong team-mate. Also, they're fantastic from the commercial side, which is what you need in the BTCC."

Ingram and Lloyd have a shared background dating back to a Rotax Junior Max karting rivalry a decade and a half ago, before Lloyd made the jump into cars in Ginetta Junior one year ahead of Ingram.

Sources indicate that the other two drivers in the Excelr8 line-up are tipped to be BTCC veteran Tom Chilton, along with Chris Smiley staying on for a third season at the wheel of the Hyundai.

MARCUS SIMMONS

➔ P30 EXCELR8'S BTCC LIFER

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Why 2022 matters for Ferrari

Speculation is traditionally rife ahead of launch season, but for F1's most famous squad the weight of expectation feels a lot greater this year

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

It's nearly that time of year: Formula 1 launch season. There will be new cars, new liveries, new drivers. Online-only, sneak-peak reveals, physical launches, 'oh dear, the YouTube livestream has died again and aren't the comments just repellent...'

Still, overall, with plenty of buzz to be generated and excitement for another year of racing awaiting, it's an integral part of the campaign, paving the way for the new championship that's now just ahead. And what a year F1 wants this to be, with its long-awaited design regulations overhaul finally set to bear fruit.

One part of the whole pre-season show is going to get old fast — because it does every year. That each competitor must “wait for testing”, then “wait for the first qualifying session” before possibly offering any meaningful comment on their chances with their new package. Fine, expectation management is part of the game — one that has led the first 2022 test taking place at Barcelona later this month to be labelled a ‘shakedown’. But it's a test all right — every time the teams run their latest cars, there's *something* to be learned. But even if it's understandable, it doesn't make it any less frustrating. So, if F1's competitors are going to stick by their robotic PR training, and will likely be even more guarded this year with the rules reset naturally masking the competitive picture, the assessment of reality has got to come from elsewhere.

The key point right now is that every team is hoping 2022 will be

“Some F1 paddock insiders have already picked Ferrari as the year's dark (prancing) horse”

their year. For Mercedes and Red Bull that means their successes continuing. For the rest the hope is that the changes upend F1's current form book and vault them either back into contention or to places they've never previously reached. But, of course, only one can win. That stunningly obvious deduction nevertheless ratchets up the pressure. And at one team in particular, the outside expectation is significantly higher: Ferrari. The only results that matter are titles, and here the team has been found wanting for the past 14 years.

Now, McLaren is in a longer fallow period, as are Alpine and Williams. But all three of those squads have been through significant and problematic upheavals in the many years since their last titles. None of the remaining squads — Alfa Romeo, AlphaTauri, Aston Martin and Haas — have title pedigree in

their DNA. The pressure is elevated higher for Ferrari, simply because it lacks the excuses of its recent(ish) frontrunning rivals.

Ferrari is F1's longest-standing squad, and since it last won a championship there has been no turbulent change of ownership or management, or competitive slide due to previous underinvestment, *a la* McLaren, Williams and Alpine (and a dramatic engine saga for the first-named of those). Ferrari's problem in the generation since Kimi Raikkonen's 2007 title triumph and the constructors' championship that followed the next year is that it has consistently failed to produce the package to beat. It must have this in 2022 with the F1-75.

In F1 history terms, it's worth acknowledging that Ferrari hasn't generally ever been an innovation leader, but its sheer power — including financial and political muscle — and facilities mean it shouldn't be overlooked. It has the capabilities. And when looking at its rules reset track record, things aren't too bad.

If we ignore non-engine-rules overhauls, as is the case this year, this takes us back to 1983 — notable because the rule changes were essentially a reverse of what is happening for 2022, with ground-effect banned. Then, Ferrari navigated the changes well, retaining the constructors' title, although Rene Arnoux and Patrick Tambay were defeated in the drivers' standings by Brabham's Nelson Piquet and Alain Prost (Renault). It also retained its competitive position during the switch to narrow-body cars for 1998, finally getting ahead of Williams but being leapfrogged by McLaren. In 2017, Ferrari made a substantial cut to Mercedes' advantage at the head of the pack but did not lead the way. The outlier is 2009, where Ferrari slumped from champion to fourth amid the mandated design changes that cut downforce levels significantly.

And Ferrari made a major step towards the front last year, regaining a top-three constructors' championship slot in a season when development was vastly restricted. It did that with its engine gains and superb — and finally well-balanced — driver line-up.

This year is different — it feels like something of a watershed moment for the team. Its long-standing title sponsor has departed and, alongside the good results (compared to 2020 at least) hauled in by its new line-up, it spent the past season training to overcome its previous shortcomings as a race operation while the pressure of a title fight was off. Some F1 paddock insiders have already picked Ferrari as the year's dark (prancing) horse. It may not pan out that way and the suggestion is generally coming up because of previous examples of new rules cycles giving one squad an advantage (such as Brawn and the double diffuser from 2009).

But Ferrari's historical reputation deserves the current Scuderia adding a new winning chapter to its legend. There's the pressure. 🏆

➔ P18 FERRARI'S STAR LINE-UP

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A new format that's actually fun

Qualifying in Formula E was overdue a revamp – and the result, demonstrated last weekend in Diriyah, was enjoyed by drivers and spectators

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

Stoffel Vandoorne and Jake Dennis did not physically stand back to back in the Diriyah paddock to take 10 paces, turn and fire. Yet their duel for pole ahead of Formula E's 2022 season opener was met with the same anticipation, trepidation and tension as a stand-off in a Western film after 22 drivers had been whittled down to the final two in the qualifying battle.

In qualifying for the second race, reigning champion Nyck de Vries took on Edoardo Mortara in the next final, one that was even more intense; the two traded blows over their laps in a thrilling fight, one that ended with de Vries grabbing pole by just 0.005 seconds.

Formula E's new qualifying system, when explained either by word of mouth or in carefully considered prose, sounds complex. There's a multitude of permutations at play, especially since the eventual pole winner affects where those eliminated in the group stages will start the race. But when played out on-screen, it's deceptively simple. Four cars progress from each group and, from there, qualifying plays out in a nifty little tournament format.

It's a format that has proved captivating. Drivers were allowed only one lap in the old system, but the new group stages were relatively freeform, allowing for unlimited running within the allotted 12 minutes, and mandating that drivers set at least one timed lap in the first half. That led to a flurry of action throughout the opening stages, as the teams

“I feel there's a lot of joy, it's cool – these battles, these duels. It's a fun challenge”

explored run plans to get to grips with the new system.

As the season goes on, run plans will eventually become optimised. The old days of group qualifying eventually iterated into a last-minute dash where all the cars in each would effectively run nose to tail like a passenger train. It still suits the drivers to run a little bit less early on and focus on the latter part of the session to preserve tyre life. Mercedes managed to get the formula right first time, making both finals and securing pole on both occasions. Being the last driver to set a time in each group stage comes with an elevated level of pressure, but also bestows the driver with the best conditions following circuit evolution.

What of the spectacle? General feedback seemed to be positive, and a quick browse through social media suggests that the audience enjoyed the intensity of the sessions, although some

were also put off by the apparent complexity of the new format. But like all things, people will get used to it; think of it as a World Cup condensed into an hour.

The TV overlays did their best to map out the ebb and flow of each duel, adding in further timing loops to show the gap between the two drivers over the lap. It probably wasn't quite as dynamic as it could be: more timing loops akin to Formula 1's micro-sectors would undoubtedly create a more fluid picture of the gap, but that's probably more a legacy of FE's temporary tracks. The split-screen broadcast was hit-and-miss over the Diriyah weekend, but those are all slight teething problems that can be fixed.

The drivers were positive too, having largely hated the old system and its bias towards the fourth group in their bids to make superpole. Porsche's Andre Lotterer, who made it through the group stages on both occasions, said: “The qualifying format is definitely better. I feel there's a lot of joy, it's cool – these battles, these duels. It's kind of a nice feeling like OK, you were going into the semi-final and then maybe finals.

“It's a fun challenge, and then it happens very quickly. It's quite emotionally up and down, you have to really get ready for another lap and then maybe you go through, then maybe again. From outside, I'm sure it was a good show. I guess at least from inside it was.”

Two-time FE champion Jean-Eric Vergne also enjoyed the format but complained that the FIA didn't do enough to stamp out drivers blocking others on their hot laps during the groups – he felt that Robin Frijns had ended his chances of progressing to the quarters on Friday.

“It's good,” Vergne said. “Like if the drivers respect the other guys and not blocking anyone, it's fine. I was on a very strong lap and then I got stuck behind Frijns, and the FIA hasn't said anything. The FIA needs to do their job, wake up and review the thing because it's not normal that the driver can block another one and get away with it. But the format is good.”

That's one issue, but it's one native to all qualifying formats with more than one car on-track. A problem more specific to the duels phase could be that the first driver on a lap crashes, not only jeopardising their lap but the driver behind too. If the driver behind encounters a yellow flag, it does somewhat unfairly ensure that they can do no better than seventh on the grid – not the end of the world, but it's still a penalty for something outside their control.

It was a positive start for Formula E's knockout qualifying, and doesn't yield nearly as many problems as the groups system did previously. There are a few kinks to iron out, but it seems to be a popular addition to the rapid-fire FE race weekend. If nothing else, it was simply jolly good fun. 🏁

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YOUR SAY

How about all the cars doing a single hot lap run individually, followed by the fastest five, or six, or 10 going out together for 10 minutes to settle the front of the grid

MARTIN CLARKE

Time to rethink qualifying for safety's sake?

I appreciate that Formula 1 and its governing body have a lot on their minds right now, but are we really going to head into another season with a qualifying system that allows all the cars to be on track with some on hot laps and others at almost walking speed queueing to start a lap?

The near-miss between Lewis Hamilton and Nikita Mazepin at Jeddah (albeit in practice) served as a reminder of what the closing speeds look like, and we have all witnessed horrendous crashes over the years when a car stalls on the grid and one from further back ploughs into it. With standing starts this is going to happen occasionally, but this F1 qualifying scenario is an easy fix.

It seems we are waiting for the inevitable massive accident before something is done. At best this will cause hugely expensive damage to two cars, and at worst...

Surely it is time to adopt a revised format. Perhaps having smaller groups in a knockout format as Formula E has adopted, or the IndyCar system. Or maybe something different. How about all the cars doing a single hot lap run individually (perhaps in reverse championship order with the leader first, so that later runners get any benefit of track evolution), following this the fastest five, or six or 10 all go out together for 10 minutes to settle the front of the grid.

I know the current qualifying format is universally liked, but I think a change is needed.

Martin Clarke
Leicestershire

Testing behind closed doors a huge disappointment

I'm incredibly disappointed to see that spectators won't be allowed to attend the Formula 1 test session in Barcelona.

I've watched testing in Barcelona with my dad and my uncle most years through the past decade and it's a fantastic few days spent in the sunshine watching the latest cars getting up to speed. It's our main touch point to the sport we love.

After the events of the Belgian and Abu Dhabi Grands Prix I assumed everyone associated with F1 would be doing all they can to ensure that fans remain committed to the sport, and that's

why I'm so surprised that anyone in F1 thinks closing the doors to Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya is a good thing to do. It's another punch in the gut for fans who have almost had enough.

James Bolton
Fleet, Hampshire

Are loyal Formula 1 fans being toyed with?

Are the FIA and F1 just toying with the loyal fans? Still trying to put aside the fiasco of Abu Dhabi when I hear that my trip to Barcelona testing this month will be a waste of time. Flights, car, hotels, parking booked last year, now a waste of time with the announcement of no public access. Pathetic.

Mario Bortolozzo
Westerham

Left cold by uninspiring LMP2 cars

Visually, if the look of LMP2 cars was the answer, what on earth was the question?! Nobody that I know, young or old, is or could be inspired by such ugly ducklings. If this is progress, then come back 917 or even XJR11. Anybody agree?

Steve Singleton
Yorkshire



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THE DRIVE

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WING FORCE

FERRARI'S NEXT TITLE



The championship drought now stands at 14 years. But if Ferrari makes the most of the rules reset to design a frontrunning car, Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz Jr can bring the good times back to Maranello

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY **FERRARI AND**  **motorsport**
IMAGES

The 2022 Formula 1 season is nearly here. Pushed back a year by the COVID-19 pandemic, the championship's new era is about to begin. For the teams that have looked on enviously as Mercedes and now Red Bull have tasted title success, it's long been earmarked as the moment when they might just have their chance to vault up the competitive order.

For Ferrari, the wait since its last title now runs to 14 years – its 2008 constructors' success, with a further year tacked on for its most recent drivers' crown (Kimi Raikkonen's shock triumph against McLaren racers Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton).

As you're probably sick of hearing, no one knows exactly how the various interpretations of the new regulations up and down the F1 field are going to perform – wait for testing, then wait for qualifying in Bahrain, as the soundbites will go. But Ferrari has got one element required for sustained success sorted already. And it knows it.

"They are pushing each other," Ferrari racing director Laurent Mekies says of the team's driver pairing, Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz Jr. "We are comfortable with that. We think that for us, the big picture is the way our drivers are pushing each other, the way they interact with each other, the way they interact with the team, the way they are part of the development of the car with the simulator. These guys go back between the races in Maranello to put themselves in a black box. We think it's a competitive advantage."

The Leclerc/Sainz partnership is just a year old but, by the end of 2021, they had cemented what many suspected at the beginning of that campaign: that Ferrari's driver line-up was the most formidable on last season's grid. At the very start of the post-Sebastian Vettel era, the results immediately improved, with the Italian squad picking up five podiums, two poles and several serious shots at race wins.

The Ferrari SF21, with its reworked engine, was of course a significant improvement on the SF1000 disaster that resulted in the squad's worst constructors' result for 40 years, and that was the main thrust behind

the team's quick climb back up the F1 order. But Ferrari still needed drivers capable of securing such good results – the kind that are rarely left on the table by the Mercedes and Red Bull leaders.

From a Leclerc/Vettel 2-1 imbalance in shock podiums in 2020 (it would have been 3-0 had Leclerc not botched his late pass on Sergio Perez in Turkey, letting Vettel ahead also to sneak his final Ferrari trophy), Sainz led Leclerc 4-1 in rostrum visits come the end of 2021. The Spaniard's third place in the Abu Dhabi finale (which might have been even higher had the lapped runners between him and Hamilton and Max Verstappen been allowed through, instead of only those so controversially between the title contenders) meant Sainz also sealed fifth in the drivers' standings – best of the rest behind the frontrunners.

It was, as Sainz repeatedly said, just a "symbolic" triumph over his new team-mate and his former one: McLaren's Lando Norris. But the fact that Leclerc's points tally amounted to 96.7% of Sainz's haul – up from Vettel's 33.7% of Leclerc's the previous year – is a more tangible representation of how Ferrari's decision to move on from its former star rebalanced its line-up. Ultimately, all but Sainz's Monaco podium of the team's silverware haul required at least a slice of fortune from the dominant leaders hitting trouble or a chaotic race.

To help get the fine overall results it did in 2021 and make good on its line-up's potential, Ferrari needed to get Sainz up to speed fast. Fortunately, its new signing was no stranger to making himself comfortable in an unfamiliar F1 home – it was the Spaniard's third new start in five seasons, and he has now raced for four of the championship's 10 squads.

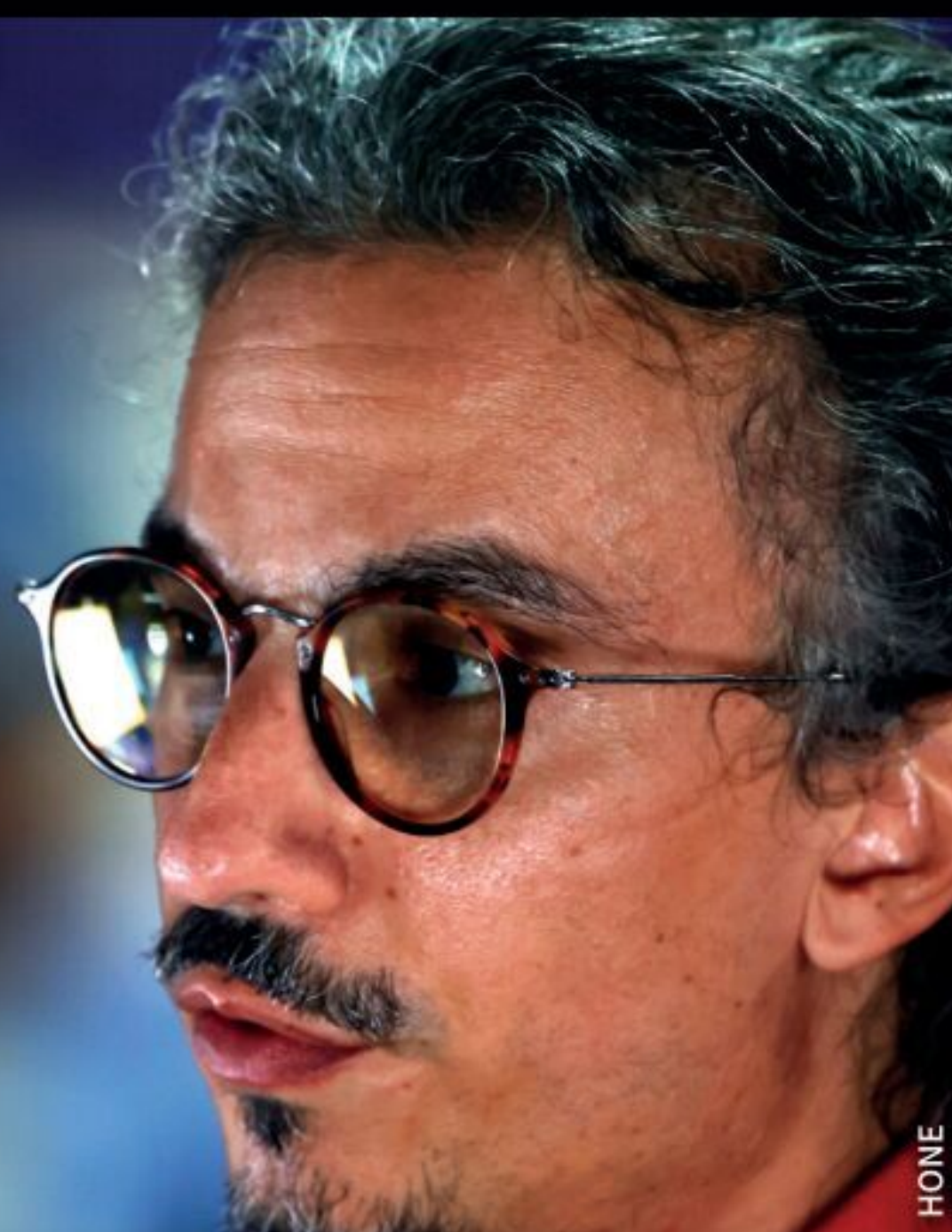
There was a January test with a 2018-spec car – a move the team repeated last week, albeit still with the SF71H and not the 2021 SF21 as originally planned thanks to ongoing confusion around F1's sporting rules for 2022. Then, once Sainz was familiar with Ferrari's operating procedures and Bahrain testing turned into the season proper, the team had to work out how to properly adapt his style – in terms of driving and technical feedback – to its own and Leclerc's. Allied with the performance step from Ferrari's upgraded hybrid system that provided a potent boost from September's Russian Grand Prix, the results got better and better as 2021 went along. In fact, Leclerc's 15th place in the rain in Sochi (he'd been eighth before the weather rolled in) was the only time either Ferrari driver finished outside the points in the second half of the year.

"In the mix of that, we had Carlos's integration," Mekies explains. "You need to learn how to speak the same language – it takes time. We had also some progress with Carlos's integration – he brought a lot of very solid feedback and approaches from his previous experiences. And it took us some time to integrate that with our own approaches, and then to blend it, and then eventually to use it best with Charles together. I think you saw some of that in the second half of the season with the double finishes [being more regular]. So, I would say at the beginning of last year, it was very easy to have a complete miss in the race. The second half of the season, this didn't happen anymore."

One way the pair combined well was in their technical feedback. While this has been previously identified as an area where Leclerc still needs to make some progress, Sainz's experience from outside the squad, as well as his approach being different to his stablemate's, proved to be valuable.

"We are enjoying very high-quality feedback from the drivers," adds >>

"WE ARE COMFORTABLE THAT THEY ARE PUSHING EACH OTHER. WE THINK IT IS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE"



DRIVER STATS

CHARLES LECLERC

Age 24

F1 races 80

Ferrari F1 races 59

Wins 2

Poles 9

F1 titles 0

Junior titles

- 2016 GP3 Series
- 2017 FIA Formula 2

Leclerc strengths

- Proven F1 winner
- One-lap speed
- Racecraft skills against F1's best
- Honest and transparent view of his own abilities
- Unfazed by Ferrari star status

Leclerc weaknesses

- Requires sharper technical feedback
- Random silly errors and crashes
- Unproven in F1 title fight
- Embroiled in a previous team-mate war
- Inconsistent tyre management

CARLOS SAINZ JR

Age 27

F1 races 140

Ferrari F1 races 22

Wins 0

Poles 0

F1 titles 0

Junior titles

- 2011 Formula Renault 2.0 NEC
- 2014 Formula Renault 3.5

Sainz strengths

- Calm, determined approach
- Proven team player
- Decisive passing and strategy calls
- Adaptability
- Fast learner

Sainz weaknesses

- Unproven F1 winner
- Sometimes pushes too hard, too early
- Unproven in F1 title fight
- One-lap speed
- Inconsistent tyre management

Mekies. “So, it’s never enough, but we think it’s one of the strong points now. Not only because they describe what they feel, but also because they have the will and motivation to go back and work with us on solutions.

“They do it with different words, so we can click things together. They don’t always agree, which again gives us a chance to look at things in a wider way. We think that part is working well. There is always more to come because of the way it is. But the way they complement each other, Carlos and Charles, is at the moment as good as it gets.”

Altogether, Ferrari worked hard to recover from its French GP tyre disaster. Its drivers returned from that race straight to Maranello to conduct a thorough investigation of its shocking struggles, which led to a series of tweaks to its systems to manage this discipline better. Although it still encountered challenging moments on tyre degradation, Ferrari bounced back strongly, with Leclerc managing his rubber well in his ultimately unsuccessful bid to hold off the recovering Hamilton in the British GP three races later.

But Mekies says Ferrari didn’t get unduly concerned by one slightly alarming theme that ran alongside the team’s new line-up getting on well throughout last year: the number of crashes the pair racked up.

There was Leclerc’s high-profile shunt in qualifying in Monaco, which secured his home pole but ultimately prevented him starting, while he also wiped the walls at Spa and in Jeddah. Sainz had a string of practice

Improved SF21 and strong
driver line-up netted third
in the 2021 points table

HONE

crashes in the summer and early autumn – in Hungary, the Netherlands and Italy – which he put down to pushing too hard, too early.

“We want our drivers to push to the limit,” says Mekies. “We need that now. It’s the right time to do it! [Last season was] a budget cap year already, so you might say it’s a little bit too late. But it’s still the right time to do it compared to [2022]. It will be more expensive this year and more taxing from a development budget point of view.”

The crashes didn’t mask the speed Leclerc and Sainz displayed in 2021. Take Monaco as an example. The drivers were able to get the best out of the SF21’s slow-speed strengths thanks to its solid front end and ease over bumps and kerbs, by working the softest

Pirelli rubber on the smooth surface in a way that got the tyres into the optimum working window. This was an important quality that even Hamilton struggled with on that occasion.

It “allowed them to build the right confidence”, according to Mekies, which resulted in Leclerc’s headline qualifying result – one he followed up in similar circumstances at the following round in Baku.

The standout results may have contained no further wins since

Vettel’s triumph in the 2019 Singapore GP, but Ferrari’s progress was clear to see in 2021. And the team is proud of how it has worked as a collective unit – of which the drivers are of course the highest-profile parts – to stay united and concentrate on its latest rebuild. There was little public criticism from either Leclerc or Sainz on the continued lack of victories, which speaks to the high levels of morale at Ferrari of late. Although that is easier to sustain without the pressures of a title fight...

“We feel like, as a group, when you go through a very hard time and the group stays united, which is never a given, then you somehow put the lowest point behind you, and you start to put your way back,” explains Mekies. “That is how we feel. The positive energy

comes from the fact that the group stayed united in the worst possible conditions. And that group, despite the limitations of the regulations [with the carryover car requirements for 2021], is managing to make some ground back. We are not excited of that. We just think that if we continue to work as hard as we did in that direction, it seems to take us to the right place.”

At McLaren, Sainz had forged a firm bond with Norris, the pair >>

“WHEN YOU GO THROUGH A VERY HARD TIME AND STAY UNITED, YOU START TO PUT YOUR WAY BACK”





Leclerc starred at Silverstone but lost out to Hamilton



Sainz got stronger as 2021 progressed and snatched fifth in points

becoming social media stars as a result of their friendship. A Ferrari move comes with different expectations and pressures, yet throughout 2021 the burgeoning relationship between Sainz and Leclerc seemed to be as jovial as the one McLaren had previously enjoyed for two years.

There were tense moments — Sainz was understandably exasperated that his team-mate's error and Monaco shunt had cost him his own shot of securing pole and a possible win, plus there was their scrap in Jeddah, which may well have come to the stewards' attention had it not been an internecine affair.

But there is a clear respect between them, as evidenced by their team-orders cooperation in Mexico, even if the first pass was handled slightly scruffily by Leclerc. Sainz even ended 2021 by saying: "We will exchange some information and we will try and both become better drivers, learning from each other. I think that this tight battle and this tight competition is what is going to bring Charles and me again to a better level next season and it's also going to benefit Ferrari and ourselves. So, it's a great competition to have and a great team-mate to have."

Leclerc is Ferrari's undisputed star given his long contract, and he showed little sign of being publicly ruffled by his new team-mate's fine first year in red. In fact, Sainz says seeing Leclerc's "crazy quick" driving style in the data Ferrari produced meant he "had to copy a lot of the stuff" to "adapt myself". That's fine teamwork, with Ferrari insiders saying that Sainz also maintained his level-headed, diplomatic reputation since joining at the start of last year. Boats were not rocked and the elevation in status brought by a move to F1's most storied (and still most successful) squad did not go to his head. It's little wonder Mekies says Ferrari's line-up is "as good as it gets" — both in terms of the drivers' friendship and how it helps the team as a result.

"I don't know if they're friends or not," he adds. "But what I can tell you is that the level of respect, the level of desire to work together, the level of trust in both as characters and in technical abilities is huge. And they both share the same drive to push the team to recover."

"If you look in Saudi, on Friday night, we were not great [Sainz was seventh and behind Pierre Gasly's AlphaTauri and the Alpine pair in FP2, while Leclerc crashed heavily]. We didn't want to settle for it. We never want to settle for it, but there was just that spirit. And it's the second to last race or whatever, just that spirit — there is something more, we knew there was something more that was there in the car that we couldn't quite grasp. Then, the race circumstances were the race circumstances, but if you look at the first stint of the race before the first red flag, Charles was a comfortable fourth, Perez was behind. So ultimately, a strong race pace came out from that."

"So I think, long story short, these two guys, the way they work

with us, the way we have integrated them, the way they are contributing, is a very significant competitive advantage. We don't want to stop there. We want to develop that because we think there is more to come as well. But certainly, it's one of the strong points we have."

And that will continue to be the case in the upcoming campaign. But, with the possibility for increased success and other changes around the F1 paddock, things will be different.

In 2021, Ferrari's line-up looked like the best and most balanced on paper ahead of the season starting, and so it proved to be. But this time around, Mercedes' move to replace Valtteri Bottas with George Russell as Hamilton's team-mate arguably gives F1's current leading team the mantle of 'best driver line-up'. But that is still yet to be proven and, indeed, Russell may take some time to reach Hamilton's level — if he ever does. At the same time, he could be a winner from the off...

Leclerc and Sainz delivered what Ferrari needed in 2021, but if the team makes good on its intentions (shared by so many other midfield squads) and does vault back to the front of the grid, their relationship will inevitably take on a different form. When wins and titles are on the line, the niceties go out of the window — just look at how ugly things got between Red Bull and Mercedes last year, or with Hamilton and Nico

Rosberg when an intra-team affair dominates a championship. For now, Ferrari is keen to uphold the current status quo.

"In terms of drivers, as we have often said, it is the track that will dictate it," team principal Mattia Binotto said at Ferrari's 2021

end-of-year Christmas media event. "The priority is always the team. But, no doubt, if they can compete for an important position in the championship, it will be the track that will tell who's ahead. And sometimes, I think it's not only about driver talent or driver capacity. A driver can be a lot unfortunate, and have damage, reliability issues, or crashes [as Leclerc did in 2021]."

"So, I don't think that we need at this stage, and certainly we will not have a policy, of number one or number two. We will simply discuss it based on positions on track whenever it will be time."

This current policy is an intriguing stance for Ferrari to take, and perhaps hints at the lessons it learned from Leclerc's battle with Vettel igniting in 2019, the last time the team was able to take the fight to the front of the F1 grid, in large part thanks to its controversial engine power.

At the start of that season, Leclerc's first at Ferrari and second overall in F1, Binotto insisted that Vettel would be "the guide with which we aim for the championship" once the campaign got under way. This approach was tested almost from the off, with Leclerc going wheel-to-wheel with Vettel and then leaving him behind in his near-victory in Bahrain.

Come the end of 2019, the pair's fight for superiority resulted in the embarrassing crash in Brazil. So, Binotto is wise to take a diplomatic stance before a 2022 car has even turned a wheel — and of course there is no guarantee that Ferrari will even find itself in better circumstances this time around. But the team opting to "make zero compromises for 2022", according to Mekies, has raised expectations of a possible Honda/Brawn-like turnaround *à la* 2009.

"The last aero bit we got on the car was probably Silverstone," Mekies says of Ferrari's approach to balancing the limited 2021 car development and concentrating on the upcoming design rules overhaul. "The only development we had in the second half of the year was the hybrid, which again is something we'll use for 2022."

"As individuals, you have a degree of excitement because you want to see where you are going to be, because you have been working on that project for such a number of months. Now you want to see the results. We are competitors, we all want to win, nobody is happy with third."

If Ferrari's dream is realised this year, keeping its driver line-up balanced and harmonious is a key test of its progress since 2019. But with their speed and proven ability in helping the team make progress in a year with such limited scope for development as was the case in 2021, Leclerc and Sainz unite to create what Ferrari needs to finally make it back to the success that has now long been missing in Maranello. And that, ultimately, is F1 titles. 🏆

"I DON'T KNOW IF THEY ARE FRIENDS OR NOT BUT THEY BOTH SHARE THE SAME DRIVE TO PUSH THE TEAM"

"WE WILL NOT HAVE A POLICY OF NUMBER ONE OR NUMBER TWO. WE WILL DISCUSS BASED ON POSITION"



THE 2021 FINALISTS

Intriguingly, three of the 2021 finalists could be racing against each other this season in FIA Formula 3, while Louis Foster is making his first step towards what he hopes will be a career in IndyCar.

LOUIS FOSTER

Age 18

Career highlight 2021 runner-up in Euroformula Open with CryptoTower
2022 programme Indy Pro 2000 with Exclusive Autosport

OLLIE BEARMAN

Age 16

Career highlight 2021 Italian and German F4 champion with Van Amersfoort
2022 programme FIA Formula 3 with Prema

JONNY EDGAR

Age 17

Career highlight 2020 German F4 champion with Van Amersfoort
2022 programme FIA Formula 3 with Trident

ZAK O'SULLIVAN

Age 16

Career highlight 2021 GB3 champion with Carlin
2022 programme FIA Formula 3 (team TBC)



ATHLETIC THINKING





THE WAIT TO DISCOVER THE NEXT BRITISH ACE

Our latest quest to find and help the best young British talents in single-seater racing has been delayed recently, but now we're nearly there...

KEVIN TURNER



The long wait is nearly over. Thanks to Omicron, the 2021 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award finalists have had to be more patient than usual but, this Sunday at the Autosport Awards, the 32nd winner will be revealed at Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane.

The four hopefuls had their simulator, fitness and Silverstone tests way back in October and are already looking ahead to their 2022 campaigns. Ollie Bearman, Jonny Edgar, Louis Foster and Zak O'Sullivan all impressed with their efforts in MotorSport Vision Formula 2, Garage 59-run Aston Martin Vantage GT3 and BBM Sport Ginetta LMP3 machinery, and the one selected by our judging panel will get the boosts of £200,000, full British Racing Drivers' Club membership and an Arai GP-7 FRP helmet.

They will join an illustrious list of winners (see below) that includes 2009 Formula 1 world champion Jenson Button, 13-time grand prix winner David Coulthard, IndyCar legend Dario Franchitti and current F1 racers George Russell and Lando Norris.

All the Award winners – some voted for by you – will be revealed on Sunday evening, so be sure to follow the events on Autosport.com. We will, of course, also cover them in next week's magazine. 🏁

➡ P28 WORST JOB AT THE TESTS?

ALL THE WINNERS

YEAR WINNER

1989 **David Coulthard**
1990 **Gareth Rees**
1991 **Oliver Gavin**
1992 **Dario Franchitti**
1993 **Ralph Firman Jr**
1994 **Jamie Davies**
1995 **Jonny Kane**
1996 **Darren Turner**

1997 **Andrew Kirkaldy**
1998 **Jenson Button**
1999 **Gary Paffett**
2000 **Anthony Davidson**
2001 **Steven Kane**
2002 **Jamie Green**
2003 **Alex Lloyd**
2004 **Paul di Resta**

2005 **Oliver Jarvis**
2006 **Oliver Turvey**
2007 **Stefan Wilson**
2008 **Alexander Sims**
2009 **Dean Smith**
2010 **Lewis Williamson**
2011 **Oliver Rowland**
2012 **Jake Dennis**

2013 **Matt Parry**
2014 **George Russell**
2015 **Will Palmer**
2016 **Lando Norris**
2017 **Dan Ticktum**
2018 **Tom Gamble**
2019 **Johnathan Hoggard**
2020 **NO AWARD** (pandemic)





Adam (left) assisted the finalists to get up to speed in the GT3 Aston Martin

THE WORST JOB AT THE AWARD TESTS?

Being a finalist is tough, but there's one role that is arguably even more stressful. Here's our salute to the benchmark drivers

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

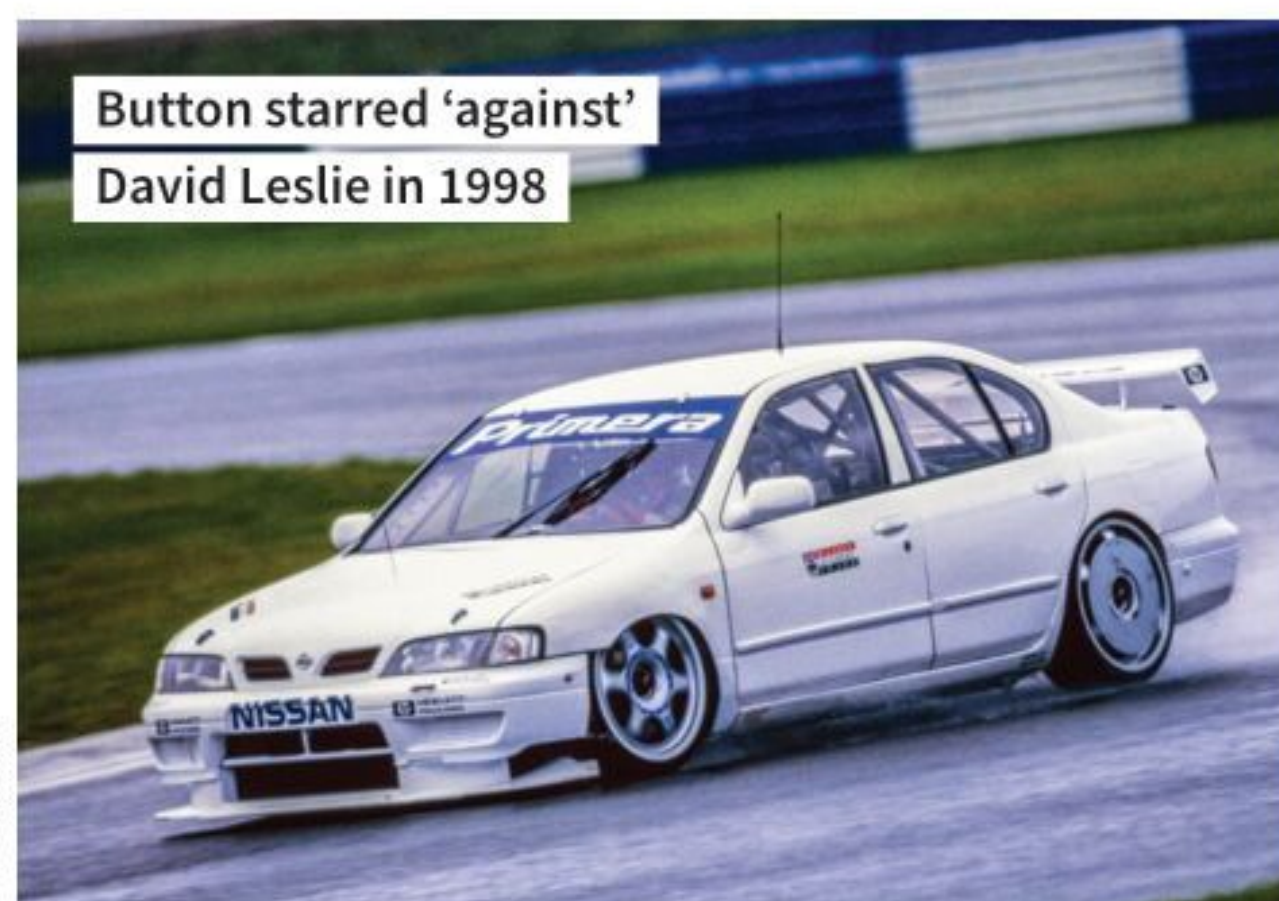
The benchmark driver has become a traditional element of the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award tests at Silverstone. There's no longer one for the MotorSport Vision Formula 2 cars, but the other challenges – last year the Garage 59-run Aston Martin Vantage GT3 and the BBM Sport Ginetta G61LT-P3 LMP3 – do come with their own experts.

The job chiefly entails making sure the car is running as it should, providing a benchmark lap time and data for the finalists, and giving advice and answering questions – from the young drivers and judges. It sounds simple enough, but it's a lose-lose situation in some ways. If the benchmark driver is fastest, it's just what was expected, but if

one or more of the finalists goes quicker there is ample opportunity for embarrassment, particularly with plenty of other drivers and ex-racers around to join in with any banter...

"The pressure is on," agrees Charlie Robertson, a former finalist and the 2021 Ginetta benchmark driver. "I've got to be on my A-game. It's pressure in a different way to being a finalist."

Some of the most memorable Award moments have come when a finalist does something outstanding in one of the non-single-seaters. Jenson Button was brilliant in the Nissan Primera Super Tourer on his way to winning in 1998, Alexander Sims stunned in the DTM Mercedes 10 years later, as did Lando Norris in 2016. Tom Gamble also impressed



Button starred 'against' David Leslie in 1998



Sims stunned in DTM Merc in 2008...



...and a teenaged Norris did likewise in 2016





Robertson (right) reckons attacking mindset helps the young drivers



in his Ligier LMP3 drive in 2018 and is now forging a career in endurance racing.

Aside from the stars tending to shine (it's rare that the big moment comes from someone other than that year's eventual winner), Robertson believes that the difference in mentality between the benchmark drivers and finalists opens the door for shock results: "As the professional driver, you get used to saving the car and it's a different mindset. You can see the finalists are ready to run that kerb I might not want to run.

They really want it and that's what it should be. If you don't come away knowing you've done everything you could, you're not going to win."

Sims has seen it from more viewpoints than most. As well as his moment making Gary Paffett uncomfortable in 2008, he was the McLaren GT3 benchmark in 2013 (when he was quickest) and the Ligier LMP3 benchmark in 2018-19 (when he wasn't).

"There's no upside to what you do!" says the Formula E race winner. "The finalists are trying to prove everything, which is fantastic, whereas for the professional drivers you are encouraged not to be like that all the time. There are times to put things on the line but a lot of the time the risks outweigh the rewards, so to get that mentality to go out and do *that* lap is a challenge. It's only when the finalists get in the car you realise that, rather than driving to a 'sensible limit', you should explore every piece of Tarmac."

Sims's job was even harder when he was the Ligier benchmark, since he'd never driven the car prior to the test. "I did no research, rocked up and winged it, which is no good," admits Sims. "And I paid the price."

"When you're the regular driver you know what to do, you can get tuned into the track and you're there or thereabouts. In the McLaren I was pretty chilled about it. Nobody was quicker, though they got close. In the Ligier it was almost a sensation of being a finalist because you know you'll be judged by the people in the judges' room. But also you want, as a judge, to make sure there is a representative lap time."

2021 BENCHMARK DRIVERS

CAR	DRIVER
BBM Sport Ginetta G61LT-P3 LMP3	Charlie Robertson
Garage 59 Aston Martin Vantage GT3	Jonny Adam

Tough job though it is, the benchmark driver is an important part of the process. Sims points out that one of their first jobs is to "get a good understanding that the car is in a sensible driveable condition", and to make sure the "balance is as expected". Then they need to provide a good reference lap to help give the judges an idea of what the car is capable of.

"To have a benchmark driver set a time and talk to the drivers is very important," says chairman of the judges Derek Warwick. "I'm humbled by the feedback they give to the finalists, especially considering that feedback helps the young drivers go quicker and quicker, and get closer to them. You can see the nervousness on their faces because they don't want to get beaten, and this year the finalists were really quick."

Nervous or not, it all contributes to the final decision on who walks away with £200,000. "Good drivers tend to show they can click with the characteristics of any car," adds Sims. "The best are not necessarily the best in every car, but it's good to get them into an alien environment and see who treads water quickest. It's a fascinating element of the Award. No one part is more important, it's building a picture."

And the benchmark drivers are one of the key elements that help build that picture, even if there are some uncomfortable moments along the way. "They do a brilliant job," concludes Warwick. "They see how seriously we take it and they take it seriously. They're massively important."

NEXT WEEK

AUTOSPORT AWARDS 10 FEBRUARY ISSUE

We hear from all the victors on our special night, including the 2021 winner of the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award.



Humphries was mechanic on Dron's Broadspeed Dolomite



Tech-Speed ran BMWs in early 1990s. Here's Baird in his M3



Now the job is to team-manage at Excelr8, where Ingram is starring

FROM DOLOMITES TO BMWs TO HYUNDAIS

...via Formula 1, sportscars and the MGF Cup. Veteran team manager Marvin Humphries has worked not only with BTCC stars, but legends including Gil de Ferran, Hans Stuck and Tom Sneva

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

He's renowned as one of the most amiable, down-to-earth members of the British Touring Car Championship paddock, of which he's been more or less ever-present over the past 20 years. And his lifespan in Britain's premier tin-top series goes further back to the tune of two and a half decades to the mid-1970s.

Yet pinning down top team manager, former team principal and all-round good guy Marvin Humphries to chat about his career in motorsport isn't easy. Why? Because he's so modest and humble about it that he doesn't see why anyone should make a fuss. The last thing he wants to do is blow his own trumpet.

So... we need to get some others to do that for us. Ask Tom Ingram, current lead driver for the Excelr8 Motorsport squad that Humphries joined as team manager prior to the 2019 season, and he enthuses: "One of the things about going to Excelr8 was working with someone like Marvin, whose experience of motorsport is enormous. It's an honour and a privilege to work with someone with such a decorated career. I love him to pieces – as much as anything else, he's such a passionate fan of the sport."

BTCC race winner and latter-day ITV pundit Paul O'Neill, who drove for many years with the Tech-Speed Motorsport squad of Humphries and wife Sandra, adds: "I owe my life to him. If it wasn't for Marvin and Sandra, I think I would have lasted probably two years in motorsport."

Humphries' career is long and varied, encompassing Formula 1, the world sportscar championship, IMSA and manufacturer-promoted one-make championships. But it all started with rollbars... From school, he found a job in 1968 with rollcage pioneer John Aley Racing, then went into an apprenticeship with British Leyland, before "I decided this maybe wasn't what I wanted to do, so that's when I saw a job advertised at Broadspeed". This was 1973, on the eve of the new Group 1 regulations for what was then known as the British Saloon Car Championship, and an era when Broadspeed was renowned as a benchmark operation in touring

cars. Humphries moved onto the race team in 1977 to run the Triumph Dolomite Sprint of Tony Dron. "I'd started in the service shop and basically worked through to high performance," he explains. "Then I got onto the race team with good old Dronnie."

The giantkilling Dolomite occasionally beat the hordes of Ford Capris from the top division, but the class-based structure of the championship meant Dron could not quite match the points of overall champion Bernard Unett, whose Chrysler Avenger GT prevailed in the 1300cc class. Broadspeed tried its best to help Unett's main class rival Richard Longman. "We did a lot of work on Longman's Mini to try and get him to beat Unett," says Humphries. "Put it on the rolling road, and stuff like that."

Humphries stayed on in 1978 to run Dron and the sister, Hermetite-liveried car driven by John Fitzpatrick, but Broadspeed's star was beginning to wane: "Two or three of the guys had gone on from Broadspeed to Shadow. I think Shadow worked out that if you'd done a bit at Broadspeed you'd probably been through the gearbox shop, the diff shop, the engine build, every shop you could find. It wasn't a massive place, but it was all under one roof pretty much. We did just about everything there. It was a great place to learn a bit about your trade, that's for sure. I think Zakspeed was based on what Ralph [Broad] had done in Southam – all under one roof. There were some really good guys there."

Now in Formula 1 with Shadow, Humphries was mechanic for Hans Stuck for the last three races of the 1978 season, before a sponsor exodus led to redundancies. "That was a bit of a blow, but I drew the short straw by getting a job with ATS!" laughs Humphries, who therefore found himself back with Stuck, who had moved to the squad owned by the famously highly strung Gunter Schmid for 1979: "Working for Gunter was an education and a half! He had his moments. He was a nice enough chap in his way but he was the most impatient man you've ever come across; all sorts of antics." In 1980, Humphries worked with Jan Lammers for the first two events before transferring to Marc Surer's machine for the South >>

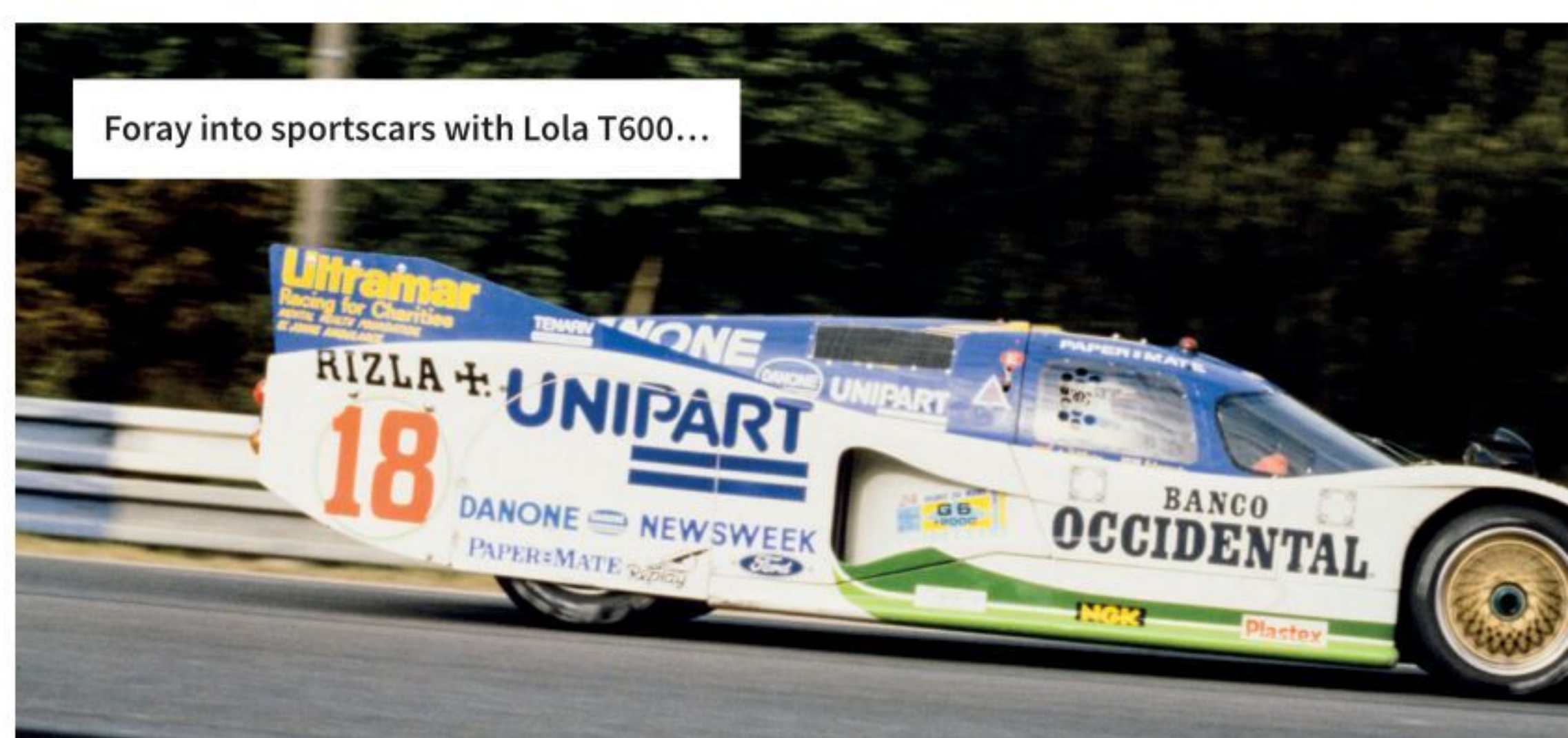



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Rainmaster Stuck scored points for ATS at Watkins Glen in 1979



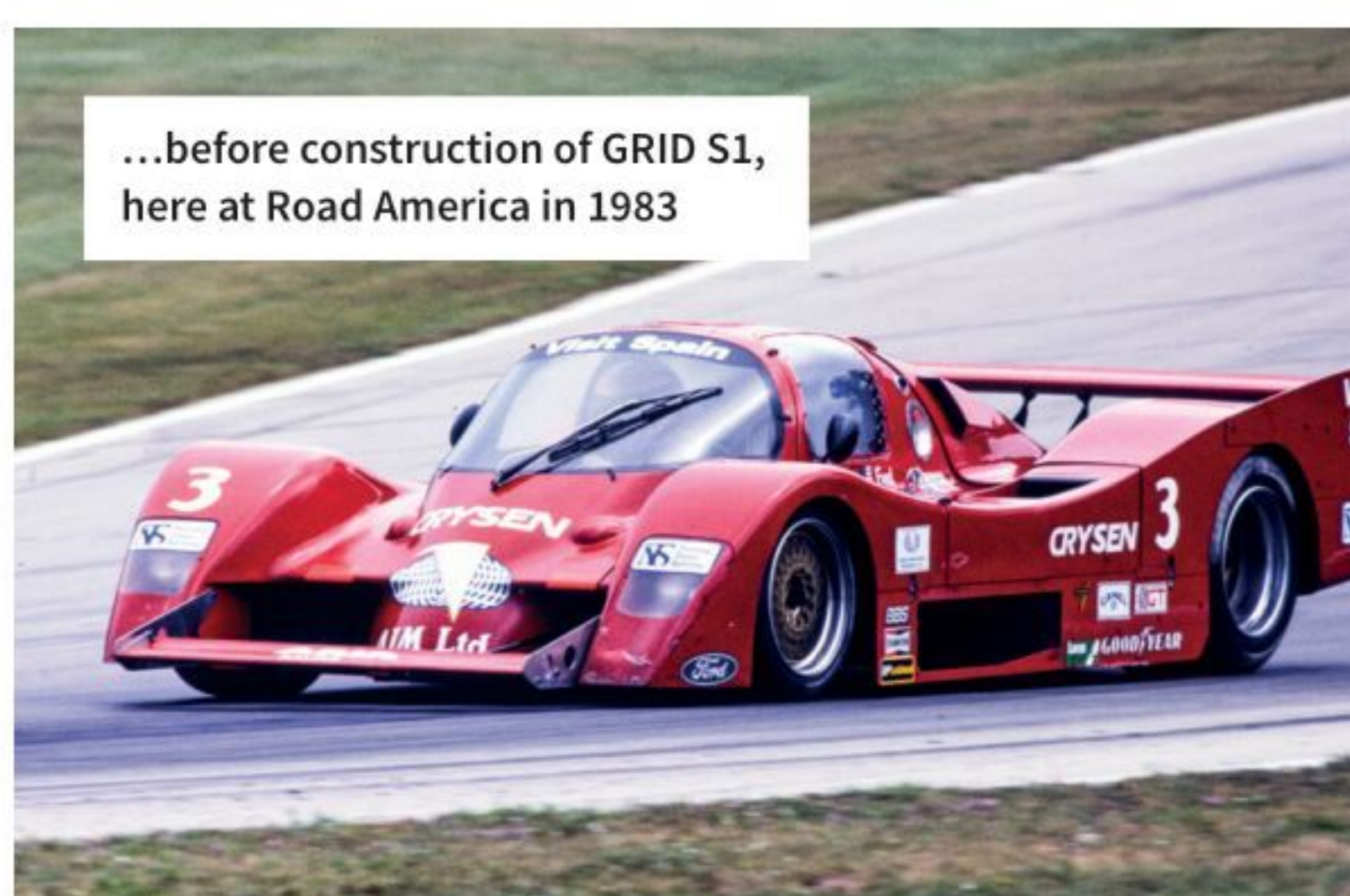
Foray into sportscars with Lola T600...

African GP, where the Swiss crashed heavily in qualifying: “They [the rescuers] were pretty useless there so we had to go round and get him out of the car. He broke his ankles and he was in a bit of a bad way. Then two or three of us left and went to GRID.”

This was the Leamington Spa-based team of Giuseppe Risi and Ian Dawson (hence the ‘GRID’ acronym), which was running Arrows machinery in the Aurora British F1 series, with Guy Edwards as lead driver. It started with victory at Oulton Park. “He had quite a big shunt in testing, we managed to build the car up again and he won the Gold Cup on the Good Friday,” remembers Humphries. Edwards was third in the championship behind the ground-effect Williams FW07s of Emilio de Villota and Eliseo Salazar, “and then we went on to build sportscars. In 1981 we started with the Lola T600. It wasn’t a bad car at all. We raced that at Le Mans with Edwards, Villota and Juan Fernandez. We finished 15th but we ended up with two gears. I think Emilio could get two gears down the Mulsanne Straight but Edwards could only get one, so we were struggling. I remember Eric Broadley [Lola founder and designer] going to bed about nine or 10 o’clock and saying, ‘You boys won’t be here in the morning’. We’d bloody well push the thing round if we had to, and we were there the next morning. Things were falling off it like it was going out of fashion, but we managed to get it across the line, which was a good result. When we got the car back the gearbox really was wrecked.”

Two weeks later, Edwards and de Villota won the thinly supported Coppa Florio round of the World Championship for Makes at Enna-Pergusa: “After the 24 Hours, the car was just about falling to bits and we had to rebuild it when we got there. And then Ian decided to build his own car.”

This was the GRID S1, designed by ex-Lotus F1 man Geoff Aldridge. It raced at Le Mans in 1982 with de Villota, Desire Wilson and Alain de Cadenet, but what Humphries remembers best are the frequent trips to the States to race in IMSA in 1983. This was the dawn of a new glory period for sportscars in the US, but some of the leading contenders of the time would become infamous for their involvement in the drug trade. Not GRID though, which had a best result of fourth in the 1983 Road Atlanta 500Km with 1978 Indycar champion Tom Sneva at the wheel. “He was an ex-schoolteacher,” says Humphries. “He was getting on a bit and he looked like a



teacher! He was a bit of a character. We had a few people out there who were characters. I do remember sitting in front of a truck with John Paul Jr and asking him what his dad did for a job, and a few people sniggered at the back! They told me that maybe I shouldn't ask that question... A few years on you think, 'Jesus, we were a bit close to trouble there.'

GRID also came close to victory in the 1983 Sebring 12 Hours with Skeeter McKitterick and Milt Minter: "We were leading up until about two hours from the end when the wheelbearing went. We always reckoned that if we'd won Sebring then we'd have sold cars in America. It was very close but we never quite made it."

The GRID was then sold to the Tech-Speed Racing team of Birmingham meat businessman Gil Baird, who had a long involvement in sportscar racing dating back to the 1960s. "Gil was a racing man without a doubt, a lovely chap," reflects Humphries. "He bought the GRID and we were seconded to run it in Thundersports." The team also bought two Shrikes to run in Sports 2000. Ex-Formula Ford ace Sean Walker won the 1985 title before returning to single-seaters in 1986 in the British Formula 3 Championship. Here started a new era for Tech-Speed. Walker finished runner-up in the Class B standings in 1986, and the team went on to run talents such as Roland Ratzenberger, Oswaldo Negri, Jordi Gene and Gary Ayles in the top division. It also gave future Indycar champion Gil de Ferran his F3 debut in Class B at the final round of 1988.

"I tried desperately to get Gil to drive for us the following year but they couldn't put the money together," says Humphries, who has been a proud British Racing Drivers' Club associate member since 1985. "Jordi in 1990 was doing national service in Spain, and that made it very difficult to do any testing. We lost him the following year to my good mate Dick Bennetts [at West Surrey Racing]. We also ran Paul Smith, who's still one of my best mates, and his son Rob ended up driving the touring car at Excelr8 [the MG6 in 2019]."

Tech-Speed became the first team to run a Dallara in British F3. Raphael del Sarte had handled a Reynard with the squad in 1988, and Humphries recalls: "He had three brothers, and they were in the stock market in Paris. They decided that the Dallara was the future and we went out to see the last race of the French F3 at Dijon. We turned up with a van and bought it from Graff Racing and took it away. >>

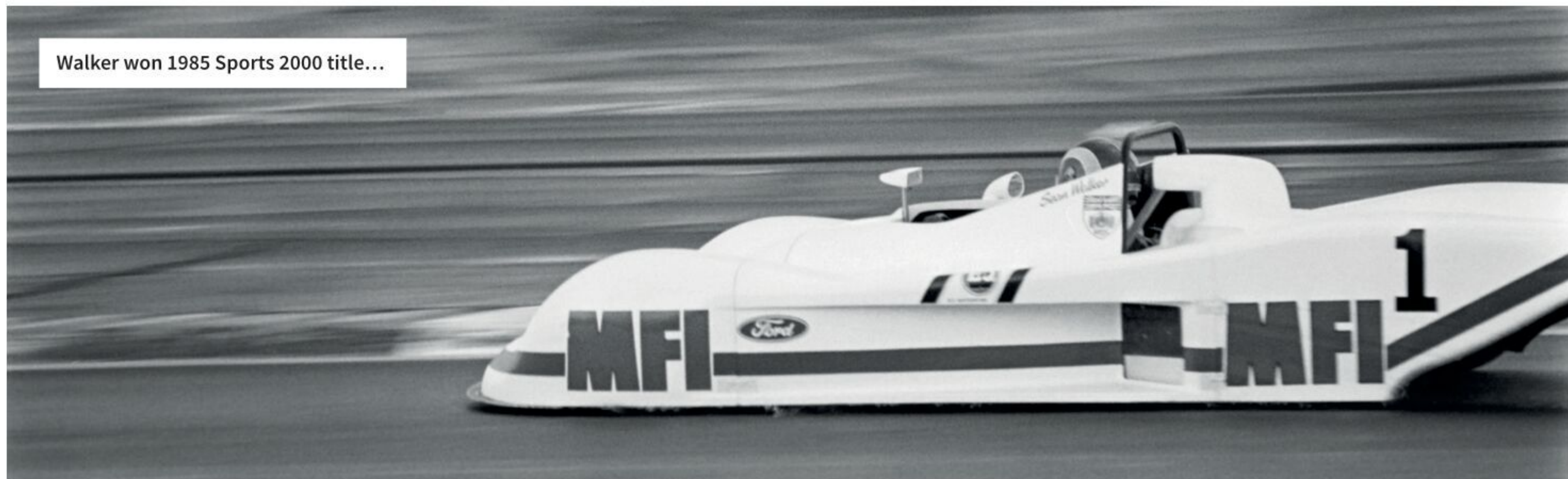
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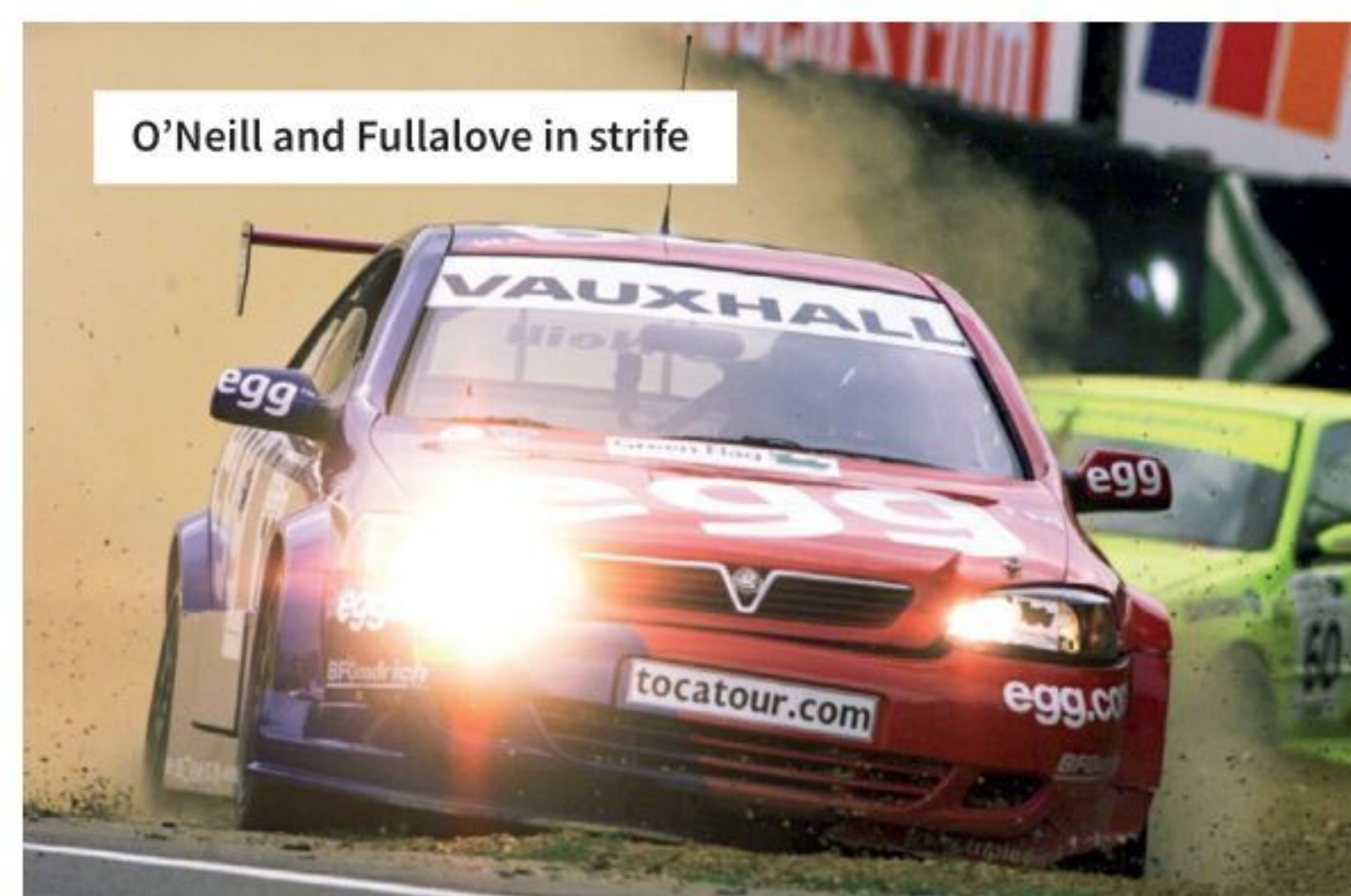
Walker won 1985 Sports 2000 title...



Tech-Speed ran Gene in 1990



O'Neill and Fullalove in strife



They were convinced that the car was going to be the business, but we didn't have any spares so they decided to buy another one.

"But the issue we had was that we were crossing it over from radial tyres to crossplies, and the car didn't seem to want to work. We struggled at places like Donington – we couldn't get enough downforce on the thing, and of course Raph was really learning. We had no comparison to say it was the car, the driver, the engine or us. We were struggling to get grip – mechanical and aero. And that was the end of the road from that point of view. The idea was right, we all thought the principle was right, and the radials were coming. Maybe it wasn't so much the tyres that were the problem, but in France they were nearly all Dallaras and they had it all pretty well sussed. The car itself was pretty good, we were impressed with the engineering, and old boy [Gian Paolo] Dallara did help us quite a lot." Four years later, Dallara flooded the UK market...

By now, Baird had surprised Humphries by making him a partner at Tech-Speed, and "I was pushing towards trying to get into touring cars. You always look where the fashion is, and it was difficult to keep with the F3 budgets." The new two-litre rules that would become known as Super Touring were arriving, and the team prepared a BMW 318is for Baird's son Nick to drive in 1990. For 1991 "we bought two BMW M3s from Prodrive". Among the drivers across the next two years were Walker, Baird, Nick Whale, Karl Jones, David Leslie and BTCC newcomer Matt Neal. But, with the manufacturers arriving in their droves, "it started drifting off – to run as a privateer was near-impossible".

Through the rest of the 1990s, Tech-Speed competed in the Rover Turbo Cup and its successor the MGF Cup (tasting success in both with Alastair Lyall), the Vauxhall Vectra Challenge, and built and ran Whale's TVR Cerbera assault on the British GT Championship. And then onto the scene came O'Neill. The brother of Spice Girl Mel C was a racing nut who'd been given the financial wherewithal to pursue his dream by his sister's success, and joined Tech-Speed

for 2000, his second season of MGFs. "I was walking around with a cheque book," says O'Neill of his early days, where to some in the paddock he smelled of popstar money. "Marvin looked at some damage that had happened in qualifying at Castle Combe and said, 'We could have fixed that for you and got you out for the race.' After that, I've driven for Tech-Speed most of my life. So many people were on my case trying to get me to drive for them. I look at where their trajectories have gone and it's always been bust, bust, bust."

Baird Sr had died in 1990, and his son took over his Tech-Speed directorship until he decided to step down in 1999. "Sandra and I bought the assets and started Tech-Speed Motorsport [a change of suffix from 'Racing']," explains Humphries. Soon after, the BTCC – with waning numbers – adopted a Super Production class, and Tech-Speed joined the fray with a team of Peugeot 306 GTIs, led

by O'Neill. Then they targeted a move to the new BTC Touring top division in 2002...

"I went down to Triple Eight to buy a Vauxhall Astra Coupe for Paul, and 'H' [Triple Eight co-founder Ian Harrison] said, 'Who's it for?' I said it was for Paul and he said, 'Well, Egg

might be interested in doing something there.'" The credit-card company had backed a second team of Triple Eight's Astras alongside the works cars in 2001, and there was a vacancy alongside new signing Neal, which went to O'Neill. "'H' said he was looking for a team manager," continues Humphries. "I didn't want to lose contact with Paul – it was a massive step, going up alongside Jimmy Thompson and Yvan Muller [in the main Triple Eight line-up] and I wanted to help him as much as I could. So Sandra ran Tech-Speed then with Annie Templeton and Mark Fullalove, and we were both in the drivers' briefings in those days!" "It was unbelievable," relates O'Neill. "The horrible thing was that I didn't take my first BTCC win with Tech-Speed, but Marvin was crying on the pitwall..."

Humphries stayed for two years at Triple Eight, then remained associated with the squad when Tech-Speed ran Vauxhall machinery through to 2008. After that came a return for O'Neill,

"I ALWAYS SAY IF HE'S IN YOUR CORNER NO ONE WILL BEAT YOU IN A FIGHT. HE'S VERY, VERY SHARP"



...and then shone in Class B F3



Del Sarte tests the F3 Dallara



Humphries greets winner Ingram...



...and came close to win with O'Neill at Rockingham in 2011

who had suffered serious illness with diabetes, forcing him out of the sport for two seasons. Against the Super 2000 machinery, he pedalled an ex-Dynamics BTC Touring Honda Integra Type R to some good results in 2009-10, before the acquisition of S2000 Chevrolet Cruzes from works team RML for 2011.

"Rockingham should maybe have been our maiden win," states Humphries of a 2011 race where O'Neill was running second to title contender Jason Plato's RML Chevy. "I remember RML coming down and saying Jason's concerned about the tyres and he wants to back off, and Paul was following him. So I radioed Paul and said, 'What do you want to do here mate? He's worried about the tyres. Are you going to follow him, or are we going to have a go for this?' He said, 'Mate, I can't carry on at this pace, I'm pleased to hear that story, I'm going to have to back off'. I always regret that, because I think that was probably our one opportunity – we got second places, we got third places, trophies and all that stuff. It was very nice of Tom Ingram to give me one of his first-place trophies last year so I've got the set." ("And he ended up getting a bit emotional, bless him!" says Ingram of the gesture.)

Talking about that era, O'Neill adds: "Marvin never took a penny off me. It was paid for because Marvin made sure the sponsors he had got were behind me. He convinced Sunshine [backer of the Honda] to believe in me, but he underwrote it. That sums him and Sandra up. It was a risk, but they got it back."

Over 2012-13 it became increasingly tough to find backing for the BTCC, and the boom was over for Tech-Speed's historic preparation business. For 2014, Humphries joined WSR as team manager for Colin Turkington's second title-winning season, before he moved to the Eurotech Racing Honda squad from 2015-18, and then on to Excelr8: "It did become more difficult without a doubt, and some of the guys that were involved with historics were having a bit of a tough time in that era. Since then

they've been getting on a bit better so I probably should start again! It was getting more and more difficult every year to find the sponsors and to find the money. We got to a point where we needed probably quite a bit of investment to push on, and maybe it was the time to stop, but since then I've met a few people I wish I'd met earlier!"

For now, though, Mr and Mrs H, who celebrate their golden wedding anniversary this year, are effectively team mum-and-dad at Excelr8. "I think you need that," asserts Ingram. "Motorsport can get over the top and serious at times, and sometimes you need that loving input from Marvin and Sandra." "Sandra's always behind me, she's always been more important than anything to see things succeed and still is," says Humphries. "If one of us stopped, the other would stop for sure because it just wouldn't work." It's a family business too – son-in-law Alistair Weston, who was a dab hand in FFord in the 1990s, is a technician at the Mercedes F1 team, and he and wife Donna (the Humphries' daughter) are keeping the Tech-Speed name alive by running youngsters in karting.

Apart from the friendliness, what makes him so good as a team manager? "I always say if he's in your corner no one will beat you in a fight," says O'Neill. "He's very, very sharp. If you've had an incident, he's the first one up to the TOCA bus even if he knows in his heart of hearts it's a tough one. He'll go to a gunfight with a spoon. And his guidance doesn't stop at motorsport – it's guidance for life." "He's old-school in his approach to fairness," states Ingram. "A number of things we had last year, Marvin was massively aggrieved, but it's his passion – he never tried to pull a fast one."

Humphries, now 70 but a few years younger than Bennetts, warns that "there's a good chance this might be my last year. Antony and Justina [Williams, Excelr8 bosses] keep saying 'no no', but I think it probably will be. Tom was one of the reasons to carry on. When he announced he was going to Excelr8, I wanted to be part of that because I've always respected him and felt he was a top driver, and I've not been disappointed. We were pretty unlucky last year and I hope we crack it."

"He's one of the loveliest men you'll ever meet, and a bloody good man to have around the paddock," says Ingram. "I want to win a championship for him, and I hope we have him and Sandra as long as possible." ❧

RACE CENTRE

DAYTONA 24 HOURS • FORMULA E DIRIYAH • WORLD OF SPORT



CASTRONEVES AND MEYER SHANK ADD DAYTONA 24 TO INDY 500 SUCCESS

The Brazilian veteran, with team-mates Tom Blomqvist, Oliver Jarvis and Simon Pagenaud, was once again victorious in the big race

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES



A

cura made it two wins from two starts in the Daytona 24 Hours since the end of its relationship with Team Penske. This time, however, it wasn't the serial winner of the big race, Wayne Taylor Racing, that came out on top last Sunday. Rather, Meyer Shank Racing

prevailed over a team bidding for a fourth straight victory in a 30-minute sprint to the flag with IndyCar legend Helio Castroneves at the wheel of its ARX-05 Daytona Prototype international.

The Brazilian, who shared the #60 ARX-05 with Oliver Jarvis, Tom Blomqvist and Simon Pagenaud, had both track position and the faster of the two Acuras when the race went green for the final time. Ricky Taylor in the WTR entry had little or nothing for his former team-mate over the final laps of the 2022 IMSA SportsCar Championship season-opener last weekend.

The Shank Acura, which led more of the 761 laps than any other car over the course of the 60th running of the Daytona enduro, had made it back to the front in the hands of Blomqvist late in the penultimate hour. He quickly pulled a four-second gap on Taylor, who fell back to third behind Loic Duval in the JDC-Miller Motorsports Cadillac DPi-V.R. The 17th safety car of the race, called with 50 minutes left on the clock, then set up the traditional Daytona dash.

Blomqvist was replaced in the Shank car by Castroneves, part of the winning Daytona line-up at WTR last year and Taylor's team-mate during the Penske years of the DPi programme in 2018-20. The Briton, making his debut in the 24 Hours, reckoned he was "cooked" and also needed to relieve himself: "I was busting for a wee the last two hours. That didn't make it very easy."

Castroneves wasn't given a new set of Michelin control tyres during the stops, while Taylor took fresh rubber on the left side only of the car he shared with Filipe



Albuquerque, Alexander Rossi and Will Stevens. The WTR driver had a look at the race leader into Turn 1 away from the restart, but that was as close as he got.

When push came to shove over those final laps, the Shank car was simply faster. Temperatures were finally rising at one of the coldest Daytonas in years: temperatures in mid-Florida fell to a 10-year low during the night. At that time the WTR car was the quicker of the two ARX-05s, but as the mercury started to creep up the balance swung the other way.

Michael Shank, whose team reprised its 2012 victory at Daytona, admitted that there wasn't any magic in its method. "As the sun came up and the track ambient with it, we

just got better," he said. "It wasn't by design, but it worked out good for us. We were lucky to have the car really there when we needed it."

He was happy to admit that the WTR car was the quicker of the two Acuras in the night when temperatures were not far off freezing. It had been the plan of the four-time race-winning team to have a car that was at its best during the hours of darkness. "We set the car up for a cold race and it was unbelievable in the night," explained Taylor. "The #60 came alive there at the end; I just didn't have enough for Tom or then Helio."

Taylor was insistent that neither his Acura nor the Shank car was fastest around the 3.56-mile Daytona International Speedway on anything more than the odd occasion. He reckoned that honour was held by different Cadillacs at different times over the 24 Hours: "One of them would always be faster than us pretty much all the time."

That honour as the clocked ticked down was held by the JDC-Miller Caddy DPi-V.R in which Duval joined full-season drivers Richard Westbrook and Tristan Vautier, and amateur Ben Keating, who completed his mandatory minimum of two hours early in the race. Late on Sunday morning, IMSA returnee – and DPi debutant – Westbrook propelled the car into a lead of just under 20s.

The team opted to double-stint the tyres, which paid dividends. Tyre warmers are not permitted in IMSA and there was time to be



Wayne Taylor Racing
Acura leads the
field at the start

OF RACING



“AS THE SUN CAME UP AND THE TRACK AMBIENT WITH IT, WE JUST GOT BETTER. IT WASN'T BY DESIGN”

gained in the early laps after a stop on old but warm rubber. There was a trade-off over the final laps of the run, but JDC-Miller and Westbrook made it work. “I was hanging on at the end there on the tyres, but there was definitely a net gain,” said Westbrook of the gamble in the 20th hour. “It was the right call at that time.”

Westbrook had been the first of the frontrunners to pit and, on rubber that was already up to temperature, he quickly built up a lead, first over Mike Conway in the lead Action Express Caddy, and continued to eke out his advantage once Albuquerque got up into second aboard the WTR Acura. But the buffer disappeared at the penultimate safety car with an hour and 50 minutes to go.

The two Acuras anticipated the yellow flags and got in and out of the pits for short stops just before the race was neutralised, and then made their full stops once everyone had slowed behind the course vehicle. That gave them track position for the all-important closing stages. This was the moment when Cadillac's bid to return to Victory Lane in a race it had won four years in a row after the arrival of the

DPI-V.R in 2017 disappeared.

Duval, who took over from Westbrook at this point, did briefly make it up into second ahead of Taylor, only to drop back down to fourth in traffic. He made it back to second after the next round of stops, and was just three seconds down on Blomqvist when the final safety car was called.

The two Caddys, which both made a second stop during the final yellow to top up their fuel load, were third and fourth in the queue behind the Acuras, Duval behind Pipo Derani. Duval, however, was the only one of the top four who had four new tyres under him for the run to the flag: Derani, like Castroneves, was on old rubber.

The problem for Duval was that he was unable to make the most of the advantage that this should have given him. He struggled to get past Derani cleanly: he tried around the outside of the first hairpin straight after the restart and ended up being pushed wide onto the dirt. It was probably one of the defining moments of the race because, by the time he did make it past six laps later, the Acuras were already away up the road.

“If you'd offered me a podium at the >>

LMP2 AND LMP3



DragonSpeed, winner of the LMP2 class at Daytona in 2019 and 2020, bounced back from a horrendous start to the 24 Hours to make it three wins in four years with IndyCar drivers Colton Herta, Pato O'Ward and Devlin DeFrancesco, plus Eric Lux.

The American entrant's ORECA-Gibson 07 was in and out of the pits five times in the opening couple of hours. The car was hit by a series of penalties, including multiple pitlane speeding infractions as a result of an incorrectly set limiter. It dropped as much as three laps off the lead, but the wave-by rules allowed the car to gain back the lost ground. By hour four, it was back on the lead lap, though it would take until the 12th hour for the car to lead the race, albeit for just a single lap. It would, however, lead another 204 before it took the chequered flag.

There was one final twist. Herta was jumped in the pits at the final stop by the Tower Motorsport ORECA with Louis Deletraz at the wheel. Herta had the measure of a driver who was in fuel-save mode to reach the finish and made it past with just under 15 minutes left at the Le Mans Chicane. When Herta lunged down the inside, Deletraz tried to hang it out on the outside, but ended up on the grass. The time lost for the car he shared with Ferdinand Habsburg, Rui Andrade and John Farano dropped it to third behind the TDS-run Racing Team Nederland ORECA of Giedo van der Garde, Rinus VeeKay, Dylan Murry and Frits van Eerd.

LMP3 honours (below) went to Riley Motorsports for a second year in a row. Its Ligier-Nissan JSP320 shared by Felipe Fraga, Gar Robinson, Kay van Berlo and Michael Cooper was a minute and a half clear after a run to 13th overall interrupted only by a puncture during the night.



start of the week, I would have taken it," said Westbrook. "It's a bit frustrating to get that close and miss out, but you shouldn't forget that we're first Caddy home ahead of much bigger teams. It shows we can compete and bodes well for the championship."

The Action car Derani shared with Conway and Tristan Nunez wasn't the competitive proposition on Sunday morning that it had been earlier. The car's performance then took another turn for the worse after the restart, one that its driver didn't fully understand. "The pace wasn't there at the end," said the Brazilian. "We need to analyse why."

The trio of Caddys that weren't part of the final shootout finished down the field after various delays, but all three had the pace to win. The two Chip Ganassi Racing DPi-V.Rs – now entered under the Cadillac Racing banner – led more than 200 laps between them, but ended up 12th and 14th.

The #01 Ganassi car shared by Sebastien Bourdais, Renger van der Zande, Scott Dixon and Alex Palou was the first to hit trouble at the end of hour 13. A failed alternator resulted in more than 40 laps disappearing with its replacement back in the garage.

Kevin Magnussen, fitting in the first of two Ganassi outings before he takes up his seat with the Peugeot World Endurance Championship team, had built up a half-minute lead on Sunday morning in the entry he shared with Alex Lynn, Earl Bamber and



Ganassi Caddy lost a whole chunk of time to broken alternator

Marcus Ericsson, only to drop back to fourth with a fuel pressure issue. The car had to go onto its reserve pump, which then failed in hour 17. That meant another Ganassi car had to go 'behind the wall' for repairs that weren't quite so lengthy as on the sister car.

"You're always disappointed when performance and results don't cross over," said CGR managing director Mike Hull. "Everything on this programme came together late ahead of last season, but we raced right through the year without a fuel pump or an alternator issue."

Jimmie Johnson's bid to add a Daytona 24 victory to his pair in the 500 NASCAR blue-

riband was derailed in the 13th hour when he made contact with a slower car. The second Action Express car, which is contesting only the four IMSA enduros this year, needed extensive work on a damaged rear corner, as well as to the diffuser and the underfloor. A total of 23 laps disappeared before the car he shared with Kamui Kobayashi, Jose Maria Lopez and Mike Rockenfeller returned to the track to finish 11th.

It was definitely a case of what might have been for Cadillac as its crew watched on while Castroneves decided it was time to climb the fence to mimic his traditional Indy 500 celebration. ❦

PORSCHE CLASH IN GTD CLIMAX

A thrilling GT Daytona Pro battle between the Pfaff Motorsport and KCMG Porsches came to a dramatic climax on the final lap. The two cars – Mathieu Jaminet in the Pfaff car, Laurens Vanthoor aboard KCMG's entry – came together after running nose to tail for the better part of three hours.

There'd been a series of minor clashes over the last few laps, Vanthoor getting ahead three laps from home, only to lose out at the first hairpin on the final lap. The KCMG man then made a bid on the outside into the newly renamed Le Mans Chicane, nee the Bus Stop. Both Porsche drivers left their braking ultra-late and neither made the corner. Vanthoor was four wheels off and Jaminet two when they touched and the outcome of the race was decided.

Vanthoor spun, but Jaminet held it together in the 911 GT3-R he shared with Matt Campbell and Felipe Nasr to take honours in the first running of the new

category for GT3 machinery that has replaced the GTE-based GT Le Mans division. Vanthoor, who was teamed with Patrick Pilet, Dennis Olsen and Alexandre Imperatori, dropped to third behind the chasing Risi Competizione Ferrari with Alessandro Pier Guidi at the wheel.

"I braked very late and he was braking later than me, so I knew it was not going to work," said Jaminet. "We both tried to make the corner, but couldn't."

Vanthoor admitted he'd cried on the way back to the pits after failing to add to his overall wins at the Spa and the Nurburging 24-hour races and class victory at Le Mans. "I did everything I could to make this happen," said the Belgian. "I'll definitely replay the scenes from the last laps in my mind for a long time."

The two Porsches led all but eight laps between them over the final six hours after the other contenders in class dropped by

the wayside. The Ferrari 488 GTE Evo that Pier Guidi shared with James Calado, Daniel Serra and Davide Rigon was probably the fastest car during the night when the cool conditions suited its turbo engine, but its challenge waned as the temperatures rose.

The Vasser Sullivan Pro class Lexus RC F GT3 took fourth in the hands of Brits Ben Barnicoat and Jack Hawksworth, plus Kyle Kirkwood. They had a clean run interrupted only by a couple of penalties.

The Wright Motorsports Porsche squad owed its victory in the GT Daytona pro-am class to a similar run. Its 911 GT3-R finished the race "without so much as a scratch" said Richard Lietz, who shared the winning car with Jan Heylen, Zach Robichon and Ryan Hardwick.

The GTD victors finished 12.5s up on the Magnus Racing Aston Martin Vantage GT3 shared by Jonny Adam, Andy Lally, John Potter and Spencer Pumpelly.



#9 Pfaff Porsche came out on top after contact with #2 KCMG car

RESULTS DAYTONA 24 HOURS, DAYTONA (USA), IMSA SPORTSCAR CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 1/12, 29-30 JANUARY, 761 LAPS, 2709.16 MILES

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME	GRID
1	Tom Blomqvist /Oliver Jarvis /Helio Castroneves /Simon Pagnaud	Meyer Shank Racing	Acura ARX-05	DPI	24h00m23.026s	4
2	Filipe Albuquerque /Ricky Taylor /Alexander Rossi /Will Stevens	Wayne Taylor Racing	Acura ARX-05	DPI	+3.028s	1
3	Tristan Vautier /Richard Westbrook /Loic Duval /Ben Keating	JDC-Miller Motorsports	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPI	+4.420s	2
4	Pipo Derani /Tristan Nunez /Mike Conway	Action Express Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPI	+5.615s	7
5	Eric Lux /Devlin DeFrancesco /Pato O'Ward /Colton Herta	Dragonspeed USA	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-10 laps	12
6	Frits van Eerd /Giedo van der Garde /Dylan Murry /Rinus van Kalmthout	Racing Team Nederland (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-10 laps	13
7	John Farano /Louis Deletraz /Rui Andrade /Ferdinand Habsburg	Tower Motorsport	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-10 laps	15
8	Ben Keating /Mikkel Jensen /Scott Huffaker /Nicolas Lapierre	PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-10 laps	8
9	Francois Heriau /Oliver Rasmussen /Ed Jones /Rene Rast	G-Drive Racing by APR	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-17 laps	10
10	Jim McGuire /Guy Smith /Phil Hanson /Will Owen	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-21 laps	16
11	Kamui Kobayashi /Mike Rockenfeller /Jimmie Johnson /Jose Maria Lopez	Action Express Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPI	-22 laps	3
12	Earl Bamber /Alex Lynn /Marcus Ericsson /Kevin Magnussen	Chip Ganassi Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPI	-27 laps	6
13	Gar Robinson /Felipe Fraga /Kay van Berlo /Michael Cooper	Riley Motorsports	Ligier-Nissan JSP320	LMP3	-38 laps	25
14	Sebastien Bourdais /Renger van der Zande /Scott Dixon /Alex Palou	Chip Ganassi Racing	Cadillac DPi-V.R	DPI	-39 laps	5
15	Lance Willsey /Joao Barbosa /Malthe Jakobsen /Seb Priaulx	Sean Creech Motorsport	Ligier-Nissan JSP320	LMP3	-39 laps	22
16	Jon Bennett /Colin Braun /George Kurtz /Nic Jonsson	CORE Autosport	Ligier-Nissan JSP320	LMP3	-40 laps	26
17	Jarett Andretti /Josh Burdon /Rasmus Lindh /Gabby Chaves	Andretti Autosport	Ligier-Nissan JSP320	LMP3	-42 laps	18
18	Dwight Merriman /Kyle Tilley /Ryan Dalziel /Paul-Loup Chatin	Era Motorsport	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	718 laps-gearbox	17
19	Mathieu Jaminet /Matt Campbell /Felipe Nasr	Pfaff Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD Pro	-50 laps	28
20	Alessandro Pier Guidi /James Calado /Daniel Serra /Davide Rigon	Risi Competizione	Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo	GTD Pro	-50 laps	49
21	Patrick Pilet /Laurens Vanthoor /Dennis Olsen /Alexandre Imperatori	KCMG	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD Pro	-50 laps	46
22	Ben Barnicoat /Jack Hawksworth /Kyle Kirkwood	Vasser Sullivan	Lexus RCF GT3	GTD Pro	-50 laps	33
23	Austin Cindric /Dirk Muller /Patrick Assenheimer	Proton USA	Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	GTD Pro	-52 laps	31
24	Ryan Hardwick /Zacharie Robichon /Jan Heylen /Richard Lietz	Wright Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-54 laps	47
25	John Potter /Andy Lally /Spencer Pumpelly /Jonny Adam	Magnus Racing	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	GTD	-54 laps	44
26	Mike Skeen /James Davison /Stevan McAleer /Scott Andrews	Gilbert Korthoff Motorsports	Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	GTD	-54 laps	36
27	Luis Perez Companc /Nicklas Nielsen /Toni Vilander /Simon Mann	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo	GTD	-54 laps	56
28	Frederik Schandorff /Ollie Millroy /Jordan Pepper /Brendan Iribe	Inception Racing (Optimum)	McLaren 720S GT3	GTD	-56 laps	39
29	Russell Ward /Philip Ellis /Mikael Grenier /Lucas Auer	Winward Racing	Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	GTD	-62 laps	29
30	Antonio Garcia /Jordan Taylor /Nicky Catsburg	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R GTD	GTD Pro	-63 laps	37
31	Connor de Phillippi /John Edwards /Augusto Farfus /Jesse Krohn	BMW Team RLL	BMW M4 GT3	GTD Pro	-63 laps	50
32	Ted Giovanis /Hugh Plumb /Matt Plumb /Owen Trinkler	Team TGM	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-64 laps	58
33	Orey Fidani /Kuno Wittmer /Lars Kern /Matthew Bell	AWA	Duqueine-Nissan M30-D08	LMP3	-66 laps	20
34	Misha Goikhberg /Franck Perera /Mateo Llarena /Maximilian Paul	T3 Motorsport North America	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	GTD	-69 laps	61
35	Ian James /Roman de Angelis /Darren Turner /Tom Gamble	Heart of Racing Team	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	GTD	-73 laps	60
36	CR Crews /Nolan Siegel /Cameron Shields /Ugo de Wilde	Muehlner Motorsports	Duqueine-Nissan M30-D08	LMP3	-80 laps	23
37	Julien Andlauer /Cooper MacNeil /Matteo Cairolì /Alessio Picariello	WeatherTech Racing (Proton)	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD Pro	-88 laps	42
38	Nick Boulle /Rob Ferriol /Katherine Legge /Stefan Wilson	Team Hardpoint	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-89 laps	53
39	Bill Sweedler /John Megrue /Giacomo Altoe /Jeff Segal	TR3 Racing	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	GTD	669 laps-drivetrain	51
40	David Pittard /Paul Dalla Lana /Charlie Eastwood /Nicki Thiim	Northwest AMR (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	GTD	-94 laps	45
41	Marco Wittmann /Philipp Eng /Nick Yelloly /Sheldon van der Linde	BMW Team RLL	BMW M4 GT3	GTD Pro	-96 laps	52
42	Steven Thomas /Josh Pierson /Jonathan Bomarito /Harry Tincknell	PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	663 laps-wiring loom	9
43	Till Bechtolsheimer /Kyffin Simpson /Marc Miller /Mario Farnbacher	Gradient Racing	Acura NSX GT3	GTD	-102 laps	55
44	Giorgio Sernagiotto /Antonio Fuoco /Alessio Rovera /Roberto Lacorte	Cetilar Racing (AF)	Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo	GTD	-109 laps	48
45	Frankie Montecalvo /Aaron Telitz /Richard Heistand /Townsend Bell	Vasser Sullivan	Lexus RCF GT3	GTD	-127 laps	34
46	Nick Tandy /Tommy Milner /Marco Sorensen	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R GTD	GTD Pro	-135 laps	41
47	Daniel Goldburg /Hikaru Abe /Garett Grist /Nico Pino	Performance Tech Motorsports	Ligier-Nissan JSP320	LMP3	588 laps-drivetrain	24
48	John Falb /James Allen /Luca Ghiotto /Tijmen van der Helm	G-Drive Racing by APR	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	556 laps-clutch/withdrawn	14
49	Don Yount /Benja Hites /Jaden Conwright /Markus Palttala	NTE Sport	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	GTD	524 laps-hub	57
50	Cooper MacNeil /Daniel Juncadella /Maro Engel /Jules Gounon	WeatherTech Racing (Proton)	Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	GTD Pro	487 laps-cooling/engine	43
51	Mark Kvamme /Austin McCusker /Trenton Estep /Antoine Doquin	Forty7 Motorsports	Duqueine-Nissan M30-D08	LMP3	425 laps-fire	21
52	Marco Mapelli /Rolf Ineichen /Andrea Caldarelli /Mirko Bortolotti	TR3 Racing	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	GTD Pro	400 laps-steering	27
53	Efrin Castro /Moritz Kranz /Ayrton Ori /Joel Miller	Muehlner Motorsports	Duqueine-Nissan M30-D08	LMP3	363 laps-accident	19
54	Corey Lewis /Robert Megennis /Sandy Mitchell /Jeff Westphal	CarBahn with Peregrine racing	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	GTD	349 laps-radiator	40
55	Dennis Andersen /Anders Fjordbach /Fabio Scherer /Nico Muller	High Class Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	345 laps-suspension/accident	11
56	Robby Foley /Bill Auberlen /Michael Dinan /Jens Klingmann	Turner Motorsport	BMW M4 GT3	GTD	280 laps-accident damage	59
57	Jon Miller /Lance Bergstein /Patrick Gallagher /Paul Holton	Crucial Motorsports	McLaren 720S GT3	GTD	263 laps-damage/withdrawn	30
58	Daniel Morad /Michael de Quesada /Linus Lundqvist /Maximilian Gotz	Alegra Motorsports	Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	GTD	181 laps-electrical	38
59	Ross Gunn /Alex Riberas /Maxime Martin	Heart of Racing Team	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	GTD Pro	103 laps-accident	32
60	Kenny Habul /Luca Stolz /Raffaele Marciello /Fabian Schiller	Sun Energy 1	Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	GTD	101 laps-accident	35
61	James Sofronas /Kyle Washington /Jeroen Bleekemolen /Klaus Bachler	GMG Racing	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	88 laps-accident	54

In each car, first-named driver started race. **Winners' average speed** 112.851mph. **Fastest lap** **Palou** 1m33.724s, 136.742mph. **LMP2** **Chatin** 1m35.532s, 134.154mph. **LMP3** **Fraga** 1m42.133s, 125.483mph. **GTD Pro** **Vanthoor** 1m45.087s, 121.956mph. **GTD** **Pepper** 1m45.117s, 121.921mph.

Race-two winner
Mortara stands at the
top of the points table
ahead of the works
Mercedes pair



Mercedes in charge but customer Mortara leads way

The Silver Arrows were the quickest cars at the Formula E season opener, but it was Venturi's ace who took an early advantage

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

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here was something quite poetic about the Diriyah circuit having to be quite literally dusted off as Formula E's eighth season

began in earnest. Desert sands and the seemingly never-ending backdrop of construction work had sprinkled a layer of dirt atop the track, depriving the drivers of grip during the early part of the season-opening weekend.

Unsurprisingly, the dustiness – and perhaps rustiness – claimed an early victim: the prized scalp of the reigning champion. Nyck de Vries made a somewhat inauspicious start to his title defence, slipping at Turn 3 early on in the opening practice session to catch his left-rear corner against the wall. A vital 30 minutes of running was snatched away by the sands of time.

But de Vries doesn't do 'down and out'. A little over 24 hours later, the Dutchman stood aloft the colossal stage centre-pinning the Diriyah venue, clutching the winner's trophy after Mercedes had underlined its superiority once again. He was fortunate, certainly, pouncing on team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne's attack-mode faux pas to take the lead, but it still presented a stunning overnight turnaround.

From a technical standpoint, Mercedes' 1-2 finish in the opening race wasn't a surprise at all; the departing German manufacturer has been phenomenally strong since entering Formula E as a full works team, and the carryover of homologated motors from last season ensured the squad was firmly billed as the 2021-22 favourite. But given the context of de Vries's shortfall in seat time after losing FP1, it was an excellent recovery – even if the early stages looked like a Vandoorne benefit concert.

The Belgian drew first blood in Formula E's all-new knockout qualifying system, cruising through the group stages and >>

making his way past Nick Cassidy and de Vries in his first two duels. In the final he was up against Jake Dennis, who'd dispatched Sam Bird and Andre Lotterer to get himself in the shootout for pole. But after putting in a quicker first sector than Vandoorne, the Andretti driver put a toe on the dust and got out of step at Turns 6 and 7, shipping six tenths to his rival and ending his hunt for pole.

It seemed that the rehashed qualifying format was popular among the drivers, especially those who'd had to regularly contend with the abyss of Group 1 in the old system, where track evolution gave the subsequent groups a clear advantage in making it to the superpole shootout.

Now everyone had an equal chance of making it all the way to the final, but qualifying still reserved the right to spring a few surprises: in Group A, Jean-Eric Vergne bemoaned an apparent block from Robin Frijns, while Sebastien Buemi couldn't put a clean lap together. Edoardo Mortara was too late in putting the anchors on towards the end of Group B, careening into the wall at Turn 1. Although Mortara had just put himself into the top four moments prior, sitting on the waiting list for a ticket into the duels, Lotterer posted a marginally better lap and booked himself a cup tie with Frijns.

It proved that Mercedes had the duels sussed out the best, and the only thing that precluded it from having both cars in the final was Vandoorne and de Vries getting drawn together in the same semi-final. But although Dennis proved to be the interloper on the grid, sitting beside Vandoorne in his reliveried Andretti machine – no longer bearing the colours of the departing BMW – it took mere metres for the two Mercedes to lead the ranks into the first corner.

"Everything that I imagined happening, happened," Dennis explained. "Stoffel would come over to the right of me, I'd have to brake early, Nyck comes down outside – and that's exactly what happened!"

Although de Vries was nipping at Vandoorne's heels in the early phase of the race, the ex-F1 ace was able to keep the reigning champion at arm's length, and caught absolutely everyone napping



on a later safety-car restart. A tussle between Frijns and Oliver Rowland, who'd swept to the quickest time in the two preceding practice sessions on his debut for Mahindra, ended in the two getting overly acquainted in Turn 14. Frijns was edged towards the wall, and responded at Turn 16 by assisting Rowland with his own, terminal, trip to the barrier.

Mitch Evans conceded that "everyone fell asleep" on the safety-car restart apart from Vandoorne, who didn't need to hang around to back up the pack. Aiming to tick off the second attack mode early, Mercedes instructed Vandoorne to pick up the three-minute boost of 30kW on lap 14 – and thereby invited the blunder that handed de Vries victory.

Vandoorne was candid about his mistake: "I missed the third attack loop on my second activation, which meant I just lost 1.5-2 seconds for nothing, basically. And there's only myself to blame for that."

"I think everything before that, the race was going well: I was leading the pack, I think our pace was looking quite strong. But then I basically handed the position to Nyck, and from there we stayed together. So you know, I'm a little bit disappointed obviously with the attack mode and not taking the loop correctly..."

Dennis, meanwhile, had his own menace to contend with in a fierce on-track brawl with Lotterer, attempting to dummy the Porsche ace into taking the outside line into Turn 18 for an inside-line dive. But it came



Vandoorne manages a smile after finishing behind team-mate de Vries



DS Techeetah man Vergne was brusque in his battle with de Vries in second bout



Vandoorne leads at start of race one; he looked to be in command until he dropped a clanger

“The race was going well, I was leading the pack. But then I basically handed the position to Nyck”

to nothing, instead going deep into the run-off. He eventually put a move on Lotterer the next time round as the German began to ail, freefalling out of the top 10 by the close of the race.

It concluded a difficult race for Porsche, with Lotterer and Pascal Wehrlein starting within the top 10 but neither able to crack the points. Lotterer's downfall coincided with a late charge from rookie Oliver Askew, who recovered from an early race tangle with Antonio Felix da Costa and Dan Ticktum to work his way into ninth. “It was some of the most fun I’ve had in a race car in a long time,” the American mused post-race, and da Costa even threw some complimentary words his way, remarking that he’d had a good race. The Portuguese, however, was less enamoured with Ticktum's bid to dive past at Turn 1, calling the Formula 2 convert “overly aggressive” in his opening gambit, which left the DS Techeetah driver with terminal suspension damage.

Qualifying groups were now shuffled >>

CAN ANYONE CHALLENGE MERCEDES?

That the Formula E season is only two races old and this question is already being considered is one way of illustrating how strong the Mercedes-powered cars were in Diriyah. Edoardo Mortara, Nyck de Vries, Stoffel Vandoorne and Lucas di Grassi all sit within the top five of the championship, but there are a few signs that they won't have it all their own way.

Leaving Diriyah, Andretti star Jake Dennis currently stands as the interloper in Mercedes' bid to lock out the top of the title fight, having picked up from his vastly impressive debut season in Formula E. His signing last year was perhaps a little bit of a surprise, but BMW rated him highly enough to give him a shot at the big time – a choice that looks increasingly shrewd by the day. Andretti made sure that after BMW ended its works support of the US team, it could continue working with Dennis, prising him from the Bavarian manufacturer for its return to independence.

Dennis estimated that, after Andretti's shift back to becoming a customer team, “80% of the workforce are new”. Getting that contingent up to speed is a huge undertaking, but it seems that Andretti has – for the most part – managed it.

One member of that incoming group was the addition of Oliver Askew to the driving line-up, replacing the Nissan-bound Maximilian Guenther. Of the three rookies populating the 2021-22 field, Askew was probably the least-known in European circles, but the American's charge from the rear of the grid to securing debut points in the first race was hugely commendable. His second race was good too, enjoying a back-and-forth battle with Antonio Felix da Costa – although he was punished for a wide moment at Turns 10/11 by Pascal Wehrlein and da Costa, who both edged him out of the way at Turn 14, an



Even when Mercedes isn't winning, it still hangs on to points-paying positions

unconventional passing spot at best.

Robin Frijns showed great pace in the second race too, putting Mortara under heavy pressure before the safety car, but Envision might not be able to hit those heights on a regular basis. Porsche also shrugged off its race-one hoodoo – it made some errors with its energy-management plans – and Andre Lotterer finished fourth. The veteran German looked at his energetic best during the Diriyah double-header, exhibiting some opportunistic passes (and robust defensive shapes) throughout. It's surprising that Porsche is still yet to win in FE, even though it's been capable of doing so in the past couple of years.

Jaguar and DS Techeetah should be in the mix too, but both endured difficult races, with the second yielding no points for Jag when Sam Bird and Mitch Evans were caught out by hitting the wall in qualifying.

Consistency from the chasing teams will be vital in breaking the Mercedes deadlock. It's all well and good picking up the occasional win but, even when Mercedes has a difficult race, it manages to remain glued to the points-paying positions. After all, championships are built on grinding results out of bad weekends – any title-winning sports squad will tell you that.



Impressive Dennis kicked off the season with a podium

IN THE HEADLINES

ROWLAND'S UPS AND DOWNS

New Mahindra recruit Oliver Rowland drew first blood for the season by topping both practice sessions, but the Yorkshire ace struggled to stay out of trouble and was saddled with three-place grid penalties in both races – one for impeding Pascal Wehrlein in qualifying, the other for his tempestuous Robin Frijns battle.

VERGNE TWEETS HIS DISMAY

Jean-Eric Vergne took to Twitter to rightly express his dismay at the recovery of Alexander Sims's Mahindra in the second race. The recovery vehicle almost caused a pile-up when it joined the track, Vergne stating he was "shocked to see how the end of the race was handled, seems like people don't learn from past mistakes".

SETTE CAMARA GETS CLOSE

Although the new qualifying system favoured the traditionally stronger teams, Dragon's Sergio Sette Camara showed flashes of promise, almost breaking into the Diriyah quarter-finals before slipping down the order at the end of both sessions. "The track evolves here very quickly," said the Brazilian. "When I was doing laps, the track was so dirty and [by the end] our tyres were too hot."

SHUNTS FOR BIRD, CASSIDY

Nick Cassidy and Sam Bird endured a similar hero-to-zero trajectory between both races. Bird finished the first Diriyah race fourth and Cassidy seventh, but both suffered crashes prior to the second race. Cassidy's heavy shunt in practice required repairs that meant he missed qualifying, while Bird hit his left-rear tyre on a qualifying lap to damage his suspension.

ROOKIES' SPLIT OPINIONS

Rookies Antonio Giovinazzi and Dan Ticktum had differing opinions on Formula E's energy-management requirements in their first races of the series. Giovinazzi admitted to struggling, while Ticktum (below) felt more comfortable. "A lot of it is just intelligence, to be honest, and feel," the NIO 333 driver said. "I'd got into quite a good rhythm."



Mortara heads di Grassi and Frijns in "very difficult for the nerves" race two



for the second race in a staggered championship order, and Saturday's running meant the track was fully rubbered in, so things were kicked up a gear. But by the end of the duels, Mercedes stood on pole again. De Vries couldn't even give pole away and was visibly "disappointed" with his lap, but still beat Mortara by a scant 0.005s in the last head-to-head.

Diriyah's second race, some may argue, ended the way that F1's contentious Abu Dhabi finale should have ended: the safety car ran out the clock until the final corner, with a Mercedes-powered driver claiming the spoils. But try as he might, de Vries couldn't reel off back-to-back victories in Saudi Arabia. He arguably took attack mode too late into the race and fell behind the frontguard runners, prior to Vergne's full-body tackle at Turn 18.

Instead, it was Mortara's and Venturi's time to shine. Although the race ended in a

static formation, thanks to the late safety car brought out for Alexander Sims's wall-bothering antics at Turn 6, Mortara had been absorbing the pressure from the cars behind ever since he'd taken the reins at the front.

Lucas di Grassi was the spark that ignited a relatively tepid encounter at the front. The first runs of attack mode had kept the top four in the same order they'd started in, but di Grassi's early activation second time around allowed him to undercut Mortara and Frijns. The Brazilian then took the fight to de Vries, charging past at the favoured Turn 18 spot with more than just a hint of contact. The race-one winner then began his ignominious descent down the order, leaving Mercedes' hopes of doing the Diriyah double with the Venturi pair.

Mortara then rounded di Grassi to pick up the lead, and refused to succumb to the pressure of Frijns in the final stages. "It was a very strategic race, very difficult for the

Andretti rookie Askew puts a move on Lotterer during "fun" race-one recovery drive





nerve,” Mortara reflected. “I didn’t have a lot of energy, but neither did my colleagues around me. They were playing strategy, trying to attack me and make me consume, so I tried to keep my head cool and it worked.”

Di Grassi’s podium came after confusion reigned in his qualifying quarter-final against da Costa, with the world feed cutting to a stranded Venturi Mercedes in the garage thanks to a bizarre moment of brain-fade from his rival. In their duel, da Costa was due to go out first, but missed his own green light and instead took di Grassi’s a few seconds later. Luckily for the latter, the universe produced its own karmic response — or rather, DS Techeetah telling da Costa to back off at the end (and the FIA deleting the lap time anyway) to set di Grassi up for the semis against de Vries.

Now that Formula E’s qualifying is less of a lottery, a pattern has already started to emerge: Mercedes looks to be running rampant in this year’s championship. But it’s Mortara who leads the points, and the Geneva-born driver celebrated his victory in style... with a midnight trip to the airport’s Burger King. Fittingly, we could have a whopper of a championship fight on our hands. 🍷

NEXT REPORT

MEXICO CITY 17 FEBRUARY ISSUE

After Saudi’s double-header, there’s just one outing at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez. Can anyone seize the chance to knock Mercedes off its perch?

RESULTS ROUND 1/10, DIRIYAH (SAU), 28-29 JANUARY (41 LAPS – 63.930 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mercedes / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	52m14.642s
2	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	Mercedes / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+0.636s
3	Jake Dennis (GBR)	Andretti / BMW iFE.21	+8.802s
4	Sam Bird (GBR)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 5	+14.925s
5	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Venturi Racing / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+15.152s
6	Edoardo Mortara (ITA)	Venturi Racing / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+16.015s
7	Nick Cassidy (NZL)	Envision Racing / Audi e-tron FE07	+17.265s
8	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah / DS E-Tense FE21	+25.076s
9	Oliver Askew (USA)	Andretti / BMW iFE.21	+25.699s
10	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 5	+27.320s
11	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric	+28.781s
12	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM03	+30.536s
13	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric	+31.521s
14	Alexander Sims (GBR)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M7Electro	+34.572s
15	Sergio Sette Camara (BRA)	Dragon Penske Autosport / Penske EV-5	+36.781s
16	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Envision Racing / Audi e-tron FE07	+39.953s
17	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM03	+41.334s
18	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 001	+49.222s
19	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 001	+50.965s
20	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Dragon Penske Autosport / Penske EV-5	+1m16.527s
R	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M7Electro	7 laps-accident
R	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	DS Techeetah / DS E-Tense FE21	0 laps-accident damage

Winner’s average speed 73.420mph. **Fastest lap** Cassidy 1m09.207s, 80.644mph.

GRID 1 Vandoorne 1m08.626s; **2** Dennis 1m08.926s; **3** de Vries 1m08.813s; **4** Lotterer 1m09.014s; **5** Bird 1m08.919s; **6** Cassidy 1m08.951s; **7** Frijns 1m09.109s; **8** di Grassi 1m09.617s; **9** Guenther 1m09.471s; **10** Wehrlein 1m09.710s; **11** Rowland 1m09.329s*; **12** Mortara 1m09.536s; **13** Vergne 1m09.811s; **14** Evans 1m09.587s; **15** Sette Camara 1m09.867s; **16** da Costa 1m09.704s; **17** Askew 1m09.891s; **18** Sims 1m10.039s; **19** Turvey 1m10.129s; **20** Ticktum 1m10.507s; **21** Buemi 1m10.185s; **22** Giovinazzi 1m10.596s.

RACE 2 (35 LAPS – 54.628 MILES)

1 Mortara 47m02.131s; **2** Frijns +0.451s; **3** di Grassi +0.912s; **4** Lotterer +1.125s; **5** Dennis +1.646s; **6** Vergne +3.166s; **7** Vandoorne +3.568s; **8** Rowland +4.235s; **9** Wehrlein +4.962s; **10** de Vries +5.294s; **11** Askew +6.732s; **12** da Costa +8.693s; **13** Buemi +9.015s; **14** Guenther +9.464s; **15** Bird +11.690s; **16** Cassidy +13.973s; **17** Sette Camara +14.521s; **18** Turvey +15.005s; **19** Ticktum +16.744s; **20** Giovinazzi +17.681s; **21** Evans +29.872s; **R** Sims 29 laps-accident.

Winner’s average speed 69.685mph. **Fastest lap** Bird 1m08.723s, 81.212mph.

GRID 1 de Vries 1m07.154s; **2** Mortara 1m07.159s; **3** Frijns 1m07.184s; **4** di Grassi 1m07.216s; **5** Lotterer 1m07.285s; **6** Vergne 1m07.539s; **7** da Costa no time in quarter-final; **8** Dennis 1m08.419s; **9** Sims 1m08.011s; **10** Rowland 1m07.780s*; **11** Wehrlein 1m08.454s; **12** Vandoorne 1m08.257s; **13** Askew 1m08.626s; **14** Guenther 1m08.339s; **15** Buemi 1m08.829s; **16** Evans 1m08.368s; **17** Turvey 1m08.943s; **18** Ticktum 1m08.753s; **19** Sette Camara no time; **20** Giovinazzi 1m08.811s; **21** Bird 1m13.910s; **22** Cassidy no time. * = grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Mortara 33; **2** de Vries 29; **3** Vandoorne 28; **4** Dennis 25; **5** di Grassi 25; **6** Frijns 18; **7** Lotterer 12; **8** Bird 12; **9** Vergne 12; **10** Cassidy 7.

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Hadrien's wall of points from Dubai double

FORMULA REGIONAL ASIAN
DUBAI (ARE)
29-30 JANUARY
ROUND 2/5

Hadrien David was on form to take a double win in the first of three consecutive weekends at Dubai Autodrome.

As last year's Formula Regional European by Alpine runner-up, 17-year-old David was a pre-season title favourite with the 3Y Technology by R-ace GP squad. But the Frenchman couldn't qualify near the front in the opening round at Yas Marina, and reckless driving resulted in his elimination – along with two other drivers – from one of the races. Dubai was, therefore, redemption, and propelled him into second position in the standings.

David was on forceful form again. Sebastian Montoya qualified on pole for race one, but David was swarming all over the Prema-assisted Mumbai Falcons car, and pulled off a spectacular move to take the lead on lap four. After a safety car period, the impressive Pepe Marti – a frontrunner in Spanish Formula 4 last season – also worked

his way nicely past Montoya for second. David now had a huge lead, and luckily for him there was no time for a restart after a second – and terminal – safety car outing.

David had pole for the finale with the Pinnacle Motorsport car of Marti alongside. This time Marti forced David to brave it out at the start to retain his advantage, and the Spaniard never let up in his pursuit. Hitech-run Red Bull Junior Isack Hadjar made it two French talents on the podium.

Pre-weekend points leader Gabriele Mini struggled in qualifying for race one, from

which he retired with a technical failure, giving him a lowly grid spot for race two. But the Hitech driver prevailed in a battle for fourth in the finale from Dino Beganovic and Jak Crawford (Crawford had won this pair's scrap for fourth in the opener).

Arthur Leclerc was also right with them, and a reversed-grid win from Beganovic and Hadjar, plus ninth in race one, lifted the Mumbai Falcons driver into the series lead.

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Dubourg pips Ehlacher to crown as Loeb makes cameo

ANDROS TROPHY
SUPER-BESSE (FRA)
29 JANUARY
ROUND 5/5

Jean-Baptiste Dubourg pipped reigning World Touring Car champion Yann Ehlacher to his sixth Andros Trophy ice racing crown as Sebastien Loeb finished his extraordinary January odyssey.

Fresh from his runner-up spot in the sand of the Dakar Rally and his victory over the Monte Carlo Rally asphalt,

Loeb made his first Andros appearance of the winter for his own team, and made it through to the seven-car Super Final by claiming sixth place in the heavily points-paying qualifying runs. These were topped by the Renault Zoe of Dubourg from Ehlacher. Dubourg then wobbled in the Super Pole shootout, which also awards points – he ended up fifth fastest, with Ehlacher on top and Loeb in fourth.

By now the sun had turned conditions decidedly slushy. Ehlacher's Super Pole performance had earned him pole for the Super Final. Dubourg, second on the grid, knew that keeping his position behind Ehlacher would put them level on points, but that his superior wins record would be enough to give him the title.

That's exactly what happened. Dubourg shadowed Ehlacher throughout, while the Audi of Aurelien Panis held off Nathanael Berthon's Peugeot. Loeb made up a position on the first lap to run in fifth spot and closed on the pair ahead, but finished just adrift of them.



WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA REGIONAL ASIAN
DUBAI (ARE)
Race 1 Hadrien David (3Y by R-ace GP)
Race 2 Arthur Leclerc (Mumbai Falcons)
Race 3 Hadrien David (3Y by R-ace GP)

ANDROS TROPHY
SUPER-BESSE (FRA)
Yann Ehlacher (Dupessey AS01)

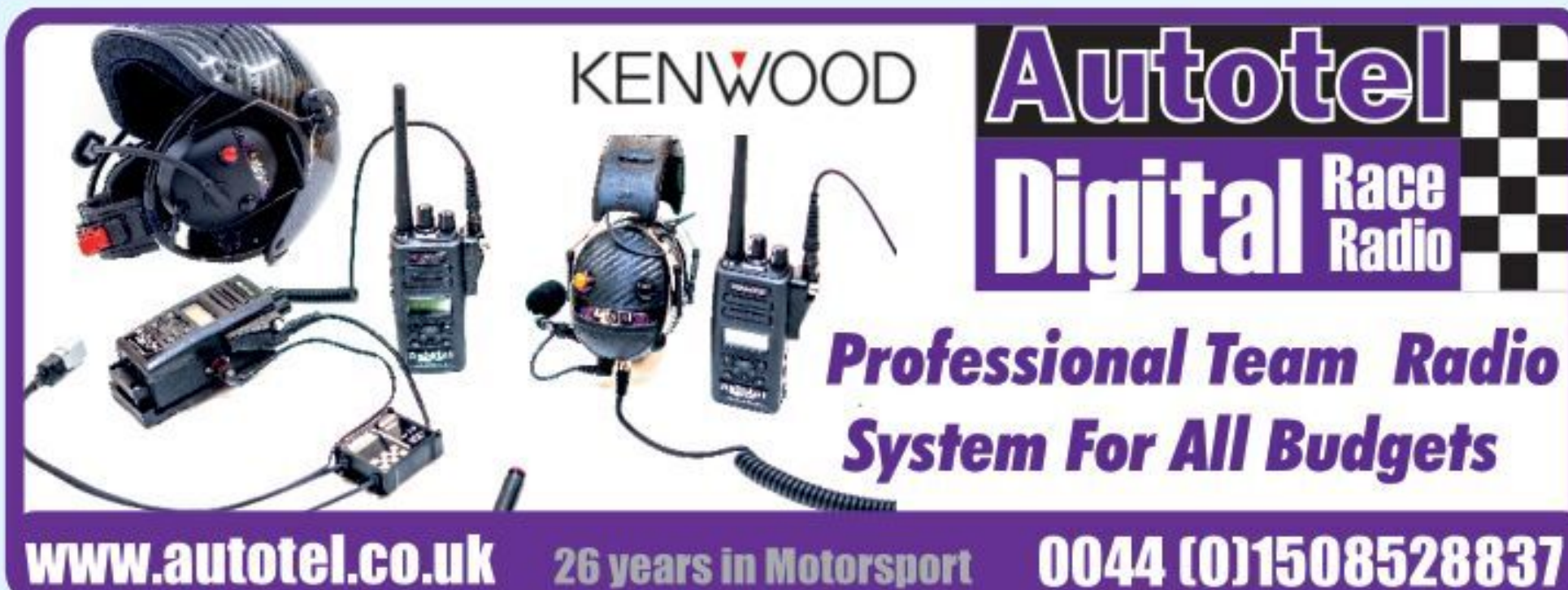


Ferrari junior Leclerc now leads the points

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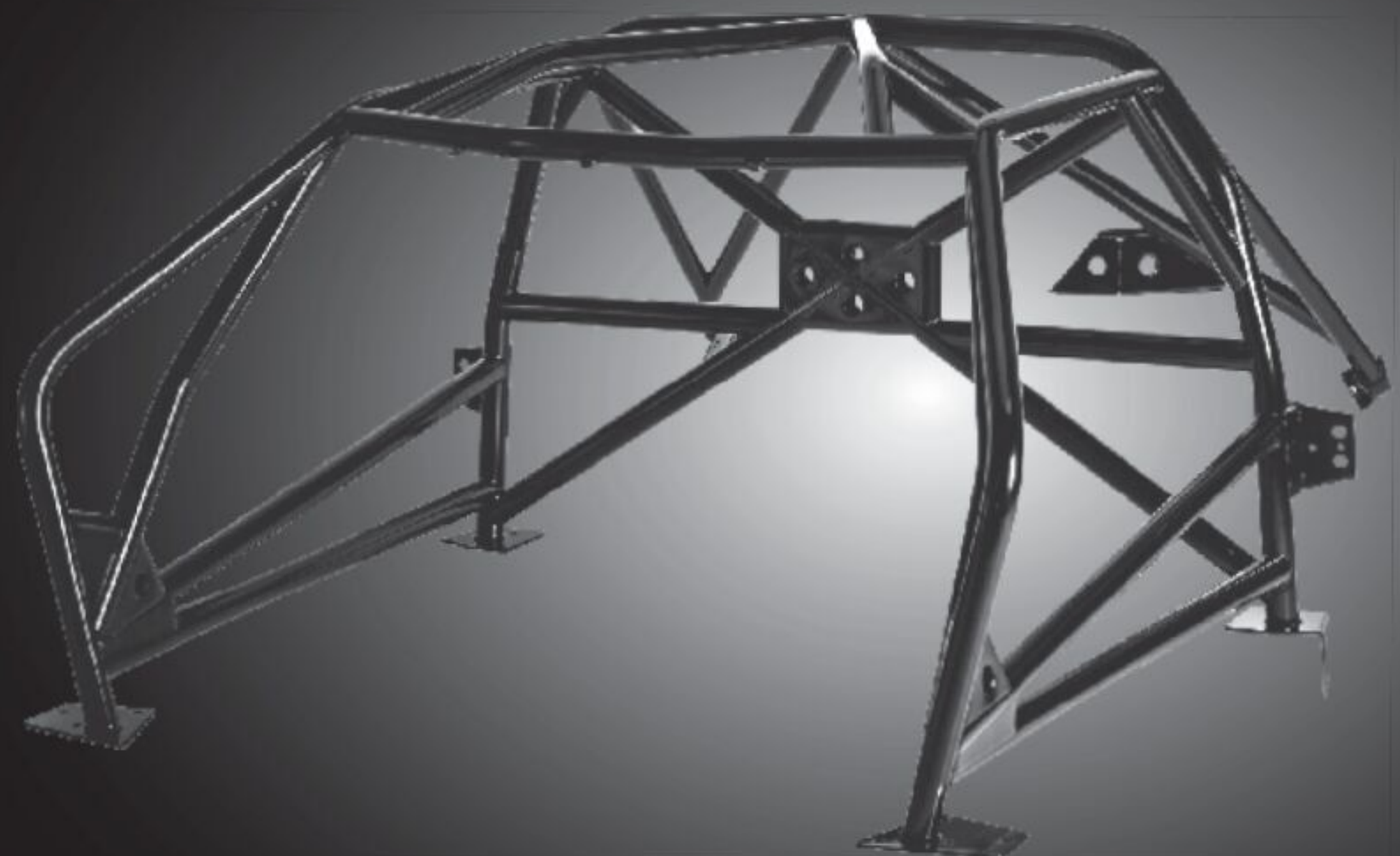
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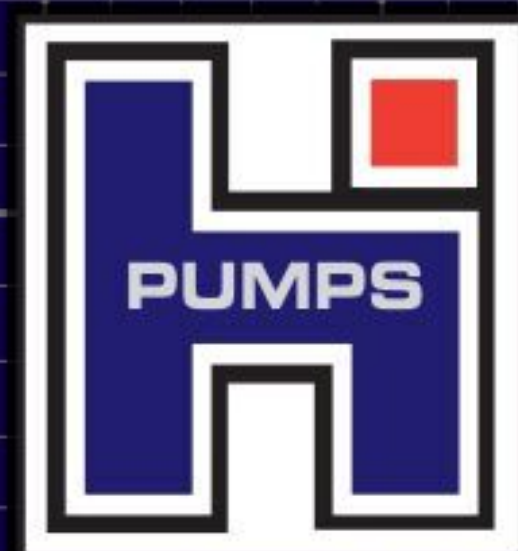


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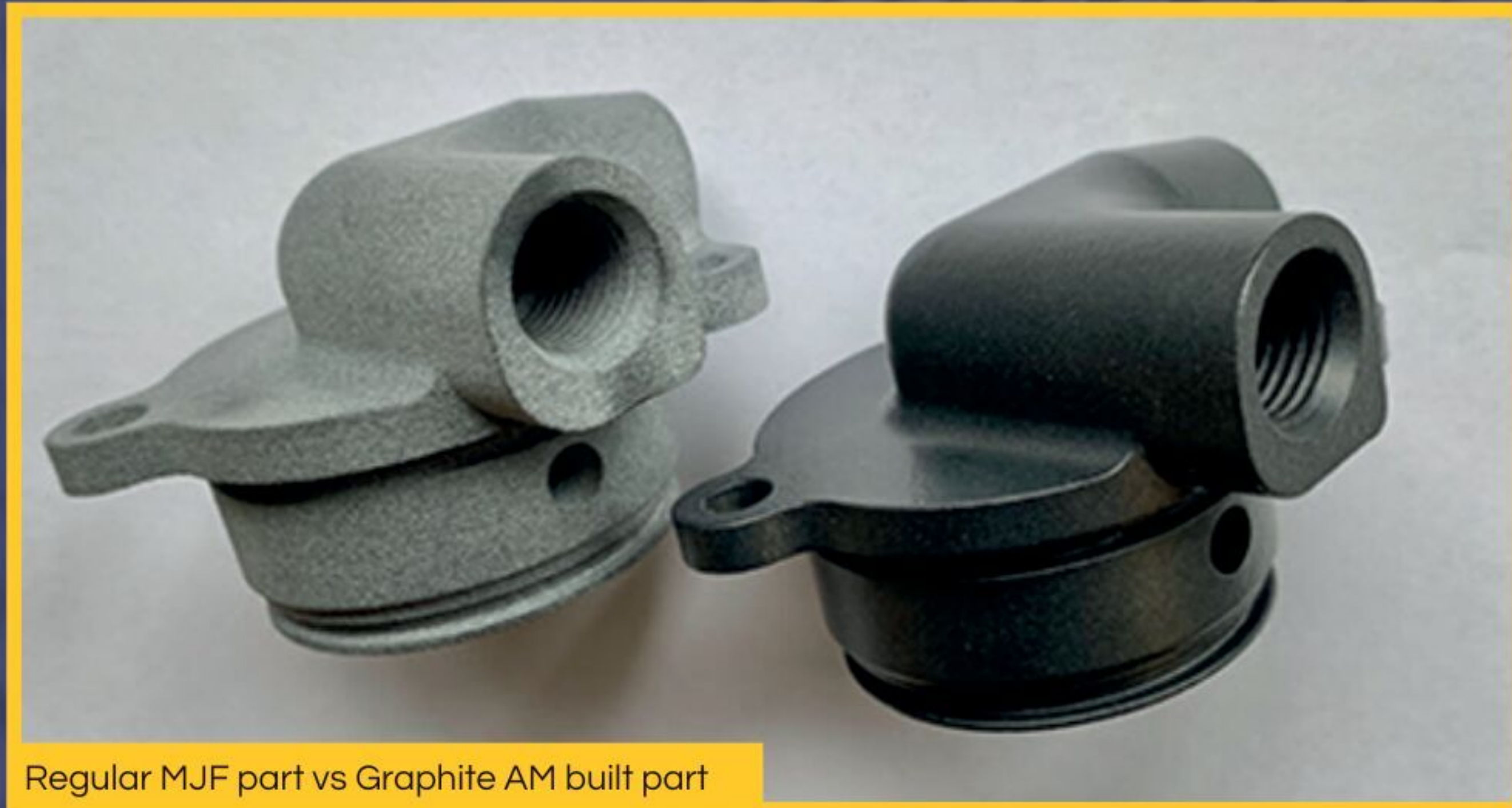
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GB4 Top National FF1600 teens get £20,000 shootout

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Rating the new series

**We assess the categories launched last year
and take a look at what's coming in 2022**



**V10 F1 CARS TO
MEMBERS' MEETING**



**SPORTSCAR STAR
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2022 CALENDAR



2/3 APRIL
SNETTERTON 300
(HEADLINE ROUND)



16 & 18 APRIL
OULTON PARK
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



7/8 MAY
SILVERSTONE GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



28/29 MAY
DONINGTON PARK GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



25/26 JUNE
SNETTERTON 300
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



30/31 JULY
SILVERSTONE GP
(GB3)



10/11 SEPTEMBER
BRANDS HATCH GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



15/16 OCTOBER
DONINGTON PARK GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)

WALKER

National FF1600 drivers
will have the chance
to win GB4 prize

TEENAGE FF1600 DRIVER TO BE GIVEN GB4 FUNDING FOR 2023

FF1600

A prize fund of £20,000 is set to be awarded to one driver in this year's British Racing & Sports Car Club National Formula Ford Championship, which they will be able to use towards a campaign in GB4 in 2023.

MotorSport Vision, organisers of the new-for-2022 GB4 Championship, have worked in collaboration with the BRSCC to offer the prize, which will go to one of the top-three teenage drivers in the final National FF1600 standings.

The trio, who must remain 19 years of age or under by the end of 2022, will take part in a shootout at the end of the season, with the winner securing the funding for a campaign in GB4 in 2023.

"It's pleasing that an organisation as influential as MSV have recognised the capability of the BRSCC National

Formula Ford 1600 championship to offer an opportunity for young drivers to get into single-seaters, who may not have a budget big enough for GB3/GB4/F4 at that time," said BRSCC chairman Peter Daly.

"We can attract teenagers who want to take a rung before going into slicks and wings. Whoever wins the shootout and benefits from the funding is going to have a good chance [of success]. It's an exciting time and I'm really pleased about it."

Daly highlighted Jonathan Browne and Max Esterson as examples of two successful Formula Ford drivers in recent seasons who have made the jump up to GB3. The new initiative also adds to the link already formed between FF1600 and GB4 by having successful teams including Graham Brunton Racing, Oldfield Motorsport and Kevin

Mills Racing involved in both.

GB4, which is due to begin at Snetterton on 2-3 April, will use the Tatuus F4-T014 chassis previously raced in Europe and is being billed as a cost-effective entry-level category into single-seaters.

MSV chief executive Jonathan Palmer said: "I'm delighted we're able to offer a package to assist the most promising young Formula Ford 1600 drivers."

A prize fund of £4000 will be available to drivers in this year's GB4 Championship via the Jack Cavill Pole Position Cup, which will award £125 for each pole position and £1000 to the driver with the most poles at the end of the year. The scheme will run for a 10th successive season in GB3, with £250 awarded for each pole and £2000 for the end-of-season prize.

STEFAN MACKLEY & STEPHEN LICKORISH



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Browning returns full-time
with Hitech in GB3

Browning in Hitech line-up

GB3

Hitech GP has revealed its line-up for the 2022 GB3 Championship, with 2020 British Formula 4 champion Luke Browning switching full-time to the category.

Browning competed in a single GB3 event at Oulton Park last season with Fortec Motorsport, taking one victory. His

main focus was the ADAC Formula 4 Championship in Germany, where he finished third overall.

The Briton, 20, will now compete full-time in GB3 this season and will partner American Bryce Aron, who raced in the series with Carlin last year, scoring a best result of fourth and 12th in the standings.

They will be joined by

Cian Shields, who makes the move up from karting in the UK and Europe.

"I'm feeling excited and confident in the team, and I'm looking forward to fighting for victories this year," said Browning. "Pre-season testing has been great and we're going to be well prepared for our campaign."

STEFAN MACKLEY



RAM Racing will field two full-time entries in British GT this year

Gounon joins Loggie at RAM Racing

BRITISH GT

Spa 24 Hours winner Jules Gounon will make his British GT Championship debut this year alongside two-time GT3 Pro-Am champion Ian Loggie at the RAM Racing Mercedes team.

The 27-year-old son of ex-Formula 1 driver Jean-Marc Gounon has emerged as one of the world's top GT3 racers in recent years. He notched up his Spa victory with Audi in 2017 and claimed the ADAC GT Masters title the same year in a Callaway Corvette. As a Bentley factory driver, he won the 2020 Bathurst 12 Hours.

The Frenchman (inset pic) has been on Mercedes' books for the past year, and finished second in the 2021 GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup with ASP.

Gounon will have to miss Snetterton and the first Donington Park round in British GT due to clashing commitments with

Mercedes, so Loggie – who narrowly missed out on the outright GT3 title with Yelmer Buurman in 2021 – will have an as yet unconfirmed stand-in team-mate.

Gounon, whose only experience of UK circuits is Silverstone and Brands Hatch, said he was relishing the new challenge. "I love Pro-Am racing; I haven't done a proper Pro-Am series since 2017 and it's a totally different atmosphere to the Pro-only stuff," he said. "I know that with Ian I have one of the best amateurs on the grid to work with. It's a shame there are clashing events that will spoil my own championship chances, but my entire goal is to help Ian and RAM win the British GT title this year."

Loggie said: "I'm really looking forward to partnering with Jules this year. In the GT3 world he's one of the best around and is well known for both his speed and commitment."

"RAM Racing is a very experienced team that has such a dedication to turning out



RAM

ADAC GT MASTERS

a faultless piece of machinery. This year I believe we have 'the magic sauce' ingredients to become overall British GT champions."

Meanwhile, newly founded team 7TSIX will enter a McLaren 720S GT3 in British GT this year for 2020 GT4 Pro-Am champions Euan Hankey and Mia Flewitt. The team has been set up by Joe Edge, with former British GT racer Jody Firth appointed as team manager, and spent time testing at Estoril last month.

JAMES NEWBOLD

New British F4 car gets first UK run at Brands

BRITISH F4

The new second-generation FIA Formula 4 car that will be used in British F4 this year had its first test on UK soil last week, with new Virtuosi signing Edward Pearson completing 176 laps at Brands Hatch.

The Tatuus-Abarth car is said to have run faultlessly, although it did not feature the bespoke Neil Brown Engineering-tuned engine that will be used in the UK series this year.

Ginetta Junior graduate Pearson described the car as "a lot of fun to drive", while Virtuosi F4 team manager Mark Salmon added: "For the

first test, we have to be very happy with how it has gone. Our engineering team has plenty of data to go away and crunch some numbers and,

for Edward, we've started to build up his mileage in the car before the season starts.

"The car itself is fantastic for this level. Today was our first run out with it, and it's gone flawlessly, which really gives us the confidence to start pushing the limits straight out of the box."

The car has already made its competition debut, its first race action coming in a non-championship UAE F4 round at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, prior to the UAE season starting last month.



Pearson put the new car through its paces

Junior Mini Challenge series launched at Mondello Park

JUNIOR MINI CHALLENGE

A new Junior Mini Challenge series has been launched, which will run as part of the Irish Championship Circuit Racing initiative at Mondello Park.

The category will be open to 14 to 17-year-olds and will use R50 Mini Cooper or Mini One models, with a controlled ECU and 1.6-litre engine capable of producing approximately 120bhp.

Cars are expected to cost in the region of €6000, with the first two races due to take place at the Irish venue on 9-10 April and a further 10 races being held throughout the year.

Mini Junior Challenge promoter Leo Nulty said: "This is hugely exciting and will be a welcome addition to the ICCR. I have driven the first car which Mondello have had built and it's perfect. Quick enough to be fun and a little bit tail-happy, which should teach the budding racers the art of car control perfectly.

"We will also be offering assistance and training to competitors, more of which will be announced at a later date."

The Junior Mini Challenge is the second new junior category to be unveiled for the upcoming 2022 season, with the Scottish Motor Racing Club also announcing the Scottish Junior BMW Championship.

IN THE HEADLINES

MUTCH WITH BROADBENT

Former Ginetta GT5 Challenge frontrunner Gordie Mutch will race alongside YouTube star Jimmy Broadbent for a full season in the Praga Cup this year. The pair teamed up for the first time in the final Praga event of 2021 and took a double win. Meanwhile, Radical squad RAW Motorsports has become the latest team to join the Praga series and will run Rod Goodman, who has sporadically raced a Praga over the past two seasons.

ELITE'S GT5 ROSTER

Elite Motorsport has announced Will Jenkins, Harley Haughton, Harry Mangion and Karim Sekkat as its driver line-up for the 2022 Ginetta GT5 Challenge. Jenkins finished fifth in Ginetta Junior last year, while Haughton took sixth in GT5. Mangion moves up to the Pro category after claiming the GT5 Am title, in which Sekkat finished fourth last term.

JACKSON TO RACE JCW MINI

GT Cup ace Joshua Jackson will switch to racing full-time in the JCW class of the Mini Challenge after making a one-off outing last year. The 2020 GT Cup champion and former Mazda MX-5 star will continue with Excelr8 Motorsport, after making his Mini debut with the team in last season's finale. "I was very impressed with the Mini Challenge in my one-off outing last year, and it made it an easy decision when the opportunity arose to move over," he said.

PALMER JOINS TEAM BRIT

Former Aston Martin CEO Andy Palmer has become an ambassador for Team BRIT, the squad that provides motorsport opportunities for people with a range of mental and physical disabilities and is targeting a future entry to the Le Mans 24 Hours. "I truly believe that having a confirmed entry to Le Mans will be a true showcase for the sport, demonstrating where disabled drivers can compete equally," said Palmer (below).



Ginetta series attracts new teams

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

Four new teams are due to join the Ginetta GT Academy series in 2022, with the championship set to grow for its second season.

Raceway Motorsport, Century Motorsport and Datum Motorsport have all signed multiple drivers for their maiden full-season campaigns in the category, which features the Ginetta G56 and was first launched last year, while Breakell Racing has taken on its first recruit.

Raceway's line-up will include Marc Warren and Tom Holland, who were the top two in last year's G40 Cup standings, and both will remain with the team as they make the step up. "After two seasons racing the Ginetta

G40, this feels like a natural step forward for my racing career and I'm greatly looking forward to the challenge of adapting to a completely new car in the Ginetta G56," said Warren.

Meanwhile, long-time Ginetta squad Century has entered the GT Academy for the first time this year and will run three drivers who competed in the series in 2021: Lee Goldsmith, Edward Acres and Tom Hartley Jr. The team's entry is completed by former Ginetta Racing Drivers Club competitor Michael Johnston.

Elise Trophy squad Datum will also be on the grid with its Lotus drivers Maurizio Sciglio and Marco Anastasi, while Breakell will run international skier and racing rookie Leo Karavasili.



motorsport
IMAGES

F1 TO MEMBERS' MEETING V10-powered Formula 1 screamers have been announced as the second set of cars to feature in demonstrations at this April's Goodwood Members' Meeting. Around 20 F1 machines from between 1989 and 2005 are due to take to the track with plans to "reunite some of the star drivers of the V10 era with cars from their careers". The display is due to feature cars from pacesetters Williams, McLaren and Ferrari, along with examples of "midfield models and backmarkers". The first demonstration revealed was a celebration of the Porsche 956 and 962. **Photograph by Motorsport Images**

Veteran performer Hepburn wins at Zwartkops

HISTORICS

Exercising the 6.3-litre Opel Rekord V8 he raced in South Africa's spectacular WesBank V8 Supercar championship 40 years ago, Willie Hepburn saw off allcomers in his 80th year to win both Midvaal Historics and Greats of the Past races at Zwartkops's Passion for Speed event, which returned to its usual calendar slot last weekend.

Hepburn thundered away from Rudolf de Vos's five-litre Chevrolet Can-Am (the fearsome South African-built Firenza V8 homologation special) of 1972 and Dawie



Olivier's Alfa Romeo GTV6 in a varied field. De Vos twiceaced Andre van der Merwe's Porsche Carrera RSR in the Historic Racing South Africa set, with Johann Smith's screaming Mazda Capella third. The Castrol Legends of the

Nine Hours mini-enduro – celebrating the internationals of the 1960s at nearby Kyalami with a pack of evocations – was a Cobra benefit, Warren Lombard beating James Temple's Shelby Daytona Coupe and Peter Bailey's

Ford GT40. Franco Scribante (Chevron B19) won the Pre-'74 sportscar sequels from Jonathan du Toit (B8). Veteran Hennie Groenewald (Chevrolet Camaro) was third first time out.

Royale Formula Fords topped the historic single-seater group initially, Andrew Horne (RP31) and Ben van der Westhuizen (RP24) leading Cape Town's Alan 'AJ' Kernick in his Dennis Temple-built Tempest Mk2. Kernick moved up to second in race two, chased by Patrick Dunseith in the ex-Bobby Scott/Desire Wilson SA title-winning Merlyn Mk25.

MARCUS PYE

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Mighty Minis next to join expanding CCRC

Mighty Minis has been a regular visitor to Combe

MIGHTY MINIS

The Castle Combe Racing Club is further expanding beyond operating its single-venue series by becoming the organising club for the Mighty Minis category.

The CCRC wanted to increase its reach within national racing, but its expansion plans were put on hold amid the pandemic. Mighty Minis is now the second 'outside' series to fall under the club's wing, following a tie-up with GT & Sports Car Cup organiser Automobiles Historiques that is set to involve the creation of a tin-top series (Autosport, 27 January).

"We're trying to explore ways of adding value and extending our membership," said CCRC chairman Ken Davies. "The opportunity arose with Mighty Minis

and, having raced with us several times, they always produce some very close racing here. It seemed to fit in well."

Mighty Minis moves across to the CCRC from the British Automobile Racing Club. It is due to have two events at Combe this year, and Davies says that balance to the calendar is likely to stay. "It's still going to be a pan-UK championship but we will administer it," he said. "The club has got enormous strength in depth – we've got the expertise, the ability and the experience so let's put it to effect."

Mighty Minis coordinator Rodger Tello added: "The move to Castle Combe Racing Club fits perfectly with our vision going forward, and one that best suits the needs of the drivers and the championship."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Nick Jesty 1943-2022

OBITUARY

Nick Jesty, who died of cancer on 23 January, was a racer and preparer for more than 50 years.

Jesty built an Austin 7 trials special in the mid-1960s, but Minis were his forte. He and first wife Judith – many say the quicker – were top autocrossers in a pair of Wessex Racing examples. They became household names in the early 1970s when Murray Walker voiced rallycross for BBC TV's *Grandstand*. Jesty's Rover V8-engined Hillman Imp was a wild ride, however.

A skilled mechanic, Jesty spannered one of Norwegian rallycross king Martin Schanche's Ford Escorts, and hosted him and Swedish superstars Stig Blomqvist and Per Eklund at home.

Jesty later prepared historic cars, including a Tasman Brabham owned



Jesty returned to racing in 2020 after decades away

by Frank Sytner, top powerboat designer Don Shead's grunty machines in Hampshire, and a fleet for UK-domiciled New Zealander Roger Wills and associates from a rural workshop near Dorchester.

Fancying one last shot at competing, he built an immaculate Mini Cooper S for historic racing in his spare time. It took several years but, after a break of almost four decades, Jesty enjoyed competing again in 2020. His smile on returning to his old Lydden Hill rallycross stamping ground spoke volumes.

MARCUS PYE

Stephen Minoprio 1940-2022

OBITUARY

Stephen Minoprio, who died on 23 January, was a gentleman racer who won in two eras, three decades apart.

Born into an Italian family, whose branch relocated via Germany to Liverpool in the 19th century and became a holiday park pioneer, Minoprio's life was filled with adventure. Between flying planes in Africa, sailing the Atlantic on his yacht and fast cars, there was rarely a dull moment.

'Mino', as countless friends knew him, graduated from an Austin A40 to the one-litre Marcos GT, HOO 144, in which he narrowly missed the 1962 Autosport sportscar championship outright. He was unbeaten in class, uniquely, over its first five rounds, but Snetterton's Autosport 3 Hours finale thwarted the combo.

Race winner Mike Parkes (Ferrari 250 GTO) snatched the crown, but Minoprio won the season's class and teams' titles. An Equipe Elva Mk7 for 1963 was less successful.

In 1996, he returned with Marcos-Volvo 1800GTs, one "crushed bilberry dilemma" hued. He subsequently braved a raucous Chevron-Mazda B16 and the ex-Fred Parkhill Can-Am McLaren M8E (below), refitted with a big-block Chevrolet V8 by Ian Jones of Racing Fabrications.

Delightfully eccentric in mannerisms and attire, 'Mino' was an asset to any social gathering.

MARCUS PYE





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Will new tin-top series be super?

The Super Touring era remains enormously popular and a new category for these machines has attracted some star names, but that's no guarantee of success

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Launching a new series is rarely easy. And it has become a whole lot harder over the past two years as myriad uncertainties arising from the coronavirus pandemic and Brexit have meant persuading people to invest in something new has been even more tricky. Over the next few pages, we take a look at those who have tried to get new categories off the ground in the past 12 months – with generally a fair amount of success. Encouragingly, quite a few organisers are also attempting to tackle new ideas over the coming year, too.

Among these additional offerings for 2022 is a category for some very familiar and very popular cars. The Classic Touring Car Racing Club has decided to add another string to its bow and has created the new Super Tourers series for this year. Without wishing to become blinkered by rose-tinted spectacles, there is no denying that the Super Touring era was a golden spell for the British Touring Car Championship and continues to be recalled with fondness now, 30 years since it first began.

“The whole Super Touring era was awesome, especially when you look back on it now,” says Anthony Reid, one of the stars of the period who twice finished runner-up in the BTCC – in 1998 and 2000. “We were on BBC Grandstand with Murray Walker and there were ex-F1 drivers like Nigel Mansell, Derek Warwick and Gabriele Tarquini. A lot of people still ask me about the

“Cleland insists there is the potential for a stunning grid to be assembled”

races in those days – we had such a high profile.”

The mid-1990s were a tremendous period for the BTCC as a dozen manufacturers got out their chequebooks and invested eye-watering sums (for the time) into developing cars. Add in the TV coverage, as Reid mentions, and the fact that these cars were instantly recognisable to the general public, who could spot them all on a short drive to Tesco, and it was a hit.

Therefore, given that deep-seated passion for these cars and the likes of Reid and two-time BTCC champion John Cleland signing up – the story announcing this was one of the most read on Autosport.com in the past week – you would think the CTCRC is onto a winner. But, as with everything in life, it is never quite that simple.

Let us not forget why Super Touring came to a crashing end

in 2000 when the manufacturers could no longer justify their vast expenditure and entry numbers plummeted. And let us also remember that a series for Super Touring machines has been created before – and failed.

The Historic Sports Car Club instigated the Super Touring Car Challenge in 2013. And, for some events, it did attract healthy grids – joining the current BTCC machines at Oulton Park in 2014 and Rockingham in 2015 were memorable examples. But, ultimately it proved unsustainable, and the HSCC reinvented the category as the Dunlop Saloon Car Cup for 2019, allowing a wider array of cars to compete.

“The problem was running costs,” recalls Cleland. “Each of the components had a life expectancy, so you couldn’t run these cars very often. Everyone was trying to run them on a shoestring and that’s why the series fell over.”

Cleland is due to be racing his 1997 Vauxhall Vectra again this year and believes the CTCRC’s plan of having just four events, spread out across the year, is a good approach. But that does not take away from the difficulty of running these mighty machines.

“For instance, the 1996 Vectra is different to the 1997 Vectra I’ve got,” Cleland continues. “There were bespoke parts for each of them and they’re very hard to get. When I bought our car, we didn’t have any spares. My son Jamie has rebuilt it completely and we’ve begged and borrowed parts from all over the world. These cars are 25 years old and you’ve got to maintain them properly.”

Reid adds: “They were not cheap to run and were high maintenance. Our engines [in period] could only do 700km before they had to be fully rebuilt, which was basically a race weekend.”

And, yet, despite those difficulties, Cleland still loves “the buzz” he gets driving these monsters, and believes another reason why the CTCRC series might succeed is the fact that the cars will be back on the Michelin tyres they were designed around in the 1990s. The new category is not just for Super Tourers either. The CTCRC is allowing BTC-T and S2000 cars as well. Another BTCC star, Colin Turkington, is due to be competing in the opener in one of these racers – back in an MG ZS for the first time in almost 20 years. However, unlike the HSCC series, there will be no Group A cars on the grid that threaten to steal some of the Super Tourers’ limelight.

But, just because the Super Touring era is enduringly popular, that is no guarantee of success for this series. It may have attracted some stellar names, but it needs many more drivers to commit to racing cars that are far from cheap to run for it to deliver stellar contests. Cleland insists there is the potential for a stunning grid to be assembled but, in these uncertain times, it remains to be seen how much of a hit this new series will be. ❧



2021

FIRST STEPS – GOOD OR BAD?

Last year was another season disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, but a number of new series were still successfully launched

STEPHEN LICKORISH AND STEFAN MACKLEY



ZEO SPORTS PROTO

★★★★☆

There has been a surge of interest in prototype racing in the UK over the past couple of years. New and updated offerings from Radical, along with Czech manufacturer Praga focusing on the British market and Phil Abbott's launch of Revolution, has created a plethora of different options for racers.

But many of these cars have their own one-make series. And, following the demise of the Open Sportscar Series at the end of 2019, there has not been a dedicated multi-marque prototype category in the UK that does not have strict regulations concerning engines or chassis. That's a gap in the market that former OSS racer Duncan Williams has sought to fill with his new Zeo Proto Series

(so named because of Williams's Excool company's development of sustainable cooling systems, and is therefore a fusion of 'geo' and 'zero').

In partnership with the British Racing & Sports Car Club, three events were held for the inaugural season last year – and a diverse mix of cars was attracted, with a high of 19 at Donington Park. As well as a range of Radicals, there were more

unusual cars such as Mike Jenvey's Jenvey-Gunn TS6 and Matthew and Richard Chamberlain's self-built CTR 01. But, perhaps most notably, there was the UK debut of the NP01-EVO.

A tie-up with the Sports Prototype Cup for a shared grid on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit this June should make for a great spectacle as the series seeks to build further momentum.

SNETTERTON SALOONS

★★★★☆

Launched by the Project 8 Racing Club, the Snetterton Saloons proved to be something of a surprise success in 2021 having not been announced until April. Four rounds were held at the Norfolk circuit, with a plethora of cars able to compete, from two and four-wheel-drive machinery, saloons, coupes, hot hatches or convertibles. Broad regulations allowed for such a wide variety. Drivers also competed in 'county' teams in a bid for the East Anglian County Cup.

Its inaugural meeting – featuring a 40-minute pitstop race – attracted 25 cars, which increased to a high of 34 for the third event, although the season finale never took place due to heavy rain. That hasn't dampened spirits for 2022, though, with seven events planned including an 'away day' at Silverstone for the March opener, while it will support British GT at Snetterton in June and a two-and-a-half-hour relay race is set for August.





ECURIE CLASSIC RACING

★★★★☆

Given the sheer volume of 1960s Appendix K small-engined sportscars out there, it perhaps was not a surprise that the new Ecurie Classic Racing contest attracted decent entries, even with the popular and near-identical Equipe GTS series in the same marketplace.

Running with support from the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club, grids began at 19 cars but increased to an impressive 36 by the final Silverstone round. Following the Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club's decision to no longer run its own categories, the Big Cats of the Mike Hawthorn and XK Challenges have found a new home with Ecurie, helping to boost the numbers.

911 CHALLENGE

★★★★☆

The latest initiative from Porsche Club GB was not an immediate success, with the new 911 Challenge – for versions of the 911 from the 1960s, '70s and '80s – failing to get into double figures at any of its five events in 2021 and averaging just seven entries.

Considering some of those poorly supported races lasted an hour – while some were shorter sprints – it was not the best use of track time. But series administrator MotorSport Vision Racing believes the pandemic was a significant factor in creating that situation, and is optimistic that more cars from Europe will head over to compete and bolster grids for 2022.



AMON CUP/

★★★★☆

ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB PALL MALL CUP

★★★★★

Motor Racing Legends introduced two new series in 2021, with varying degrees of success. The Amon Cup – named in honour of 1966 Le Mans 24 Hours winner Chris – for Ford GT40 machines held two events across the season at the Donington Park Historic Festival and Silverstone MRL meeting.

Grids of 11 and seven cars respectively weren't massive – COVID-19 restrictions likely discouraged overseas entries – and both 80-minute contests were won

by three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden and Miles Griffiths. The series continues in 2022 with an extra round at Snetterton in July, added to returns to Donington and Silverstone.

The Royal Automobile Club Pall Mall Cup was a continuation of the successful Pre-'66 Three-Hour race held at the end of 2020, and last term the two three-hour fixtures at Donington and Silverstone proved incredibly popular, attracting grids of 50 and 43 cars. Classes for pre-'61 sportscars, pre-'63 GTs and pre-'66 GTs and touring cars ensured an eclectic mix of machinery and, like the Amon Cup, the series is set to expand to three rounds in 2022.

MAZDA MX-5 CLUBMAN

★★★★☆

The British Racing & Sports Car Club has placed an emphasis on listening to its customers and creating accessible entry points over the past few years. And that is how Mazda MX-5 Clubman came about.

The idea was to give drivers a cheaper and less daunting option than its thriving Mk1 MX-5 series. Instead of having three races over two days, the Clubman series features qualifying and two races all in one day to reduce costs.

Given the popularity of the MX-5, the concept was successful. After a slow start, some events attracted over 30 cars, with an average of 25.

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

★★★★☆

The newest series from Ginetta proved to be a hit with drivers and teams. Using the G56 GTA – a toned-down version of Ginetta's GT4-spec G55 – and branded as an entry level into GT racing, five rounds were held across the year, four of which supported British GT, while the event at Silverstone was on the same bill as the British Touring Car Championship.

In total, 21 drivers competed across the season, eight of whom were in the rookie class, and grids never dipped below 15 cars. Although the outright wins were shared among only four drivers – Toby Trice, Angus Whiteside, Martin Wills and Wes Pearce – competition was generally strong across the field. This year the championship will build on its maiden season, with five more rounds planned in support of British GT and the BTCC, and strong interest is reported.



GPR TROPHY

★★★★☆

An arrive-and-drive package featuring Audi TTs and put together by FF Corse founder and Grand Prix Racewear owner Anthony Cheshire, the GPR Trophy struggled in its maiden season.

Three proposed rounds became two, with just seven drivers attracted to each. Unreliability plagued the series throughout both weekends – only one car finished the finale – and for 2022 it joins the MotorSport Vision Racing Allcomers series as development on the cars continues.

2022

AND A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

From 1950s sportscars to some very modern prototypes, and everything in between, there's a diverse range of new series planned for this year

STEPHEN LICKORISH AND STEFAN MACKLEY

PRAGA CUP

A couple of years ago, few in the UK had even heard of Praga. Now, the Czech manufacturer is expanding its presence and running a standalone grid for its R1 prototypes.

The cars had their own class in the Britcar Endurance Championship last year but the amount of interest generated – no doubt helped by YouTube star Jimmy Broadbent driving an R1 and his online following watching the livestreamed races in their droves – has allowed Praga to bring forward its plan of developing its own championship to 2022, with Britcar assisting in

the administration.

Six events that feature two one-hour enduros, except for Oulton Park, make up the season, and there is also set to be a non-championship trip to Spa. Praga has pledged a minimum of 16 cars on the grid, with the majority being run by independent teams – F3 Cup ace Shane Kelly's University of Wolverhampton squad and successful club racer Tim Gray's eponymous squad are among them.

An intriguing prize package is also on offer, with the drivers' champion getting a funded seat in an arrive-and-drive 24-hour race, while the team will receive an R1.



MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP CLUBMAN

Given the success the British Racing & Sports Car Club enjoyed with its new Mk1 MX-5 Clubman championship last year (see previous page), it was perhaps logical that it would apply the same concept to its Mk3 MX-5 Supercup. And that is exactly what the club has done for 2022.

The MX-5 Supercup became the BRSCC's most popular category in terms of grid sizes last season, and that posed some problems for organisers as lengthy reserve lists built up for some events. Adding a lower-cost single-day sister series should help combat this and, although there are not as many Mk3s out racing as Mk1s, it's still likely to attract decent fields this year.

SCOTTISH JUNIOR BMW CHAMPIONSHIP

A new junior series for 2022, the Scottish Motor Racing Club-run championship will use BMW 116i cars built between 2004 and 2006. Open to 14 to 17-year-olds, the category is one of four junior series permitted by Motorsport UK.

Self-build kits from Raceworx will be available from £7200 plus VAT, while complete cars are set to be £11,450 plus VAT. Six rounds are scheduled to take place, five at Knockhill on both the clockwise and anti-clockwise layouts, with the other at Cadwell Park in July.

BMW 1 SERIES SUPERCUP

Another new British Racing & Sports Car Club offering is the BMW 1 Series Supercup, which is designed to be a top-level club category.

This is not just a copy of the 750 Motor Club's successful 116 Trophy – instead a wealth of bespoke parts have been developed by the BRSCC and its partners to make this 1 Series a serious bit of kit. The suspension, engine mapping, brakes, front splitter and rear wing have all been created to produce a rear-wheel-drive series that drivers can progress to from other categories, such as the BMW Compact Cup.

It is due to run as a class within the Clubsport Trophy this year ahead of getting a standalone grid for 2023.



SUPER TOURERS

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club was one of the success stories of 2021 as its plethora of series enjoyed a surge in popularity. And it's now aiming to have another hit on its hands with the creation of a bespoke series for a very special kind of tin-top: the Super Tourers.

While the series also caters for the slightly newer BTC-T and Super 2000-specification British Touring Car

machines, the Super Tourers will get the most attention.

The signs are promising, with the likes of 1990s BTCC stars John Cleland and Anthony Reid set to race their cars from those halcyon days. But the Historic Sports Car Club was unable to keep its Super Touring series going in the face of mounting costs, and it's no guarantee that the CTCRC's version will be more of a success (see club column, p65).



TURISMO X/UNITED FORMULA FORD

MotorSport Vision Racing will field two series with new names this year, although both have previously run in other guises. Turismo X takes the place of the defunct MSVT Supercup, and will introduce Class X, for cars measuring up to 240-300bhp/tonne, while the pre-existing classes will undergo tweaks.

Six rounds consisting of two 20-minute races are due to be held at Silverstone, Anglesey, Snetterton, Oulton Park, Donington Park and Brands Hatch, with each meeting featuring a new 'Super Pole' format where the top 10 fastest qualifiers

compete in a one-lap shootout for pole.

United Formula Ford, meanwhile, is the brainchild of James Beckett – founder of the Walter Hayes Trophy – and will combine the old Heritage Formula Ford and Champion of Brands series. Five classes will make up the grid, from pre-1972 to post-1998 machines, and drivers from each class will be eligible to fight for the outright title. Seven rounds featuring two 20-minute races will be held, one each at Donington, Silverstone, Cadwell Park and Snetterton, with three visits to Brands Hatch forming the Champion of Brands contest.

GRIFFITHS HAIG TROPHY

The Historic Sports Car Club's newest series – named in honour of key figures in the club's history Guy Griffiths and Betty Haig – goes further back in time than many of the club's categories. It is open to 1950s drum-braked sports, sports-racing and GT cars built and registered between 1947 and 1961, with other models accepted subject to individual entry.

Four meetings are planned for 2022, including on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit (14-15 May), Oulton Park Gold Cup (29-31 July), Castle Combe Autumn Classic (24 September) and Dijon Motors Cup (7-9 October). The Combe event harks back to the first Griffiths Formula race for historic sportscars, which took place at the Wiltshire venue in May 1966 and led to the formation of the HSCC.



GB4 CHAMPIONSHIP

This latest initiative from MotorSport Vision is billed as an affordable entry point into single-seaters. It will feature the Tatuus F4-T014 chassis, previously used by Formula 4 series in Italy, Germany and Spain, powered by a 1.4-litre turbocharged Autotecnica-tuned Abarth engine capable of 160bhp.

Thirteen teams have so far stated their intention of competing, including those already racing in GB3, Formula Ford operations and international squads.

Driver budgets are expected to be between £120,000 and £150,000, with 15-year-olds able to compete, and £50,000 will be awarded to the inaugural champion to use in their 2023 single-seater campaign.

The championship is formed of eight UK-based rounds – six of which will support British GT – with each weekend consisting of three races in the same format as GB3 (first two grids determined by qualifying times; full reversed-grid race three with points awarded for positions gained).

MOTORSPORT GREATS

OPEN UP ABOUT EACH OTHER

BOOK REVIEW

DRIVERS ON DRIVERS

Philip Porter

RRP £30

Ask a top-line driver for their strengths and weaknesses, and it's rare that you'll get a truly insightful answer. But ask a rival and you are more likely to get a nuanced response with an anecdote or two.

This is the premise behind the new *Drivers on Drivers* book from Porter Press, which has assembled an ensemble cast of racers spanning 70 years of motorsport across multiple disciplines to discuss their rivals, team-mates and heroes.

The book raises money for cancer charity A Hope for Tomorrow (£11 from the sale of each copy goes to the charity), and is the result of an idea that author Philip Porter had three years ago. It certainly fulfils his stated aim in presenting "a happy balance of interesting, punchy and sometimes revealing comments".

Among the subjects are drivers who Porter interviewed before their deaths, Stirling Moss and Tim Parnell – the former BRM boss labels Graham Hill "the greatest man that I ever met, or was associated with, in motor racing" – and current Formula 1 aces Lewis Hamilton, George Russell and Lando Norris. This trio sat down with David Tremayne, with additional interviews supplied by Ben Edwards, Louise Goodman, Mark Cole, Simon Taylor, Peter Windsor and Ian



Wagstaff, giving the book an added breadth as topics flit from James Weaver to Jim Clark and Laurent Aiello to John Surtees.

Several interviewees are happy to name their all-time greats – unsurprisingly, Ayrton Senna crops up frequently, while Paddy Hopkirk cites rally ace Timo Makinen. But a common thread is that "drivers can only be fairly compared who have raced in the same period", as 1950s F1 ace Tony Brooks puts it. The all-time-great debate, says 1969 Le Mans 24 Hours winner Jackie Oliver, "is a question of whether or not the skill set that they brought to the profession was appropriate for the time in which they raced".

It's in the insights from drivers who raced against each other where the book comes to life, even if some anecdotes are now well-known or have been covered elsewhere. Jody Scheckter tells of the "very honest, but naive" Gilles Villeneuve's road car antics that you can read in Gerald Donaldson's 1989 tome on the late



Fittipaldi was wary of going wheel to wheel with Regazzoni

French-Canadian. But he is excellent value on how his former Ferrari team-mate "loved the image of being this wild maniac guy", a weakness in Scheckter's eyes that gave him confidence. It's always interesting when Damon Hill compares Alain Prost, Senna and Michael Schumacher, even if it's ground that's covered in his 2016 autobiography. But his comments in the opening chapter are accessible in a 'pick-up-and-play' manner where perhaps an autobiography isn't.

Likewise, it might come as no surprise to find Nigel Mansell and Stefan Bellof repeatedly rated as among the bravest of the brave, although Martin Brundle's recollections of replacing a chickenpox-stricken Mansell at Spa in 1988, using a tiny steering wheel "that looked like a doughnut", help to put meat on the bones. It's one of many fascinating observations from the 1990 Le Mans winner's entry.

The interviewees are largely candid, although a few hold back from naming the more difficult drivers they didn't get on with. Derek Warwick describes his Toleman F2 team-mate Brian Henton as "a devious little bugger that you knew was trying to screw you over at every moment", but



Unsurprisingly, Senna is cited frequently as all-time great



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F1'S 2022 TECH IN 3D

With all-new car designs and innovations, Formula 1 2022 promises to be a groundbreaking year for the championship. Autosport's Jake Boxall-Legge looks at what technical changes to expect from teams as the season progresses, and whether the regulation changes will achieve their aim.

Go to youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom

Scheckter recalls his time
as Villeneuve's team-mate



SCHLEGELMILCH/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

credits 'Super Hen' with teaching him the skills needed to survive in F1, while Emanuele Pirro lifts the curtain on life at Audi in the early 2000s when early "friction" with Allan McNish soon gave way to mutual respect. Emerson Fittipaldi and David Hobbs both mention that they were wary of going wheel to wheel with Clay Regazzoni.

Not all of it is a serious assessment of drivers' capabilities, and humorous off-track tales are also included. Gerhard Berger recalls the pranks he played on Senna, while Richard Attwood fondly remembers "born, unpaid entertainer" Graham Hill lobbing wine bottles out of a hotel room window while in

Australia for the Tasman Series.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, entries from the trio of current F1 racers and W Series champion Jamie Chadwick are rather shorter, although Norris reveals his admiration for IndyCar ace Colton Herta from their British F4 days – "He's a hooligan, that guy!" – and Russell provides an interesting explanation for choosing Kevin Magnussen as the most "fearless" driver he has encountered so far.

As Hamilton's and Russell's Mercedes partnership plays out and new names come to the fore in years to come, it could well be that a second part is needed before long...

JAMES NEWBOLD

WHAT'S ON


INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Formula Regional Asian

Round 3/5

Dubai, UAE

5-6 February

 **Livestream**
on Motorsport.tv,
Sat 1235, Sun 0620,
Sun 1035

Kyalami 9 Hours

Intercontinental

GT Challenge

Round 3/3

Kyalami,
South Africa

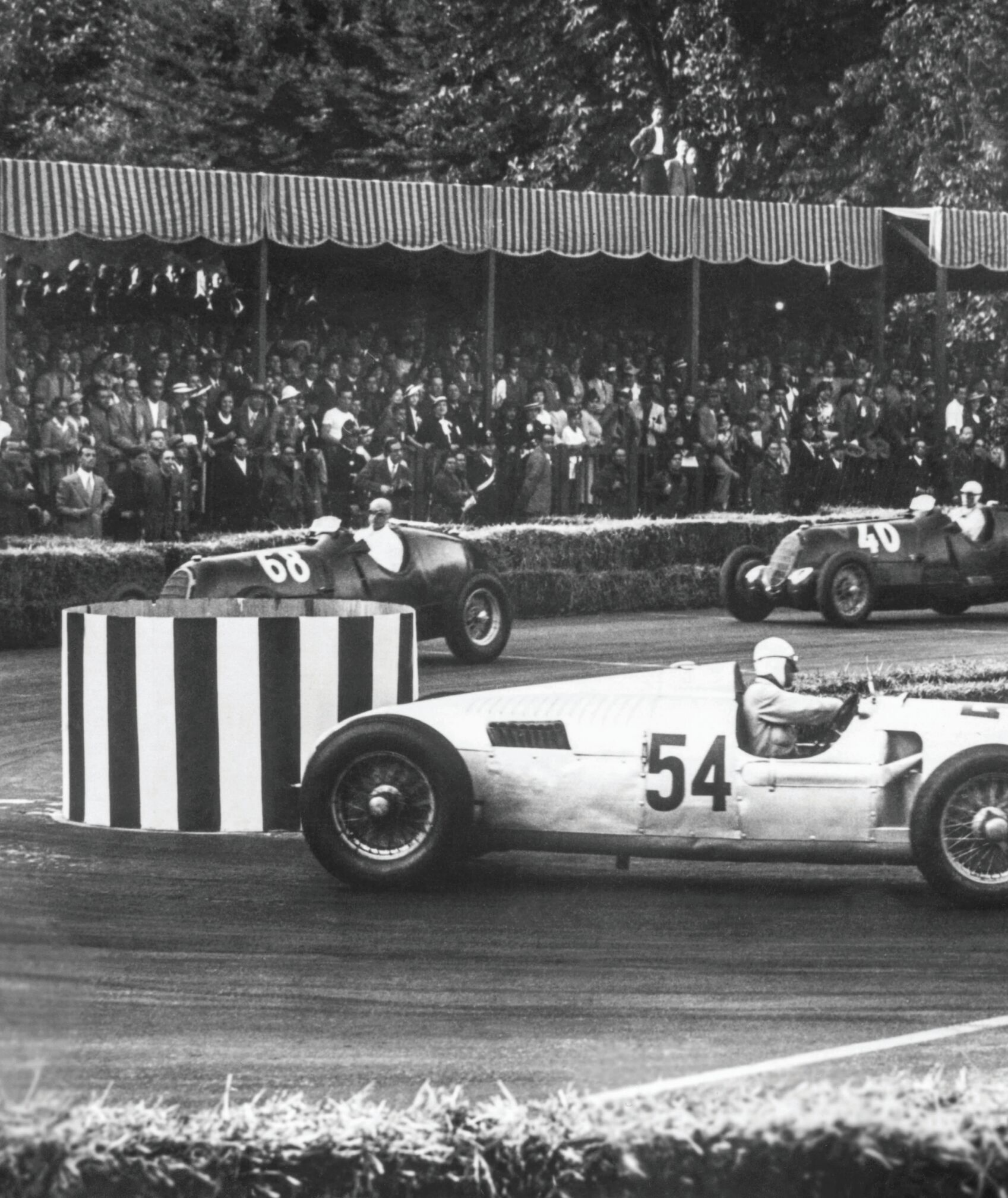
5 February

Formula 4 United Arab Emirates

Round 3/5

Dubai, UAE

5-6 February



FROM THE ARCHIVE

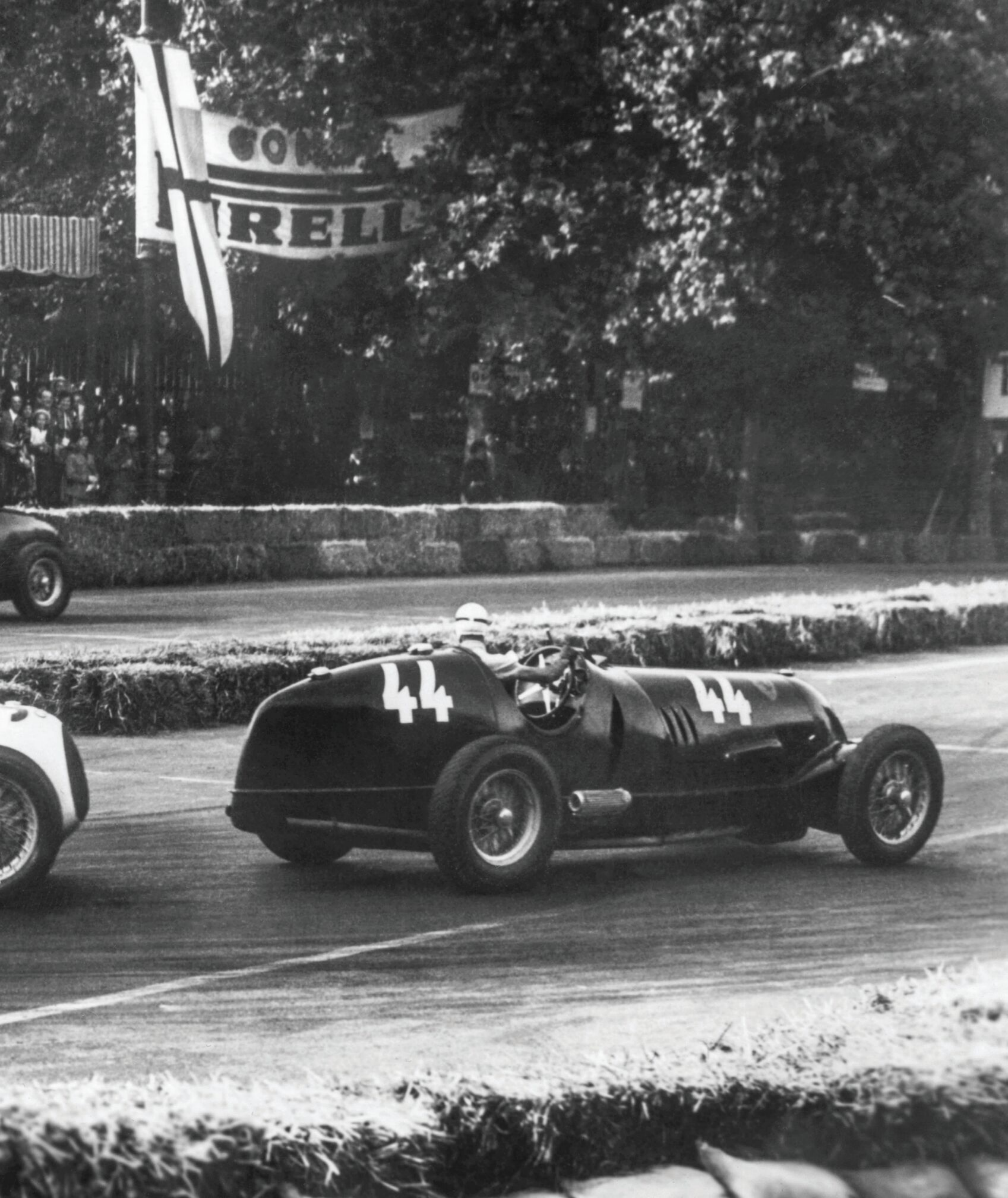
Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo 12C-36), leads arch-rival Achille Varzi (Auto Union Type C), Antonio Brivio (Alfa Romeo 8C-35) and Giuseppe Farina (Alfa-Romeo 8C-35) during the

60-lap non-championship Milan Grand Prix, run in the northern Italian city's Sempione Park on 28 June 1936. Varzi had initially got ahead of polestarter Nuvolari, but the Alfa Romeo driver fought

back and regained the lead from the sole Auto Union entry after a thrilling pursuit, the pair's pace being such that they lapped the rest of the field. Farina took the final podium position ahead of Brivio.



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Augusto Farfus

MY FAVOURITE... Track

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Macau

A winner on the famously tricky street track in touring cars and GTs, with Alfa Romeo and BMW, Augusto Farfus is well-qualified when it comes to Macau. “Either you love it or you hate it,” he says. And Farfus is firmly in the former camp.

“I like flowing high-speed tracks, and at Macau, besides Lisboa and Melco Hairpin, most of the corners are medium to high-speed, or flowing corners,” explains the Brazilian, who feels “the most comfortable” when his car is on the verge of stepping out over the bumps.

Farfus doesn’t hesitate in picking out the ultra-fast Mandarin sweeper that precedes the first heavy braking zone at Lisboa as his favourite corner. “In GTs it can be flat, but you need massive commitment,” he says. “You can really make a difference there. If you get that one right, you can easily gain another three or four tenths

on the following straight.”

Farfus quickly made himself at home at Macau, winning the first race of the 2005 World Touring Car Championship finale. “I remember at the press conference, a journalist told me there was another guy who won Macau at the first attempt and that was Ayrton Senna,” he recalls. “That meant a lot and since then Macau has always treated me very well.”

He won again in 2009, this time the reversed-grid race, and took an emotional GT World Cup victory in 2018, the final race attended by long-time Schnitzer boss Charly Lamm before his retirement. The popular German died just two months later. “It goes without saying the last race with Schnitzer and Charly, winning the World Cup there, is the cherry on the cake,” adds Farfus.

But beyond his successes, it’s the special feeling that results from the rare feat of nailing a lap in qualifying – with red flags a constant peril – that truly elevates Macau in Farfus’s eyes. “Macau is about being opportunistic in qualifying with an incredible lap and getting lap one right,” he says. “You cannot go out when the session is green and say, ‘I prepare the lap.’ When the track is green, you go! That’s why Macau is so special.”

JAMES NEWBOLD



TRIENITZ/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

IN NEXT WEEK’S ISSUE



What could go wrong with F1 2022

THE NEW PITFALLS READY TO CATCH OUT TEAMS

MATTHEW FIVEASH

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