

F1 Las Vegas returns for 2023 night race

AUTOSPORT

7 APRIL 2022

“TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE”

What's gone wrong at Mercedes and how soon Hamilton and Russell can fight at the front

2 RACES
0 POLES
0 WINS

“It's an ambitious car but we will put it right”

JAMES ALLISON



PLUS

Goodwood preview

F1's newest supersub

Plato to retire from BTCC

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The hurdles facing Mercedes to get back to the front of F1

When can Mercedes get back into contention with Ferrari and Red Bull? Few doubt that the Silver Arrows will return to the battle at the front of Formula 1, the question is more about whether the progress can come soon enough to make it a three-way title fight.

As James Allison and Andrew Shovlin show in our cover article on page 16, the technical problems of the team's 2022 machine are more complex than those of its predecessor 12 months ago. And the scope for improvement is more limited thanks to the cost cap and windtunnel restrictions.

Nevertheless, the squad's record over the past decade, not to mention the strengths of Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, suggests Mercedes will surely overcome the problems. F1's new era has made a promising start – having a third team battling at the front to keep everyone guessing would really continue that momentum.

F1's new-found success in the United States also means it will return to Las Vegas in 2023 (p4). The circuit *should* be more interesting than the Caesars Palace venue used in 1981-82, so all F1 needs now is the Andretti team plan to come off and for an American driver to follow in the footsteps of Mario Andretti, Phil Hill and Dan Gurney.

Elsewhere in this issue, we hear from F1 supersub Nico Hulkenberg (p24), China's rising Le Mans star Yifei Ye (p26) and look ahead to the Goodwood Members' Meeting this weekend (p34).



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK
14 APRIL**

Australian GP action
Ferrari or Red Bull? F1's
new battle heads
to Albert Park



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Steve Etherington/Motorsport Images

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F1 gets third US race – in Las Vegas

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 has doubled down on its newfound popularity in the United States by adding a third American round to the calendar. The championship will return to Las Vegas in 2023 as part of a three-year deal, only this time the grand prix will in-part be held on the iconic Strip rather than tucked away in a car park.

To complement a race in Austin and the inaugural Miami GP in May, as of November next year F1 will dock in Vegas for a Saturday night round to ensure all three US time zones are represented on the schedule.

The plan is to use a 3.8-mile street circuit (above) – shorter only than Jeddah and Spa – that will feature 14 corners and a long straight that should have drivers reach speeds of over 210mph during a 50-lap race.

“This is an incredible moment for F1 that demonstrates the huge appeal and growth of our sport with a third race in the US,” said F1 CEO and president Stefano Domenicali. “Las Vegas is a destination known around the world for its excitement, hospitality, thrills, and of course, the famous Strip. There is no better place for F1 to race than in the global entertainment capital of the world and we cannot wait to be here.”

F1 has previous for racing in the glitzy Nevada city. The season finales in 1981 and 1982 ran through the car park of the famous Caesars Palace. But the repetitive and flat circuit didn’t endear itself to drivers and was poorly attended by fans. This time around, however, F1 will work with many of the casinos and resorts to help promote the race, as well as with the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

Steve Hill, the president and CEO of the LVCVA, added: “We eagerly anticipate the moment when the history, energy and momentum of F1 will culminate in an unforgettable Saturday night on the Las Vegas Strip. Spectators will experience the

unrivalled thrill of watching these world-class drivers race through what is sure to become one of the most iconic race tracks.”

Las Vegas ticks the boxes for Liberty Media as it wants “destination cities” on the schedule. It also has a strong sporting culture, regularly hosting major boxing and UFC bouts, as well as being the home to the Las Vegas Raiders NFL team.

Despite a 10-year deal for Miami and Austin signing a contract extension, Domenicali said there were no fears Vegas would lead to the American market becoming diluted. He said: “It’s an added value for everyone because we are hitting the different targets in terms of demographics and location. The beauty of the growth of our sport in this country is we are reaching a lot of young people that are starting to be thrilled by our sport.”

F1 reported a record crowd of 400,000 for the United States GP in Austin last year, proving the growth of the series in the American market after previously struggling to capture the audience.

Summing up the US expansion, Domenicali said: “If you think where we were three years ago, it was difficult to have one grand prix full of people. Now we are heading to a situation where this year we are going to have two events totally sold out.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

MOSLEY DIED FROM SELF-INFLICTED GUNSHOT

INQUEST

Ex-FIA president Max Mosley's death last year has been ruled as suicide.

Westminster Coroner's Court has heard that former FIA president Mosley died last May from "significant injuries consistent with a gunshot wound".

The 81-year-old was found dead at his home in London on 23 May 2021.

British media has reported that WCC heard that Mosley "was receiving palliative care for lymphoma" after being diagnosed in 2019. It also heard that he had



TEE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

shared his plans.

"It was obvious he had used the shotgun to himself and endured a life-ending injury," said the coroner, who ruled that Mosley's death was a suicide.

Mosley had been receiving treatment for the lymphoma but the focus of the cancer treatment had switched to improving his quality of life from April 2021.

The Mirror reported that Dr Christopher

McNamara, a consultant haematologist who had been treating Mosley for the lymphoma since October 2019, said: "He had accepted this would not be cured. He was extremely upset as his quality of life was poor and left him uncomfortable. He had expressed ideas of committing suicide previously."

It is understood the family also submitted a written statement.



LIBERTY MEDIA



LIBERTY MEDIA

"It's giving you the magnitude of what the US will represent for F1. We feel the vibes. We feel it is something that needs to belong to this country. This is a huge opportunity.

"We are focused on making sure this would be one of the most important markets for F1, not forgetting of course that we were born in Europe, and are a worldwide sport."

Breaking with the traditional weekend format to stage the first Saturday race since the 1985 South African GP, it is hoped a 2200 Pacific Time Zone start will secure a primetime west coast US audience while also serving those waking up in the morning on Sunday in Europe.

Asked about the decision to race on a Saturday night, Domenicali said: "F1 cannot be static. That is the reason we are flexible, we are showing that's the right moment to have the best show in this context."

An initial three-year deal has been struck for F1 in Las Vegas, but Domenicali said he hoped the race would "stay for longer".

LUKE SMITH & JESS McFADYEN



ETHERINGTON

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Saudi offers Hamilton talks

FORMULA 1

The Saudi Arabian government is open to talks with Lewis Hamilton to address concerns he has expressed about racing in the country.

Seven-time F1 champion Hamilton commented at the inaugural Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in 2021 that he felt "uncomfortable" because of the nation's human rights record. He reaffirmed his stance at the Jeddah race last month.

Saudi's minister of sport Prince Abdulaziz Bin Turki Al-Faisal has now publicly offered Hamilton the chance to air his reservations.

Abdulaziz said: "I saw the comments that Lewis had, and that he had issues with some of the things in Saudi Arabia. I told him openly and frankly, 'You can speak to me. Let's sit down, discuss what are your issues, and understand where we are.'"

"A lot of these things, you read a lot about Saudi Arabia, but you don't see what are the details... He was saying that he couldn't find anyone to discuss it with. So, I'm ready to sit with him. I think a lot of these issues ignite because there is no communication and there is no understanding of what's happening."

JONATHAN NOBLE

Loeb to make DTM debut in Ferrari



DTM

Nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb will make his DTM debut at the Algarve Circuit later this month, joining Felipe Fraga in Red Bull's line-up.

Loeb will replace Nick Cassidy in the opening round of the 2022 DTM season on 30 April/1 May, with the Kiwi unavailable due to his commitments with Envision Racing in the Monaco Formula E race.

Loeb got his first taste of the AF Corse Ferrari 488 GT3 at Spa last month and is also expected to take part in this weekend's official pre-season test at Hockenheim.

With Cassidy also likely to miss the Norisring round in July due to Formula E

clashes, and potentially the Spa DTM weekend due to a clash with the FIA World Endurance Championship's Fuji round, Loeb could be in line for further DTM appearances later in the year.

"Throughout my career, I have always liked to change between disciplines," said the 48-year-old. "DTM is a famous championship and as the opportunity came up for me to compete in it, I took it, of course. It is an exciting challenge because the driving style is entirely different."

"Now, it is time to work. I will be up against specialists in such racers and my last proper GT3 race already is a long time ago. My goal will be to find my rhythm as well as I can and I will try to use my

experience to give the team good feedback about the set-up of the car. I know that it will be difficult but the cars really are fun to drive. Really fast, nice cars. I am looking forward to it."

Loeb has made a stellar start to his 2022 campaign, finishing runner-up to Toyota's Nasser Al-Attiyah in the Dakar Rally before beating Sebastien Ogier in a two-horse race between WRC's greatest drivers on his return to Rally Monte Carlo.

His 2022 programme also includes a full season in the new FIA Rally Raid Championship with the Bahrain Raid Xtreme team and an Extreme E campaign with Lewis Hamilton's X44 squad.

RACHIT THUKRAL

Aston Martin in serious N24 bid with TF Sport

NURBURGRING 24

Aston Martin will make its first bid for outright honours in the Nurburgring 24 Hours since 2018 with a factory-supported effort from TF Sport in May.

Works drivers Nicki Thiim, Marco Sorensen and Maxime Martin will share a Vantage GT3 in the Nurburgring-Nordschleife enduro on 28-29 May with lap record holder David

Pittard. It will be the debut for the car in the 24-hour fixture as well as the maiden appearance for TF, runner-up in the World Endurance Championship GTE Am points in each of the past two seasons.

TF will also take part in a trio of warm-up races as the British marque attempts to improve on its fourth-place finish from four years ago. Thiim, Sorensen and Pittard will compete in this

weekend's Nurburgring Langstrecken-Serie round, with Martin replacing Pittard for another outing in one of the four-hour races later this month.

Two more factory drivers, Charlie Eastwood and Valentin Hasse-Clot, will step in for the two three-hour Nurburgring qualifying races on 7-8 May when the regular drivers are unavailable.

GARY WATKINS





Plane issue threatens MotoGP

MOTOGP

MotoGP's Argentinian Grand Prix was put into doubt last Thursday when delays in freight arriving to the country forced Friday's action to be cancelled.

After a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MotoGP touched down at Termas de Rio Hondo last week for its first South American race since 2019. But the weekend was put in jeopardy when one of the five cargo planes chartered to bring freight from the island of Lombok following the Indonesian GP broke down in Kenya on its way to Argentina.

Another cargo plane also encountered technical issues, but made it to Termas de Rio Hondo ahead of Friday's planned first day of running.

The plane – a Boeing 747-200 operated by Kyrgyzstan-based company Aerostan – did not arrive in Argentina until 2145 local time on Friday, with that day's running cancelled on Thursday.

The missing freight – which included all of VR46 and Gresini's equipment, as well as missing bikes for KTM and various parts for other teams and companies throughout the paddock – arrived in the early hours of Saturday having been driven

60 miles from the airport at Tucuman.

Numerous teams had to start set-up before 0400 Saturday morning for FP1 getting under way at 1235 local time.

With almost 10,000 miles separating Indonesia and Argentina, Dorna Sports CEO Carmelo Ezpeleta was questioned about possible calendar changes going forward. However, he ruled this out.

Ezpeleta did note that the problems MotoGP faced in Argentina were partly a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He stated that around 20% of the cargo planes that used to be available worldwide were operated by Russian companies. However, those planes are no longer available due to the sanctions many western nations have placed on Russia. The long-lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic also played a role.

Many riders also ruled out the idea of MotoGP permanently switching to a two-day race weekend format following the revised event.

The Argentinian race was won by Aleix Espargaro, his first victory in 200 MotoGP starts, riding for Aprilia.

LEWIS DUNCAN

➔ P44 MOTO GP REPORT

IN THE HEADLINES

HAMILTON AS GOOD AS SENNA

Gerhard Berger believes Lewis Hamilton's balance between being aggressive and methodical places him "in the middle" of Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost. "For me, after these 45 years I've been around here, Lewis and Senna are the two best I've seen," said the 10-time grand prix winner.

BREEN TO SANREMO

Craig Breen will contest this weekend's Rally Sanremo to help prepare for the World Rally Championship's visit to Croatia later in the month. The M-Sport driver will pilot a Ford Fiesta Rally2 on the Italian asphalt rally, an event he won in 2019 and 2021, to ready himself for the asphalt of Rally Croatia.

PEDROSA'S LAMBO DEBUT

Former MotoGP rider Dani Pedrosa made his car racing debut last weekend in the one-make Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe series at Imola. The 36-year-old teamed up with Antonin Borga in the Pro-Am class and recorded a best finish of eighth overall in race two, and fourth in class.

W SERIES GETS TRS CARS

The Toyota Racing Series will loan 18 of its FT60 cars to the W Series for two events this season. Both series use the same Tatuus chassis and the TRS cars will substitute the regular W Series cars for the undercard appearances at the Spanish and Japanese GPs to streamline the logistics for the W Series. The Toyota powerplants will be left in the TRS cars for W Series, which normally uses Autotecnica Motori engines.

BYKOLLES VANWALL RUNS

The new Vanwall Vandervell Le Mans Hypercar developed by ByKolles was given a run at the Zweibrücken airfield, which hosted German Super Touring races in the late 1990s, last week. The potential WEC contender was driven by Christophe Bouchut.

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Plato set to leave BTCC at end of 2022

BTCC

Double British Touring Car champion Jason Plato has signed with the BTC Racing Honda team but will retire from the series at the end of 2022.

Plato, who has a record 97 BTCC victories, tested a BTC Honda Civic Type R at Donington Park last month. He has now joined the squad that took six wins last season, to drive alongside Josh Cook and Jade Edwards.

The 54-year-old has also announced that this will be his last season in the BTCC, in which he made his debut driving a Renault Laguna in 1997. "I didn't want to just drift out of the BTCC without signing off properly," said Plato, whose most recent series win came at the end of 2019. "I need to be in a competitive car and team."

"The opportunity came very late with [team owner] Steve Dudman but, once we talked, we came to an agreement quickly. I liked his style and what I heard. Having jumped in the car and been to the factory, it's a really good team with great people."

Dudman said: "Jason has shown what a world-class driver he is throughout his career and I have always admired him. Jason is hugely capable of winning races and I'm sure he will be in the championship mix from the start."

Plato reckons he can still be a frontrunner and is aiming to become the first driver to score 100 BTCC wins: "I do believe I'm not done. If I've got the right car and right support around me I can do the business. I'm pretty sure I'll win some races this year. I don't want to walk away without doing the 100! It's a target but that will take care of itself if the main goal of being competitive is achieved."

Plato will not retire from racing at the end of 2022. Pursuing other options is one of the reasons for his announcement. "The world of motorsport assumes I'll be doing the BTCC each year so other opportunities don't come up," he explained. "I fancy GTs, I've got to do Le Mans, and I'll do some more historics. There's lots more I want to do."

Plato's 23rd BTCC season will be his first driving a Honda, a manufacturer he has often competed against. He has twice finished as runner-up to a Honda driver in the championship, Matt Neal in 2006 and Gordon Shedden in 2015.

Meanwhile, Ricky Collard's expected move to the Speedworks Toyota team has been confirmed. The 25-year-old son of former BTCC racer Rob Collard will drive a second Corolla GR Sport alongside race winner Rory Butcher.



Collard Jr will race
Speedworks Toyota

IAIN STRUTHERS PHOTOGRAPHY



Plato has joined
BTC Racing for his
last BTCC campaign

"Following a comparatively quiet past couple of years, I was planning to stop racing at the end of 2022 to move to Australia – I had my visa organised and everything!" said Collard, who got his first taste of front-wheel drive in recent tests at Donington, Knockhill and Croft. "While I still had some good options in GTs, my interest was waning, but this opportunity has really reignited the spark and I intend to grab it with both hands, fully embrace it and enjoy it."

"The only type of car I've raced that I haven't won in is a touring car, so I'm pretty keen to put that statistic to bed. Despite effectively being a rookie, I'll be disappointed if I don't achieve that, and I'm targeting podiums at the very least."

• Four-time champion Colin Turkington topped last week's Donington test in his WSR BMW 330e M Sport (below). Turkington recorded 1m09.104s to lead the first BTCC test of the hybrid era by 0.145s from Gordon Shedden's Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R. Collard was 14th, Plato 16th.

KEVIN TURNER



JEP



NASCAR Denny Hamlin scored Toyota's first win of the new NASCAR Cup Next Gen era at Richmond Raceway last Sunday. The Joe Gibbs Racing driver used fresher tyres to overcome long-time leader William Byron's Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet with less than five laps to go and held off the Stewart-Haas Racing Ford of Kevin Harvick to win by 0.552 seconds. All three NASCAR manufacturers have now won Cup races in 2022. Team Penske's Ryan Blaney and Hendrick's Chase Elliott are tied on points at the top of the table after seven of the 36 rounds. **Image by Gavin Baker/Motorsport Images**

Edgar withdraws from F3 due to health issues

FIA FORMULA 3

FIA Formula 3 driver Jonny Edgar has withdrawn from the series after being diagnosed with Crohn's disease.

In a social media post, Edgar, who is part of the Red Bull Junior Team, wrote: "As a family, we have made the extremely difficult decision that I will not continue in the 2022 FIA F3 Championship until I am feeling well again."

"Having recently been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, at the present

time I am simply unable to physically compete at the level required.

"Once on the correct treatment path, I will hopefully be back to full health/fitness but until then I need to take some time out to prioritise my health.

"I would especially like to thank Red Bull, Trident Motorsport and [sponsor] D Tolson & Sons for their unwavering support throughout what has been a challenging time. Hope to be back soon."

The Briton, who was a finalist



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

in the 2021 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award, will be replaced at the Italian team by Dane Oliver Rasmussen,

who will line up for his second F3 campaign after competing with HWA Racelab in 2021.

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A black and white photograph of a woman standing next to a vintage convertible car. The woman is wearing a light-colored, lace-patterned dress, a matching beret with a flower, and long dark gloves. She is holding a small white clutch bag and has her right hand raised near her face. The car is a light-colored convertible with a white steering wheel and a folded-down top. The background is a dense, dark foliage.

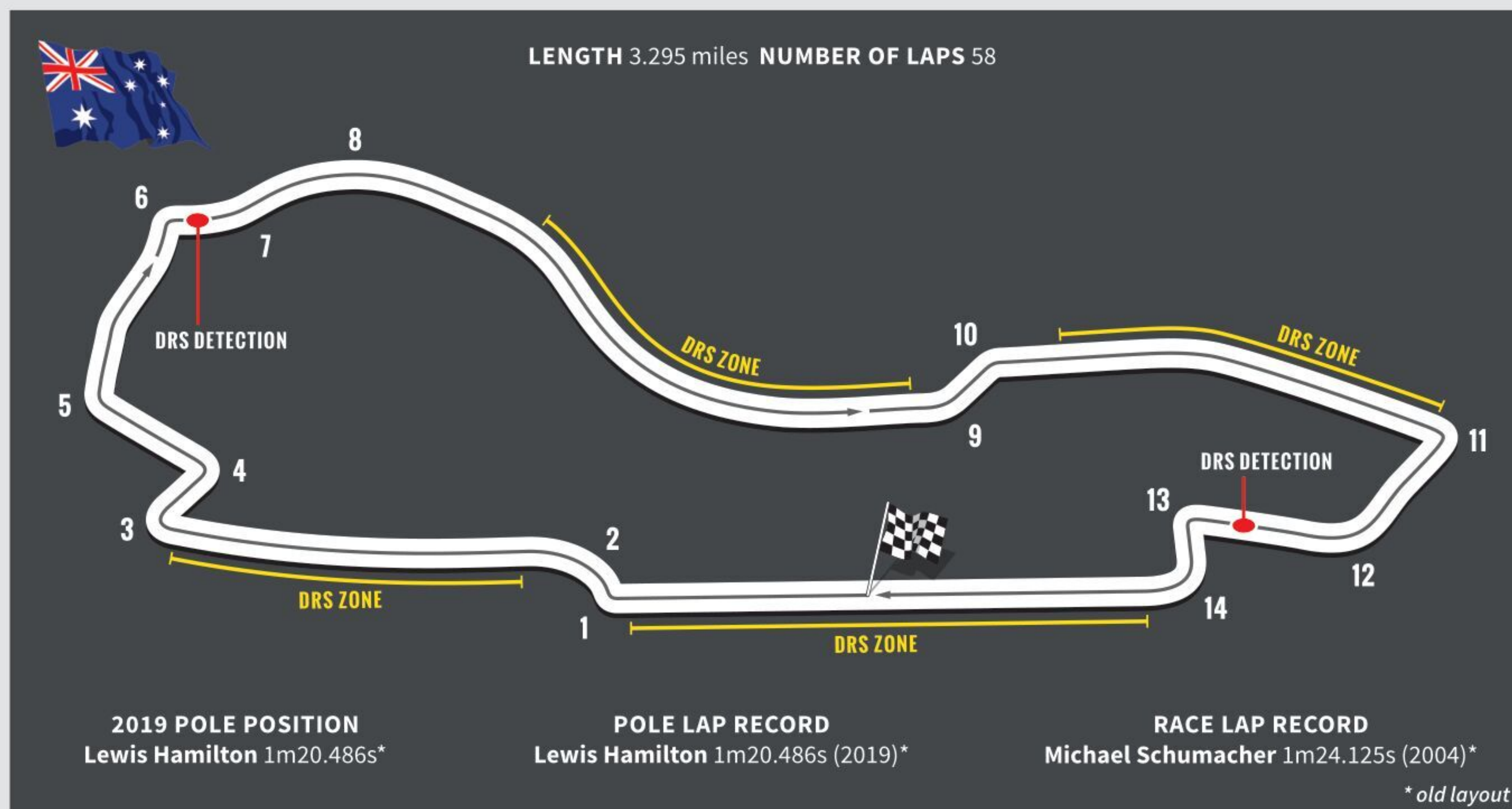
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QUALIFYING 0700

Sunday 10 April

RACE 0600

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CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Leclerc	45
2	Sainz	33
3	Verstappen	25
4	Russell	22
5	Hamilton	16

Constructors

1	Ferrari	78
2	Mercedes	38
3	Red Bull	37
4	Alpine	16
5	Haas	12



RACE STATS

Previous winners

2019	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes
2018	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2017	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2016	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Kimi Raikkonen	Lotus
2012	Jenson Button	McLaren
2011	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2010	Jenson Button	McLaren



Points tallies

Hamilton	164
Vettel	150
Alonso	115
Bottas	59
Ricciardo	34
Verstappen	34
Magnussen	26
Perez	12
Leclerc	10
Sainz	9



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F1 owes pay-back to Melbourne

Two years ago, F1 came to a grinding halt in Albert Park. Since then, the circuit has been transformed. Now it's time to reward the Australian GP with what it deserves

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

It's been two long years. We've all been through so much with the COVID-19 pandemic, it hardly seems helpful to mention it again. But we know just how tough it was, still is for some, and how much people yearned for escapism. That has always been a part of motorsport's DNA, with Formula 1 as its top echelon the most visible and valuable global series.

All of that is worth considering when looking back to March 2020 and the last time an Australian Grand Prix was about to be staged. Then, the pandemic was just unfurling, with a hoped-for expectation it wouldn't be as bad as it tragically became. Melbourne's Albert Park track was gearing up to celebrate its 25th race and in 2022 is now finally doing so once again – home hero Daniel Ricciardo having swapped a yellow-and-black Renault race suit for McLaren orange in the meantime.

That's far from the only thing that's different this time around. Hopefully, some of the key changes in F1 since coronavirus first truly became part of our shared lexicon can play a role in making the coming weekend one of joy and celebration.

There never was any F1 competition that weekend, of course. And the Melbourne race couldn't happen in 2020, even as F1 got a 17-event season in following its resumption at the Red Bull Ring nearly four months later. The costs and impact of infrastructure being built on public roads meant 2021 was the earliest the race

“Now celebration is in the air, with new cars and drivers ready to entertain Melbourne”

could return, but that was postponed and then scuppered by a combination of Australia's slow vaccine rollout and the logistics challenge of the then ongoing 14-day quarantine rules for all arrivals working within F1's fast-paced calendar.

As F1 departed Melbourne two years ago, it was suggested that Albert Park would be resurfaced before the next event – something that hadn't happened since it joined the F1 calendar in 1996. That has now occurred, but as part of much wider changes aimed at increasing overtaking. The hiatus caused by the pandemic meant there was a chance for this major work – which had been considered five years ago given Albert Park's reputation for producing dull races with the quicker modern cars on a one-line track with very short braking zones – to go ahead. It began in early 2021, with the resurfacing the last job, completed back in January.

It is still expected to offer low grip, being a temporary race track, so Pirelli has brought its softest 2022 tyre – the C5 – as this weekend's red-walled option. Intriguingly, the C4 step has been left out, with the teams having the C2 and C3 as hards and mediums this weekend, which could offer strategic variability with only moderate tyre wear predicted (the surface isn't super-abrasive and previous bumps are gone), as could the now wider pitlane if the FIA correspondingly ups the speed limit there.

There has been much social media handwringing at the inclusion of four DRS zones. These pitch the newly renamed Turn 11 at the end of the back straight as the key overtaking opportunity and reflects the challenge of passing at Albert Park even with so much change. The worry seems to be that there could now be too much passing – to go along with all the apparently 'bad' (but clearly excellent) racing between Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc in Bahrain and Jeddah. The weekend's action will reveal all, but plenty of overtaking will always trump a procession.

The race is also set to take place in front of a bumper crowd. This can't be a race-day record (154,000 from 1996) because of local labour shortages – a continued hangover from the pandemic, with a lack of international students and skilled visa holders to adequately staff hospitality operations meaning the organiser didn't want to risk compromising the quality of its event, so capped Sunday numbers at 130,000. But an aggregate crowd record could well be possible.

This follows a trend of sell-out and packed races as lockdowns end and humanity adjusts to living with COVID. People are so wonderfully keen to live having been prevented from doing so for so much of the past two years (and, in some parts of the world, sadly continue to have to do so). Melbourne endured the world's longest COVID lockdown, and so it is the fans attending this race that F1 should consider above all. Some of them will be the same people who were denied entry in the chaotic scenes on that cloudy Friday morning in March 2020, when F1 did make the right call, having made the wrong one in deciding to travel to Melbourne at all – with other motorsport series, such as Formula E, and whole sports, for example the NBA, enacting quick season suspensions as the pandemic unfurled.

Now though, celebration is in the air, with new cars and drivers ready to entertain Melbourne. It's waited a long time, gone out of its way to improve its own spectacle, and fully deserves F1's love and attention. Might there too be a future reward for the city? While a lucrative event for F1, Melbourne isn't matching the financial might of the Middle East when it comes to paying to be the season opener (or finale). But with such a vibrant and sport-mad city, lacking in 'sports-washing' aims, it would be satisfying to soon see Melbourne restored as F1's curtain-raiser. 🏁



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DRS: should it stay or should it go?

Formula 1's Drag Reduction System is a mixed blessing and the new cars have raised the prospect of getting rid of it. But that could be a touch premature

MATT KEW

Since 2011, DRS has been a sticking plaster to cover the crack that is a lack of overtaking in Formula 1. However, the seismic, dirty air-slashing shift to ground-effect now presents the best opportunity to get rid of it. And with Ross Brawn among the big names with the desire for it to go, those opening letter-box slots won't hang around forever. But we're not there yet.

"DRS needs to stay for now, otherwise the races would be very boring," said Ferrari's Charles Leclerc following last month's Saudi Arabian Grand Prix. "As much as following has been better from last year to this year, and it's a very positive step, I still think it's not enough to get rid of the DRS."

Part of the case for it to stay might be, perversely, the result of the new rules. Red Bull rival Max Verstappen reckons the 40kg jump in the minimum weight limit means for the driver following, tyres are overheating more under initial acceleration in the remaining dirty air. That's allowing the gap to the car in front to increase out of slow corners and so DRS is required to recover lost ground.

Until it can be done away with, F1 is in a place where the Saudi Arabian GP was judged an on-track thriller largely down to a second

"Should the DRS tactical *tete-a-tetes* happen at every race, there might be an issue"

successive DRS detection zone tactical battle between Verstappen and Leclerc, yet still be qualified by many as a failure. That is to lend a voice to critics who have long considered DRS to manufacturer action *deus ex machina*-style. F1 fans want an entertaining race and the second visit to Jeddah certainly was that. But the spectacle was at least enhanced by DRS, at most created by it.

The situation in Saudi was wildly exaggerated by circuit design, it must be noted. With one DRS zone feeding into another and then another, it created a triple effect. Should F1 return to Jeddah, reconfiguring the DRS set-up should be added to the list of ongoing track improvements required.

Despite this desire for tweaks, it doesn't take away from what played out on the 2022 configuration between Leclerc and eventual winner Verstappen. It was an exhilarating 200mph

game of DRS chess. The actual use of the overtaking aid and the initial cat-and-mouse game to determine the order when cars buzzed the painted white lines denoting the detection area offer another tactical element. It's not so far removed from refuelling or tyre and pitstop strategy.

While Leclerc and Verstappen were brought closer together by tyre behaviour and the different ways in which the Ferrari and Red Bull generate their lap time, the headline battle wouldn't have hit the heights without DRS. There might have been one occasion when the Red Bull – quicker after its switch to hard Pirellis to maximise a low-downforce set-up – relegated the Ferrari. But that would have been it. There still would have been a crescendo as the gap between the leaders dipped below one second, but the eventual pass would likely have been a one-hit wonder only, unlike the multiple hits that transpired when Leclerc was given the ability to fight back.

Some might argue that you can indeed have too much of a good thing, in so far as too many DRS-enhanced moves devalues the art of the overtake. But it seems unfair to say we're close to that mark yet. The wheel-to-wheel climax of the Verstappen-Leclerc duels has only lasted for three laps in Bahrain and four tours in Saudi out of a total of 107 racing laps. That's 6.5% of the time. Hardly an embarrassment of riches.

That's not to say we cannot go too far with DRS as we continue to learn the traits of these new ground-effect racers. Admittedly, it has been two from two in terms of races in which drivers have perversely desired second place and checked their pace over the DRS detection line to then streak back ahead on the following straight. In isolation, that concept is a bit silly. (Although much less than an F1 race being able to go ahead because it's covered by a missile defence system!) Should the DRS tactical *tete-a-tetes* happen at every race, there might be an issue. But for now, the sample size is too small to say.

This weekend in Melbourne will be a far better acid test. It is a venue where traditionally passing has come at a premium, and low-speed corners aren't in short supply to potentially exaggerate Verstappen's theory on tyre wear in 2022.

If DRS is again the main talking point after this weekend, then perhaps F1 will have a mini 'jump the shark' moment on its hands thanks to the cocktail of DRS and the new regulations taking things too far. Alternatively, if it looks like a dud in Australia lies in wait after the first few laps, perhaps an injection of DRS drama might lift the race to stop a UK audience nodding off after setting those early Sunday morning alarms. 🏁

DIFFERENT SAME STOR

*Mercedes has started this year as it did last year — on the back foot.
But the problems now are more serious, so what next for the Silver Arrows?*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**



PROBLEM, Y?



“W

hat Mercedes must do to fix the W12”. Don’t worry, it’s fine. You’re reading the latest issue of Autosport and Mercedes is facing a big job to keep its Formula 1 title streak alive. You have, however, just somehow travelled back in time to 15 April 2021. Don’t ask us how, just stick

a few quid on Max Verstappen winning the 2021 world title. Trust us, it’ll work out even when Lewis Hamilton is leading by miles as the final laps of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix approach...

Once you’ve collected your winnings, sit back and relax until 7 April 2022 – and note if you please that Ferrari, yes, really *Ferrari*, is going to win the new season opener. Today, that point has arrived and the 2022 F1 season is well under way, with your inexplicable reality-changing journey complete and the latest issue of Autosport open before you.

It’s a new year, new F1 season, but something almost as far-fetched as a whimsical time-travel tale has really happened: the mighty Mercedes squad is simply unable to win races on pure pace.

Given its staggeringly long period of success since the start of the turbo-hybrid era, it seemed unlikely that what was then the Black Arrows team would end 2021 with the first blemish on a championships run that now stretches back eight years. But that happened and the W12 is only the second works Mercedes turbo-hybrid not bestowed with a Hamilton title accolade. And, while the possibility was always there, it seemed pretty preposterous to consider that when the start of F1’s new car design era began, Mercedes would be the team to have most missed the mark. Sure, it has the clear third fastest car at the start of ground-effect’s return and is ahead of many squads that were hoping the rules overhaul would help them leap up in the opposite direction. But that is a major step down the order for a team that can absolutely claim to be F1’s benchmark best.

It’s far away from Mercedes’ expectations at its typically bullish season launch back in February. There, Hamilton declared “if you think what you saw at the end of last year was my best, wait until you see this year” in anticipation of a renewed battle with Verstappen and Red Bull at the front of the grid. But even if Hamilton produces an on-track performance level to better the sensational efforts he put in after being disqualified from qualifying at last year’s Sao Paulo GP, right now he needs crashes or reliability failures for any two of the Red Bull or Ferrari cars just to make it onto the podium. That happened in Bahrain, with his third-place finish once Verstappen and Sergio Perez had dropped out late on with fuel vacuum problems, greeted and celebrated by Mercedes like the shock result it absolutely was.

The biggest problem Mercedes faces is porpoising. For all the excitement around the new car designs, this is surely going to be the word of 2022. Every team has encountered it to some degree – even if some have had little bouncing but then discovered much bigger problems, such as a lack of overall downforce and pace, as has happened at McLaren.

“Porpoising is something that caught all of the teams out when they first launched this generation of cars,” explains Mercedes chief technical officer James Allison. His words reveal just when the issue came to the forefront of the teams’ collective attention, as it was during the filming days that accompanied most car unveilings that porpoising began its journey to the top of F1’s lexicon.

Several teams are understood to have had to stop their filming days, which are essentially glorified shakedown sessions, once they saw what was happening. One team is said to have worn a hole right through its new machine’s floor, such was the severity with which the car was repeatedly striking the ground at high speed. They decamped to Barcelona, where at least one squad sent engineers to discover if those working at another with which it is closely aligned were encountering the same problem.

Trackside observations from those three days in Spain revealed the full challenge facing the teams, with Mercedes among the very worst for bouncing. For the Silver Arrows car, this was a near comical frequency.

“WE WERE CAUGHT OUT BADLY. THE PORPOISING WE SAW HAS BEEN QUITE EXTREME”

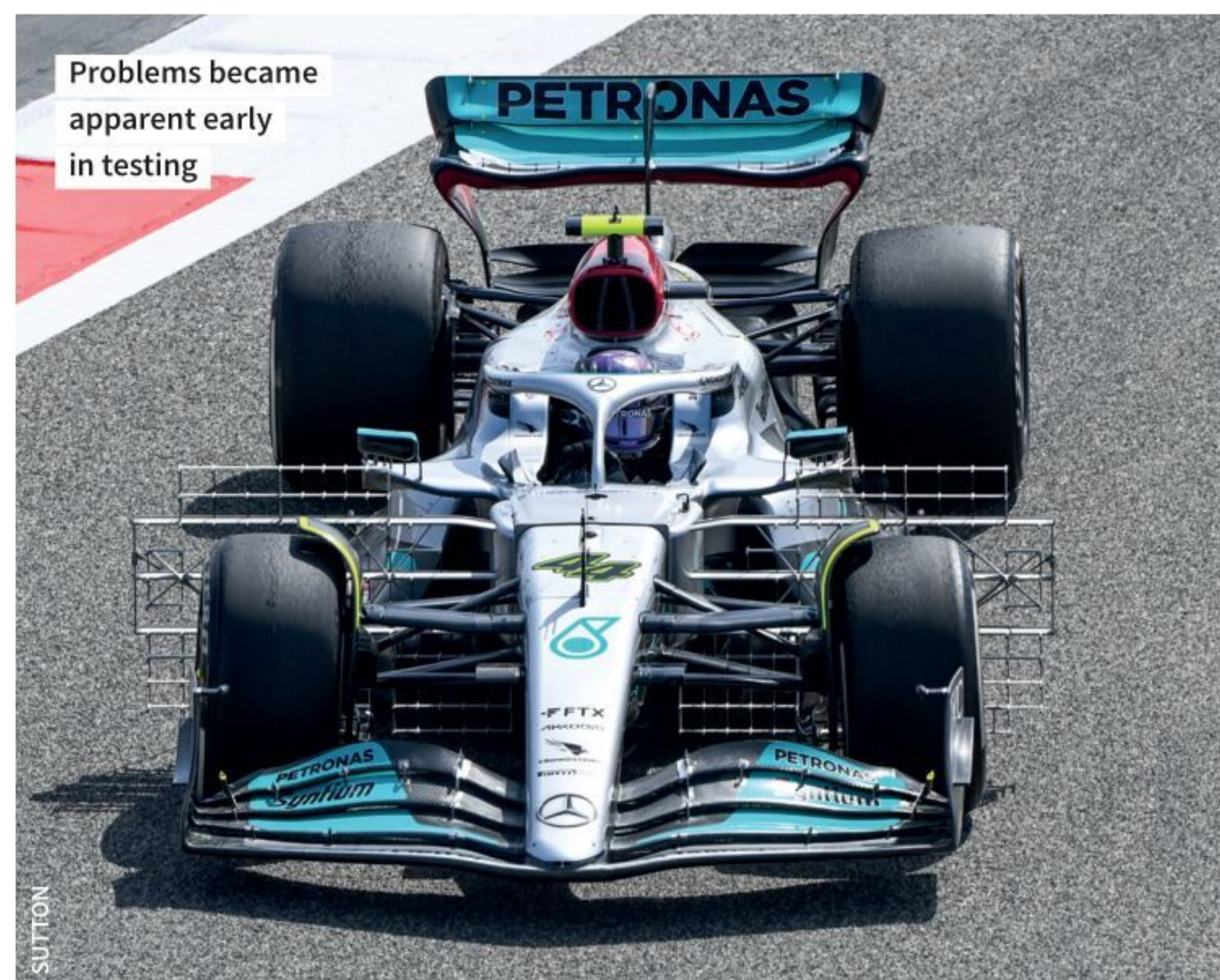
Engineers who had worked in F1 during its last ground-effect era 40 years ago were shocked to learn the problem had returned and surprised that the modern superteams hadn’t been expecting it.

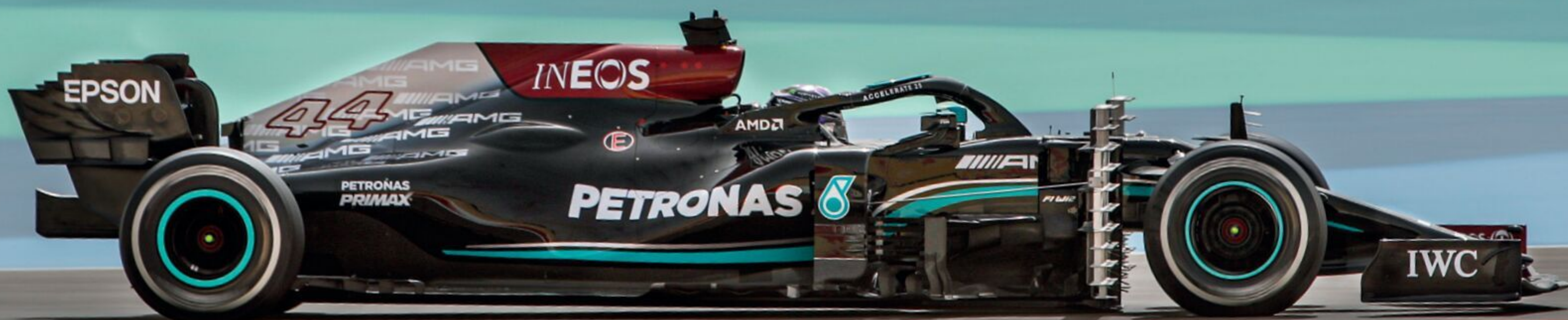
The surprise concerned the windtunnels and simulation tools the teams have long used to build their cars. The former uses scale models on rolling roads to demonstrate how effectively aerodynamic solutions are working, but the belts these are placed on simply aren’t stiff enough to replicate the unyielding track surfaces the scaled-up cars were about to be unleashed upon. When they were, air moving rapidly through the new front wings and leading floor edge venturi tunnels sucked the cars to the ground, faster and faster as the downforce from the rest of the chassis surfaces come into play. But it suddenly stalls when the floors flex and meet the solid track surface, with the new 18-inch tyres also lacking in give compared to their predecessors, and so the pressure rapidly releases. Repeat, repeat, repeat as the car closes in on its top speed and the driver is having a very bumpy ride.

Mercedes implemented several mechanical solutions for its Barcelona-spec car, which chiefly involved adding long rear floor stays designed to stiffen this part. At the time, these weren’t thought to be permitted for racing in 2022 but have since been confirmed as allowed by the FIA. Leaving Spain, Mercedes was on top, as its day three fixes led to Hamilton forging ahead of George Russell’s previous test-leading time on the final afternoon.

For the Bahrain test, the paddock’s attention initially focused on

Mercedes’ “extreme” – per Red Bull boss Christian Horner – interpretation of the sidepod and side-on crash structure rules. This meant the W13 arrangement with which it completed that test and started the campaign has near flat sidepods, with a vertical opening more akin to the 1991 Lambo 291 than any of its contemporary designs. But Mercedes was soon going from defending the W13’s legality, to briefing why it wasn’t going to be winning at the start of the new season. Its rivals refused to accept F1’s dominant squad wasn’t bluffing, but the scale of its porpoising issue was laid bare as the second test ended. >>





Team was able to bounce back from early troubles with the W12 in 2021

MAUGER



Mercedes thinks it has a gap to the midfield runners such as Haas

SUTTON

Hamilton knew third in Bahrain was more than W13 deserved



SUTTON

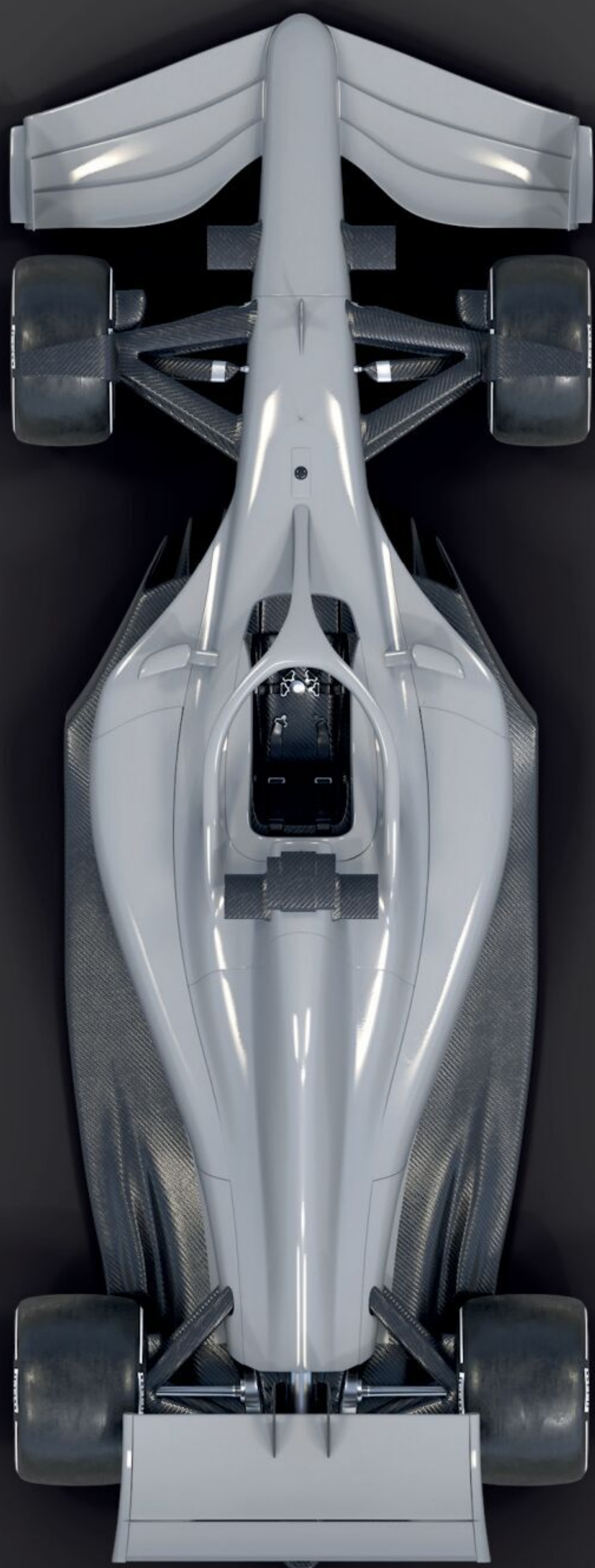
Hamilton struggled to 10th last time out in Saudi Arabia, after qualifying 16th



TEE

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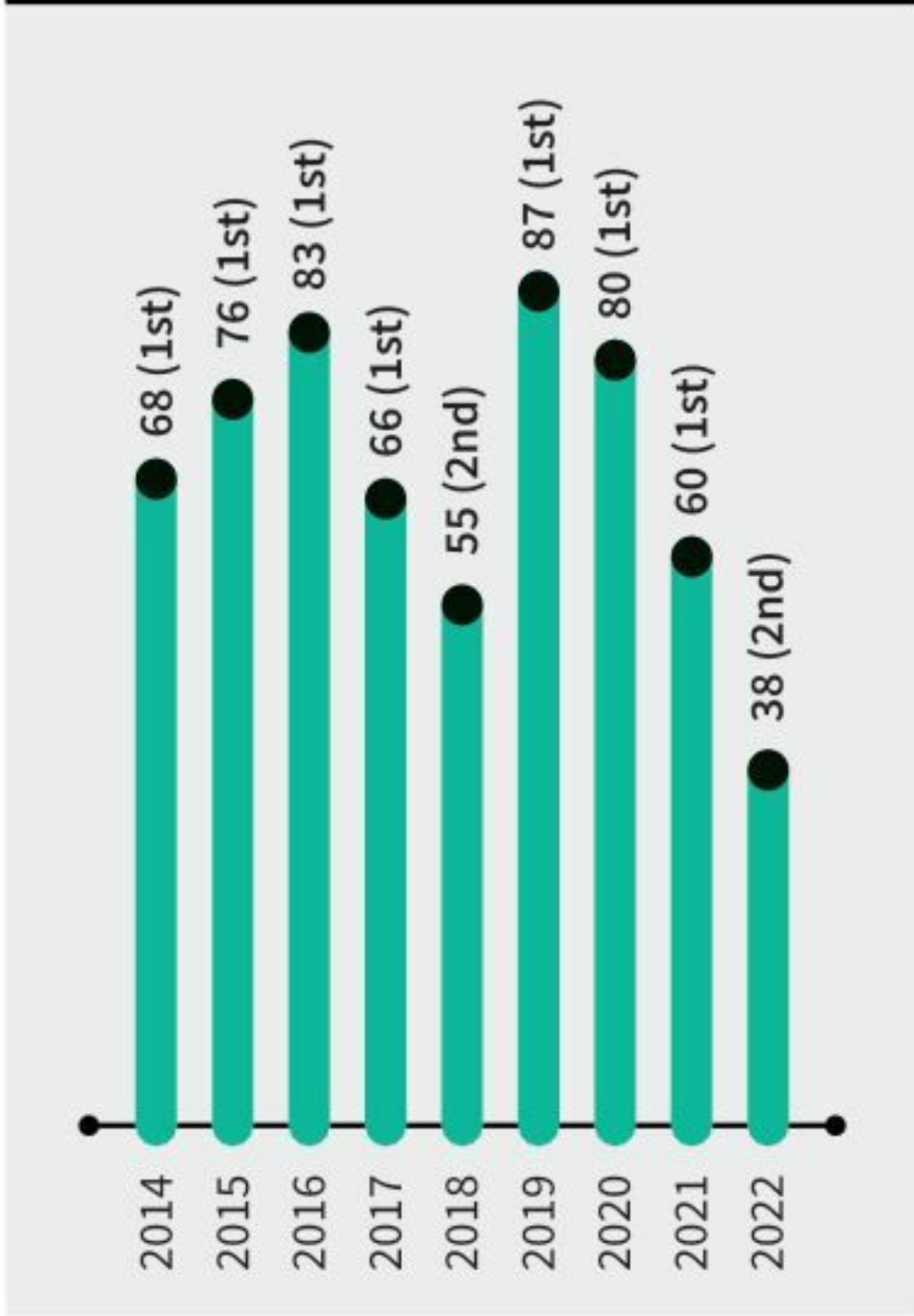
MAUGER

There, Russell was tasked with showing Mercedes’ hand in the final session performance-running shootout – but ended up 1.039 seconds slower than Verstappen’s test-best for Red Bull, with a car that was moving around wildly and porpoising even in the corners.

Mercedes tried plenty of solutions. It took a saw to the W13’s innermost underfloor strake at the front of its venturi tunnels in a bid to dramatically alter its overall aerodynamic profile and actually cut downforce in a bid to lessen the bouncing. But the only way it could set its best times, with a car that still porpoised badly, was by raising its rideheight and lessening the ground-effect. Potential lap time had to be ceded. “We were caught out by it quite badly,” says Allison. “And the amount of porpoising on our car, especially when we put our first race upgrade package on in the last winter test, has been quite extreme.”

Testing still conceals so much of a season’s reality, but in practice for 2022’s first race a week later, Russell was having to come off the throttle when conducting his qualifying simulation effort, so bad did Mercedes’ porpoising continue to be. In Bahrain GP qualifying, Hamilton trailed Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc by 0.7s. The following week in Saudi Arabia, Mercedes spent the opening practice sessions trying “a few more

MERCEDES POINTS FROM FIRST TWO ROUNDS IN TURBO-HYBRID ERA



experiments to understand the bouncing issue”, according to team director of trackside engineering Andrew Shovlin. “[There were] some which made it worse,” he added. “Some which helped. But we don’t yet have a solution to make the problem go away.”

That was ahead of qualifying in Jeddah, where Mercedes’ pace deficit meant Hamilton ended up out in Q1 and Russell led the line in sixth – albeit losing the best-of-the-rest grid spot to Esteban Ocon’s Alpine. He put that right in the race, finishing fifth, but shipping “a second behind [Red Bull and Ferrari each lap] generally”. Team boss Toto Wolf declared



Mercedes was well behind Red Bull and Ferrari in Bahrain

Mercedes' place in the current pecking order to be "totally unacceptable".

"We're under no illusions what that performance gap is, and in Jeddah it was ultimately a bit bigger than in Bahrain," explains Shovlin. "But we've got quite a lot to find both in qualifying and on long runs if we want to challenge the Ferrari and the Red Bull cars. However, behind us it looks like we have a bit of margin to that midfield. We need to do a good job to be ahead of them, but that margin buys us a bit of breathing space to allow us to experiment on the weekends, to try and bring solutions to lift the level of performance of the car."

Ahead, Red Bull's RB18 appears to have had the worst of its pre-Bahrain porpoising dialled out – the car's late-testing sidepod update and front wing experiments combining to alleviate the issue, with much improved ride smoothness ever since. At Ferrari, porpoising remains a notable feature of the F1-75, but the car is more compliant overall than the W13, which means its drivers can more confidently cope with ongoing bouncing.

Mercedes' current performance predicament is compounded by several factors. First, it has a downforce problem – in that it apparently continues to generate too much. This means the porpoising continues to be so severe, because even with a raised rideheight the aero surfaces that are working well at the top of the chassis are pushing it down onto the floor, which stalls dramatically. Plus, while Mercedes' current lowest-drag rear wing is helpful in corners, it is a serious burden on the straights – especially compared to the RB18, which is gaining a crucial edge on Ferrari by having better end-of-straight speed with a slippery, drag-reducing package. In Jeddah, Mercedes also removed its rear-end gurney flap in a bid to dump as much drag as possible, but still remained only half way up the order in the qualifying speed trap.

"Engine mode [is a factor in all this] as well," Russell also said in Jeddah. "The faster you go the worse it gets. So, it makes it harder for qualifying because we turn the engines up, maximum power, go quicker down the straight – which causes more downforce and causes more porpoising. We almost need to pre-empt this issue and also in the race when you have the DRS closed, you have more downforce than you do with the DRS open, and that's another factor we need to consider."

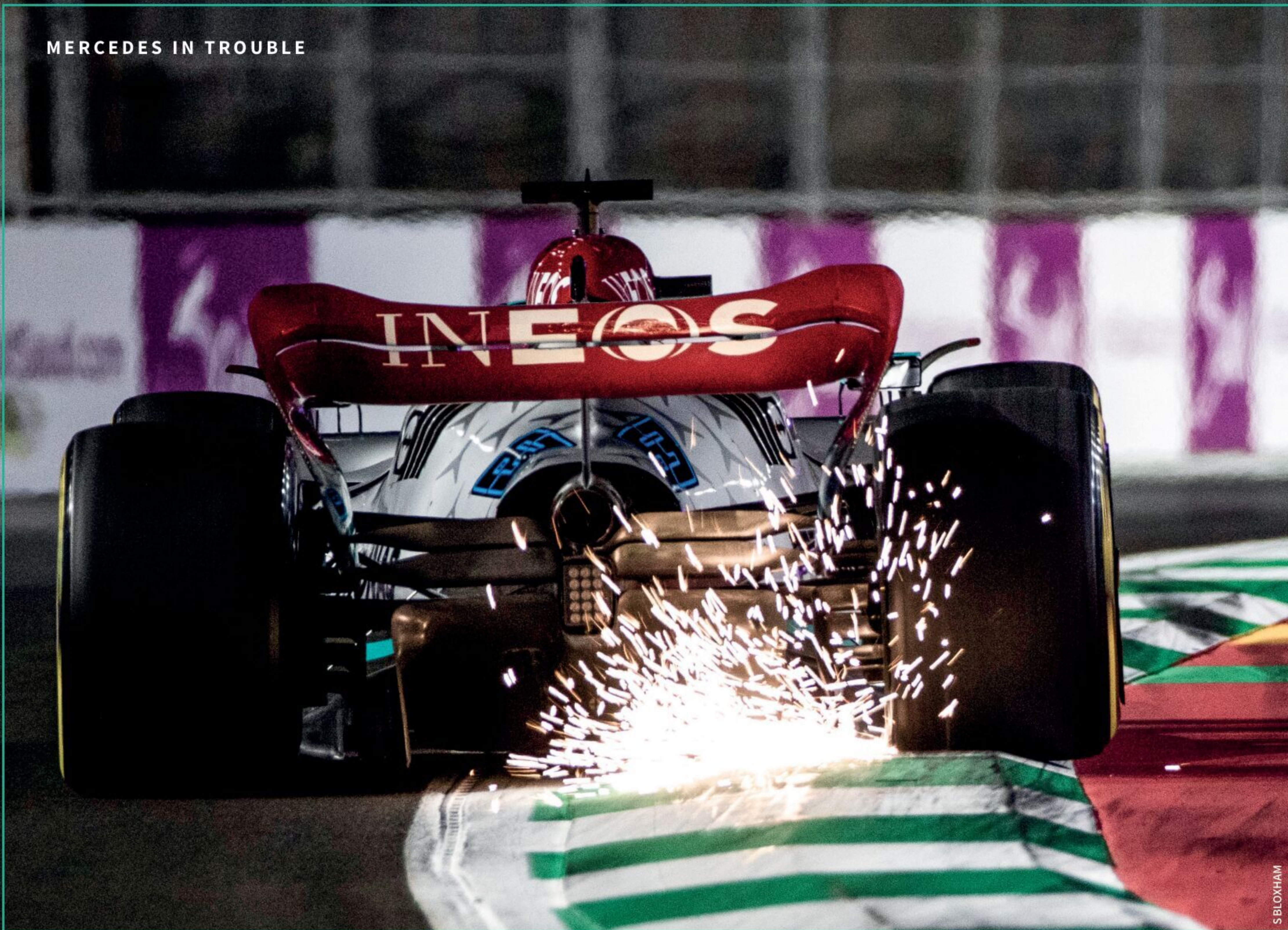
There's also an issue with getting the best from the hampered W13 package right now. And this is familiar from the W12, and very familiar now you've gone back and been presented with what we were writing this time 12 months ago. Essentially, Mercedes is still working out how to set up its car to let its drivers feel as confident as they can. >>

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S. BLOXHAM

RUSSELL RISING TO YET MORE CHALLENGES

He said he would relish it: the challenge of engineering a Formula 1 car to title success, even if it started off the pace. “I’m looking forward to being part of the development of a car that will be progressing drastically throughout a season,” George Russell stated the first time F1 visited Jeddah, barely four months ago and less than a month before he finally made his dream move to become a Mercedes works driver. But the then Williams driver cannot have known how prescient his words would be.

Finally embarking on a long-coveted career step isn’t always easy – especially so if plenty of the problems that held you back before somehow materialise in your new surroundings. And that’s what’s happening for Russell right now in 2022. Having spent years honing his F1

craft at the back with Williams, often, especially in his rookie season in 2019, conducting race-long test sessions to make car set-up and development breakthroughs, he must do so again with Mercedes. At least the W13 is fast enough

to score consistent points...

Russell’s results so far in 2022 are a fourth and fifth from Bahrain and Jeddah – but in the latter he particularly impressed, after having to recover from a messy Q3 in the season opener. Not only did he

lead the way for Mercedes when Lewis Hamilton was dumped out in Jeddah Q1, but he did so commandingly – his move on Esteban Ocon’s Alpine at the final corner bold and decisive. And he stood out as an off-track leader (and as

the only Grand Prix Drivers’ Association director on-site) when the drivers considered boycotting the race after the FP1 missile attack.

So, with all that in mind, how does Russell’s long-time benefactor and new full-time employer rate his races so far in 2022? “Well, it’s not just on where he finishes,” says Mercedes’ director of trackside engineering Andrew Shovlin. “It is looking at how he is performing through the sessions. How well George and Lewis are working together – which is going really well. They are both very determined to get on top of this car and try and bring more performance to the future races.

“And he has really settled in very well with the team. We had high expectations for George, he is delivering on those expectations. So, we are all happy.”

Russell is already performing strongly at Mercedes



ETHERINGTON

The reason why the two silver cars started the Jeddah race so far apart was because a drive to increase front-end response on Hamilton's W13 worked well in FP3 there, so the team "went a bit bolder" on this for qualifying although with "not a huge set of changes", all per Wolff, but it ultimately robbed him of rear grip at a track where confidence is everything.

"We were experimenting with set-ups to find out where the sweet spot of the car is," Wolff explained. "The outcome was that basically they had no rear end in the car [on Hamilton's side of the garage]. And that explains that big deficit."

Porpoising isn't the only problem that is vexing teams up and down the grid in 2022. With the total minimum car weight now set at 798kg – to compensate for the rear floor stays such as those that have been permanently added to the W13 since late in the Barcelona test – only one squad is thought to be at or close to that requirement. That is Alfa Romeo, with Ferrari understood to be the lightest of the frontrunners and so gaining time over Red Bull and even more over Mercedes as a result. Again, there isn't a simple fix to this problem – a large portion of which stems from several of the standard parts incorporated in the 2022 designs, such as the funky wheel covers, actually coming in heavier than intended.

Then there's Mercedes' engine, which is no longer the class of the turbo-hybrid field. Ferrari's 2022 engine gains after the underpowered pain of 2020 are clear to see with the stunning steps up the grid taken by its customer squads Haas and Alfa (which it must be said have also produced good chassis designs). Meanwhile, Red Bull continues to reap the benefit of Honda's pre-F1 exit development progress.

Although Ferrari is thought by many in the paddock to be the new best hybrid power package overall – its acceleration speed is stunning – at the same time Mercedes insists that "most" of its straight-line time loss "is coming from the size of our rear wing", according to Allison. "If you look at the cars coming down the straights one after the other and just look at the frontal area of the rear wings that each team has, you will see that we were running the biggest rear wing," he adds.

But perhaps the biggest hurdle Mercedes faces in addressing everything that is currently wrong with the W13 concerns a key off-track part of F1's new era. As well as currently having 2.5% less windtunnel and CFD analysis usage time to make things right compared to Red Bull and 5% less against Ferrari thanks to F1's modest aero-design performance balancing model based on last year's constructor's' championship order, there's the cost cap. At \$140million for this year, its restrictions mean Mercedes cannot simply throw additional finance resources at building a W13B that doesn't porpoise. Instead, it must first do the best with what it has – through understanding the "lot of experiments" Shovlin says it went through in Jeddah practice – and make sure it has a suitable set-up for this weekend's Melbourne event. This must ensure it can lock out the third row of the grid and have its two drivers equally confident in the package, all while undergoing even more trials to

help what's going on in its Brackley base.

This is using its windtunnel and CFD tools to simulate new developments around what Mercedes' engineers now know will happen once the W13 is back on unflexing track surfaces. At least Mercedes can reflect on its recent aero development prowess, where the bargeboard and floor updates it added to the W12 at Silverstone last year brought it fully into line with Red Bull's 2021 potential.

That was with a car design philosophy that was already over four years old – so it is reasonable to expect there to be a certain amount of low-hanging development fruit to exploit in such new and expansive regulations. But this will be the case for Red Bull and Ferrari too, so Mercedes is fighting against the wind with its upgrade plan and that also just won't be as packed as in previous years thanks to the cost cap's inevitable impact.

Red Bull and Ferrari refused to believe Mercedes was off the pace in testing purely because of its recent progress pedigree. In 2017 and

"WE INTEND TO PUT THESE PROBLEMS RIGHT, HOPEFULLY IN TWO OR THREE RACES"

2018 it reversed early-season losses to Ferrari to triumph with commanding title doubles, while its 2019 upgrade plan (and the Scuderia underperforming) meant it forged ahead once the first races rolled around. A year later, it used the season's delayed start to fix a considerable engine reliability problem and roared to its most recent championship double.

"I'm fully convinced they'll be back if they get the bouncing under control," reckons Red Bull advisor Helmut Marko. "Mercedes have been known not only for starting strongly, but mainly for finishing strong in the last few seasons," says Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr. "I strongly believe that they will get themselves back in the mix."

And the Silver Arrows team itself? Naturally, tantalisingly, it backs a fightback. "Of course, it isn't just competing for wins that we wish to do – it's competing for championships," concludes Allison. "That's the purpose of our team."

"It is a big job. We were something like 0.6s, maybe more, off the pace of the leaders in Bahrain [and 0.9s from pole in Jeddah] but we are carrying a lot of problems and a lot of problems that all have solutions and all of those solutions are within our compass to deliver."

"Yes, it is challenging but actually after winter testing, I'd feared worse and I think actually the performance improvement we've managed to deliver from winter testing to the first race, while perhaps not visible to the fans and perhaps not reassuring to the fans, is reassuring in-house, within the team, and what we have ahead of us. The way in which we are

approaching the problems and the way in which we will bring solutions also gives me some comfort that we will get back to a competitive car quite swiftly and that we will be able to pursue the objective we have of championships."

"It is an ambitious car. Some will argue that perhaps we have bitten off more than we can chew with it, but we are very good chewers in this team and we intend to put these problems right as quickly as possible, hopefully in the next two or three races. But in any case we will put them right and we will get our car back at the front of the grid competing as we all intend to, to allow us to pursue our dream of championship success."



NICO HULKENBERG

F1'S LATEST SUPERSUB

Nico Hulkenberg seems to be making a habit of returning to Formula 1, but he's happy to let circumstances lead him

ADAM COOPER

On the Thursday morning of the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix weekend, Nico Hulkenberg was sitting at home in Monaco when his mobile phone buzzed into life. It was new Aston Martin team boss Mike Krack with a simple message — Sebastian Vettel has COVID-19 and we need you here, right now.

It was the start of a hectic 11-day adventure for Hulkenberg, who would add two more GP starts as a reserve driver to the two he logged in 2020, further extending an F1 career that began with Williams back in 2010.

The usual procedure for Hulkenberg is that for flyaway races he is on site, and in Europe he can wait at home and jump on a plane if needed. The Aston Martin race team thought he was scheduled to be in Bahrain, but another department had inadvertently cancelled his trip. He thus had three hours to pack and say his goodbyes to wife Egle and nine-month-old daughter Noemi Sky, before flying from Nice to Amsterdam and then on to Bahrain, arriving after midnight. He had some homework to do on the trip.

"The team gave me a whole presentation from testing," he explains. "About the driver comparisons, some data to look at, the strategy preview, the team's expectation basically about the weekend and the tyres. So on the flight over I had a good read through. However, there's only so much you can do in theory. Ultimately you have to get in the car and you have to feel it, and learn it, to progress."

The priority on Friday was to get him comfortable in the AMR22. He'd done a winter seat fitting in a chassis mock-up, but some work was required to hone his final seat. Then it was in at the deep end in FP1.

"My strategy was to focus on the basics," says the 34-year-old. "I wasn't spending time around set-up, or control switches, or optimising the diff so much, it was just about getting the basics right, getting the feel with the car, my inputs, the braking, all that stuff. It's an overload of information and generally of work. So it was, 'Let's filter only the important stuff for me right now.'"

He finished FP2 just shy of team-mate Lance Stroll, who had made a mistake on his quick lap. It was a solid first day: "Obviously overnight you subconsciously just process everything and the feeling grows, and you come back with a much better starting point."

He qualified 17th, ahead of not only Stroll but also McLaren's Daniel Ricciardo. And then it was into the race itself. "The race is always the most difficult part of the weekend," he admits. "Especially given that I hadn't raced for two years, I hadn't spent much time with this car at high fuel. Sunday was much, much more difficult, because the fuel is coming down, the balance is changing, you're racing cars, so many things happening, so many moving parts. It was always clear that Sunday would be the most difficult."

"I was trying to overtake [Mick] Schumacher and outbraked myself, I ran wide in the dirt, and I lost the rhythm a bit. Soon after that the lapping events happened, so it was very quickly into a downward spiral. I think the pace once I was on my own was actually pretty good. But circumstances went against me quite early."

Having finished 17th, Hulkenberg flew to London on Sunday night and, after a day to catch his breath, he was in the Aston simulator on



Hulkenberg found racing the trickiest part of return

MAUGER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

F1 STATS

STARTS 181
POLE POSITIONS 1
BEST FINISH 4TH
FASTEST LAPS 2
POINTS 521

Tuesday learning Jeddah. He then waited for news on Vettel, and was eventually told that he'd be racing once more.

He flew on Wednesday evening via Dubai, arriving in Jeddah on Thursday morning. This time he could take part in engineering meetings and do an evening track walk. However, he soon found that the sim hadn't provided adequate preparation.

"I had that weekend in the bag in Bahrain, but then coming to this intense and crazy track as a sub, it was pretty unforgiving and tough," he says. "Despite having simulator prep, it was actually a big challenge. On Friday I didn't feel so confident and comfortable in the car, and even Saturday I was not where I would like to be."

From 17th on the grid Hulkenberg started on the hard tyre, which made life tricky in the early laps. By staying out under the safety car he jumped up the order, albeit knowing that others had taken free stops. "The race was actually the best feeling I had all weekend," says the German, who finished 12th. "I think it was clean, it was faultless. Unfortunately the safety car went against my strategy, so that really compromised me."

I had a lot of stoppers with fresh tyres behind, and I couldn't hold them, I didn't even want to hold them. I had to manage my tyres, because I was going long. But the car was more enjoyable than in Bahrain."

The whole experience flew by: "Very eventful, intense days. A lot of travelling, so much coming at you. I need a few weeks to process everything, and to digest it all. But I think in a few months when I look back at this time, it's good memories, good times."

"And being back in the competition, in the heat of a fight, feeling the rush and the adrenaline of quali, of lap one, it's been fun and cool."

So what's next? He sampled and rejected IndyCar with a McLaren test last year, and currently he has no other racing programme lined up. "The future is here," he says. "I will stay as reserve driver for Aston, and I'm doing my stuff for ServusTV. And then beyond that, I don't have the answer. I don't know myself. But that's OK. I'm in a totally good headspace. And I'm totally fine with that, it's not a pressing issue."

"I need to find something in racing that I really want to do. That hasn't come around yet. And it might do in the next months. But I'm totally relaxed and open about it. I had many, many good years of racing. If there's more to come, great. But it's not like my life stops without it." ❧



FACT

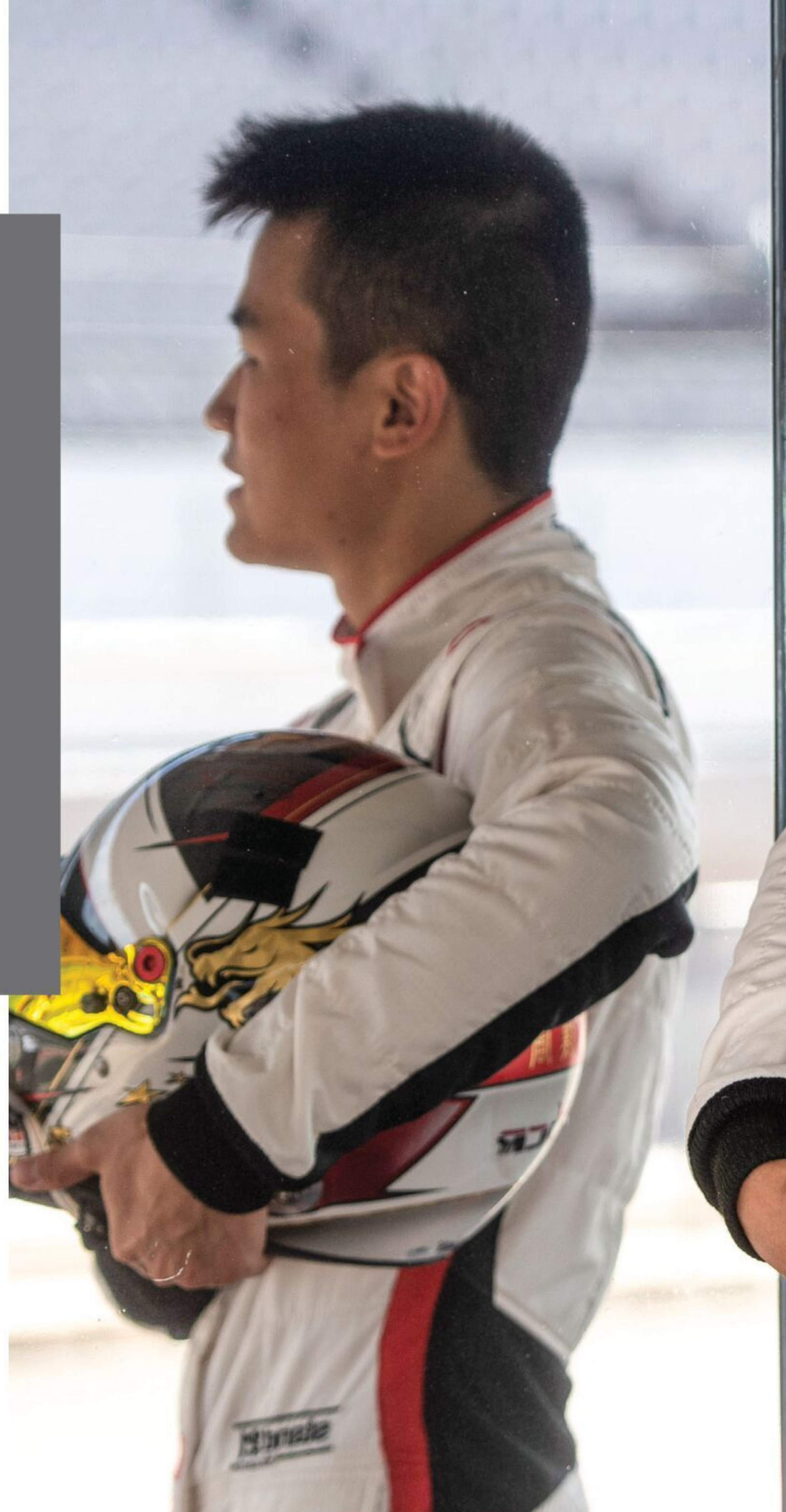
Hulkenberg holds the record for most F1 starts with a podium finish

The first Chinese driver to win Le Mans?

He *should* have won the LMP2 class in the 24 Hours last year and he *could* have a top drive next year. Meet Yifei Ye

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES



“The perfect season minus one lap.” That’s how Yifei Ye sums up his maiden year of sportscar racing in 2021. The Chinese driver’s switch from single-seaters to endurance racing in the LMP2 ranks yielded a pair of titles, in the Asian and European Le Mans Series, but he missed out on victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours courtesy of that missing lap. Yet it was his performance prior to his WRT ORECA rolling to a halt out of the lead with just eight or so miles of the race to run that explains the prize that edged his season towards perfection.

Just days after its completion, 21-year-old Ye was announced as a Porsche driver. Not a full-factory driver, it should be pointed out; rather he is contracted to Porsche Motorsport Asia Pacific. But the Chinese-based organisation has been very clear in an intent to do its utmost to give its new charge a shot at a seat in one of Porsche’s new LMDh prototypes that will race in both the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar Championship from next year. That explains why Ye’s primary programme in 2022 will not be at the wheel of one of the German manufacturer’s GT cars, but aboard an ORECA-Gibson 07 P2 in the ELMS again, this time with the Swiss Cool Racing squad.

Le Mans was central to Ye’s ascent from single-seater refugee to would-be factory driver at the very pinnacle of sportscar racing. He’d already made his mark in the P2 arena by the time he pitched up at the 24 Hours last August after winning the two-weekend, four-race Asian series in February with the G-Drive Racing squad and notching up victories in the opening two ELMS rounds with WRT. But what followed at the big one at Le Mans thrust him into the limelight.

Ye was the star rookie in P2 courtesy of a performance that stood comparison with that of any of his more experienced rivals in an ultra-competitive field. It didn’t really matter that he and team-mates Robert Kubica and Louis Deletraz lost victory on that fateful final lap when the engine died. The late drama only turned up the brightness



JULES BEAUMONT

on the light that shone on the Chinese driver’s speed and consistency over the previous 23 hours and 56 minutes.

“Le Mans, I think, was the most important moment of the year for me,” says Ye. “It could have been the icing on the cake, but what was important had already been shown before that. As a new guy at Le Mans that race was special. It definitely helped me move forward towards my goal of driving with a manufacturer in the Hypercar category.”

Ye's backer, Porsche Motorsport Asia Pacific, is clear in its intent to give him a shot at bagging a seat in one of the German manufacturer's new LMDh prototypes



“There’s so much other stuff to learn and master next to being able to do a quick lap”

Ye was right at the sharp end of the averages over the course of the race: he was in the top-three quickest P2 drivers on whatever sample you care to choose. Not bad for a sportscar rookie racing on the daunting 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe for the first time.

Talk to Ye about his maiden Le Mans, and he sounds like a seasoned pro with any number of campaigns in the sportscar blue riband under his belt. “It isn’t like a typical racing circuit,” says Ye,

whose performances last year also earned him a nomination for Rookie of the Year at the Autosport Awards. “You have to be very careful where you put the car, because there are places where if you go there’s a good chance you won’t come back. There are points on the track where there isn’t any gravel or runoff.

“There are so many factors to concentrate on. The tyres and the brakes cool down on the long straights. You have to learn how to manage the traffic, there’s so much other stuff to learn and master next to being able to do a quick lap.”

Ye admits to some trepidation after venturing out onto the circuit for the first time, but quickly came to enjoy the challenge. “I wasn’t 100% confident at the beginning but, after a couple of laps, I was really quite into it and enjoying what the car could do, especially in the high-speed corners,” he explains. “It’s fun to push in those places with the >>

downforce we have. I had a really special feeling at night. Sometimes when you are overtaking cars in high-speed corners, going around the outside of a GT, it feels a bit like a video game.”

Ye had made an immediate impression at the wheel of a P2 car in the Asian series. He had never so much as tested the G-Drive ORECA he shared with Ferdinand Habsburg and Rene Binder in the rearranged Asian series in Dubai and Abu Dhabi but was immediately on the pace in official testing ahead of the first of the pair of double-header weekends. He went quicker than either of his team-mates on his second flying lap.

Ye had decided to put his single-seater aspirations on hold after a successful campaign in the Euroformula Open Championship in 2020. He calls it a “regroup season” after a disappointing graduation from Formula Renault 2.0 to the FIA Formula 3 Championship with Hitech yielded little in the way of results the year before. He points to the quick-fire nature of the FIA F3 weekends and strict limits on testing as being “bad for driver development”.

“The move to Euroformula was what I needed; I needed more driving time in a high-downforce, high-grip car,” he explains. “A lack of experience hurt me in F3. I didn’t really have the time to get the car to my liking.”

Ye won the Euroformula title at a canter with the Motopark-run CryptoTower Racing squad, claiming victory in 11 of the 18 races, and scoring another four podiums to boot. A return to F3 was never on the cards; he was looking to Formula 2 after his championship success.

“F2 would have been the logical next step, but there wasn’t enough sponsorship or support to go with a top team,” says Ye. “I saw the upcoming golden age in endurance racing with multiple manufacturers and thought I should give it a try. We thought about the Asian series knowing that it would not be too late to change back to single-seaters.”

That never happened partly because the support Ye needed to graduate to F2 didn’t materialise and partly because he became a commodity in sportscar racing. He remained silver-graded under the FIA’s system of driver categorisation despite winning the title in Euroformula Open — the series is not specifically named in the ranking regulations. That smoothed his path into WRT’s ELMS line-up alongside Kubica and Deletraz as the mandatory silver.

Ye certainly wasn’t ignorant of sportscar racing heading into last year. He lived in Le Mans when he joined the FFSA Academy



Ye will share ORECA-Gibson 07 P2 in ELMS this year with Lapierre and Krutten



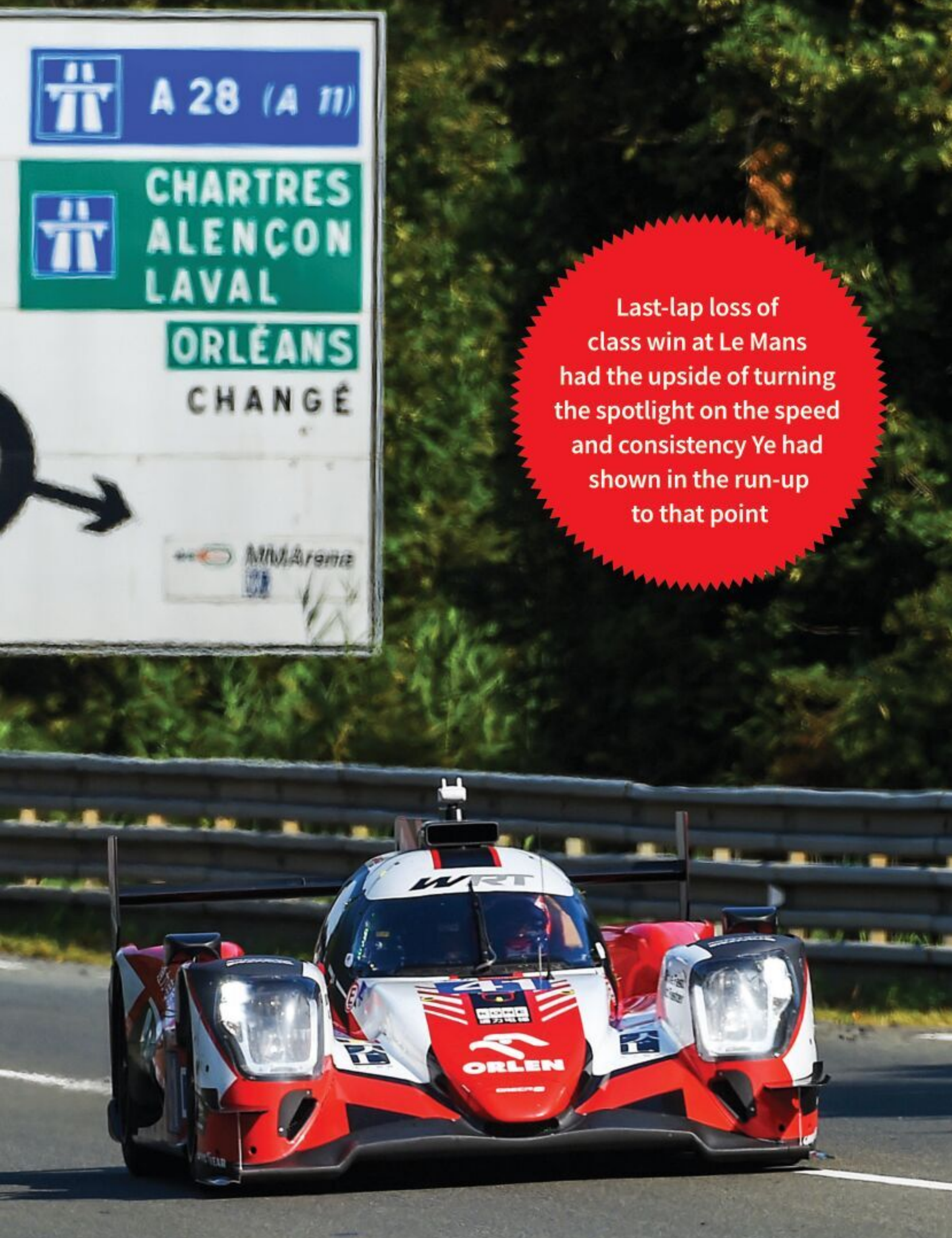
Deletraz, Ye and Kubica celebrate victory in 2021 Spa ELMS round

as a 14-year-old exchange student at the end of his karting career and stayed for five years through his move into single-seaters in the French Formula 4 Championship and through his graduation to Formula Renault 2.0 in 2017. He was also present in the paddock at the 24 Hours in 2016 when friend Neel Jani, a former sparring partner of Ye’s manager Congfu ‘Franky’ Cheng from the A1GP World Cup of Motorsport, triumphed outright with Porsche.

Ye had his first taste of racing for his new employer in the Asian LMS in February. He turned out in a Porsche 911 GT3-R run by the Herberth Motorsport squad in a series that retained its 2021 format.



Eleven wins from 18 races for Ye on his way to 2020 Euroformula crown



Last-lap loss of class win at Le Mans had the upside of turning the spotlight on the speed and consistency Ye had shown in the run-up to that point

“When I started the final lap I thought, finally this is over. Then the car lost all power”

There might be the odd appearance at the wheel of GT machinery to come, but the main focus of his season will be the ELMS, starting later this month at Paul Ricard, now as a gold-ranked driver after his 2021 successes, alongside Cool boss Nicolas Lapierre and Niklas Krütten.

He seems unconcerned that there will be pressure on his shoulders with the carrot of a Porsche LMDh ride dangling in front of him. “With the job I did last year, there will be more people watching me with or without Porsche,” he says. “I’ve always put pressure on myself. My job this year is to keep developing myself, not just to drive better but also to improve things like the way I work with a team, and to keep the knife sharp if the opportunity with Porsche comes.”

There will also be an attempt to make amends for the victory that got away at Le Mans last year, with two-time IMSA champion Ricky Taylor coming into the line-up when Lapierre is on duty with Alpine. The reasons why the engine cut on Ye as he powered out of the Dunlop Chicane starting the final lap last year will probably never be fully understood. The assumption in the immediate aftermath of the event was that a leaking drinks bottle had caused the ECU to short circuit, but a report from supplier Cosworth proved inconclusive.

The overriding emotion Ye felt as the Gibson engine in his ORECA stopped was one of shock. “I wasn’t really annoyed and I didn’t break down,” he recalls. “I was, let’s say, speechless. After I took over the car with about 100 minutes left, I started to back off a bit, avoiding the kerbs and changing gear early. I had a lot of time to think about what I was going to do after winning.

“When I started the final lap I thought, finally this is over. Then out of the Dunlop Chicane suddenly, without warning, the car lost all power.”

That robbed Ye of a perfect maiden season of sportscar racing. But he did get to complete the missing, final lap of Le Mans – on the back of a flat-bed while still strapped in the car. ❧

What those in the know say about Yifei Ye



Thierry Tassin
WRT LMP2 sporting director

“I was surprised at his speed from the beginning compared with Robert and Louis. I thought, ‘Wow, he’s there already’. The big revelation came at Le Mans. Everything he did there was impressive. Yifei is clever and works hard. I think he has everything he needs to succeed at the highest level in endurance racing.”



Timo Rumpfkeil
Motopark Academy team principal

“The first time in the car he showed that he was a natural talent, exceptional on braking and in the fast corners, but he needed to learn what buttons to press when the car wasn’t to his liking. After we were done with him in Euroformula Open, he had the ability to extract the maximum out of the car and to use the physics of the car. I wasn’t surprised he did so well in LMP2.”



Nicolas Lapierre
Cool Racing team boss and driver

“Yifei is certainly very talented and what he did last year, especially at Le Mans, was amazing. He’s already fitted in well with the team and now there are just a few things we’ve got to work on, like qualifying because he wasn’t given the chance to do that last year.”



TARSO MARQUES

On the comeback trail... from F1 to NASCAR

*Tarso Marques had a forgettable spell in Formula 1,
but has the chance to show what he can do in NASCAR*

JAMES NEWBOLD

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

Jacques Villeneuve hit the headlines in February by qualifying for NASCAR's biggest race, the Daytona 500, aged 50. And he's not the only driver from the 1996 Formula 1 rookie crop to have set his sights on a successful crossover to the Cup Series this year, although the 1997 world champion's career bears little resemblance to that of Tarso Marques beyond the 24 times they shared a grand prix grid. True to his career to date, the Brazilian's NASCAR bow will be with an underdog outfit in Cup newcomer Team Stange, whose owners had originally targeted a move into IndyCar...

The story starts with a supercar that 46-year-old Marques, who ceased racing in the Brazilian Stock Car championship after the 2018 season to focus on his burgeoning custom car and motorcycle company, built with the aim of creating the ultimate trackday weapon. Capable of up to 1200 horsepower, according to Marques, the TMC M1 attracted interest from investors in the United States

and contact was made via occasional ARCA team entrant John Stange. They had first crossed paths at Long Beach in 2004, when Marques was racing in Champ Car for Dale Coyne, and Stange had brought Yoke TV sponsorship to the minnow squad.

Conversation soon turned to Stange's ambition of creating his own IndyCar team, having partnered in an Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports Indianapolis 500 entry that Oriol Servia drove to 22nd



MARQUES F1 STATS

STARTS 24
BEST QUALIFYING 14TH
BEST FINISH 9TH
POINTS 0



John Stange (left)
with Oriol Servia at
Indianapolis in 2019

in 2019, and Marques was sounded out about helping the outfit get up to speed with some test work. When he agreed, things then developed rapidly and Stange's investors pushed for Marques to commit to the project as its driver – despite his insistence that younger and better funded alternatives would be more suited to the project's ambitions.

Marques freely admits that he had previously “declined many opportunities” to continue racing, as it “was not my priority anymore”, but was finally persuaded for what at this point was still a planned IndyCar assault.

“We started to talk in November I think,” Marques recalls. “I said, ‘John, you can have thousands of drivers, 20 years old, new stars that can bring a lot of money for your team. I’m not racing.’ And he said, ‘No, we don’t want that, we want you’ and they kept pushing for two or three weeks. By the beginning of December, we were working on the contract.”

But, after pen had been put to paper, the team hit a wall on engine supply deals and the idea of racing in NASCAR formulated. The Chicago-based Ford squad – bucking the unwritten rule that NASCAR outfits are headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina >>

Under today's system, Marques
would have managed to score four
points in his truncated 2001 F1 season



Marques will tackle
eight races in the 2022
NASCAR Cup schedule



Marques won Estoril F3000 round from pole position in 1995



F1 debut came in 1996, with two outings for Minardi in Brazil and Argentina

— will enter eight races on the 2022 Cup schedule, beginning with Road America on 3 July. Afterwards, Marques will tackle the Indianapolis Road Course, Watkins Glen, Daytona, the Charlotte Roval, Las Vegas, Homestead and the Phoenix Championship Race. All were selected by Stange's main backer, blockchain company Dignity Gold.

Having raced single-seaters, touring cars and GTs — taking a best finish of fourth in three FIA GT outings in 2004 — Marques is enthused by the prospect of taking on the good 'ol boys in one of the few series he has yet to sample.

"I raced everything in my life, NASCAR is the only thing I didn't drive yet and I always wanted at least once just to see how it was," he says. "For the driver, the races are amazing because it's so competitive and that should be huge fun. I think it will be cool, I'm really looking forward to that."

But Marques is under no illusion that he faces a huge challenge, since what is effectively a start-up team as a non-charter entry will have to qualify for events. "We're going to have a hard season in front of us," he admits. "NASCAR is 10 times harder [than IndyCar], especially to qualify. The cars are so close, the teams are there for a lifetime already and most of the drivers too. That's why we're going to do only eight races this year, first of all because we have to build the cars and because we need time."

"We are not in shape as a team to be racing the normal programme of NASCAR because they run almost every weekend. We need to do a race and then we need two or three weeks to see what we did wrong, what we need to adjust to try and improve a little more for the next race and to be prepared for maybe a better season next year. But we have the knowledge that we have hard work in front of us."

Marques insists that he's not making his comeback in NASCAR to prove a point to anybody, and says he's "doing it for myself". "I don't really care for what people say, people that say bad things about me, it's guys that don't really know me or don't know the situation," he remarks. "It's not fair to judge a driver if you don't know the conditions that almost no one knows, just people inside the team know what's going on."

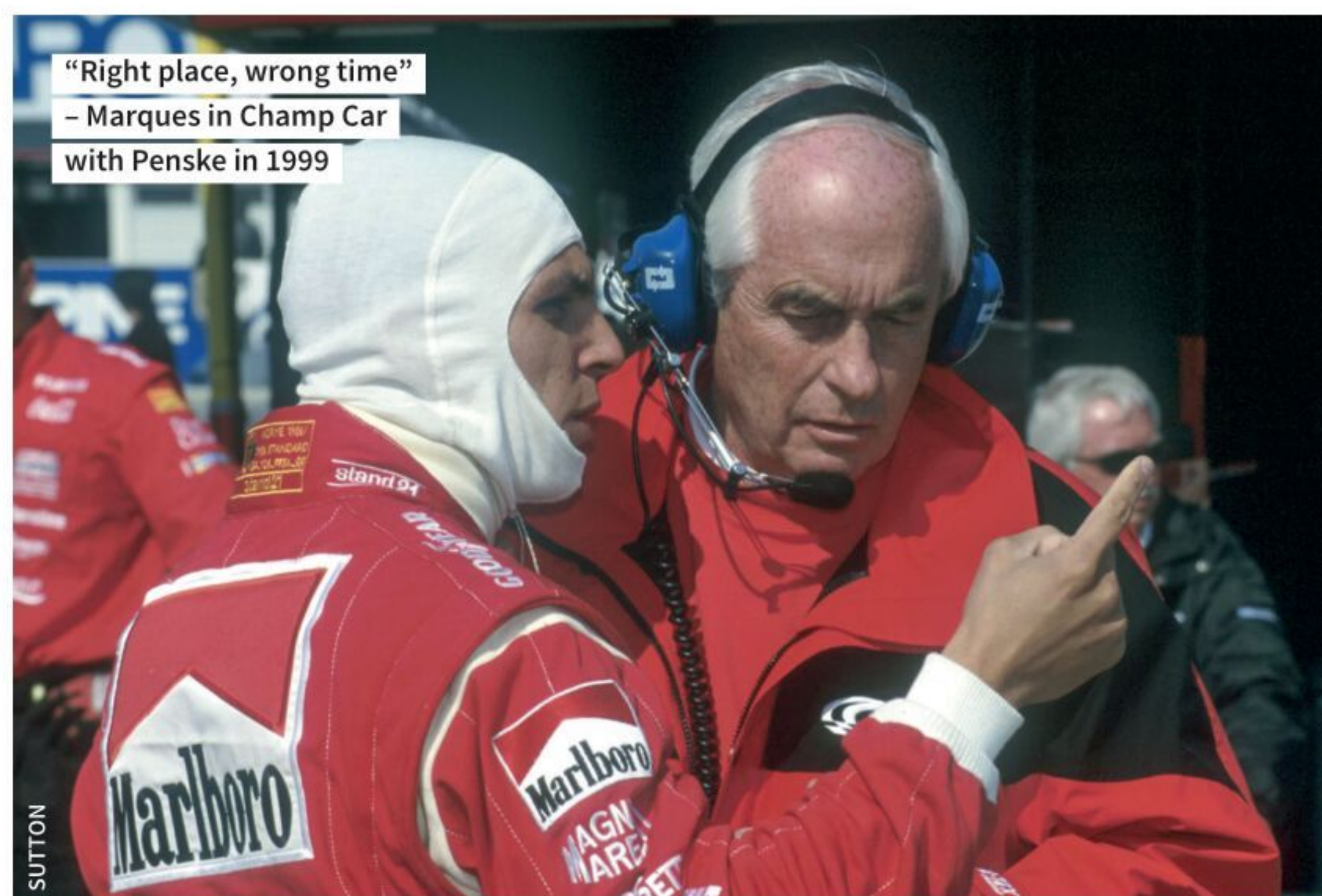
The occasion of Villeneuve's last grand prix podium at Hockenheim in 2001 — a third place for BAR in a race of attrition — provides a snapshot of Marques's challenging F1 stint that comprised three separate spells at Minardi in 1996, 1997 and 2001, none for a full season. A leaking refuelling valve on team-mate Fernando Alonso's car caused a fire prior to the start and the Spaniard was switched to the spare, only for Marques's car to suffer the same fate. He was given Alonso's bodged race car that used different pedal and seating configurations. Trying to cram himself into a car set up for Alonso's 5cm shorter frame was, Marques

"I think the experience I have of hard times is one of the strongest reasons they pushed to have me"

recalls, "a nightmare", although he was spared further punishment when the gearbox packed up on lap 26. It sums up a season spent driving a chassis that might be called a parts-bin special, only built up in the garage before its first race in Melbourne, although Marques did muster two ninth-place finishes that would be worth points under today's system.

"My car and Alonso's car were completely different," he says of the first PS01 chassis that was deliberately built on the conservative side of the weight scale to pass its crash test. "Heavier, different brand of brakes, less power, everything because they just did not have the money. With my car, I was sometimes three tenths, sometimes almost a second slower."

Throttle problems meant he failed to qualify within 107% of the pole time at Silverstone and was prevented from starting. Marques reckons the aged Cosworth engines, badged as Europeans in deference to owner Paul Stoddart's aviation business, were already 150 horsepower down on the top cars even when working properly: "Then [at Silverstone] I had only 75% when I go full throttle, so we had almost 300 horsepower less. How can I do like a 107% time of



"Right place, wrong time" — Marques in Champ Car with Penske in 1999



Torrid time in 1997,
with only four
finishes in nine GPs



Cramming himself into a car
set up for 2001 team-mate
Alonso was “a nightmare”

the pole position? People said, ‘The guy couldn’t even qualify’, which is ridiculous, but I couldn’t say anything.”

Marques’s career is one of promise unfulfilled. Aged 19, he dominated the 1995 Estoril Formula 3000 race from pole, and had previously taken pole at Pau – only to collide dramatically with DAMS team-mate Guillaume Gomez shortly after the start. He acquitted himself well in his two F1 starts for Minardi in Brazil and Argentina in 1996 but had to wait more than 14 months for his next chance when Jarno Trulli was signed by Prost to replace the injured Olivier Panis. Marques says he had originally been slated to partner Ukyo Katayama but refused to sign a management deal presented by Trulli’s minder and team co-owner Flavio Briatore. He was demoted to a test role and considers it a turning point in his career.

“If I had signed with Briatore, I’m pretty sure I would end up winning races and maybe a championship, because all the drivers he signed got the chance to drive for a big team,” Marques says.

However, the Hart-powered M197 wasn’t much to shout about, a litany of mechanical woes reflecting the team’s limited finances. The engine let go five laps into his return at Magny-Cours, the transmission failed on the grid at Hockenheim and brake problems were a confidence-sapping regular occurrence. The nadir came in Austria, where Marques was disqualified after qualifying due to running 3kg underweight, which the team put down to not compensating with ballast for weight lost by the driver since his last FIA weigh-in.

Left on the sidelines in 1998 as Minardi favoured the well-backed

Shinji Nakano and teenager Esteban Tuero, he engaged former McLaren bigwig Creighton Brown as a manager and was hired by Team Penske in 1999 to replace the injured Al Unser Jr on its single-car Indycar team. But it wasn’t the dominant force of today and was at the time experiencing its longest-ever winless streak. “I was in the right place at the wrong time,” he says.

John Travis’s “beautiful” PC27B was mated to a Mercedes engine that lacked the punch of Honda and Ford, and mounted on Goodyear tyres that were inferior to Firestone’s products. Part of a revolving cast of drivers for the team that year along with Alex Barron and Gonzalo Rodriguez, while the team also flitted between its bespoke chassis and a customer Lola, Marques completed four more races after two outings subbing for Unser but only managed a single top 10 finish at Rio.

“The whole package was wrong the year I did the races for Penske,” he says. “The following year they changed the chassis, engine and tyres and it was amazing, they won everything. The team was great, but just the wrong package at that time.”

As the lone Swift runner in 2000 with Dale Coyne Racing, Marques was always fighting an uphill battle. That his most significant impact on a race came at Michigan when, already four laps down, he unwittingly towed Juan Pablo Montoya past Michael Andretti on the line speaks volumes for the unpopular car’s competitive prospects. Later spells at Coyne in 2004 and 2005 were similarly fruitless, but Marques believes drawing on these hardships will help Team Stange in 2022 as it attempts to become established in the Cup Series.

While realistic, he doesn’t lack belief and is committed to the ambitious team for the long haul. It has announced a scheme to blood international drivers in NASCAR development series, with FIA F3 race winner Matteo Nannini its first confirmed driver for a partial programme in ARCA, and is fielding F3000 race winner Ricardo Sperafico in the Brazil-based GT Sprint Race championship (run by Marques’s brother Thiago) as Dignity Gold seeks to grow its South American presence. His role, then, amounts to much more than merely a driver.

“I think probably this experience that I have of those hard times is one of the strongest reasons that they pushed so hard to have me,” Marques says. “When I got to Formula 1, I didn’t have a chance to drive a competitive car and neither in Indycar. All the teams that I went to weren’t in a good condition at the time, so we were not competitive. I’m used to that, unfortunately!”

“I will stick with Team Stange no matter what the condition, even if I have the offer to go to the best team. If we suffer to qualify, I will keep with them, working hard because I was retired and they trusted me to help me to develop the team. We have a long-term deal and my intention is to stay and work with them.” ❦



Uphill struggle as sole
Swift runner (left) with
Dale Coyne Racing in 2000

A posse of Porsche 956s and 962s, icons of the Group C era, will be demonstrated on track



PREVIEW

10 things to watch at Goodwood's Members' Meeting

The eighth MM of the West Sussex motor circuit's modern era brings a blend of new races and old favourites to Chichester's cathedral of speed

MARCUS PYE

PHOTOGRAPHY HAWKINS AND



motorsport
IMAGES



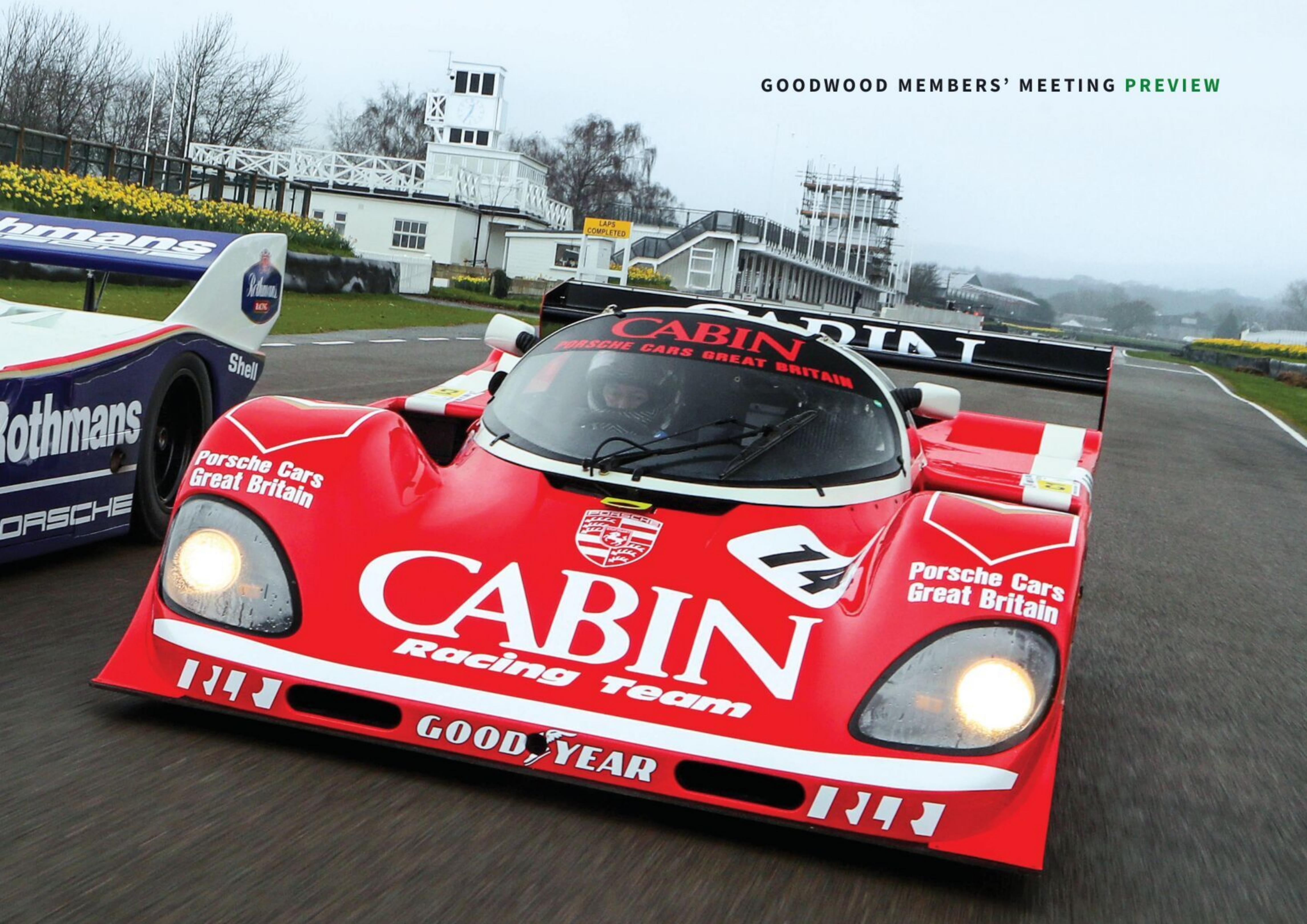
1 Lotus genius across the board

Colin Chapman's Lotus marque was the most successful across Goodwood's 71 contemporary era Members' Meetings, from 1949-66. ACBC's feisty lightweights carried drivers to 129 victories. Closest rival MG scored 45, 17 before Chapman opened his account in a MkVI in July 1953.

For Lotus fanatics, this year's MM features six streamlined Elevens plus a 17 and two rear-engined 19s in the Robert Brooks Trophy race alone. Scottish pro Andrew Kirkaldy holds the trump card in Sandy Watson's Eleven, the agility of which coupled with his apex speeds should be sufficient to outrun the opposition. Danish veteran Otto Reedtz-Thott and countryman Jakob Holstein exercise the two-litre Climax FPF-powered 19s.

Elan 26Rs will be outgunned, but not outhandled, in the Graham Hill Trophy, although Nicks Fennell and Padmore (the latter sharing Robin Ellis's Shapecraft coupe) are out to claim the scalps of larger-engined cars.

Japan's Katsu Kubota drives his Ford V8-engined Type 30 in the Surtees Trophy prototype showpiece. Andrew Thorpe, Werner Pircher and rapid Italian Enrico Spaggiari uphold Lotus honour in the 1000cc F3 set, named for period MM 7 to 41 winner Derek Bell.



2 Lola Mark 1 quintet reunited

Five Lola Mk1s will contest the sportscar race named for Robert Brooks, who died last year. The auctioneer extraordinaire won the Sussex Trophy race at the first Revival Meeting (1998) in a Lotus 15 with its rear wheelarch flapping.

Four of their histories are intertwined with the venue. Designer Eric Broadley rolled the prototype (BY-1, built in Byfleet) at Madgwick, third time out, at the 31st MM. Christopher 'Dickie' Le Strange Metcalfe won the first era finale at the 71st MM on 2 July 1966 in Bromley-built BR-32, previously raced by Tom Hart and Jack Paterson.

Susan Ahlers has long owned BY-1, entered for husband Keith's regular co-driver James 'Billy' Bellinger. Fellow preparer Nick Finburgh saddles the Adams family's car, in Metcalfe's black livery.

The first Lola raced in the USA, in agent Allan Ross's hands, BY-2 was reacquired by Broadley in 1985. Bought from him by period Goodwood racer Robs Lamplough, 'Lulu' is entrusted to the versatile Ben Mitchell.

Sir John Chisholm's BR-21 contested the 1962 Whitsun Trophy and won that day's handicap in first owner Lord Angus Clydesdale's hands. Crashed in practice for the 1963 Singapore GP, it was bought by the Duke of Richmond and Gordon (then Lord March) in the 1990s.



3 Works Sprite in Weslake Cup

The appearance of Julian Ellison's newly acquired works (Donald Healey Motor Company) Austin-Healey Sprite, in which Timo Makinen/Paul Hawkins finished 18th at the Sebring 12 Hours in 1966 (pictured), is an exciting focus for the Weslake Cup race. Paddy Hopkirk/Andrew Hedges subsequently raced it at Le Mans but retired.

The BMC A-Series engine is synonymous with motorsport success, and tuning guru Harry Weslake's work in developing its cylinder heads for competition made the accessible unit an obvious choice to power models from a host of British GT car manufacturers in a buoyant marketplace.

Much international success fell largely to Sprite derivatives from the corporation, notably the hallowed Sebring Sprites raced by Stirling Moss, Clive Baker, Roger Enever and others. It's no surprise that they will comprise a third of the grid. Also in the line-up are Ashley, Lenham and Speedwell Sprites, plus a Williams & Pritchard bodied MG Midget.

The pace of the Turner Mk1s should not be underestimated, particularly since Le Mans veteran Darren Turner is piloting one. Two Ogle GTs, a Deep Sanderson and a Rochdale Olympic with outright lap record holder Nick Padmore up are in the mix.



4 Frazer Nashes honour AFP Fane

Archie Frazer Nash's eponymous creations of the 1920s and 1930s guarantee spectacular action wherever they compete and the opportunity to celebrate the exploits of Alfred Fane Peers Agabeg who – usually as AFP Fane – successfully showcased the marque in racing and hillclimbing.

Heading an extraordinary field of chain-driven Nashes at Goodwood is the raucous supercharged Nurburg that Fane raced at the Nurburgring in 1932. Restored by the great Dick Smith from a kit of parts in 1960, it is raced by son Andrew, who also competes in rear-engined Coopers.

Top drivers include Patrick Blakeney-Edwards

and double FIA Thoroughbred GP champion Martin Stretton in 1935 Monopostos, and American Fred Wakeman, Eddie Williams and young Tom Waterfield in earlier Super Sports. The extrovert Dougal Cawley (Ford-powered Piglet) and Julian Grimwade's gruff Alvis-engined Norris Special will be up there too.

AFN Ltd, which imported BMWs to Great Britain from the 1930s, went on to achieve remarkable success at Le Mans post-war with its own cycle-winged sportscars powered by Bristol's evolution of the straight-six BMW engine – and imported Porsches from 1954.

5 Collins' 1950s sportscar heaven

Peter Collins cemented his place in Goodwood history by winning, with Pat Griffith and against the odds, the inaugural Nine Hour race in August 1952 in an Aston Martin DB3. The reliable Astons also beat Jaguar's hares in 1953 and 1955 for a clean sweep of the three gruelling enduros (it wasn't run in 1954) and the 1958 and 1959 RAC Tourist Trophy races.

Jaguars are out to turn the tide in the Collins 1950s sportscar race. Gary Pearson leads five D-types and three C-types into battle against the Maserati 300Ss of Dutchman David Hart and German brothers Josef-Otto and Stephan

Rettenmaier, plus Ferrari 250TR/290MM-mounted American Mike Malone.

Darren Turner and Martin Hunt are out in wieldy HWM-Jaguars, while Katarina Kyvalova is back with her ex-Bertie Bradnack Cooper-Jaguar T33 and James Thorpe brings his Lister 'flat-iron', also XK powered.

Christopher Mann's glorious Alfa Romeo 3000PR 'Disco Volante' and Bill Shepherd's Ford Thunderbird 'Battlebird' represent opposite ends of the aerodynamic spectrum, in a field that includes Alain Ruede's Cunningham C4R and Nick Jarvis's cycle-winged Allard-Cadillac J2X.



TIMETABLE (Note: no Race 13 as usual, for reasons of superstition)

SATURDAY 9 APRIL

0730	Gates open
0900	Gordon Murray T.33 reveal
1000	Official practice
1310	Formula 1 demo
1405	Official practice
1530	Race 1: Hailwood & Sheene Trophies for motorcycles up to 1983
1605	Race 2: Gerry Marshall Trophy for Group 1 saloons 1970-82
1705	Official practice
1730	Drift demo
1800	Official practice
1835	Race 3: Robert Brooks Trophy for club sportscars
1945	Porsche 956 & 962 demo

SUNDAY 10 APRIL

0730	Gates open
0845	Official practice
0925	Race 4: Weslake Cup for cars powered by A-Series engine
1005	Race 5: Hailwood & Sheene Trophies for motorcycles up to 1983
1045	Race 6: Sopwith Cup for 1950s saloons
1125	Race 7: Derek Bell Cup for one-litre F3
1200	Porsche 956 & 962 demo
1235	Race 8: Graham Hill Trophy for GT cars 1960-64
1415	Formula 1 demo
1510	Race 9: Surtees Trophy for 1960s sports-racers
1555	Race 10: AFP Fane Trophy celebrating Frazer Nash
1630	Drift demo
1705	Race 11: Varzi Trophy for pre-Second World War racers
1750	Race 12: Peter Collins Trophy in the spirit of Goodwood 9 Hour races
1830	Race 14: Gerry Marshall Trophy Sprint for Group 1 saloons 1970-82
1900	Prizegiving in Great Hall



6 Exotica gunning for GT glory

Graham Hill's victories in Goodwood's last two world sportscar championship RAC Tourist Trophy races in 1963 and 1964, driving Colonel Ronnie Hoare's Maranello Concessionaires' Ferrari 250 GTO and 330P respectively, are remembered in the double-driver pre-1966 GT showpiece.

The Netherlands is very strongly represented, by two prancing horses and a Bizzarrini. Marino Franchitti partners Nicky Pastorelli in Piet Roelofs' 250 GTO/64, while Yelmer Buurman joins Olav Glasius in his shapely 250 LM. The quickest combo may, however, be David and Olivier Hart in their mighty Chevrolet-powered 'Bizza' 5300GT. Two of the three svelte Porsche 904 Carrera GTs are crewed by Le Mans 24 Hours winners. Richard Attwood shares with Olivier Blaupain and Emanuele Pirro with David Clark, but Oliver Bryant/Andrew Smith may win the marque battle also involving Franck Trouillard (906).

The Ford V8-powered AC Cobras and TVR Griffith 400 (Guy Smith/Mike Whitaker) specs have been reined-in this year, which may favour the quickest Jaguar E-types. Wolfgang Friedrichs has Simon Hadfield finishing in his Aston Martin DP214 as usual. Anthony Reid saddles a thuggish Cheetah-Chevrolet.



7 Europeans chase Bell Cup F3 prize

Single-seaters made their Members' Meeting debut on 27 September 1958, when Tommy Bridger (Cooper-Norton MkIX) won the 500cc F3 race. Three weeks later he made his only world championship appearance in the season-closing Moroccan GP, driving British Racing Partnership's Cooper T45, but was eliminated in a fiery multi-car crash.

Formula Junior joined the MM roster in 1960 – the fabled race won by Jim Clark (Lotus-Ford 18) from poleman John Surtees (Tyrrell Cooper-BMC T52) – then 1000cc F3 in 1964. Local star Derek Bell's F3 wins in 1964 and 1965, in Lotus 31 and 4, earn him the race title as the 'screamers' return.

Previous victors Andrew Hibberd (Brabham BT18) and American veteran James King (Chevron B17) head the entry. Historic F3 champion Jeremy Timms (ex-Reine Wisell Chevron B15) has proven pace, as does FF1600 hotshoe Horatio Fitz-Simon who drives Mike O'Brien's B15, dormant for many years.

Delightfully, this pack is enhanced by continental European racers Leif Bosson (Brabham BT28), Francois Derossi (Chevron B17), Thierry Gallo (Tecno), Werner Pircher (Lotus 31), Mauro Poponcini (Cooper T76) Enrico Spaggiari (ex-John Miles Lotus 41X) and Christoph Widmer (Brabham BT18A).

8 Gerry Marshall Trophy

Always a modern Members' Meeting highlight, the Gerry Marshall Trophy celebrates the greatest British showman of his era and the Group 1 Touring Cars he loved. Once seen never forgotten is how fans recall the big man wagging the tail of a Ford Capri 3.0S or Triumph Dolomite Sprint.

As ever, the contest should be closely fought between the quickest Capris and swashbuckling V8s. Triple British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden, Darren Turner, Alex Brundle and Alex Buncombe join past masters Emanuele Pirro and Stuart Graham among the Chevrolet Camaro posse.

Andy Priaulx and Jason Plato fly the Blue Oval flag sharing Ford Mustang Boss 302s. Goodwood rookie Erik Comas represents Rover – in French compatriot Rene Metge's Marlboro/Air Inter Supertourisme SD1 – alongside David Brabham and Marino Franchitti.

Bentley's Le Mans winner Guy Smith saddles Mike Whitaker's Autocar Capri, but will have to fly to beat the similarly mounted Jake Hill, Rob Huff, Stig Blomqvist and Tiff Needell in Saturday's 'pro-am' enduro. Nic Minassian/Nick Padmore will surprise in the lone BMW 530i, and there are giant-killing Mini 1275 GTs and a VW Scirocco if the going is slippery.



9 Sopwith's racing endeavour remembered

Tommy Sopwith (1932-2019), for whom the 1950s saloon car race is named, started competing at Goodwood in 1953, driving a Jaguar XK120, then progressed to Cooper sportscars. On 18 June 1955, he won three of the 18th Members' Meeting's eight races, two in a Cooper T39 'Bobtail', the other in his Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire.

Having won all but one round of the inaugural British Saloon Car Championship of 1958 in a 3.4-litre Jaguar, Sopwith narrowly lost out to class winner Jack Sears in a shootout to decide the title's destiny at Brands Hatch in Riley One-Point-Fives.

Old Stoic Sopwith – son of aviator and America's Cup yacht racer Sir Tom – was a successful Brighton car dealer whose Equipe Endeavour was among Britain's top private teams. Driving its Jaguar E-type, Graham Hill famously won on the model's competition debut at Oulton Park in 1961. The team bowed out victoriously at the end of 1962.

The field for Sunday's race appropriately features three Jaguar MkVIIIs and spans Renault 4CV to Lincoln Cosmopolitan via MG YB and Jowett Javelin. Can anybody catch Jason Kennedy's Lancia Aurelia B20GT?

10 Formula 1 and Porsche 956/962 demos

The shrill note of V10 engines, particularly the Mercedes-Benz unit in a McLaren MP4-15 raced by Mika Hakkinen in 2000, will transport onlookers back to Formula 1's 1990s and early 2000s era as grand prix cars from 14 marques take to the 2.4-mile circuit on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

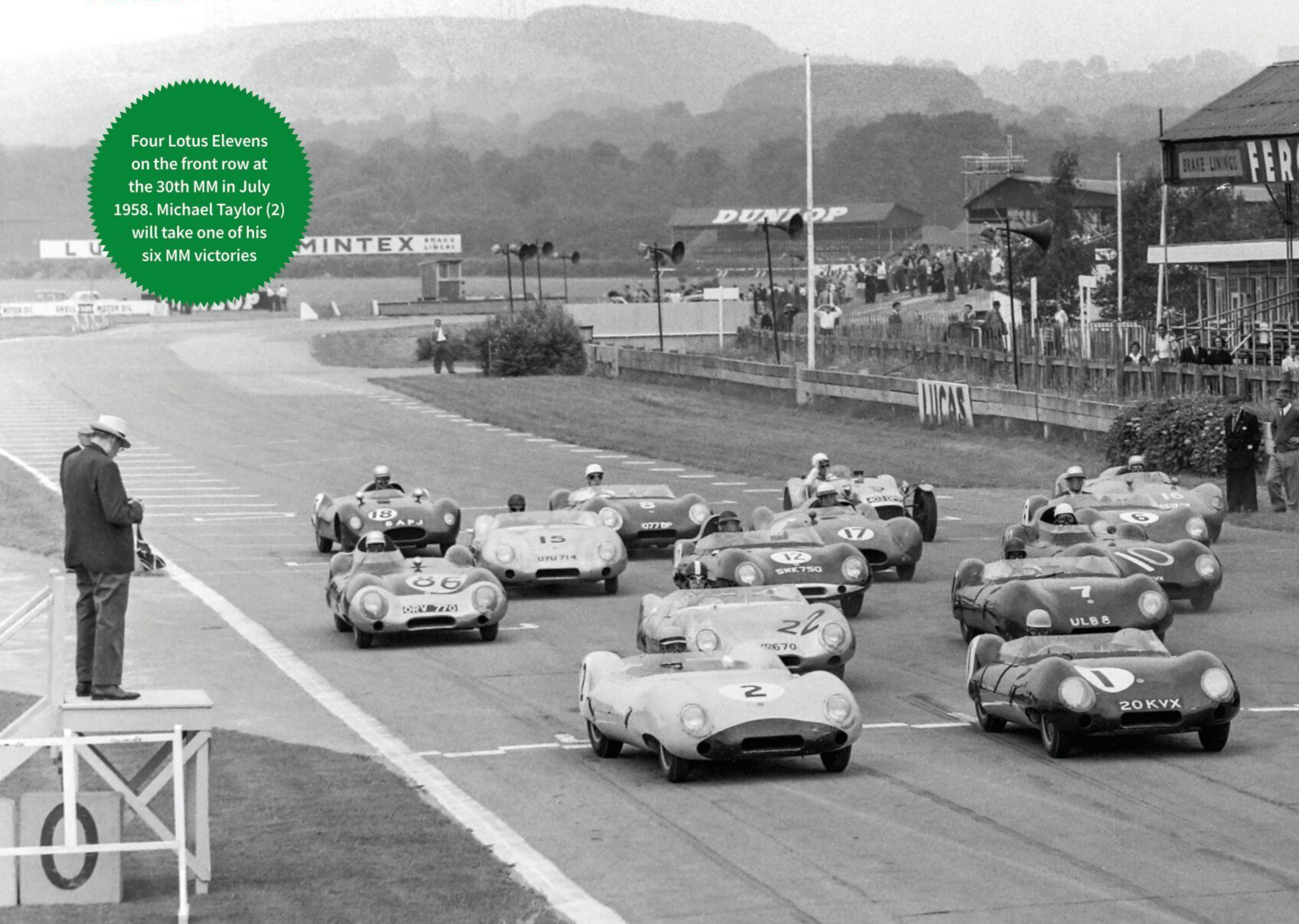
Splitting them into two groups will give drivers the space to sizzle down the straights of what was a popular F1 testing venue in the 1970s and 1980s Cosworth DFV era, after Goodwood's 19 years as arguably the world's most hospitable contemporary racing circuit

were over. The provisional 'grid' harbours Ferrari F399, Brabham BT60B, Leyton House CG901 and earlier McLarens.

Sportscar racing's Group C epoch of the 1980s was all about Porsche for many enthusiasts. They will relish seeing and hearing towards 20 of the flame-belching turbocars charging round the track. Five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell (who achieved golds in 1982, 1986 and 1987 with Rothmans Porsches) and Tiff Needell (third for the Japanese Alpha Racing Team in 1990 with Anthony Reid and David Sears) are among the drivers.



Four Lotus Elevens on the front row at the 30th MM in July 1958. Michael Taylor (2) will take one of his six MM victories



PREVIEW

Tripping the Light Fantastic: how Lotus blossomed at Goodwood

The future Formula 1 pacesetter was the most successful constructor at period Members' Meetings as Colin Chapman's firm gained momentum

MARCUS PYE

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

Lotus's rapid rise from humble roots in a garage behind a North London pub in 1952 was down to the charisma of founder Colin Chapman BSc (Eng), the determination and resourcefulness of cohorts and disciples in realising his clever designs, and marketing. The early production cars were race-proven and attractively priced, thus sporting motorists made a bee-line for Hornsey, cheque books at the ready, impatient to join the throng.

More than 100 Mark 6s, with cycle front mudguards and shrouded rear wheels, left the works over three years, but their super-sleek successor, the Eleven, was the game-changer. From 1956-58 the

Lotus Engineering Company made around 270 examples – priced from under £1100 for the Club model – keeping employees, volunteers and a local supply chain of skilled chassis fabricators and sub-contractors working flat-out. The cash flow generated underpinned the business's expansion and Chapman's ambitions, which took Team Lotus grand prix racing at Monaco with Type 12s in 1958.

Chapman's little equipe grafted until the 1961 season-closer at Sebring for its first world championship Formula 1 win, recorded by Scot Innes Ireland in a 1500cc 21. The inimitable Stirling Moss – a 500cc race winner on Goodwood's opening day back in 1948, and unquestionably the circuit's greatest driver, as four successive



RAC Tourist Trophy wins attest — had already left Lotus's hallmark at Monaco, driving 2500cc and 1500cc Coventry-Climax FPF-engined 18s in privateer Rob Walker's blue warpaint in 1960 and 1961 respectively.

But the Elevens, not limited-production single-seaters, were Lotus's bread and butter. Available in three configurations, with similar tubular steel chassis and swing-axle front suspension, the majority were powered by small, reliable, light-alloy Climax engines. Basic club-specification cars featured live-axles and drum brakes, and starred in domestic races. More expensive versions with de Dion rear ends and disc brakes scored famous class wins in the Le Mans >>

GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING **PREVIEW**



LOTUS WINNERS AT PERIOD MEMBERS' MEETINGS

WINS	DRIVER	MODEL(S)
6	Michael Taylor	Eleven
5	Innes Ireland	Eleven
	Chris Williams	23, Lotus Brabham-BMW
4	Colin Chapman	Mk6 Ford, Mk9 Climax
	Jon Derisley	7 Ford
	Mike Beckwith	23
3	Keith Greene	Eleven
	Derek Howard	Eleven
	Chris Andrews	18
	Dizzy Addicott	Eleven, 15 Buick
	Charles Hodgson	Eleven
	Rodney Banting	20, 31
	Derek Bell	7, 31, 41
2	John Coombs	Mk8 Connaught
	Peter Lumsden	Eleven, Elite
	Alan Stacey	Eleven
	Tony Page	Eleven
	Alan Rees	Eleven
	Bill de Selincourt	Eleven
	Jack Westcott	Eleven
	Ken Lyon	Eleven, 20
	David Porter	7 Ford
	Brian Berrow-Johnson	20
	Rodney Bloor	23B
	Mike Johnson	Elite
	Keith Burnand	Elan
	Mike Crabtree	7 Ford, Elan

1 WIN Peter Gammon (Mk6 MG); David Piper (Mk6 MG); Dick Steed (Eleven); Roy Bloxam (Mk8 MG); Jean Bloxam (Mk8 MG); MJ Clay (Mk6 Climax); Peter Ashdown (Mk9 Climax); Bill Frost (Eleven); Len Gibbs (Eleven); Claude Rye (Eleven); John Friedman (Eleven); David Shale (Eleven); Dick Prior (Eleven); Peter Riley (Eleven); Tony Maggs (Eleven); Peter Arundell (Eleven); James van Sickle (Eleven); Peter Boshier-Jones (Eleven); Jim Clark (18); Anthony Bullen (7); Trevor Taylor (18); Terry Wilson (18); Peter Dodd (Eleven); Peter Dickinson (Eleven); Mike Sumner (7 BMC); David Cole (7 Ford); Mike Adlington (7 Ford); Joe Hicks (Eleven); Roger Nathan (Elite); Mark Konig (Elite); Eddie Fletcher (20); Kevin Keegan (Elan); Bob Duggan (Elite); Mike Warner (23B); James Manfield (23); Peter Gethin (23); Richard Burton (31); Valerie Pirie (Elan); Roger Swanton (Cortina); David Preston (7 Ford); Chris Rose-Gold (7 Ford); Charles Sawyer-Hoare (23); Simon de Lautour (30); John Miles (Elan 26R); Tommy Weber (23 BRM); Eric Oliver (Elan); Clarke Sturdgess (7 Ford); Peter Pollard (Elan).

Note: All Elevens powered by Coventry-Climax engine.

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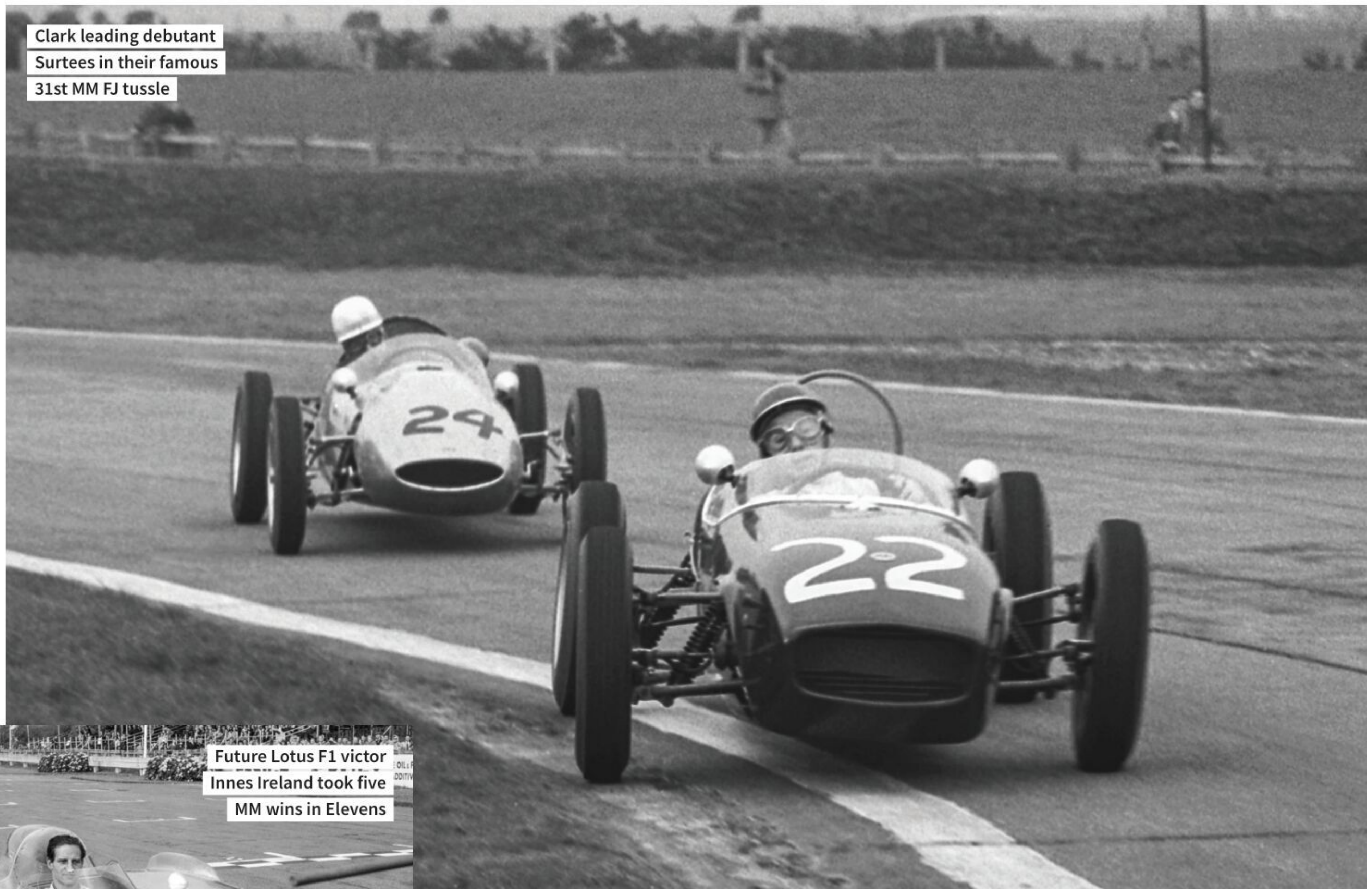
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Clark leading debutant
Surtees in their famous
31st MM FJ tussle



Future Lotus F1 victor
Innes Ireland took five
MM wins in Elevens

24 Hours and fourth overall in Florida's gruelling Sebring 12 Hours (in 1958). Some remained zippy road burners, occasionally used on track.

The British Automobile

Racing Club-organised Goodwood Members' Meetings, inaugurated in 1949, were rich hunting grounds for Lotus owners. Inspired by the swashbuckling moustachioed Chapman – who landed the marque's first wins in a Mk6 at the 13th and 14th MMs in the summer of 1953, then a double in the works Le Mans 9 in September 1955 – they scored 129 victories over the 71 second-tier race days run in the Chichester airfield circuit's contemporary heyday. Closest rival MG boasted 45 (with a four-year headstart) and third-placed Jaguar 35.

That 28 competitors notched a total of 48 victories between them in Elevens is a more remarkable statistic. While drivers of the calibre of Mike Taylor and Ireland topped the table (see panel) the majority who experienced the joy of taking the chequered flag were weekend warriors getting a buzz from lapping the high-speed track rapidly in their streamlined roller skates, motivated in the main by 1098cc Climax FWA engines. Derek Howard and Charles Hodgson (with a 1216cc FWE unit as used in the astonishingly lithe and aching pretty fibreglass monocoque Type 14 Elite coupes) bagged three apiece.

Among the other winners was Welshman Peter Boshier-Jones – the 750 Motor Club's Ford side-valve powered 1172 Formula champion at the wheel of one in 1958, the fourth Lotus driver to claim the crown in five seasons. Peter's moment of Goodwood glory came in 1960, while brother David was claiming the first of three straight RAC British Hillclimb titles in a Cooper-JAP V-twin incidentally. Elevens remained competitive until Hodgson closed their chapter in history at the 55th MM on 6 October 1962.

Multiple Lotus victories were common, but that was a day of days: those flying the ACBC flag took six of the eight races. As well as Hodgson, Rodney Banting (Formula Junior 20), David Porter (7), future Nomad sports-prototype financier Mark Konig and Mike Johnson (Elites) and Brian Berrow-Johnson (FJ 20) added to their CVs, Konig and Johnson's efforts both Members' Meeting firsts.

The era of the Type 26 Elan and Type 28 (Ford) Lotus (Consul) Cortina had dawned by this time. Kevin Keegan (namesake of the footballer yet to trigger the national radar) and UK-based Australian dentist Derek 'Doc' Merfield inscribed the models on the MM register in 1963, although Jack Sears and Jimmy Blumer had raced 'Lotus Cortinas' at the big Easter international.

Already in the spotlight were the rear-engined 23 sportscars, thanks to Mike Beckwith, who had stood out from a fleet of five 1100cc Ford-engined examples in June 1962. Beckwith and Boshier-Jones finished first and third at the 51st MM, split by Tony Hegbourne in one of the ageing but still effective Lola Mk1s first seen in 1958. Beckwith nailed four wins in short order, but the 1600cc twin-cam 23Bs arrived in 1963, carrying Mancunian Rodney Bloor and Surrey garagiste Chris Williams to victories.

Quintuple Le Mans winner Derek Bell, who won a very soggy race debut in a Lotus 7 at the 60th MM in 1964 (when future Formula 5000 champion and BRM F1 winner Peter Gethin also topped the virtual podium), returned over subsequent seasons with F3 Lotuses powered by 1000cc Ford MAE engines. The local ace topped the pack both times, his 70th MM triumph in a 41 the marque's penultimate victory.

To Peter Pollard (Elan) fell the honour of the final one on 2 July, 1966, after which the Duke of Richmond and Gordon closed the Goodwood gates to racing. His grandson, the present Duke, reopened the venue in spectacular style in 1998 with the Revival Meeting attendees still talk about. After a gap of almost 48 years, the 72nd Members' Meeting strengthened the Goodwood Road Racing Club's motorsport hand to three events in 2014. But it would take two more years until Richard Meaden (Cortina) opened the 'new age' tally and three before Andrew Hibberd (F1 18) hit gold in a pure Lotus. ❧

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WRT Audi once again untouchable at Imola

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
ENDURANCE CUP
IMOLA (ITA)
3 APRIL
ROUND 1/5**

It wasn't quite the domination of two years ago, but the result remained the same for top Audi team WRT as Kelvin van der Linde, Charles Weerts and Dries Vanthoor stormed to victory in the opening GT World Challenge Europe bout of the 2022 season in the Endurance Cup contest at Imola.

If the last time the GTWC circus visited the Italian circuit had showed anything, it was that Audi was the class of the field and it proved to be the case again last weekend. The #32 R8 LMS powered to pole position on Sunday morning with the best average time across the three-part session in an Audi 1-2-4. Weerts duly led away from the rolling start, with the Sainteloc Audi of Christopher Mies in tow.

Mies then snatched a rather fortuitous lead when Weerts uncharacteristically ran wide on the exit of Villeneuve, dipping two wheels into the gravel and narrowly avoiding a spin, shortly after the first of four full course yellow periods during the race. That delay had come when the Iron Dames Ferrari of Sarah Bovy was the unfortunate victim on the second lap as she was collected by the JP Motorsport McLaren of Patryk

Krupinski after spinning at Rivazza.

Rob Collard caused the second FCY after 38 minutes as his Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini got beached in the gravel trap at the same corner.

Sainteloc led until the first round of pitstops towards the end of the opening hour but was leapfrogged by the quicker WRT mechanics, Weerts having come in a lap earlier to hand over to van der Linde.

From then on, WRT was firmly in charge of the race, despite two more FCYs – one which caused a bizarre standstill of the entire field between Variante Alta and the exit of Aqua Minerali, which then resulted in Matthieu De Robiano's Bentley smashing into the back of Jordan Witt's Leipert Lambo.

Sainteloc's Lucas Legeret battled the Aston Martin of Nicki Thiim in the second stint before plummeting down the order as Legeret slid into the gravel at Tamburello. That dropped the car out of contention.

Vanthoor took over for the leading Audi for the final hour and kept the advantage to the flag, finishing 6.2 seconds clear of the Akkodis ASP Mercedes of Jules Gounon, Raffaele Marciello and Daniel Juncadella.

Team GetSpeed's lead Mercedes completed the podium – driven by Maro Engel, Luca Stolz and Steijn Schothorst – but only just. A sensational late-race scrap with the charging Car Collection Audi of Christopher Haase, Mattia Drudi and Luca



WEEKEND WINNERS

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
ENDURANCE CUP
IMOLA (ITA)**

Kelvin van der Linde/Charles Weerts/
Dries Vanthoor
WRT (Audi R8 LMS Evo 2)

**NASCAR CUP
RICHMOND (USA)**

Denny Hamlin
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

**NASCAR XFINITY
RICHMOND (USA)**

Ty Gibbs
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Supra)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Ghiotto was the pick of the battles, with just four tenths splitting the cars at the line.

While those at the front celebrated, there were tales of misfortune further back, with the Beechdean Aston Martin of Thiim, Maxime Martin and Marco Sorensen missing out on a potential podium finish after being caught out by the last FCY. They pitted a lap later than the leading group and dropped out of the hunt, much like the usually rapid #63 Emil Frey Racing Lambo, which lacked outright pace all weekend.

The biggest draw for the swathes of local fans during the weekend was undoubtedly the appearance of MotoGP legend Valentino Rossi, driving a WRT Audi alongside Nico Muller and Fred Vervisch. The nine-time world champion showed strong pace to help qualify the car 15th in the 52-car field, but a pitstop blunder when he missed his box was a blemish and the car ended up 17th.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



MOTOGP
RIO HONDO (ARG)
3 APRIL
ROUND 3/21

Before last Sunday's Argentinian Grand Prix, Aleix Espargaro had started 283 grands prix across all the MotoGP world championships since his debut in 2004. Of the stacked 24-rider grid, the 32-year-old Aprilia stalwart was the only one without a grand prix victory. Brushed over by many as a bit of a seat-warmer, on a bike many still viewed as something of a joke in the Aprilia, Espargaro — of everyone on the grid — had the biggest point to prove. Except, as far as he was concerned, he didn't really.

After securing a "dream" maiden win for himself and Aprilia on his 284th time of

asking, Espargaro said "nothing will change" in his life now as he feels he has everything he's ever wanted.

Espargaro has always been steadfast in the belief in his talent, and those around him who have seen the dedication can vouch for this. Toiling away on midfield bikes his entire premier class career, he made his first splash in 2012 and 2013 on the Aprilia ART machine he rode for Aspar. He then joined Aprilia for 2017 and, after two tough years for the marque, he slowly helped develop the RS-GP into the weapon on which he beat Pramac's Jorge Martin in a tense Argentina GP to make history.

Strong in 2022 so far, Espargaro took Aprilia's first pole in the modern era on a hectic Saturday that featured a heavily revised schedule owing to

Friday being nerfed due to freight delays.

Seemingly staring down his best ever shot at victory, he juddered away at the start and allowed Martin into the lead.

Already proving in his short MotoGP career that he is adept at being the hunted, "killer" Martin acted as stiff opposition for veteran Espargaro — so much so that, on lap 10, two mistakes dropped Espargaro a second adrift of the young Spaniard he helped during his early racing career. Regrouping on lap 11 to wipe the smile from his detractors' faces, Espargaro fired in the best lap of the race with a 1m39.375s to recover lost ground.

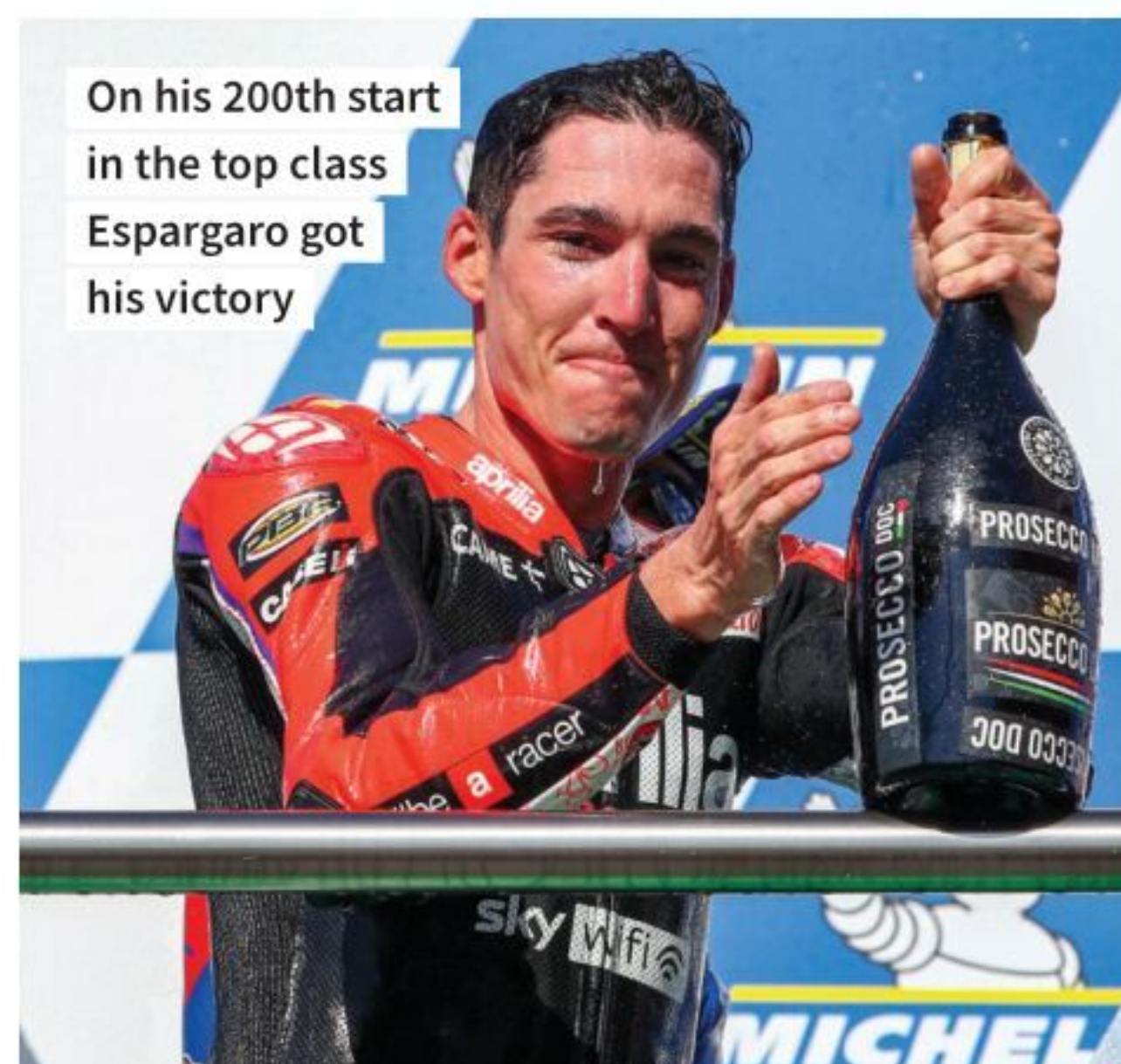
When the Pramac rider's rear grip started to fade, Espargaro began his assault. Attempt one at the Turn 5 hairpin on lap 18 came to naught as he ran out wide. The same thing happened again on lap 20, but next time around he executed a textbook block pass that would prove decisive.

There was no stand-up wheely as he took the chequered flag, no primal chest-thumping. Just tears — for himself and for the many onlookers. From contemplating quitting before the pandemic hit, Espargaro realised his dream — and vindicated all of Aprilia's toil since its return to MotoGP.

Martin's runner-up spot puts to bed a nightmare pointless start to his 2022, with a set-up change back to something he ran in 2021 helping him extract more from the troubled GP22 Ducati.

Alex Rins closed in on the leading duo in the final stages, but had to settle for





On his 200th start in the top class Espargaro got his victory



Rins came through from seventh to take strong third for Suzuki

a third he didn't expect on the Suzuki having had to fight from seventh. With team-mate Joan Mir shadowing him in fourth, Suzuki's solid start to 2022 continues to bubble under the radar.

What also wasn't expected, according to Fabio Quartararo, was Yamaha's start to its season. The world champion was among the fastest in practice in terms of race pace, but slumped from sixth off the line in the grand prix down to 13th in the early stages. Battling a lack of rear grip and mired amid Ducatis he could do nothing about with Yamaha's lack of top speed, he was forced to settle for eighth behind former team-mate Maverick Vinales on the second Aprilia.

A breakthrough concerning front-end confidence allowed Francesco Bagnaia to storm through from 13th to fifth to cap off a weekend he hopes acts as a lesson to himself, after he let frustrations boil over in qualifying. Team-mate Jack Miller felt he was the victim of the shortened weekend as a set-up change in warm-up failed to stop him doing better than 14th, while KTM's Brad Binder continued to score good points in sixth behind Bagnaia.

Valentino Rossi's staunch supporters in Argentina celebrated a fine ninth for VR46 rookie Marco Bezzecchi, while erstwhile championship leader Enea Bastianini was an off-colour 10th. But given Gresini – and VR46 – had no bikes until the early hours of Saturday due to freight delays, Bastianini's weekend could have been much worse.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 3/21, TERMAS DE RIO HONDO (ARG), 3 APRIL (25 LAPS – 74.658 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	41m36.198s
2	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+0.807s
3	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	+1.330s
4	Joan Mir (ESP)	Suzuki	+1.831s
5	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	+5.840s
6	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+6.192s
7	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+6.540s
8	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+10.215s
9	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+12.622s
10	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+12.987s
11	Luca Marini (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+13.962s
12	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+14.002s
13	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	KTM	+14.456s
14	Jack Miller (AUS)	Ducati	+14.898s
15	Alex Marquez (ESP)	LCR Honda	+23.472s
16	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+25.862s
17	Remy Gardner (AUS)	Tech3 KTM	+28.711s
18	Darryn Binder (ZAF)	RNF Yamaha	+28.784s
19	Stefan Bradl (DEU)	Honda	+31.943s
20	Andrea Dovizioso (ITA)	RNF Yamaha	-3 laps
R	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	22 laps-accident
R	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	Honda	14 laps-accident
R	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Yamaha	7 laps-puncture
R	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	5 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 107.670mph. **Fastest lap** A Espargaro 1m39.375s, 108.183mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 A Espargaro 1m37.688s; 2 Martin 1m37.839s; 3 Marini 1m38.119s; 4 P Espargaro 1m38.165s; 5 Vinales 1m38.196s; 6 Quartararo 1m38.281s; 7 Rins 1m38.455s; 8 Mir 1m38.516s; 9 Zarco 1m38.537s; 10 Nakagami 1m38.576s; 11 Miller 1m38.584s; 12 B Binder 1m38.932s.

QUALIFYING 1 P Espargaro 1m38.501s; 2 Nakagami 1m38.523s; 3 Bastianini 1m38.566s; 4 Bagnaia 1m38.610s; 5 Morbidelli 1m38.805s; 6 Oliveira 1m38.871s; 7 Bezzecchi 1m38.877s; 8 Dovizioso 1m38.938s; 9 A Marquez 1m39.095s; 10 Giannantonio 1m39.126s; 11 Fernandez 1m39.153s; 12 Gardner 1m39.159s; 13 D Binder 1m39.380s; 14 Bradl 1m39.487s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 A Espargaro 45; 2 B Binder 38; 3 Bastianini 36; 4 Rins 36; 5 Quartararo 35; 6 Mir 33; 7 Oliveira 28; 8 Zarco 24; 9 Martin 20; 10 P Espargaro 20; 11 Miller 15; 12 Morbidelli 14; 13 Vinales 13; 14 Bagnaia 12; 15 Marc Marquez 11; 16 Nakagami 10; 17 Marini 10; 18 Bezzecchi 7; 19 D Binder 6; 20 A Marquez 4; 21 Dovizioso 2; 22 Gardner 1; 23 Fernandez 0; 24 Giannantonio 0; 25 Bradl 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 61; 2 KTM 55; 3 Aprilia 45; 4 Suzuki 37; 5 Yamaha 35; 6 Honda 24.

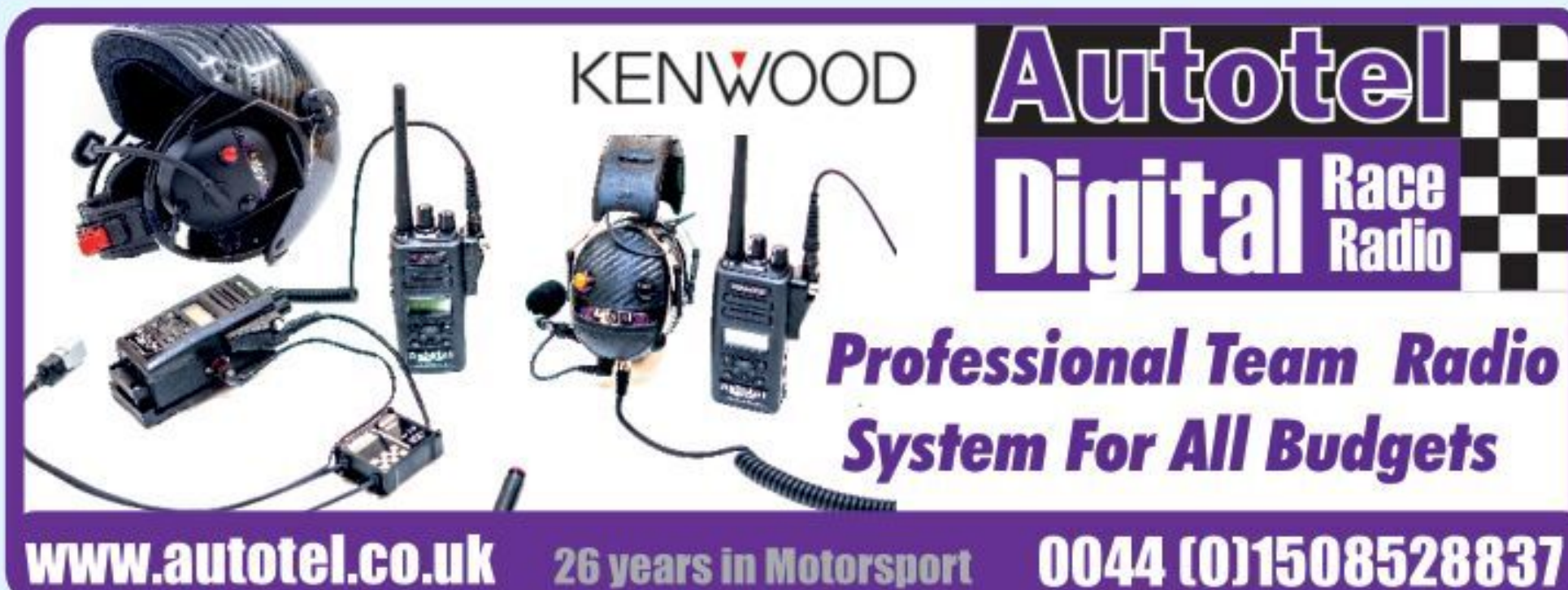


Rookie Bezzecchi (I) took his first MotoGP points for Rossi's team

NEXT REPORT

GP OF THE AMERICAS
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- Take responsibility for the presentation, service, overhaul and specification of the 3rd and 4th chassis in line with the expectations of the Chief Mechanic.
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British GT Champion Machitski won't defend his crown

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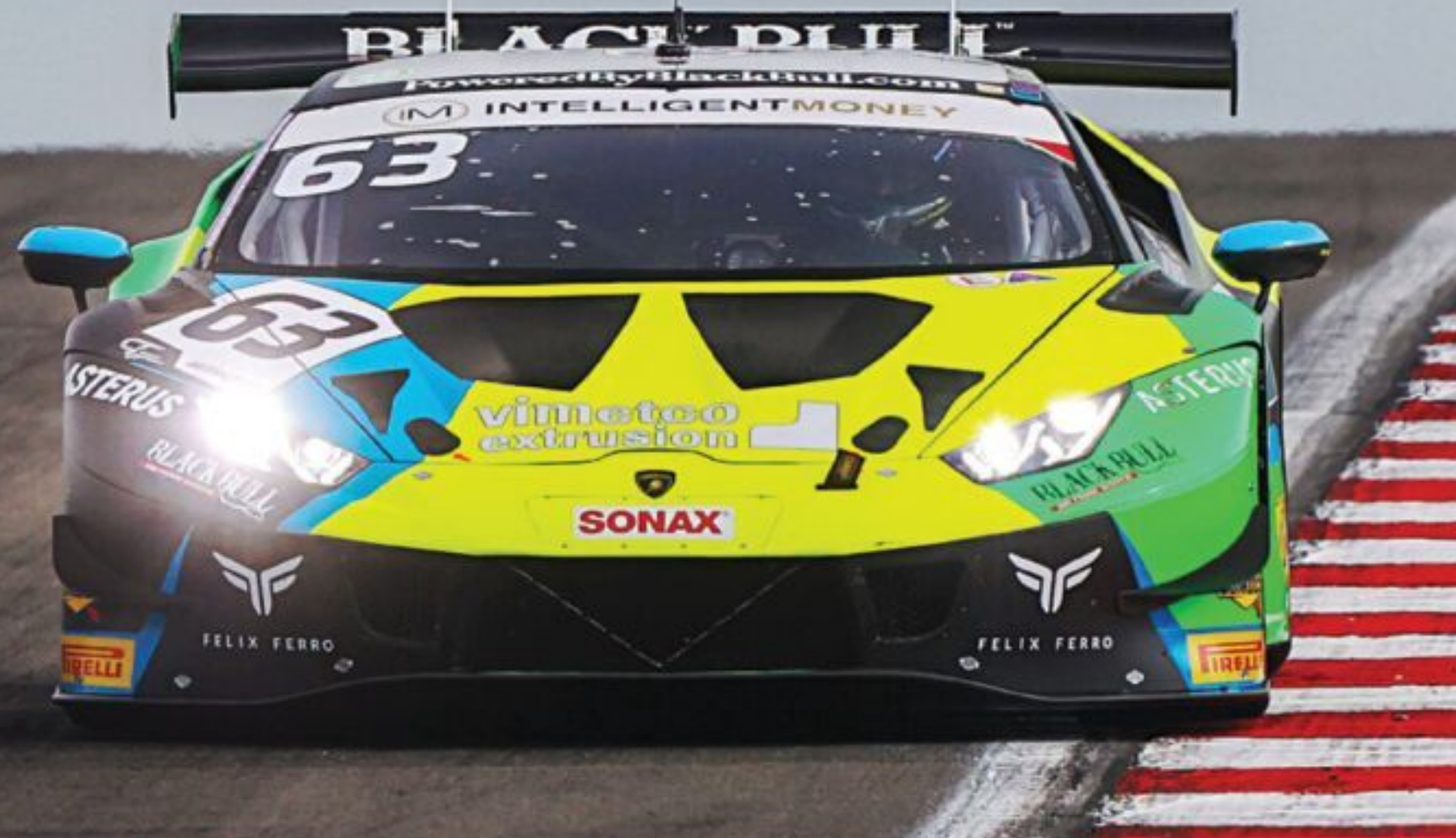
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Barwell duo claimed the British GT3 title in a Lamborghini



MAIN AND INSET: JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

No title defence for Machitski and Lind

BRITISH GT

Reigning British GT champions Leo Machitski and Dennis Lind will not defend their title having not featured on the 32-car full-season entry list.

The Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini crew's participation had been thrown into doubt by a Motorsport UK ruling following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which barred Russian licenceholders from competing in Britain.

Barwell has not formally commented on the development, but a British GT statement said that Machitski, who has previously held a UK licence, and Danish driver Lind "cannot retain their GT3 drivers' crown as a result of Motorsport UK's decision to suspend its recognition of Russian licences".

It continued: "Barwell Motorsport is currently evaluating several race-by-race options for its title-winning Lamborghini, which has been removed from the full-season entry."

The absence of the defending champions means 17 GT3 cars are confirmed for the season, up on a 2021 seasonal average of 11 (excluding the Silverstone 500, which traditionally enjoys a bump in entries and featured 18 cars last year).

That 2021 season-high total is set to be matched at the Oulton Park opener. Chris Froggatt and Kevin Tse tested recently at the Cheshire track with Mercedes squad 2 Seas Motorsport and Froggatt, who

competes under the Tempesta Racing banner, is expected to contest a limited schedule of British GT events in 2022.

CONFIRMED ENTRIES

Paddock Motorsport's expected switch to McLaren was announced last week after Autosport went to press. Team co-owners Martin Plowman and Kelvin Fletcher will swap to a 720S GT3 after taking over JRM's Bentley programme last year.

The team has also added a 570S GT4 car that will be driven by ex-Balfe racer Ashley Marshall, a winner at Spa last year, and Moh Ritson – who piloted the car to second in the GT Cup's GTH class.

Tom Rawlings, Ritson's team-mate in 2021, will line up alongside team returnee Chris Salkeld in Century Motorsport's second BMW M4 GT4, while Taiwanese driver Betty Chen has been entered in the team's brand-new M4 GT3. Her co-driver has yet to be announced.

Valluga Racing will make its series debut with a Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS, with 2014 GT4 champion Ross Wylie its first confirmed driver. Steller Motorsport has entered two Audi R8 LMS GT4s, but is yet to announce any drivers.

Callum Macleod will reunite with Ian Loggie at RAM Racing for the three rounds Jules Gounon will skip. Macleod, who won at Silverstone with Loggie in 2019, will step in for the Silverstone, Donington Park (May) and Snetterton meetings.

JAMES NEWBOLD

SHEPHERD AIMS FOR TCR UK TITLE WITH JAMSPORT

TCR UK

Former Ginetta GT4 Supercup frontrunner Adam Shepherd is targeting a championship challenge as he switches to TCR UK this year.

Shepherd, who was a multiple podium finisher in the GT4 Supercup in 2018 and has titles in the Civic Cup and M3 Cup to his name, will drive a Hyundai i30 N tended by Jamsport. He was fastest in the series' official media and test day at Brands Hatch last week.

"I want to come and win it," said Shepherd, who won the 750 Motor Club's Type R Trophy last year. "It's not going to be easy but we can't set our sights on anything other than winning otherwise you shouldn't be racing."

"The problem for us is the budget. At the minute, we've only got the budget to do half the year. So we're trying to do as best as we can, get more sponsorship and progress."

Joining Shepherd at Jamsport in two more Hyundais will be race winner Max Hart and Andy Wilmot, who contested a part-season in the category last year.

Among other names confirmed on TCR UK's burgeoning entry list, ahead of its Easter season-opener at Oulton Park, are Civic Cup race winner Rob Butler (JW Bird VW Golf GTI) and Fiesta Junior graduate Alex Ley (Daniel James Hyundai).

Jack Depper, son of former British Touring Car racer Martin, will drive a Golf prepared by former Maximum Motorsport man Leon Pegg's new Capture Motorsport outfit, having achieved a best result of sixth in three outings last year.

MARK PAULSON



HAWKINS

Pearson to make comeback after cancer treatment

BRITISH F4

Former Ginetta Junior racer Joel Pearson will make a remarkable return to competition in British Formula 4 this season, a year after his planned graduation had to be put on hold following his cancer diagnosis.

Having finished eighth in the 2020 Ginetta standings, Pearson had been set to make the jump to F4 last year with the Argenti Motorsport squad. But during the winter he was found to have a rare form of bone cancer in his pelvic area, which required specialist treatment and meant racing had to be put on the backburner.

He was then able to return to the cockpit earlier this year with Argenti, having continued to use a simulator during his treatment, and targeted a long-awaited F4 drive. That dream has now been realised after Pearson agreed a late deal to join Chris Dittmann Racing.

"I've always wanted to do F4 ever since I started karting," said Pearson. "It's the thing that was keeping me going through it [the treatment] – I was trying to stay positive and wanted to

get back to racing. For me it all stopped so abruptly it felt like it was torn away from me."

Pearson had his first test with the team and the new second-generation F4 car last week before taking part in the media day running at Silverstone on Tuesday. Given his lack of seat time compared to his rivals, Pearson is aware of the challenge ahead but still has an ambition to fight at the front.

"It has been a very tough year of my life, but it's put me in a different mindset this year than I've ever had before," he said.

"I have to be realistic – I've only done one day of testing in the new car [before media day] and I didn't race last year. But, as a driver, you want to go out there and get podiums and wins so that's the aim. I'll be going out there and having fun."

Pearson is CDR's first signing

after expanding into British F4 this year and team boss Chris Dittmann is optimistic about fielding a second car at points this season.

"We're really pleased to get Joel back racing," he said. "We had a good test last week and we're now trying to get as many laps in as we can. This year is very much a building year for us as a team."

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Petters victorious on Porsche debut at Snetterton meeting

CSCC

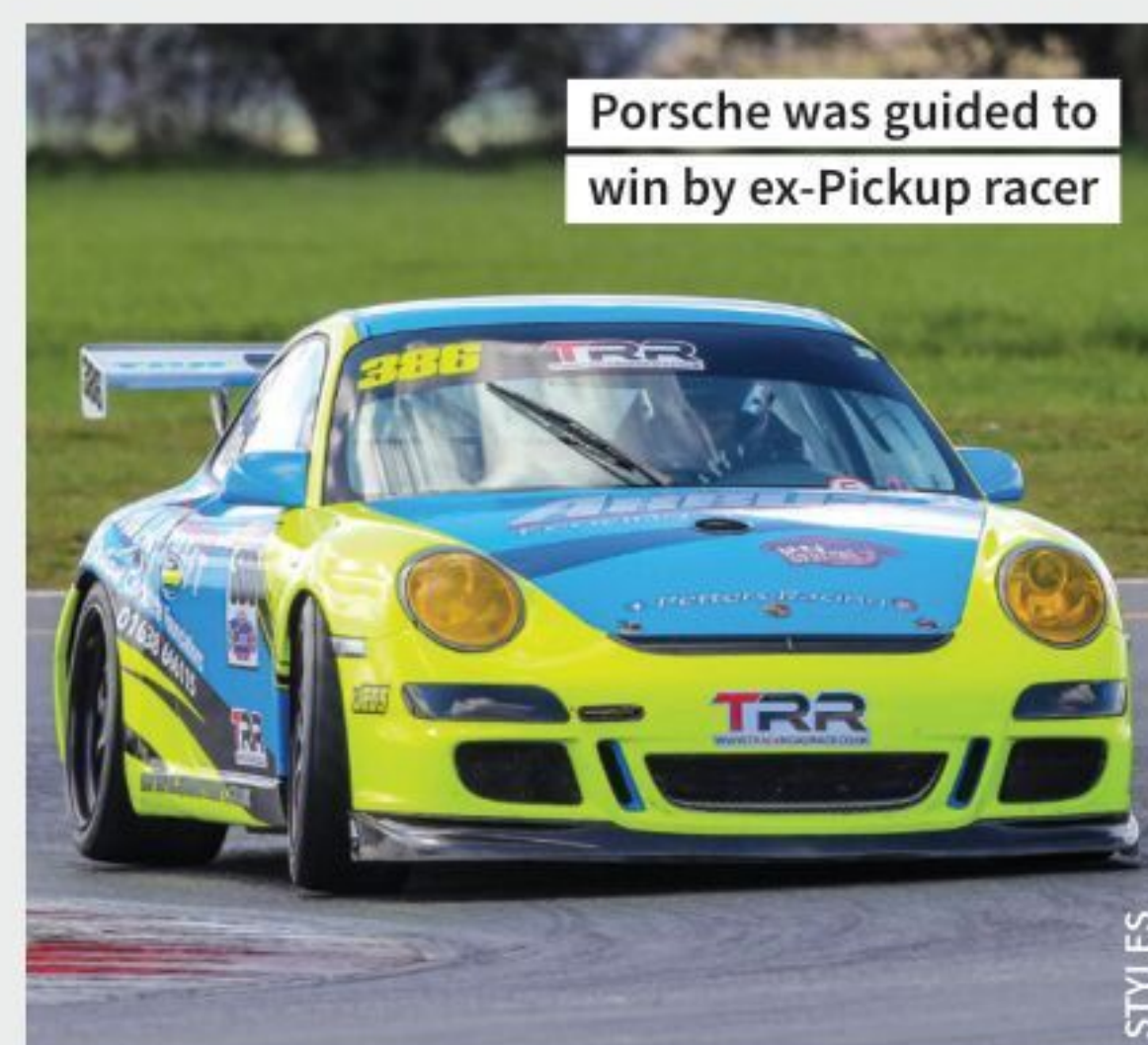
Pickup Truck racer Daniel Petters had a dream start to life in the Classics Sports Car Club, winning on his debut at Snetterton last weekend.

Petters had been a stalwart of Pickup racing since 2018, and finished runner-up last season to George Turiccki. But for 2022 he "just needed a fresh start" and has made the decision to switch to racing a Porsche 911 997 GT3 Cup car, which he picked up in January this year

and had previously been used at the 2011 Nurburgring 24 Hours among other outings.

Aboard the Porsche, he took pole for the 40-minute New Millennium race by more than two seconds, and cruised to a comfortable victory by nearly 32s.

"I had no idea what to expect, but it's been really good," he said. "Porsches are cool cars and it's just fun to drive. I'm doing all the Slicks Series races this year and the New Millennium races when they don't clash, and the trip to Spa.



"It will be nice to have a battle [in future races] but I'm not going to complain."

STEFAN MACKLEY

IN THE HEADLINES

BACK TO RACING ROOTS

Lydia Walmsley will continue in the JCW class of the Mini Challenge for a second season this year. Having driven for British Touring Car squad BTC Racing in 2021, Walmsley is now returning to her family team that previously powered her to success in the Cooper category. "I'm hoping that this season will see much more progression in this competitive field, and climbing up the grid even further is the target," she said.

GT5 CHALLENGE DRIVERS

Junior Saloon Car race winner Ruben Hage and former Volkswagen Racing Cup frontrunner David Sutton will join the Ginetta GT5 Challenge grid this season. Hage will partner sophomore driver Will Rochford at Total Control Racing while Sutton makes his return to racing after six years out with his own Team Avago squad. Meanwhile, veteran Ginetta racer Richard Sykes is also due to make a comeback this year, racing in the GT Academy.

BURNS DOUBLES UP

Will Burns will run a double GT4 race programme in 2022, combining the defence of his British GT4 crown alongside his first foray into continental racing in the European GT4 Series. He will partner Jack Brown in a Century Motorsport BMW M4, having taken the title last year alongside Gus Burton, and will race a similar car in Europe with Turkish outfit Borusan Otomotiv Motorsport.

HILL STARS IN PANOZ

British Touring Car race winner Jake Hill starred behind the wheel of Simon Watts's Panoz LMP07 LMP900 machine (below) at Mugello last weekend in Endurance Racing Legends. The Briton took pole in his session, which placed the car eighth after Watts had set a time, and just missed out on victory before being penalised for a jump start, which dropped him to third.



JEP



Kane, Onslow-Cole and Erdos (l-r) will be helping clerks

Kane, Onslow-Cole and Erdos to help with driving standards

GINETTA

Racers Tom Onslow-Cole, Jonny Kane and Tommy Erdos have been appointed as Ginetta driving standards representatives to help maintain discipline across the manufacturer's portfolio of series.

One of the trio will be on duty at each Ginetta race weekend and will work alongside clerks of the course in race control as well as the championship managers to help ensure fairness is upheld.

It is intended that 2006 Renault UK Clio Cup champion Onslow-Cole, 1997 British Formula 3 title winner Kane and two-time Le Mans class victor Erdos

will use their racing experience to assist with judicial procedures.

"This is an exciting new development for Ginetta and one that we are proud to be implementing," said Ginetta championship manager Steph Bush. "We feel it is vital to have a clear and consistent approach to managing driving standards and the judicial processes across our championships."

"Our driving standards representatives have a wealth of experience and will be a great asset to our team and the clerk of the course, as well as to the drivers and teams who should benefit from a clearer understanding of the consequences of breaching driving standards."

Trice and Whiteside into Porsches

PORSCHE

Ginetta GT Academy champions Toby Trice and Angus Whiteside will both move into Porsche machinery this season.

Overall champion Trice has decided not to defend his title and will instead switch to the Sprint Challenge GB, driving an SVG Motorsport-prepared Cayman. Meanwhile, rookie title winner Whiteside will progress to the Carrera Cup GB with the Toro Verde squad.

"To be driving a Porsche seems like a huge pinch-yourself moment," said Trice. "When I started out in rental karts at Buckmore Park, that was obviously a lot of fun, but I never ever imagined that I'd be strapping myself into a Cayman GT4 Clubsport. It's so exciting!"

"I'm going to be putting in a lot of hard work behind the scenes to be as high up the grid as possible and I'd love to be in contention with the top guys in the Pro class at the end of the year."

Whiteside added: "The Carrera Cup is the biggest and fastest single-make championship in the UK, so if you're going to make a name for yourself it's probably the place to do it."

Joining Whiteside in the Toro Verde line-up will be 2014 British GT4 champion Jake Giddings, series regular Peter Kyle-Henney and Carrera Cup returnee Peter Mangion.

**ROB HANSFORD
& STEPHEN LICKORISH**

Roskell bags Circuit Rally title by a point

MN CIRCUIT RALLY

The final round of the *Motorsport News* Circuit Rally Championship went down to the wire last weekend, with Neil Roskell taking the crown as former champion Barry Morris claimed victory at Cadwell Park.

Morris/Tom Hutchings' Darrian T90 GTR+ led all day, with championship leaders Roskell/Andrew Roughead initially second in their Ford Fiesta R5. Both could still win the championship, but Roskell could afford not to win the rally and still come away with the title.

After four stages, Morris led by nine seconds, but Roskell was joint second with John Griffiths/Nigel Wetton's Fiesta R5. Roskell responded on the next stage by posting the fastest time but, from stage six onwards, Griffiths edged away to finish only seven seconds down on Morris.

Third overall was enough for Roskell to take the title, though, with just one point to spare. "Absolutely brilliant, but it will take a while to sink in as I have only



been rallying three years," he said.

Andy Scott/Tom Woodburn's Fiesta S2000T held fourth from stage three, after Andy Fenwick/Harry Marchbank's Hyundai i20 R5 spun.

Class C winners Josh Payton/Jamie Vaughan's Ford Escort Mk2 usurped Paul Murro/Callum Cross's Fiesta R5 for fifth overall after five stages, with Tony Robinson/Mark Jones's Skoda Fabia R5 clinching sixth by stage seven.

Kay Thompson/Charlotte Wainwright's Nissan Micra won Class A, after James Hardy/Nick Wilkins's similar car retired after hitting a tyre stack. The Peugeot 106 Maxi of Ben and Andrew Wilkinson was never headed in Class B.

Overall winners Morris/Hutchings topped Class D from Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones's Escort Mk2, but it was enough for Jones to be crowned co-driver champion.

PETER SCHERER

O'Donovan takes to the Proton Iriz RX Supercar



BRX

British Rallycross Championship frontrunner Ollie O'Donovan will compete at the wheel of a Proton Iriz RX Supercar in the series this year.

The car has been a collaboration between multiple BRX championship-winning team Tony Bardy

Motorsport and Proton rally specialist Mellors Elliot Motorsport, and is the world's first Proton Iriz RX Supercar.

Using the Iriz R5 rally car as a base, it has been built specifically for rallycross. The car will make its public debut at the BRX media and test day on 14 April at Lydden Hill.

"Seeing the Iriz RX

drive out of the trailer for the first time recently was a big moment for me and the team," said O'Donovan, who won the BRX title in 2007. "Then getting in and it fitting me like a glove was a special feeling. There has been a huge amount of hard work go into this project, and it was brilliant to conduct the initial testing at Pembrey."

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David Sheane 1945-2022

OBITUARY

The Irish motor racing community was saddened at the weekend by the news that David Sheane had died.

Sheane introduced Formula Vee to Ireland in the mid-1970s, racing himself. As his chassis became dominant, he received orders for more and was happy to supply and, by the 1990s, the Vee class was easily the biggest in the Mondello Park paddock, with almost all of the cars built by Sheane's Blainroe company.

As well as Formula Vee, Sheane designed and built many hugely successful VW-powered sporting trials cars and later introduced Formula Sheane as a cost-effective step up from Formula Vee.

Sheane made motor racing accessible for many in Ireland, often loaning out his cars for a race, or even a season, at no charge. Similarly, he repaired race cars for ridiculously small sums of money on



a regular basis. Irish motorsport owes David Sheane a debt of gratitude and he will be sorely missed.

LEO NULTY

Third generation of Welches to get behind the wheel in 2022

MGB

Sisters Arabella and Emily Welch will extend a proud family tradition into a third generation when they take to the track for the first time with one of two MGBs in the stable this summer.

Granddaughters of the late Austin-Healey legend Denis Welch — who raced on water in hydroplanes before switching to the circuits in the 1960s — and daughters of his son Jeremy, the pair will grace the MGB's 60th anniversary season having gained their

ARDS qualifications at Mallory Park.

Arabella, 19, will be first under starters' orders having gained experience over several track evenings at Donington Park, and seat time at Castle Combe's media day last month. Her plan is to do more testing prior to entering the big MGB '60' race at Silverstone in June.

Emily, who turns 17 this summer, is already a capable technician with the family's Denis Welch Motorsport team and has long supported her dad and customers on events. She too had a run in the MGB at Combe.

"The B is down on power at the moment, but it's perfect for the girls to learn in," said dad Jeremy. "Once they have mileage under their belts we'll refresh it and I'll come out for those events in the other one."

MARCUS PYE



IN THE HEADLINES

RETURN FOR VOYAZIDES

Historic racer Leo Voyazides will return to racing this season after a two-year COVID-19 sabbatical. Voyazides, who lives in Switzerland, has not raced since the end of 2019. He will pick and choose his events this season for his Ford Falcon and Lola T70 Mk3B, which will both be shared with the cars' preparer, Simon Hadfield.

SPORTS 2000 REUNION

A reunion of former Sports 2000 racers from the 1970s and 1980s is being planned for Silverstone on 24 April when there will be a round of the Sports 2000 Pinto series on the national circuit. The reunion is being organised by former Sports 2000 racer John 'Pancho' Webb and likely attendees include John Brindley, Ian Flux and Sean Walker.

ESPORTS TO THE TRACK

Ex-Aston Martin Formula 1 Esports driver Lukas Blakeley will contest his first real-life racing championship this year, driving in Scottish Formula Ford 1600 with Graham Brunton Racing. Blakeley came to prominence in his second season of F1 Esports by finishing runner-up to eventual champion Jarno Opmeer. He caused a further stir when he beat four-time F1 champion Sebastian Vettel in a heat of the recent Race of Champions in Sweden. He said: "I'm totally realistic about results and expectations but I'm not here to make up the numbers."

NICHOLLS FINISHES ON TOP

Local driver Will Nicholls took overall victory as motorsport returned to the Isle of Wight's roads with the Sandown Sprint. He set a combined time of 69.23s following a series of impressive runs in his M-Sport prepared Ford Fiesta R5 rally car. Damian Bradley finished second, just 0.1s behind as 100 competitors took on the course, including two-time World Rally champion Miki Biasion in a Lancia Delta Integrale (below).





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The promise of a new series

The GB4 Championship attracted 12 entries for its opening round, but numbers will need to increase to ensure its future

STEFAN MACKLEY

Months of build-up, speculation and anticipation finally came to an end last weekend as the inaugural round of the new-for-2022 GB4 Championship took place. MotorSport Vision's newest category has been known about since September last year, when it was touted as being a cost-effective means of going racing in a slicks-and-wings machine.

The machine in question, the Tatuus F4-T014, was used previously in Germany and Italy, meaning there's an abundance of cars – with MSV itself buying 17 in the off-season – and seemingly a plethora of teams attracted to the concept, with 13 registering formal interest in joining the championship.

All good in theory, but the biggest question during the off-season centred on just how many drivers would actually be drawn to the opening round. Predictions varied between team bosses and MSV chief executive Jonathan Palmer, but all were confident that it wouldn't be in single figures.

They were proven correct and 12 drivers from five teams lined up for the three races at Snetterton. That being said, only 11th-hour deals managed to get the grid into double digits, with South African Jarrod Waberski – who finished runner-up in his local F1600 championship last year – joining Kevin Mills Racing and ex-W Series driver Megan Gilkes and former GB3 runner Max Marzorati signing with Hillspeed days before the event.

“Palmer will be disappointed if grids don't reach 15-plus cars by the end of the season”

The latter squad had never intended to race in the opener, with team boss Richard Ollerenshaw previously stating that it didn't make financial sense to do the standalone meeting when the remaining seven rounds are alongside GB3, but said that MSV had “twisted our arm”.

“We had no intention of being here but we got a call from Giles [Butterfield, MSV's group operations and engineering manager] Monday lunchtime asking if we could put some cars out,” Ollerenshaw says. “Apart from one car we ran at Donington Park, we've not done any work at all with the cars since they came back from Spain. Our intention was to start from Monday morning for Oulton Park. Jonathan and Giles just said look at if you can do it in order to support the championship.”

Despite the lack of preparation, the visit to Norfolk paid off

as the squad recorded a 1-2 in the fully reversed-grid race, but Ollerenshaw has so far yet to confirm any drivers for the remaining rounds.

As for the other cars that competed last weekend, there are encouraging signs that the battle could rage all season for the title, and with it a not insignificant £50,000 prize on the line. Racing debutant Nikolas Taylor just had the edge in terms of speed on Alex Walker and Tom Mills, but lacked the racecraft of the ex-Formula Ford drivers and trails them in the points.

Throughout the field, the racing was clean, with only an incident between Jack Sherwood and Jessica Edgar in the final race meriting any intervention from the officials, and there were no caution periods – which, for a junior single-seater series, is no mean feat. The live TV coverage was a boost, as was being the focal point at the Classic Sports Car Club meeting. That won't be the case moving forward as GB4 supports British GT at six of the remaining seven meetings.

“I think it's a good start to what is a completely new championship and, in terms of people on the grid, I don't think there is anybody here that actually would have been on a British F4 grid,” says Palmer. “It is as we always intended, it is a championship that's aiming for those that just can't get near a British Formula 4 grid, but want to develop their careers in single-seater racing.”

The point regarding a lack of budget is certainly true, with Taylor admitting that a part-season of British F4 at best was on the cards if not for the lower costs of GB4. It's provided him and others with a genuine opportunity to get a foothold on the single-seater ladder, which is certainly no bad thing in principle.

But that ethos needs to be matched by increased participation levels as well as competitive racing. The Snetterton meeting provided a solid start to life for the GB4 Championship, but those at MSV cannot rest on their laurels if they want it to be a long-term success. This writer has no doubt that numbers will fluctuate during the year for a variety of reasons, but it's imperative that, come the final round of the season in October, entries are consistently averaging more than 12.

Palmer has admitted that he will be disappointed if grids don't reach 15-plus cars by the end of the season, and certainly anything less will raise serious question over whether there is sufficient appetite for an entry-level single-seater series of this nature in the UK.

The GB4 Championship is officially under way, but the remaining rounds will put to the test whether the series has a bright, long-term future. 🏁

➔ P61 GB4 REPORT

Pratt pips Thompson to Morgan spoils

SNETTERTON
CSCC
2-3 APRIL

An enthralling battle decided by the smallest of margins in the Morgan Challenge was the highlight of the Classic Sports Car Club season opener at Snetterton.

William Pratt placed his Morgan +4 comfortably on pole but ceding the lead to Andrew Thompson at the rolling start set up a race-long battle between the pair. Despite his car inexplicably producing plumes of smoke on several occasions, Pratt shadowed Thompson's ARV6 throughout the 20-minute encounter having briefly retaken the lead on the opening lap.

Quicker through the corners but unable to find a way past, the deciding moment came on the last tour. Hanging back through the final turn of Murrays and getting a better drive out allowed Pratt to pull alongside and take the chequered flag by just 0.026 seconds.

"My dad before going out told me the car has the speed, he said don't do anything heroic, wait until the straights and choose the right moment," said a delighted Pratt.

Thompson grabbed the lead again at the start of race two, while Pratt also briefly fell behind Tony Lees's +8, but repassed him before the Bentley Straight. Pratt was already several seconds behind Thompson but was handed a reprieve as first a safety car, then a red flag was deployed to retrieve a stricken car at Riches — the only caution period/stoppage during the entire two-day meeting.

At the restart, it was Thompson who once again made his way into the lead, but any challenge from Pratt was nullified when he spun at Agostini. Thompson therefore cruised to victory from Tom



Pratt (r) just edged out
Thompson in the opening
Morgan Challenge race

Andrew's +6, while Pratt surged from 16th to third by the flag in the 15-minute rerun.

It was spin and win for Sam Polley in the Swinging Sixties Group 1 race, as the Mini Marcos driver recovered from an off at Wilson. He was aided by main rival Richard Perry having a "bit of a fuddled pitstop", which allowed Polley to regain the lead once the mandatory stops had been made.

Austin-Healey Sprite driver Perry then spun himself exiting Oggies in pursuit and briefly dropped to third behind Tom Pead (BMW 1600 Ti), before regaining second just before the end of the race as all three podium finishers took class wins.

Father-and-son pairing Nigel/Ollie Reuben cruised to a one-minute victory in Sunday's later Group 2 race in their TVR Griffith.

The Magnificent Seven victories were shared between Christian Pittard and Stephen Nuttall, although the latter could have left Norfolk with the double but for electrical gremlins in race one while

leading. Pittard benefited from Nuttall's retirement having got the better of Ben Simonds in the 40-minute pitstop race.

Starting from the 12th and final row of the grid in the 20-minute second race, Nuttall surged through to third by the end of the opening lap, helped by the confusion caused when Spire team-mates John Cutmore and David Watson collided at Agostini.

Nuttall moved into second the following lap and finally passed Pittard for the lead through an oil spill down the Bentley Straight, which had been deposited courtesy of a spectacular engine failure for James Tubby that had sent him spinning one lap earlier. Watson completed the podium again in third despite the earlier contact.

Carl Chambers just held on to victory in the Turbo Tin Tops encounter at the wheel of his Peugeot 208 GTI. Chambers cycled through into the lead once the mandatory pitstops had been made, but saw a 14s advantage whittle away in the closing stages.

Nigel Tongue, sharing a VW Scirocco with John Hammersley, closed the gap to within a second by the flag, while Keith Issatt's Mini Clubman completed the podium having led in the early stages following a spin for polesitter Phil Briggs's SEAT Leon. Andrew Windmill's Honda Civic Type R Leggera was never headed in the later Tin Tops contest for normally aspirated cars.

Elsewhere, Karl Cattliff was victorious in the Modern Classics having started down in seventh as BMWs swept the podium. Front-row starter Stuart Daburn finished fourth in his TVR Tuscan Challenge, but cruised to the win in Sunday's Future Classics encounter.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Pittard heads Nuttall
as both took a win in
Magnificent Sevens



WEEKEND WINNERS

MORGAN CHALLENGE

Race 1 William Pratt (+4)

Race 2 Andrew Thompson (ARV6)

SWINGING SIXTIES

Group 1 Sam Polley (Mini Marcos)

Group 2 Nigel & Ollie Reuben (TVR Griffith)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Race 1 Christian Pittard
(Caterham CSR)

Race 2 Stephen Nuttall
(Caterham Supersport)

TURBO TIN TOPS/PUMA CUP

Carl Chambers (Peugeot 208 GTI)

TIN TOPS

Andrew Windmill
(Honda Civic Type R Leggera)

MODERN CLASSICS

Karl Cattliff (BMW M3 E36)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan Challenge)

GB4

Race 1 Nikolas Taylor

Race 2 Alex Walker

Race 3 Megan Gilkes

CLASSIC K

Sam Smith (Lotus Elan)

NEW MILLENNIUM

Daniel Petters
(Porsche 911 997 GT3 Cup)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

GB4 GETS GOING



Taylor (66) and Walker (41)
took a win apiece in GB4's
inaugural meeting

A win and a further podium on the inaugural weekend for the GB4 Championship handed Alex Walker the points lead leaving Snetterton.

The Elite Motorsport driver blended speed with consistency, but had to give best to Nikolas Taylor in qualifying as the British-Malaysian bagged a double pole ahead of his racing car debut. "I'm just trying not to put too much pressure on myself," said Taylor, a former member of Arden's Young Racing Driver Academy.

Despite his lack of race experience, Taylor dominated proceedings in the opening race as he led from start-to-finish ahead of fellow front-row starter Walker, whose attentions were focused on Formula Ford rival Tom Mills.

Mills had shot through from fifth to third by Turn 1, Riches, before a tighter line and better drive out of the Wilson hairpin moved him ahead of Walker.

The ex-British F4 driver was soon back ahead, though, making his move at Riches on the next tour, but was unable to mount a challenge to Taylor. Mills completed the podium ahead of Hillspeed's Max Marzorati and Kevin Mills Racing team-mate Jarrod Waberski.

Intent on putting Taylor's lack of racecraft to the test, Walker passed around the outside of his Fortec Motorsports rival into Riches at the start of race two. Taylor tried to retaliate around the outside through Turn 3 and again looked to the

outside of the Agostini hairpin. But the gap left on the inside was too inviting for Mills, who moved into second and he was soon handed some breathing space behind when Taylor spun through Brundle and dropped several places.

Mills's focus changed to challenging Walker for the lead, his best attempt coming into Agostini on lap two, which was covered off. He shadowed the Elite driver over the following laps, but the dirty air meant he dropped back in the closing stages as Walker won by 1.4 seconds.

"We saw what happened when we gave him [Taylor] a bit of breathing room, so I wanted to get on him early and managed to do that," said Walker of his Turn 1 overtake. "Definitely there was risk, but I knew I had to go for it."

Waberski just held on to third from Marzorati, as Taylor recovered to sixth behind Fortec team-mate Elias Adestam.

The Swede, who recently turned 16, bagged a podium in the fully reversed-grid race but had to give best to the Hillspeed duo of Megan Gilkes and Marzorati.

Ex-W Series driver Gilkes took the lead from fellow front-row starter Jessica Edgar, while team-mate Marzorati surged through into second from fifth.

Mills continued his blistering starts to move from sixth to third, but lost the place to Adestam at Agostini on lap five of 10. The Fortec driver chased down Marzorati and probed his defence, before losing the tip of his nose cone on the last lap after minor contact. All this allowed Gilkes to take a comfortable victory.

Taylor took eighth after a torrid race that included stalling on the grid and being handed a 10s penalty for being out of position. Walker finished sixth and heads the standings with 77 points from Mills on 68.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Walker leads the standings
after opening GB4 round



Barter heads the fast-starting Tooms as 70s Road Sports season begins at Brands Hatch

Tooms's fast getaways fail to stop patient Barter

BRANDS HATCH
HSCC
2-3 APRIL

"Three out of four wasn't bad," grinned Paul Tooms, having burst his Lotus Europa through between Kevin Kivlochan's Morgan +8 and Jeremy Clark's Lotus Elan to repeatedly lead the vibrant 70s Road Sports field into Paddock Hill Bend, the second leg being a three-parter! Tooms's glory didn't last, for Kivlochan growled back from a moment to pip Clark to win the opener as poleman Charles Barter retired his Datsun 240Z with a duff spark plug.

Kivlochan careered into the Druids gravel trap on lap one of the sequel, bringing out red flags, but was ushered back to P1 for the restart, which proved expensive. "The gearbox felt a bit sticky," said KeKi but, when his Rover V8 threw a rod on the Cooper Straight, he spun, followed by several others on the oil slick. Barter, who twice went from the back,

regained the initiative in the four-lap decider from Clark, Tooms and David Tomkinson, whose TVR Vixen had rocketed momentarily ahead in one stanza.

Kivlochan's fortunes turned on Sunday in his Historic Road Sports AC Cobra. After a hairy traverse of Surtees, he beat Frazer Gibney (Elan) by 0.681 seconds. Peter Garland (Morgan) and Jonathan Stringer (Lotus 7) tussled behind them.

Benn Simms stunned Historic Formula Ford 2000 rivals with his 48.628s (89.42mph) pole charge. With the qualifying heat canned, his Reynard was ahead when Saturday's points race was stopped twice, initially after Jason Redding (Delta) could not avoid Ian Foley's spinning Reynard at the foot of Paddock. With no time to run the five-minute dash before the 1830 curfew, it was rescheduled for Sunday morning. "My clutch wouldn't have taken another start," said Simms.

On the second anniversary of his father and mentor Paul's passing, Benn nailed it

and round two, with Andy Park and defending champion Graham Fennymore (also in clutch bothers) bagging a second and third apiece. Drew Cameron and Ian Pearson led Royale squabbles for fourth, with Lee Bankhurst whose front upright had failed in qualifying.

The promising Historic Formula Atlantic category outnumbered Classic F3 in a combined grid, from which 44.774s (97.12mph) polesitter Rory Smith twice prevailed in his beautifully prepared 1984 Ralt RT4. Marc Mercer gave Smith a shock, bolting his March 73B out of the blocks to lead both races, but parked on Sunday promoting 18-year-old Samuel Harrison (1971 Lola T240) to second. Irishman Conor Murphy had the legs of the F3 set but retired, advantaging Anthony Hancock (ex-Mike Blanchet Lola T670).

Chris Drake's Terrier was straining at the leash at the 'front-engined' Formula Junior start and tore off to win. Nic Carlton-Smith pursued stoutly in his Kieft 'pusher', beginning his title defence with Class C2 victory. Alex Morton (Condor) was third, clear of Simon Goodliff in Ken Nicholls's first Nike. After Trevor Griffiths parked his Emeryson at Graham Hill Bend following half-shaft failure, Crispian Besley (Cooper T56) repelled the tenacious John Hutchison Jr (Envoy) for fifth.

Mark Charteris claimed Classic Clubmans pole on Saturday, testing his now Ford-axled Mallock, but could not stay for Sunday's races. John Harrison was thus shuffled into P1 and overcame Spencer McCarthy for a double. Clive Wood matched Harrison in the FF1600-engined division, remarkably remaining unlapped in race two. Old rival Barry Webb retired from the first when his



Simms took a poignant brace in Historic FF2000

READ

WEEKEND WINNERS

70s ROAD SPORTS

Race 1 Kevin Kivlochan (Morgan +8)

Race 2 Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z)

HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS

Kevin Kivlochan (AC Cobra)

HISTORIC FF2000

Races 1 & 2 Benn Simms (Reynard SF77)

FORMULA ATLANTIC/CLASSIC F3

Races 1 & 2 Rory Smith (Ralt RT4)

HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR, FRONT-ENGINE

Chris Drake (Terrier Mk4 S1)

CLASSIC CLUBMANS

Races 1 & 2 John Harrison (Mallock Mk21)

HISTORIC TOURING CARS

Race 1 Mike Gardiner (Ford Lotus Cortina)

Race 2 Bill Sollis (Mini Cooper S, below)

HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR, REAR-ENGINE

Michael O'Brien (Brabham BT6)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

distributor disintegrated, but wafted his Delapena U2 through to second later.

Historic Touring Car champion Mike Gardiner won the first of two outings after a misfire and a track-limits penalty hobbled pacemaker Jack Moody's A-frame Ford Lotus Cortina, dropping him to fourth behind Mini maestro Bill Sollis's Cooper S. Moody retired after a lap of the sequel, leaving Sollis and Gardiner scrapping with Bob Bullen, whose Cortina's gearbox broke. Gardiner went back ahead only to skate off at Druids on oil from Paul Wallis's stricken Alfa. Sollis held off the recovering Gardiner for a superb victory, with Bill's team-mates Nick Paddy and David Ogden third and fourth.

Behind Mark Watts' Ford Mustang, Nigel Cox (Cortina) and young Harry Barton (BMW 1800Ti) traded sixth place. Ultimately, the merest of brushes into Paddock destabilised Cox's car, which broadsided into gravel and toppled languidly onto its driver's side. A final quandary for hard-working marshals that inevitably stopped the race. Cox emerged unscathed.

MARCUS PYE



VICTORIOUS VIXEN David Tomkinson demonstrated his TVR Vixen S2's potential with superb fourths in both 70s Road Sports contests. Tomkinson raced a Triumph Spitfire before building and debuting the 1600cc Ford crossflow-engined machine last year. Putting a series of mechanical dramas behind him, he has bounced back stronger. The combo beat Chris Fisher (MG Arkley) and Gary Thomas (Lotus Seven S4) in Class E and outran three class B TVR 3000Ms, earning the driver of the day accolade.



O'BRIEN STARS ON DEBUT Racing their respective cars for the first time, McLaren GT ace Michael O'Brien (ex-Ned Spieker Brabham BT6, above) and Horatio Fitz-Simon (ex-Tommy Reid Lotus 22) looked set for a SpeedSport 1-2 in Formula Junior's rear-engined set. When Fitz-Simon's oil pressure sagged and Andrew Hibberd (ex-Bob Anderson/Peter Arundell Team Lotus 22) and the lapped Richard Ferris (Donford) tangled at Clearways, bringing out red flags, Clive Richards (22) claimed second.



MARTIN RETURNS Brian Martin is remembered for his sports-racers of the 1970s, less so for his two single-seaters. Built on a tubeframe chassis stiffened by sheet alloy panels, the Formula Atlantic BM12 carried Martin to two sixth places in BP championship rounds in 1973. Later, the car was sent to the US and expat Briton Bob Yarwood raced it in the 1990s, then brought it home. Classic Clubmans racer Antony Denham bought it four years ago. Restored by Tom Smith, the head-turner had engine woes.

Southcott's Midget storms to opening win

OULTON PARK
BARC
2 APRIL

Andrew Southcott's Lenham MG Midget won the opening round of the CNC Heads Sports/Saloons, after his initial battle with Paul Dobson's Mazda rotary Locost ended when the latter lost fuel pressure.

Having led into Knickerbrook from lap three of 12, it was comfortable for Southcott, with championship sponsor Ric Wood also clear in second in his Nissan Skyline. Oliver Thomas had been third until his Subaru Impreza lost fourth gear and was caught by Tim Foxlow's Ford Escort. They swapped places several times before Thomas finally clinched it, as Foxlow was also hampered by a sticking throttle.

With Jonny MacGregor's Taranis spinning at Old Hall on the opening lap of the British Endurance Championship race, Wayne Marrs' Mercedes-AMG GT3 and Kevin Clarke's BMW Z4 made a very early break.

Clarke got ahead on the 10th lap and built on his lead before pitting to hand over to Ryan Lindsay. But, within a couple of laps, Lindsay was back in the pitlane with a broken driveshaft, leaving Tom Jackson



Once Dobson retired, Southcott was in a class of his own

in the Marrs car over a lap ahead.

It proved to be an easy win for the Rob Boston Racing Mercedes, with MacGregor recovering to take second and Chris Goddard/Charlie Hollings's Ferrari 458 third, both a lap down. Carl Cavers/Lewis Plato's Porsche Cayman GT4 finished third on the road, but picked up a one-lap penalty, dropping to fifth behind Callum Jenkins/Ollie Turner's Porsche 911 GT3 Cup.

Matthew Isherwood took his maiden victory in the first Legends race of the day, where it came down to a one-lap sprint after a safety car period. Isherwood had

led Marcus Pett and Nathan Anthony before the caution, but both lost out on the final lap. Jack Parker snatched a close second from reigning champion Miles Rudman.

Both Isherwood and Rudman were early casualties in the second race, led initially by Sean Smith until John Mickel and Parker battled their way to the front. The lead fight went down to the wire, with Mickel just holding off Parker's challenge. The intensity of their battle allowed Andy Bird and Daniel Clark to follow them line astern to the flag.

The final soon developed into a three-

Highs and lows for Jenkins on mixed weekend

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR
2-3 APRIL

The 7 Race Series got off to a typically thrilling start at MotorSport Vision Racing's season-opener at Donington Park, with Phil Jenkins experiencing contrasting emotions across the weekend in the 420R class.

The 2020 series champion prevailed in a three-way tussle at the front in the



There was no stopping Morris in first Porsche contest

early stages of Saturday's encounter. After several more position changes, it was Jenkins that led from Mark Stansfield and Anthony Barnes when the race was brought to an early conclusion with five minutes remaining. It came as a surprise to the victor, who did not spot the chequered flag and continued for an extra lap.

Jenkins swiftly climbed from 10th to third in Sunday's partially reversed grid race behind Paul Thacker and Barnes, and then took advantage of the pair's squabble into Redgate to sweep by into the lead on the exit. But, while trying to keep his tyres warm during a late safety car period, Jenkins inexplicably lost control and dropped out of the top 10. Thacker controlled the restart to take victory ahead of Barnes, with the chequered flag again waved early after Oliver Gibson and Stewart Calder collided through the Craner Curves.

Richard Johnson enjoyed a winning return at Donington Park in Sports 2000, having made a fiery exit during last season's visit.

But it was a frustrating weekend for the pacesetter Michael Gibbins, who held a commanding 10-second lead in the opening race before succumbing to a clutch issue on his MCR. "A little unexpected," said Johnson after inheriting victory. "This time last year I had a smashed radial head and here we are, almost a year to the day, back racing again."

Contact between Joshua Law and James Barwell resulted in race two being restarted after the latter was fired into the barriers before Redgate. Law went on to take victory after pulling off the perfect dummy up the inside of early leader Johnson into the Roberts chicane in his updated MCR S2n machine. Gibbins stormed up the order from 17th on the grid, but a gear-linkage issue consigned him to fifth place. "It's frustrating, the positive is we were really quick," Gibbins reflected.

Peter Morris took a lights-to-flag win in the first of the Porsche Club races, with Chris Dyer and reigning champion Simon Clark finishing close behind. An early rain

JONES



Clarke's BMW pressured and passed the winning Mercedes in early stages

JONES

way tussle between Chris Needham, Will Gibson and Rudman. Although it remained close, Rudman just had the upper hand as they started the last tour. But Needham had a brief moment and dropped to sixth, leaving Rudman to hold off Gibson, with Pett, Parker and Smith all gaining a place too following Needham's woes.

The Praga Cup started in dramatic style with a three-car clash into the first corner. With George Line and Dan Gore both stopping on the green-flag lap and Alex Kapadia in the pits, the race started under caution for the remaining runners. But, as

the green flag was waved, the field seemed to split, Scott Mittell on the right into Old Hall and Stefano Leaney on the left, leaving a sizeable gap in the middle. As Rob Wheldon filled that space and turned in, contact with Mittell pushed him into Leaney, who then spun into the tyre wall. After further contact, Wheldon was off and Mittell continued well down, with Tommy Foster and Gordie Mutch vying for the lead. Foster/Miles Lacey took a fairly comfortable win, with Mutch/Jimmy Broadbent and Mittell/Charles Hall completing the podium.

PETER SCHERER



Jenkins won opener before mistake during safety car period

WALKER

shower over part of the circuit created a chaotic race two, with the run down the Craner Curves particularly treacherous for the slick-shod machines.

Several drivers, including Morris, Dyer and James Caley, were caught out. Clark pulled out an unassailable lead in his 996 ahead of the recovering Morris's 997, while overheating brakes resulted in Bill Caley – making his Class 1 debut in Clark's 2021 title-winning Cayman – conceding third to father James in the closing stages.

Scott Parkin made the perfect start to the Focus Cup season with a double

victory, coming from behind to narrowly beat reigning champion Simon Rudd in the second encounter.

Parkin was also on double-duty for IP Racing in the five-hour EnduroKa event, which once again lived up to its fun reputation. There were plenty of creative liveries and team names among the 45 entrants, not least the Yippee-KA-yay squad of Ben Gillias and Mark Johnson, which triumphed after the AxiaMetrics outfit pitted from the lead in the final half-hour.

STEVE WHITFIELD

WEEKEND WINNERS



JONES

OULTON PARK CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS

Andrew Southcott (Lenham MG Midget)

BRITISH ENDURANCE

Wayne Marrs/Tom Jackson
(Mercedes-AMG GT3)

LEGENDS

Race 1 Matthew Isherwood (above)

Race 2 John Mickel

Race 3 Miles Rudman

PRAGA CUP

Tommy Foster/Miles Lacey

DONINGTON PARK 7 RACE SERIES – 420R

Race 1 Phil Jenkins

Race 2 Paul Thacker

SPORTS 2000 – DURATEC

Race 1 Richard Johnson (MCR S2, below)

Race 2 Joshua Law (MCR S2n)

PORSCHE CLUB

Race 1 Pete Morris (997)

Race 2 Simon Clark (996)

FOCUS CUP

Races 1 & 2 Scott Parkin

ENDUROKA

Yippee-KA-yay
(Ben Gillias and Mark Johnson)

7 RACE SERIES – 1600

Race 1 Gary Smith

Race 2 Don Henshall

SPORTS 2000 – HISTORIC

Races 1 & 2 Paul Streat (Lola T87/90)

911 CHALLENGE & BOXSTER CUP

Races 1 & 2 Tim Bates (911)



WALKER

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

The 1970s Porsche taking the fight to modern GT3s

In a world of off-the-peg sportscars, Richard Chamberlain's incredible Porsche 935 stands out and, despite a devastating fire five years ago, he continues to develop the car further

MARK PAULSON



GT racing has boomed in recent years, both internationally and, increasingly so, on the British national racing scene. Its growth has largely been fuelled by the accessibility and competitiveness of the GT3 formula. But a consequence is that low-volume specials that previously populated grids are now few and far between.

Bucking the trend is Huntingdon-based CTR Developments with its self-developed Porsche 935 clone. Richard Chamberlain, his son Matt, and former Empress Race Developments man Tony Frost – recently aided by Peter Weston, previously Dyson Racing's chief engineer in the American Le Mans Series – run a car capable of giving the GT3s a hard time in the GT Cup.

Never resting on their laurels, it has been a 30-year journey with plenty of setbacks along the way – including a devastating fire in 2017 – while demonstrating what can be done with ingenuity, determination and hard work.

Chamberlain's passion for motorsport began when, aged 13, he went with a friend to watch karts race at Crystal Palace. Saving up from holiday jobs, the pair bought their own 197 Villiers to share. After some Formula Ford while at university, family life and establishing his successful electronics business then took priority.

Having been caught speeding in his Porsche 911 Carrera road car, Chamberlain realised it wasn't really suited to everyday driving. So Josh Sadler, of Porsche specialist Autofarm, suggested that Chamberlain went hillclimbing. Plenty of success followed before Sadler encouraged Chamberlain back onto the circuits in the car with which he would

become synonymous for the next three decades.

It had been built in the late 1980s from a standard 1972 911E by Mike Youles, with a Bob Watson-supplied engine. With Youles – a future class winner at Le Mans – aboard, it was a prolific winner in modified Porsche and Intermarque races before passing to Chester Wedgwood.

"Like a lamb to the slaughter, I looked at the car he said he was going to sell me, which was the old Mike Youles 3.5-litre RSR," Chamberlain recalls. "It was a bit rough and ready but it was pretty spectacular. And then they started it up, and it was on open megaphones. Well, I just bought it there and then!"

With the modified Porsche series no longer running, Chamberlain focused on Intermarque through the 1990s, competing against the likes of Gerry Marshall in the Marsh Plant Aston Martin V8, Malcolm Hamilton's V12-engined Jaguar E-type and Win Percy's Jaguar XJ220. On occasion, even the Aston Martin Nimrod Group C car would appear, piloted by John Dennehy.

Chamberlain became a regular pacesetter, and was made captain of the Porsche team, but never took the individual crown due to the weighted points structure favouring less modified cars. But a continual arms race required constant development just to stand still compared with the opposition.

One year, Chamberlain remembers, "We modified it, we lightened it, we got a little bit more horsepower out of the engine and we thought, 'This is going to be it, we're just going to whitewash the championship,' but we were wrong. Brian Robinson got his turbocharged 911 going



The car was originally built by Youles from a standard 911E



Youles raced the machine with success in the late 1980s



Car has evolved considerably and eventually lost its RSR rear end

properly, Malcolm had got the V12 going properly, and we were blown into the weeds. I went quicker than the previous year, but it was just hopeless.”

Turbocharging appeared to be an obvious solution but initial attempts proved an expensive dead-end and left Chamberlain sidelined for a season. That disappointment set him on the path to taking on the development himself, rather than employing others' services. “I was at my wits' end,” Chamberlain recalls, “and actually my wife said to me, ‘Look, Richard, I don't know how much money this has cost, but I do know you're not enjoying it. Either give up or do it yourself.’”

“It was a bit rough and ready but it was pretty spectacular. I just bought it there and then!”

A trip to Richard Salisbury's Chatteris-based Empress Race Developments, also in Cambridgeshire, would prove fruitful. Empress had experience of running Judd engines in the Formula 1 Tyrrells of future Minardi owner Paul Stoddart's European Formula team, which fielded drivers such as Nigel Greensall and F1 technical director Mike Gascoyne in BOSS Formula. Empress recommended Judd for Chamberlain's engine overhaul.

The resulting 3.4-litre twin-turbo-powered 935 became so potent that Chamberlain was effectively barred from competing when Intermark was restructured for 2003. Meantime, operating under the Chimp Tune Racing banner – a reference to a schoolboy nickname earned by performing bicycle circus tricks – Chamberlain had employed ex-Empress man Frost. And over the course of a successful multi-year relationship, Judd showed Chamberlain how to tune the engine, allowing him to bring that in-house.

“There are no secrets,” says Chamberlain. “It's just sound engineering. We do all our engines now but they were the ones that really gave me the confidence to do it.”

CTR Developments – “when we started to get customers, we >>

thought we ought to change it to CTR because that sounds a little bit more professional,” admits Chamberlain — had been a spare-time enterprise until Chamberlain sold his business 20-odd years ago. It continues to operate from the workshop at his house but, with Chamberlain and son Matt both having mechanical engineering degrees, combined with Frost’s motorsport experience, it boasts impressive engineering pedigree as well as design and manufacturing capability.

After a few years dominating the Porsche Open series, Chamberlain switched to the then-new Britcar category, where the main challenge was adapting to longer enduro-style races. “It was very expensive to do because suddenly you were going from 15-30 minutes races in Intermarque and the Porsche Open to three, four and six-hour races in Britcar,” he says. “So you were gobbling through tyres and fuel and having to rebuild engines every three meetings.”

The next move was to GT Cup, founded by Marc Haynes of the publishing family, where Chamberlain has competed ever since. There, development of the venerable Porsche stepped up

“We’re dinosaurs, let’s be honest. But it’s much more satisfying to make it all at home”

another gear. Alongside a Holinger paddleshift gearbox, and further chassis lightening, came the first real foray into aerodynamics beyond the earlier switch to a 935-style front end.

Having had the car 3D-scanned, Chamberlain Jr used computational fluid dynamics to develop new aero surfaces, including a flat floor and longer tail. “Round somewhere like Donington, on the National circuit, we probably found 2-2.5 seconds a lap, so it was a stunning jump forward,” remembers his father.

But Porsche’s traditional powertrain layout, with the engine hanging out over the rear wheels, was hampering it against more modern machinery. Rotating the engine and gearbox for a better weight distribution would be a massive job. Instead, yet more power was eked out of the air-cooled lump via a flat fan, new cylinder heads and camshafts.

Eventually, an incident that could have spelled the end became an opportunity to pursue the mid-engined route. A puncture in

qualifying at Silverstone in 2017 caused damage that sprayed oil onto the turbos and the 935 became an inferno.

“It was pretty scary, because the car filled up with horrible acrid smoke instantly, and you just couldn’t breathe,” says Chamberlain. “I got out and watched it burn to the ground. It was destroyed. And once again, I’m really pigheaded so I didn’t give up. So we literally just got a gas axe and cut the back of the car off at the B-pillar.”

A complete redesign rotated the engine, mating it to a Hewland gearbox, and extended the wheelbase by around 300mm. It took more than a year, but everything was done in-house, from CAD design to manufacture using CNC milling machines and lathes. The car made a successful return with three wins from four races first time out at Donington Park in 2019.

“Every single bit from the B-post back, except the engine and gearbox, we manufactured at home,” says Chamberlain. “The car was a lot more stable in the fast corners, it carried more speed to



HAWKINS

Like father, like son

Matt Chamberlain is following in his father’s footsteps by refusing to take the easy option. The manufacturing engineer designed and built the CTR 01 sports-prototype the pair share in the Zeo Prototype Cup in his spare time.

Chamberlain Jr previously competed in Bikesports with a heavily modified version of a Suzuki Hayabusa-engined Lynx Racing LR1300 kit car, which he christened the Arachnid in a playful nod to Porsche’s famous Spyders.

“The engine was very powerful but we couldn’t hold the gearbox together, or the clutch – one or the other would always blow up,” he says. “So, after having the Arachnid for a couple of years, I foolishly thought I could do better. So I set about

“I’m a glutton for punishment, so in there is the tiniest flywheel and clutch that you can get”

designing the current car in the evenings and weekends. But originally it had the same bike engine, and I was hitting the same trouble. It wasn’t fun, and I couldn’t afford to keep buying new clutch baskets or gear clusters.”

Drawing on CTR customer experience in VdeV



JONES



The Porsche 935 was a key Intermarque contender in 1990s

the apex, it would brake more consistently. Very satisfying.”

With the engine now the ‘wrong’ way round, cooling became a problem. So Chamberlain’s next project was to switch to a water-cooled powerplant. “Anyone with any sense would have bought a 997 turbo engine from a scrapheap and rebuilt it,” he smiles. “But I didn’t do that. I really always wanted to build a 962 engine. The 962C engines had water-cooled cylinders and water-cooled heads. It’s a truly sophisticated, proper race engine. And it’s a very expensive lump and getting the parts is almost impossible.”

Step forward expert Group C engine builder Paul Knapton of Xtec Engineering. After some haggling with 935 engine parts, Knapton built Chamberlain an engine for 2020 – only for COVID-19 to restrict it to a single outing. “Xtec made a beautiful job of it,” Chamberlain says. “But, interestingly, the engine had considerably less power than the 935 engine, which was a major disappointment to me. And it was a lot heavier as well. So the car put on a fair bit of weight and



Chamberlain’s latest developments include new suspension for this year

had lost horsepower, but had gained reliability.”

Development in conjunction with Xtec on ports, valves and camshafts clawed back that power deficit and more. It helped the old warhorse onto the podium at Snetterton last year. “It was a real mixed bag last year, and I thought the driving standards were appalling,” says Chamberlain. “I actually blew an engine up, which really upset me, because someone hit me in the side of the car and flattened an oil-return pipe. I didn’t know, and 30 seconds later the engine lunched itself. It was disappointing.”

In the continuing quest to keep up with the GT Cup’s GT3s, including British GT outfits on dual programmes, this winter’s development included shedding 30kg via finite element analysis. Having replaced the front suspension’s MacPherson struts with double wishbones last year, the car now has new uprights too.

“We are, I think, almost unique in the pitlane in that we design and build our cars, whereas everyone else goes to the showroom and buys one,” surmises Chamberlain. “We are dinosaurs, let’s be honest. But for us, it’s much more satisfying to make it all at home and compete.”

By “compete”, Chamberlain means “win”. His Porsche 935 might fall into GT Cup’s Open class, away from the GT3-spec cars, but Chamberlain isn’t interested in class honours.

“A class win is pointless as far as I’m concerned,” he says. “The only win worth having is a win. I’m very keen to be able to beat them. We haven’t given up!”



Chamberlain Jr has developed the CTR 01 prototype with Honda engine

racing, Chamberlain upgraded to a Formula 3-style powertrain of Honda K20 engine and Hewland six-speed sequential gearbox. Every other part is bespoke, designed and machined in-house, and fitted in around Chamberlain’s day job as

well as CTR customer work, which includes using its 3D printer technology in Formula 1.

“When we turned the engine round on Dad’s car, we looked at timescales, costs, the whole business case,” he explains, “and we

worked out that we could probably earn back the cost of the machine, software and bits and pieces, mostly on that one job. Now we machine probably 95% of our parts. There are one or two things that we can’t do because the machine physically isn’t big enough.

“The Hewland doesn’t come with a bellhousing so I had to design that. But I’m a glutton for punishment, so in there is the tiniest flywheel and clutch that you can get. So I’ve had to design and make a silly step-aside, drop-down starter motor.”

After suffering from porpoising, worse on bumpy circuits, the CTR 01 now has an interim suspension package before a full upgrade with new uprights and pick-up points comes on stream. All-new aero, set to increase downforce and reduce drag, will follow.

It’s a continual evolution that’s never complete. “I’ve learned from Dad the ‘wrong’ way of doing things really!” laughs Chamberlain.

FINISHING STRAIGHT



The most realistic console driving experience yet



VIDEO GAME
ASSETTO CORSA COMPETIZIONE
RRP £34.99
(available on PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X|S)

If you would like to take your virtual driving up a notch and into the realm of a dedicated simulator, *Assetto Corsa Competizione* has been a staple choice for leagues, Esports events and real-world drivers looking for some practice since 2018.

Up until recently, however, this has largely been the preserve of those with a gaming PC – and a beefy one too due to the power-intensive programming of the official GT World Challenge game. It has been available to those with a PlayStation 4 or Xbox One console since 2020 but, while this version

drove well, its visual performance was best described as a catastrophe.

Now though, a new iteration has been released for the more powerful PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X|S devices. Thankfully, those without the space, time or requisite budget to set up a gaming rig can experience one of the best home-based driving experiences in its intended fashion.

What we have here is a vast array of GT3 and GT4 machinery, up to 19 tracks, close racing against computer-controlled rivals and competitive online events all nestled within knock-out visuals, dynamic weather conditions and some of the most realistic driving feedback around.

It's that last point where Kunos Simulazioni's homage to SRO's GT racing series prowess has never been in doubt. Use a steering wheel peripheral, and the force feedback effect creates an unparalleled sense of realism. Hopping over kerbs at Oulton Park feels brutal enough to

prevent track limit abuse, for example.

Assetto Corsa Competizione's core strengths have translated with aplomb, such as the industry-leading engine audio, convoluted but engaging pitstop sequences and a physics system that rewards in-depth knowledge of steering lock settings, aero balance and tyre pressures.

So do some of the platform's idiosyncrasies. There's a driver rating system that constantly monitors your ability – even in offline practice – and if you don't reach a high enough level, the best online races are off limits for you. A great idea in principle that isn't signposted enough.

Similarly, with button assignments, engine map usage and start procedures you are simply left to your own devices. Thankfully, there is a thriving community of advice articles, videos and forums to delve into that provide a helping hand. In some respects, that's part of the appeal, but this writer believes that more needs to be done to help explain features and settings for newcomers.

The single-player career structure is also unexceptional, for the most part a procession of race events with no attempt to add extra depth through team management. Then again, for a focused platform like this, anything outside of time trials and multiplayer can be seen as a bonus.

Visually, it runs smoothly and looks just as good as on a powerful PC, if not the leading edge in aesthetics. Loading times



Game features an impressive choice of GT machinery

ACC

Realism of racing at Spa in top-line GTs is at your fingertips with this latest offering for Xbox

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Australian Grand Prix

F1 World Championship

Round 3/23

Melbourne, Australia

10 April

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sunday 0555

TV Highlights Sky Sports F1, Sun 1200, Channel 4, Sun 1505

Formula E

Round 3/10

Rome, Italy

9-10 April

TV Live Channel 4 Sport YouTube, Sat 1330, Eurosport 1, Sat 1330, Channel 4/Channel 4 Sport YouTube, Sun 1330, Eurosport 2, Sun 1400

IndyCar Series

Round 3/16

Long Beach, USA

10 April

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 2000

IMSA SportsCar

Round 3/12

Long Beach, USA

9 April

Super Formula

Round 1/7

Fuji, Japan

9-10 April

Australian Supercars

Round 3/13

Melbourne, Australia

9-10 April

NASCAR Cup

Round 8/36

Martinsville, USA

10 April

TV Live Premier Sports 1, Sun 0000



F1 returns to Albert Park for first Australian GP since 2019

SBLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

NASCAR Xfinity

Round 8/33

Martinsville, USA

8 April

NASCAR Truck Series

Round 5/23

Martinsville, USA

7 April

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Fri 0030

MotoGP

Round 4/21

Austin, USA

10 April

TV Live BT Sport 2, Sun 1830
TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

UK MOTORSPORT

Goodwood BARC

9-10 April

Members' Meeting (page 34)

Livestream youtube.com/watch?v=unelQU6EkRs

Oulton Park BRSCC

9 April

CityCar Cup, Fun Cup, Northern FF1600/Super Classic, ST-XR Challenge

Brands Hatch BRSCC

9-10 April

BMW Compact Cup,

Caterham (270R, 310R, Roadsport, Seven UK), Fiesta, Fiesta Junior, Modified Ford Series, Track Attack

Donington Park MSVR

9-10 April

Clubmans, GT Cup, Lotus Cup, Production GTI, Radical Challenge, Radical SR1 Cup, Toyo Tires Racing Saloons/Z Cars, United FF1600

Croft 750MC

9-10 April

116 Trophy, 5Club MX-5, BMW Car Club, Classic Stock Hatch, Clio Sport, Hot Hatch, Ma7da, Sports 1000, Type R Trophy
Livestream alphalive.co.uk

Mondello Park MPSC

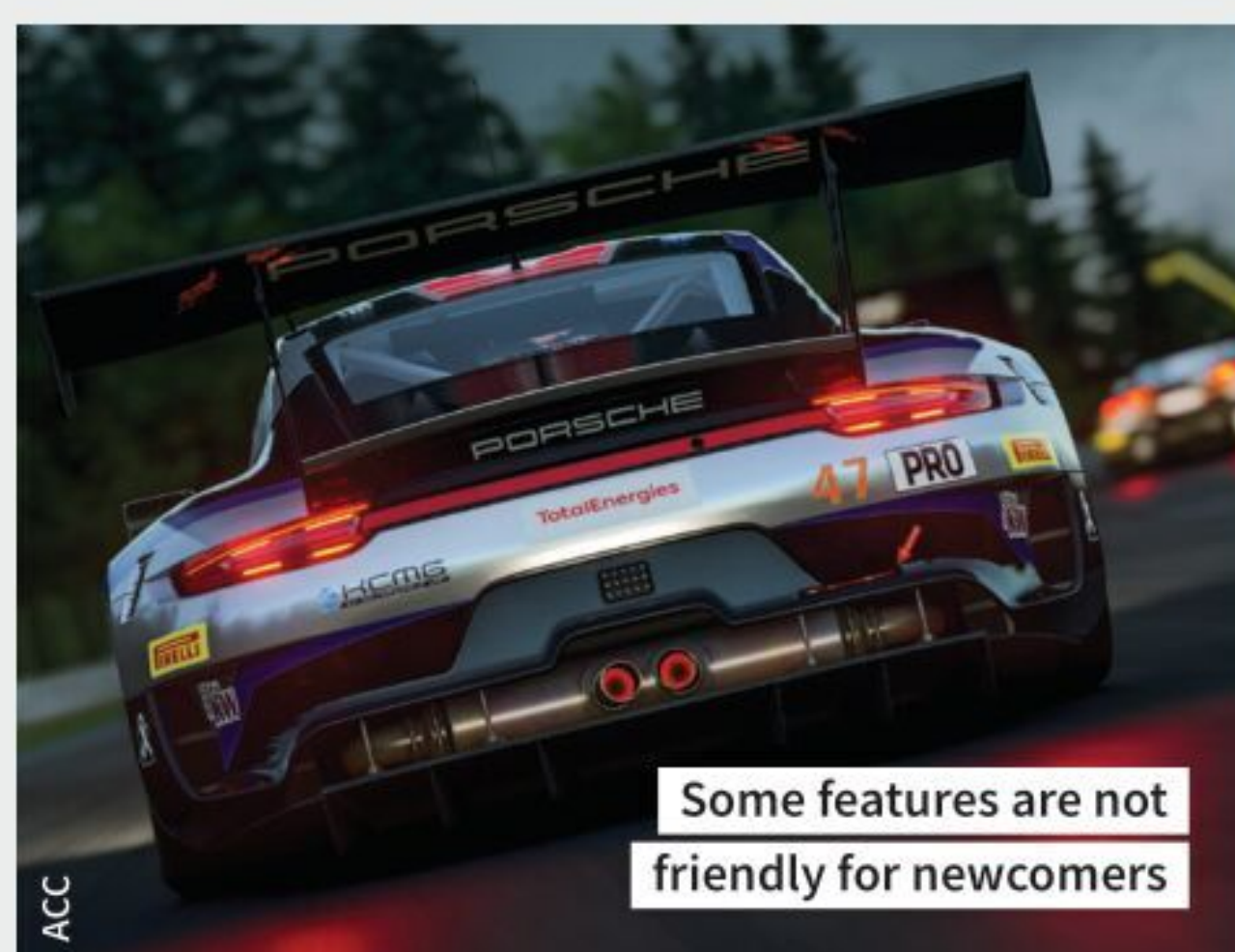
9-10 April

Fiesta ST, Fiesta Zetec, Formula BOSS, Formula Sheane, Formula Vee, Future Classics, Historics, ITCC/Supercars/SEATS, Junior Mini/Ginetta Junior, Legends, Strykers

Knockhill SMRC

10 April

Citroen C1, Classics, Fiesta ST, Scottish FF1600, Junior, Mini, R53



Some features are not friendly for newcomers

too are fleeting, helping you nip between a night race at Mount Panorama to a GT4 event at Kyalami in the blink of an eye.

As an added bonus, private online lobbies are included, allowing you to natively race with friends without hiring a server. Not being able to change race settings mutes the appeal somewhat and the omission of driver swaps likely means Esports competitions will not be held on PlayStation or Xbox, however.

On the PC there was a 'version 1.8' update in November 2021 that improved the handling characteristics even further, but this has yet to materialise for the console devices. Hopefully, this appears sooner rather than later, as it means the recent 'Challengers Pack' content that included Valentino Rossi's Audi and the latest Porsche 911 Cup car cannot be released on console at present.

Still, driving against a packed GT3 field, at night, in the rain, around Spa with the most aurally pleasing sound design in the sim racing space is a brutal, but rewarding challenge that any motorsport fan should experience.

THOMAS HARRISON-LORD

For daily racing game news, visit traxion.gg



Goodwood Members' Meeting offers mix of eras for races and demos

JBLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



FROM THE ARCHIVE

An audience of curious locals gathers to watch 21-year-old Peter Collins and his colleagues from the works Aston Martin concern as they inspect the brand new DB3S that has just been

unloaded from its transporter ahead of the 1953 Le Mans 24 Hours. This was one of three factory entries for Collins/Reg Parnell, George Abecassis/Roy Salvadori and Eric Thompson/Dennis Poore. Sadly, both pace and

luck were lacking for Aston Martin. The Collins/Parnell car crashed out, Abecassis and Salvadori retired with clutch problems and Thompson/Poore's engine expired after having been dogged by valve gear issues.



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MY FAVOURITE... **TRACK**

Suzuka

ALLAN McNISH



MAIN: MOTORSPORT IMAGES; INSET: AUDI COMMUNICATIONS MOTORSPORT/MALTE CHRISTIANS

Allan McNish never enjoyed much success in the three races he was entered into at Suzuka.

He was withdrawn from the 2002 Japanese Grand Prix following a 175mph qualifying crash, and his best finish from two prior visits in the FIA GT Championship was third in 1998. The Scot maintains that “we should have won” that year, when his Porsche was punted into the gravel early on by Ricardo Zonta’s Mercedes and lost three laps. McNish went on to set the fastest lap.

But his love for the 3.608-mile circuit is deep-rooted, having spent many a day pounding around in testing for McLaren to develop its Honda V12 engine for the 1991 Formula 1 season. McNish says one of the circuit’s best attributes is that it “hasn’t been sanitised”.

“I loved it from the first moment I sat on the circuit,” he reflects. “It had a natural feel to it. It was a challenge, a lot of elevation change. And there was grass right at the edge of the circuit, it was quite narrow, so it bit you in the arse if you



made a mistake. You had to respect the circuit and it was a challenge to get it right. But when you did, it was a great feeling.”

To McNish, that satisfaction was unaffected by the car he drove. “Every corner still was that sort of same challenge,” he says. “When you dropped down into the first corner and tried to brake and turn and get it tightened up for the second part, you needed a little lift to get the front of the car in, it wasn’t just flat-out.”

McNish stresses that his 69G impact with the 130R tyre barrier in 2002, prior to what was due to be his final GP with Toyota, didn’t dampen his enthusiasm for Suzuka.

“It disappointed me that they changed the corner, it took away a little bit of something,” he says of the reprofiled 130R that he sampled upon his return as Renault’s third driver in 2003.

“I know it tried to make me 1m20[cm] instead of 1m65, but it wasn’t the corner’s fault! And it didn’t necessarily take away from the circuit as a whole.”

JAMES NEWBOLD



MAUGER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

IN NEXT WEEK’S ISSUE

F1 returns to Australia

WHAT NEXT IN THE LECLERC VS VERSTAPPEN BATTLE?

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