

F1 2022 Why Ferrari has more to come

AUTOSPORT

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21 APRIL 2022

CAN FERRARI TAKE ITS BIG CHANCE?

F1's legendary team has nailed the new rules, now comes the challenge of Red Bull's reply

'This reset has given us the opportunity, it's our job to stay there'

CARLOS SAINZ

PREVIEW

BTCC IS GO!

OUR 10-PAGE
GUIDE





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The challenges and strengths of Ferrari's latest F1 attack

It's been a long wait for Ferrari Formula 1 fans — or, indeed, anyone wanting to see a team other than Mercedes and Red Bull win a world championship. But things have not looked this good for some time.

Ferrari has ticked the box of building a quick, reliable car for the new ground-effects era, plus Charles Leclerc is clearly ready to battle Max Verstappen *et al* for the drivers' crown. The big question now is whether can Ferrari keep up its performance and development rate in the face of what will almost certainly be a major assault from Red Bull, which has already proven it has a rapid machine in the RB18.

Matt Kew hears from the key Ferrari players this week to explore how good a chance the 2022 season is for the famous team (page 18). It appears that the squad has solved the issues that scuppered its 2017-18 challenges, and there are some aspects of the new rules that should help Ferrari in its fight against Red Bull and a recovering Mercedes.

The British Touring Car Championship kicks off at Donington Park this weekend. Marcus Simmons looks at the new tin-top superteam and is your guide to what's new for 2022 in our preview on p26.

Although it was a relatively quiet weekend for international motorsport (p36), there was plenty of UK racing action over Easter. We cover the best races and news, as well as assess the runners and riders in the BTCC's support categories, in this week's 23-page National section (p45).



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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NEXT WEEK
28 APRIL

The F1 battle in Italy
All the action from the latest Ferrari vs Red Bull battle, at Imola



COVER IMAGE

Andy Hone/Motorsport Images

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PIT + PADDOCK



BTCC enters its new hybrid era at

BTCC

If everything goes to plan, at 1150 this Sunday at Donington Park, 29 hybrid-equipped NGTC cars will blast off at lights-out into a new era of the British Touring Car Championship.

'Reliability' is the key word among the leading contenders for 2022, and a glance at the Thruxton stats reveals that the usual contenders were racking up the mileage – a tribute to their teams' preparation and implementation of the Cosworth-produced hybrid system, which was only delivered

to the squads in March. The Motorbase Ford of Ollie Jackson chalked up 96 laps on the day, followed by Rory Butcher's Speedworks Toyota (81) and, tied on 79, Sam Osborne (Motorbase Ford), Colin Turkington (West Surrey Racing BMW) and Adam Morgan (Ciceley BMW). "West Surrey is the only team I'd want to be going into the new era of hybrid with, because I've seen the work they've done to install the hybrid package," said four-time champion Turkington. "Reliability is going to be really important."

A byproduct of the hybrid is that it has allowed series organiser TOCA to do away with the old system of success ballast. This has been replaced by restrictions on deployment of the hybrid for the series' most successful drivers (see p32). It means that, next to 'reliability', the most regular word cropping up in pre-season conversation is 'consistency'. Tom Ingram, who will once again pilot an Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai, has even gone so far as to predict that a weekend clean-sweep is on the cards, for the first time since Jason Plato won all three races at the 2009 Brands Hatch finale.

"We've all run the hybrid system in anger, but we haven't run it in anger over a race distance, and we don't know what it's going to do in terms of how that number affects it," says Ingram. "How does it change it over a race distance? What does it do on a single

lap time performance? All these things that we just don't know about, we're going to learn on the job and that'll be cool.

"Seventy-five kilos of success ballast [the old maximum] made you go seven and a half tenths a lap slower. Is having 15 seconds of hybrid compared to zero seconds [in qualifying for the points leader] seven and a half tenths? Dunno. We'll find out, but I don't think it'll be as great. So potentially we could see – and I'll happily stand to be corrected because I'm probably going to be wrong – somebody qualifying on pole, winning race one, two and three if they get a favourable reverse grid. So it's going to be interesting, and I think it'll favour consistency more than we've ever seen."

The other main topic is the change of balance induced by the hybrid, especially in front-wheel-drive cars. Three-time title winner Gordon Shedden, who lost much of his running in his Team Dynamics Honda at Thruxton thanks to a bizarre shunt with the WSR BMW of Stephen Jelley when they were both on out-laps, remarked: "I tell you, it changes the car more than I thought it would. It just feels so different from having 75kg of ballast in the car because of its position. It's much higher up, it really pulls the centre of gravity up, so it's changing the way the car feels quite a bit, and that takes a little bit of getting used to, but once you get



Haas rejects refund claim from Russian ex-sponsor

FORMULA 1

The Haas Formula 1 team has rejected a claim from title sponsor Uralkali for a refund of £9.9million already paid to the squad and has demanded £6.6m compensation for 'loss of profits'.

Haas terminated its sponsorship deal with Uralkali in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, due to company director Dmitry Mazepin's ties to Russian president Vladimir Putin, and ended its deal with Mazepin's son Nikita to race for the team in 2022.

Uralkali said it was considering legal action over the matter, and wrote to Haas to dispute the team's rights to terminate the contract, as well as request a refund of €12m (£9.95m) that had been paid in advance. It has emerged that Haas has now formally responded to the Uralkali letter and wholly rejected the company's claims.

In the letter from the team to Uralkali, a copy of which has been seen by Autosport, Haas insists it had a right to end the deal because of a clause in the sponsorship agreement obliging Uralkali to not 'injure, bring into disrepute, ridicule, or lessen the public reputation, goodwill or favourable image of Haas'.

Haas claims that the Mazepin ties to the Kremlin, allied to sanctions imposed by the European Union, triggered the disrepute clause. But no sanctions had been imposed by anyone – including the EU – when the contract was terminated.

Haas added that beyond the money already paid, the team is entitled to compensation for the loss of profits it believes would have been made if the Uralkali deal had continued. It has subsequently demanded a payment of €8m in lieu of this, which it wants transferred in a matter of days. Haas has also made clear that it will not fulfil a



Mazepin was ejected on eve of the season

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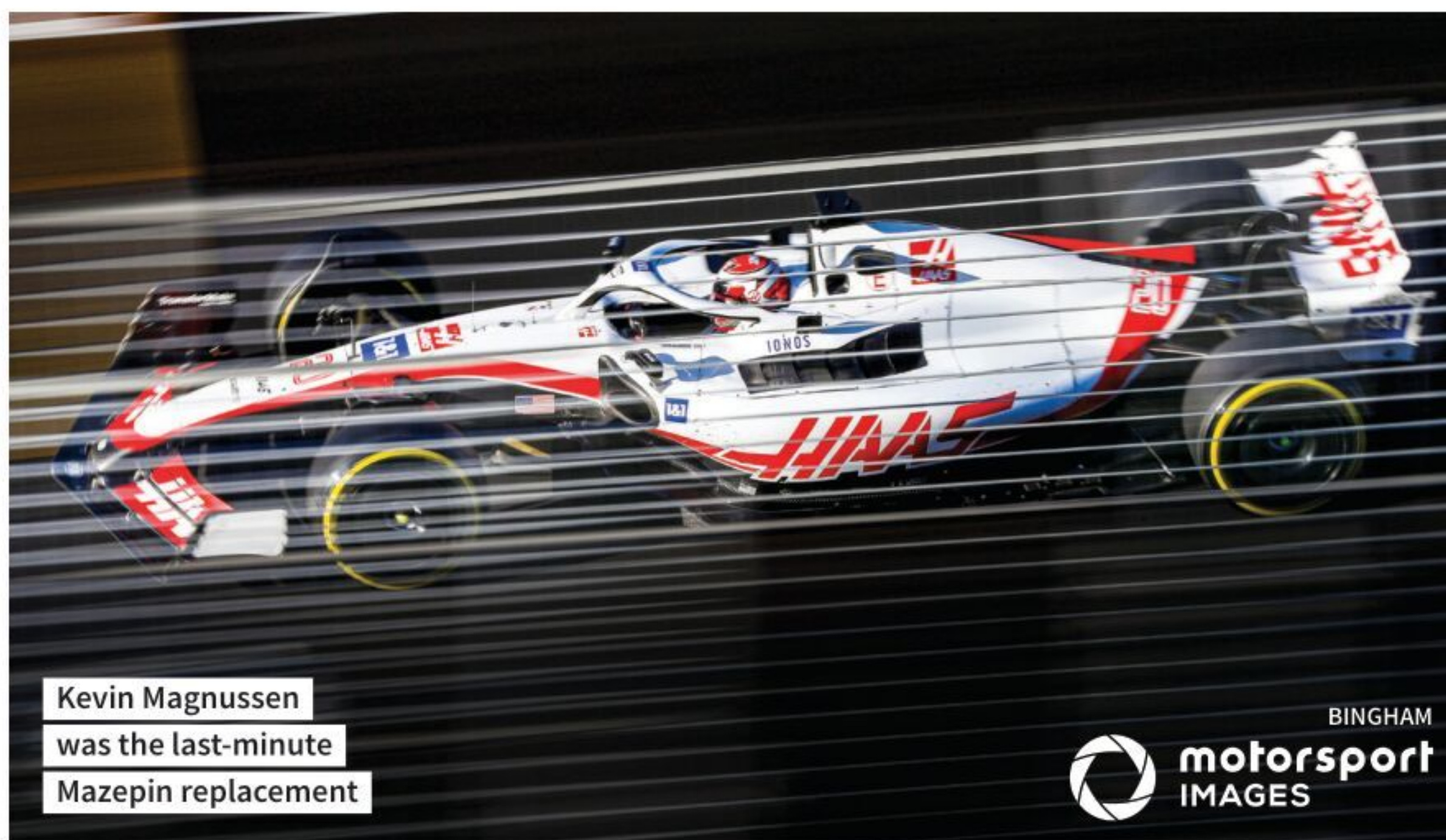
clause in its original contract for Uralkali to be given one of Mazepin's 2021 F1 cars until it has received the €8m payment.

According to a source with good knowledge of the situation, Haas has also refused to pay Mazepin his salary for the time worked this season before his contract was cancelled.

Haas's stance is understood to have left Uralkali astonished, with sources saying they are in "disbelief" about the withholding of the money and the demand for an extra payment. One source said: "They seem to be fine with spending Russian money – and even are asking for more – but don't want to have any Russians around."

Representatives of Uralkali and Mazepin Jr declined to comment on the matter and instead referred to a previous statement issued on the company website. The Haas F1 team was approached for comment but had not responded at the time of publication. The matter now almost certainly looks to be heading to court, unless there is a last-minute change of approach from Haas in relation to the money.

JONATHAN NOBLE



Kevin Magnussen was the last-minute Mazepin replacement

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Donington

your head round that and you find a way to compensate for that it's actually OK.

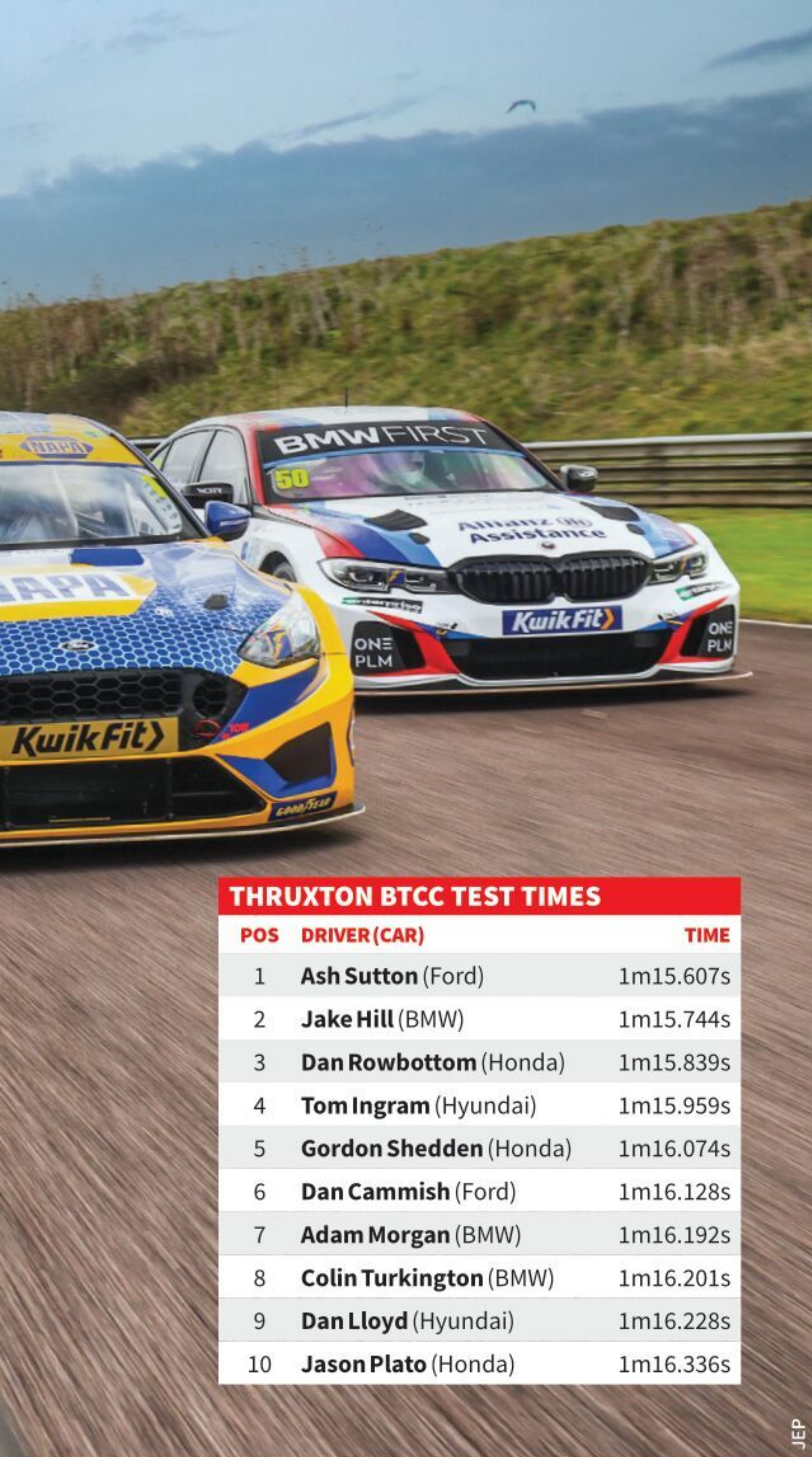
"To be fair our system's been good. Understanding the best way to use it is what everyone's trying to do, and that's deployment, cooling, everything that goes with it. But I'm not unduly worried."

Reigning champion Ash Sutton topped the test with a late run in his Motorbase Ford, displacing the morning best of Jake Hill (WSR BMW). Best of the cars powered by the new M-Sport-built TOCA customer engine was Plato's BTC Racing Honda in 10th overall. Whether the TOCA cars get a boost increase in time for Donington was unknown as we went to press.

For some, it was a job to get running at all. At Team Hard, Aron Taylor-Smith did 33 laps in his Cupra, Bobby Thompson nine in the morning, eleventh-hour re-signing Nic Hamilton a few at the end of the day, and Rick Parfitt's Infiniti didn't get going at all. Lead driver Jack Goff was AWOL, and team boss Tony Gilham didn't want to comment as he rushes to sort things out. In the neighbouring awning, Aiden Moffat got just two laps in his Laser Tools Racing Infiniti, although Dexter Patterson got some decent running in during the afternoon.

MARCUS SIMMONS

➔ P26 BTCC PREVIEW



THRUXTON BTCC TEST TIMES

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
1	Ash Sutton (Ford)	1m15.607s
2	Jake Hill (BMW)	1m15.744s
3	Dan Rowbottom (Honda)	1m15.839s
4	Tom Ingram (Hyundai)	1m15.959s
5	Gordon Shedden (Honda)	1m16.074s
6	Dan Cammish (Ford)	1m16.128s
7	Adam Morgan (BMW)	1m16.192s
8	Colin Turkington (BMW)	1m16.201s
9	Dan Lloyd (Hyundai)	1m16.228s
10	Jason Plato (Honda)	1m16.336s

JEP

Monaco GP boss says race's future is safe

FORMULA 1

The organisers of the Monaco Grand Prix say they have no concerns about the future of the race amid talks over a new contract beyond 2022.

Questions have been raised about Monaco's future amid the ongoing expansion of the F1 calendar to include more city events such as Miami and Las Vegas, particularly as the race has traditionally not paid a hosting fee. F1 CEO and president Stefano Domenicali recently warned that it was "not enough to have a pedigree anymore" for races to keep their place on the calendar, and that the arrival of new events would "force the organisers of traditional grands prix to raise their level of quality".

Monaco's existing contract expires after the 2022 race,

but Automobile Club de Monaco president Michel Boeri responded to concerns about its future by expressing confidence that a new contract would be signed as negotiations with F1 continue.

"I'd like to refer to what has been read in the press, where it is said that we may struggle to keep organising grand prix races beyond the 2022 event, so as early as next year," Boeri said at an event with marshals ahead of next month's race, according to *La Gazette de Monaco*.

"It was implied that the fees required by Liberty [Media] were too excessive for Monaco and the grand prix would no longer be held. That's untrue. We are still in talks with them and must now seal the deal with a contract. I can guarantee you that the grand prix will keep



taking place beyond 2022. I don't know if it will be a three or five-year contract, but that's a detail."

AlphaTauri driver Pierre Gasly said it would be "a bit of a shocker if Monaco gets taken out of the calendar",

stressing the significance of the event to F1's image. "It's a very iconic weekend," said Gasly. "It's probably the toughest track of the season, the most challenging, and is my favourite one."

LUKE SMITH

Alpine could loan Piastri for 2023 season

FORMULA 1

Alpine is open to loaning Oscar Piastri to another Formula 1 team for the 2023 season, as long as a return is part of the deal.

Reigning F2 champion Piastri is embarking on an intensive testing programme with Alpine this year as part of his reserve role with the team. He is completing all of the private test running and taking part in debriefs on race weekends, as well as making at least two FP1 appearances.

It is all part of a push to prepare Piastri for a race seat in 2023, although there may not be a vacant drive at Alpine. Esteban Ocon is in year one of a three-season contract, while Fernando Alonso has indicated that he wishes to keep racing for another couple of years. If Alonso continues to perform well this season and a decision is taken to retain him for 2023, Alpine CEO Laurent Rossi said the team is open to a loan deal elsewhere for Piastri, but



BINGHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

only if there was a clear path back.

"If it's a solution that allows me to get him back at some point, I might think about it," said Rossi. "I'm not opposed to the solution. You understand I want to develop Oscar; I don't want to leave him sitting on the bench waiting forever. [Looking at a loan has] always been a parameter for all of us. We knew last year that Fernando was performing. And it would be very surprising if suddenly during the winter he lost his magic. So let's be realistic. It's part of the scenarios we need to explore."

Rossi is adamant that the year on

the sidelines won't hamper Piastri's rapid development, with the team effectively redesigning the reserve role around the Australian.

"It's going to be an extensive testing programme, a lot of test days, a lot of kilometres, a lot of simulator," added Rossi. "Even compared to last year, my reserve driver [Daniil Kvyat] was not necessarily involved in all those briefings or debriefs – clearly not doing all of the tests, clearly not going on the simulator so much. And that's normal. Oscar is doing it all."

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

New Ferrari hits track at Fiorano

GT3

Ferrari's new GT3 contender began testing on home ground at Fiorano last week, with Alessandro Pier Guidi and Andrea Bertolini putting the twin-turbo V6 machine through its paces over two days at the marque's test track.

The run last Tuesday and Wednesday followed a short installation roll-out at Paul Ricard's mini-test track close to the headquarters of French motorsport organisation ORECA, which has won the tender to build the new Ferrari design.

Ferrari GT boss Antonello Coletta described the first laps of the 296 racer, the replacement for the 488 dating back to 2016, as a "special moment".

"We chose to carry out the first tests in Fiorano because it's our home and to allow the people who worked on the project to share a very special emotion," he said. "We've already had some good feedback from this first session."

Two-time World Endurance Championship GTE Pro title winner Pier Guidi expressed satisfaction with the test: "The Ferrari 296 GT3 proved to be a delightful and precise car to drive. Obviously,



at this stage the work focused on testing the systems and essential reliability, and we are pleased with the data we gathered."

Ferrari chose not to reveal the mileage completed by the 296 on its first test, but a spokesman explained that the programme planned for the car was completed over the two days. "We managed all the tasks that we were trying to do," he said. "There were no

big problems, only one small issue at the end of the second day, but nothing that prevented us from doing our work."

Coletta has promised "an intense testing programme" over the rest of the year prior to the homologation of the 296 GT3 and its release to customers for 2023. No details of this programme have so far been released.

GARY WATKINS



Loeb back on board for Portugal

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

World Rally Championship legend Sebastien Loeb will rejoin M-Sport to contest next month's Rally Portugal in a Ford Puma. The nine-time champion has secured another one-off deal with the British squad, after defeating Toyota's Sebastien Ogier to score a memorable 80th career WRC win on the Monte Carlo Rally in January.

M-Sport had been keen to secure Loeb's services for more WRC events depending on the 48-year-old's busy schedule, which includes Extreme E, the FIA World Rally-Raid Championship, and now DTM. A deal has been struck for the 20-22 May gravel rally thanks to support from Ford and

Red Bull. Loeb will once again be joined by co-driver Isabelle Galmiche following their Monte Carlo success. It is anticipated that Loeb will renew his rivalry with Ogier, who is also tipped to continue his part-time WRC campaign in Portugal.

"I have competed on this version of the rally in 2019 so I have a base of pacenotes from some of the stages," said Loeb. "That was one of the reasons for choosing Portugal, the other was I wanted to do a gravel rally; I like driving on gravel so it was a very straightforward choice."

M-Sport will field five Pumas in Portugal, Loeb joining Craig Breen, Gus Greensmith, Adrien Fourmaux and Pierre-Louis Loubet.

TOM HOWARD

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Minardi chosen to oversee junior racing ladder



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Minardi (inset) used to be an F2 constructor. This is Alessandro Nannini at Enna-Pergusa in 1983

COLOMBO
motorsport
IMAGES

SINGLE-SEATERS

Ex-Formula 1 team owner Giancarlo Minardi has been chosen as the new president of the FIA Single Seater Commission. The Italian was elected by an e-vote of members of the World Motor Sport Council, and replaces former Force India deputy team principal Bob Fernley, who got the job under previous FIA president Jean Todt in December 2020.

Following the election of new FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem last December, Fernley was not invited to continue, and the post was left vacant on the list of key FIA appointments. Originally formed in 2010, the Commission oversees

the ladder of categories below F1, with F2, F3, F4 and Formula Regional the main focus. The late Barry Bland was the inaugural president, succeeded by Gerhard Berger, Stefano Domenicali and Fernley.

Ben Sulayem said: "I warmly welcome the election of Giancarlo Minardi as FIA Single Seater Commission president. He is a major figure in motorsport. I look forward to working with him to further develop the single-seater pyramid around the world."

Minardi first became known as an F2 team owner in the 1970s under the Scuderia Everest name. He began constructing his own F2 cars in 1980, before making the move to F1 in 1985, initially with a single

entry for Pierluigi Martini.

The Minardi name remained in F1 for two decades, with the team latterly under the ownership of Paul Stoddart. It was sold to Red Bull in the summer of 2005, became Toro Rosso the following season, and is now known as AlphaTauri.

Minardi himself remained involved in motorsport in various roles. He became president of the Automobile Club d'Italia's Land Speed Records Commission in 2004, and in 2020 was chosen as president of the organisation behind his local Imola circuit, which that year returned to the F1 calendar as the host of the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

ADAM COOPER

Collet leads MP 1-2 in Barcelona 'pre-Europe' test

FORMULA 3

Dutch single-seater team MP Motorsport was the king of Barcelona last week. After Felipe Drugovich had topped the Formula 2 test (see right), the FIA Formula 3 runners took to the track on Friday and Saturday, and it was MP's Brazilian talent Caio Collet who emerged on top from team-mate Alexander Smolyar.

As in the F2 test, it was the final morning when the majority of the field went

on qualifying simulation runs. Collet (right) beat Smolyar by 0.317 seconds, with the other Dutch team, Van Amersfoort Racing, next up thanks to Franco Colapinto. Series leader Victor Martins was 14th overall with ART Grand Prix.

Top of the Brits was Prema's Ferrari protege Ollie Bearman in 19th position, while compatriot Ayrton Simmons was replaced at Charouz Racing System by DTM-bound David Schumacher for reasons that remain unclear.



TOP 10 TIMES

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Caio Collet (MP)	1m31.507s
2	Alexander Smolyar (MP)	1m31.824s
3	Franco Colapinto (VAR)	1m31.848s
4	Isack Hadjar (Hitech)	1m31.855s
5	Roman Stanek (Trident)	1m31.935s
6	Gregoire Saucy (ART)	1m32.002s
7	Oliver Rasmussen (Trident)	1m32.080s
8	Zane Maloney (Trident)	1m32.107s
9	Matteo Nannini (ART)	1m32.177s
10	Arthur Leclerc (Prema)	1m32.206s



Drugovich on ominous form

FORMULA 2

Early-season FIA Formula 2 Championship leader Felipe Drugovich completed his fine start to the season by setting the quickest time of last week's three-day test at Barcelona as the teams geared up for the European bulk of their campaign, beginning this weekend at Imola.

The majority of teams kept their powder dry for qualifying simulation runs on soft option tyres until the final morning of the test, on Thursday. That was when Brazilian Drugovich (above), who claimed pole and won the feature race last time out in Jeddah, whisked his MP Motorsport machine around the Circuit de Catalunya to go quickest to the tune of 0.291 seconds.

Red Bull Junior Liam Lawson, who is second in the points after finishing runner-up in the feature race at the Bahrain opener and winning the sprint race at round two in Jeddah, was the best of the rest at Barcelona in his Carlin car. "MP were quick at Barcelona, but the problem with these tests is when you do your time," said team boss Trevor Carlin. "Felipe went out a little bit later than us and the conditions had improved a little bit.

"There's still work to do but we're

cracking on. Liam has got the experience on the option tyre and knows when to push, but we can improve the car and he can improve his driving. We haven't peaked yet."

Behind Jack Doohan (Virtuosi) and Richard Verschoor (Trident), Ralph Boschung was fifth overall with Campos Racing. The Swiss broke ranks by setting his time with a run on the soft tyres during the opening afternoon. The weather was cooler over the first two days, with showers interrupting some of the running.

MARCUS SIMMONS

TOP 10 TIMES

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Felipe Drugovich (MP)	1m27.529s
2	Liam Lawson (Carlin)	1m27.820s
3	Jack Doohan (Virtuosi)	1m27.838s
4	Richard Verschoor (Trident)	1m27.858s
5	Ralph Boschung (Campos)	1m27.929s
6	Dennis Hauger (Prema)	1m27.945s
7	Ayumu Iwasa (DAMS)	1m27.989s
8	Jehan Daruvala (Prema)	1m28.019s
9	Theo Pourchaire (ART)	1m28.021s
10	Enzo Fittipaldi (Charouz)	1m28.027s

M-SPORT REVEALS DAKAR COLLABORATION

DAKAR RALLY

M-Sport plans to contest the Dakar Rally as part of a new collaboration with renowned rally raid manufacturer Neil Woolridge Motorsport.

The partnership will mean a collaboration between the World Rally Championship squad and South African operation NWM on the development of the Ford Ranger T1+ rally-raid racer.

Cumbrian-based M-Sport will become NWM's European headquarters and global distributor for the Ranger, while setting up a customer support programme, with the first Ranger vehicles expected to arrive at the end of May.

A definitive timeframe for its first Dakar attempt is yet to be announced, with the team confirming the event as its long-term goal. "It's fair to say I'm not one to stray away from a challenge, it's what I love about motorsport and it's no secret we have some work to do to contend for the prestigious Dakar Rally," said M-Sport managing director Malcolm Wilson. "That said, I am confident that M-Sport and NWM have the tools and knowhow to push the Ford Ranger T1+ to new heights."

TOM HOWARD



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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-trimmed 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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Mercedes junior Aron
leads Nicolas Todt-
managed Mini at Monza



Massive field for Monza opener

FORMULA REGIONAL

The Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine is one of motorsport's success stories since the merger of the historic Formula Renault Eurocup with the pallid original version of FRegional European for 2021. The organisers had yet to issue an entry list as we went to press, but you can expect up to 40 entries for this weekend's opening double-header round at Monza.

Massive numbers, yes, but since its inception the Tatuus Regional F3 chassis has forged a reputation for not being conducive to good racing. For 2022, therefore, an IndyCar-style push-to-pass system has been introduced. Drivers will be allowed five pushes of the button each race, each giving them 15 seconds of additional engine power. A less-durable Pirelli has also been introduced, although this has not caused noticeable concerns of degradation.

As in the halcyon days of FRenault, the field will now be split into two groups for qualifying, with each getting a chance to run first for the two sessions over an event.

So who will emulate 2021 title winner Gregoire Saucy? The man who finished runner-up to the Swiss, Alpine F1 'Affiliate' Hadrien David, stays on at R-ace GP for his third year at this level. It's a potent line-up for the French squad, which is also fielding second-year drivers Gabriel Bortoletto and Lorenzo Fluxa.

The third-placed driver from 2021 also remains in FRECA: Estonian Mercedes F1 junior Paul Aron stays on at Prema Racing alongside Swedish Ferrari protege Dino Beganovic, who was quickest in last week's

final test at Monza. Fastest in the first two tests was Gabriele Mini – the Sicilian remains with ART Grand Prix (the team that ran Saucy in 2021) and lines up with Spaniard Mari Boya. The Dutch teams field Kas Haverkort (Van Amersfoort Racing) and Michael Belov (MP Motorsport), who the governing body will pretend is not Russian by allowing his entry under the FIA flag.

A bunch of Formula 4 stars are moving up. Reigning French champion Esteban Masson is with FA Racing, Spanish title winner Dilano van't Hoff stays with his home team MP for his step up, and NACAM (Mexico) king Noel Leon races for UK squad Arden as a Red Bull Junior. F4 runners-up include Tim Tramnitz (Italy and Germany) at Trident and Matias Zagazeta (Britain) at G4 Racing, while Maceo Capietto (third in France) is at Monolite Racing – despite his father Guillaume being a Prema chief.

And talking of influential dads, Sebastian Montoya steps up from F4 with Prema, while Eduardo Barrichello joins Arden for his second year in the series.

MARCUS SIMMONS



IN THE HEADLINES

INDY 500 STUCK AT 32

A total of 32 cars were set to take part in this week's Indianapolis 500 oval test, which was getting under way as Autosport went to press. The same cars are on the entry list for the 500, which therefore currently falls one short of the traditional grid of 33.

The additions from the regular 2022 IndyCar field are Tony Kanaan (Chip Ganassi Racing), Marco Andretti (Andretti Autosport), Juan Pablo Montoya (Arrow McLaren SP), Ed Carpenter (Ed Carpenter Racing), and Santino Ferrucci and Sage Karam (both Dreyer & Reinbold Racing).

SORDO'S FIRST HYUNDAI RUN

Spanish World Rally Championship veteran Dani Sordo will get his first outing of the season on next month's Rally Portugal with Hyundai. Sordo is sharing the marque's third car this season with Oliver Solberg, who is expected to contest the majority of events alongside full-timers Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak.

DAVID ROBERTSON 1955-2022

American sportscar privateer David Robertson, who with wife Andrea was part of the only married couple to score a Le Mans 24 Hours podium, has died aged 66. A commercial airline pilot, Robertson raced a Ford GT-R developed by Doran Racing in the American Le Mans Series in 2008-11 together with his wife under the Robertson Racing banner. The highlight of their brief international career, which started with a handful of ALMS races in a Panoz Esperante GTLM in 2007, came with a distant third in the GTE Am class at Le Mans sharing with David Murry in 2011.

DILLMANN TRIUMPHS

Versatile Frenchman Tom Dillmann won the opening round of the Le Mans Cup at Paul Ricard last weekend with German amateur Alexander Mattschull in their Racing Spirit of Lemans Ligier (below). Mattschull was involved in a battle for second in the first stint with Jerome de Sadeleer, before Dillmann raced away. Top Brits were Tommy Foster and Martin Rich, third in their RLR MSport Ligier.



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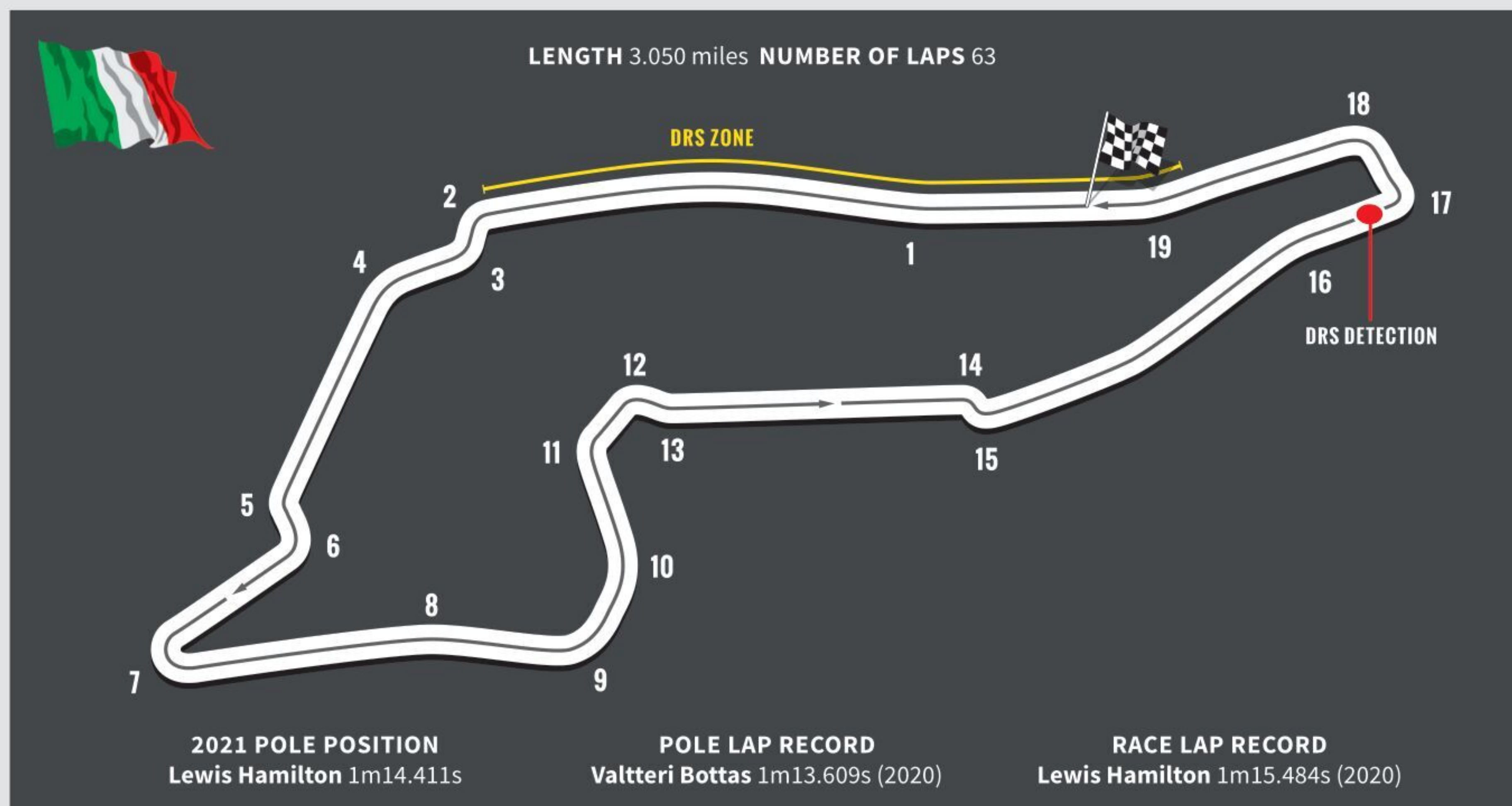
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ROUND 4/23 F1 EMILIA ROMAGNA GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

Friday 22 April
FP1 1230 QUALIFYING 1600

Saturday 23 April
FP2 1130
SPRINT RACE 1530

Sunday 24 April
RACE 1400

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SKY SPORTS F1
BBC RADIO 5 LIVE
SPORTS EXTRA
HIGHLIGHTS
CHANNEL 4 1830

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Leclerc	71
2	Russell	37
3	Sainz	33
4	Perez	30
5	Hamilton	28

Constructors

1	Ferrari	104
2	Mercedes	65
3	Red Bull	55
4	McLaren	24
5	Alpine	22



CIRCUIT STATS

Previous Imola winners

2021	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2020	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2006	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2005	Fernando Alonso	Renault
2004	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2003	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2002	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2001	Ralf Schumacher	Williams
2000	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
1999	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari



Imola points tallies

Hamilton	45
Alonso	27
Verstappen	25
Ricciardo	23
Leclerc	22
Norris	19
Bottas	18
Sainz	16
Perez	8
Gasly	6



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The problem with sprint races

Formula 1's sprint race format returns this weekend for the Emilia Romagna GP. And a change has been made that is likely to make it more contentious

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

I'd completely forgotten that we had a sprint race there!" To be fair to Charles Leclerc, he's got a lot else to consider now. There's a title fight on, with Ferrari hoping to finally end a 14-year drought. And it's off to an excellent start from both driver and team, which is competing on home soil at Imola this weekend. There, as Leclerc was amusingly reminded after his dominant Melbourne win, the first sprint race weekend of the new season will take place. It'll be the fourth in the championship's history since the sprint format's 2021 debut. Silverstone, Monza and Interlagos were the host races for the altered weekend last year, with only the last of those three getting to do so again in 2022 (the Red Bull Ring is the other sprint race venue this year). All three 2021 sprint race weekends were memorable, for wildly different reasons – the first two of the respective grands prix played out the way they did because there was an extra race, while the third boiled down to Lewis Hamilton's brilliance following his qualifying disqualification. For 2022 the sprint race is worth more to more finishers. Now, the winner will get eight points and rewards are paid out down to eighth place. And this is a problem. F1 wanted to have six sprint races in 2022 because it viewed the potential for a big revenue increase thanks to added sponsorship deals and broadcast reach, but this was scuppered by the teams

"Experimenting with an alternative format is no bad thing in isolation"

needing to have an appropriate level of compensation for any accident damage picked up in the extra race events. A compromise was reached on increasing budgets around the three sprint rounds – to \$150,000 more for each one – and another \$100,000 allowed if a car retires, unchanged from 2021. The deal also meant planned sprints in Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands were dropped.

This exposes the challenge of adding extra races, even shorter ones, in the cost-cap era. But it isn't the main problem when considering the sporting impact of the altered format. And that is awarding points for the extra race. The 2021 sprint weekends were billed as experiments, as F1 aimed to tweak its format to increase excitement and have a meaningful session for fans attending the tracks each day. Such an approach meant that awarding points was dubious – surely it would be fairer to award no points if the main

aim was to see how an F1 weekend could be improved.

Experimenting with an alternative format is no bad thing in isolation – progress will be achieved one way or another. But giving points as a sporting reward when the success was being measured in an overall context is problematic. Especially as there was a sporting reward all along – the grid placings for the main race being up for grabs. At least for 2022, F1 and the FIA have sensibly ditched the awarding of the pole statistic going to the sprint winner and transferred it back to whoever tops Friday evening qualifying. And it's good that the 'qualifying' moniker has gone from the Saturday event that was definitely a race...

But having extra points for the three extra races remains contentious – and more so now they're worth more. Yes, there's an argument that drivers will race harder to gain ground, but the evidence from 2021 was that once the early exchanges had happened, most drivers opted to prioritise their current positions against the risk of a lowly GP start in an incident (see Lando Norris not fighting Hamilton hard over fifth late in the Interlagos sprint). The teams fear these in any case due to the potential added costs.

Sprint races are here to stay and that's fine, but F1 has shown that it is willing to listen to feedback on those early trials, so hopefully it will do so again in 2022. Perhaps it will also consider the impact of which tracks get considered for future sprints, with Imola, for example, an intriguing choice.

The track's old-school nature is popular with drivers and nostalgic fans, but its narrow layout means there is a high risk of a procession. The evidence so far from the 2022 rule changes is that following, and therefore overtaking, has been made easier. This raises hopes that if Red Bull can get back to Ferrari's level and set up the multi-team scraps for victory F1 witnessed in Bahrain and Jeddah, then another exciting event is on the cards for this weekend. But even if it ends being a low-action San Marino 2005-06 nailbiter, then that's no bad thing. Those events are considered GP classics for different reasons.

But it means the burgeoning history of F1 sprint races now faces its toughest test so far: combining Imola's overtaking challenge with the opening sprint race coming much earlier this time around. That's because if the extra points don't result in the attacking incentive F1 hopes for, which is unfortunately highly likely at this early stage of the season, then it will have to consider if timing becomes a deployment factor for such events. And this would make the awarding of points for minority weekends all the more contentious and edge sprint races towards the feel of the 2014 double-points finale. Essentially, a gimmick too far, which would negate the positive aspects F1 has enjoyed with its sprint race trials. ❧



An Indy 500 winner's dilemma

Alexander Rossi has had a terrible time of it in recent years and his IndyCar struggles at Andretti continue. So, should he stay or should he go?

DAVID MALSER-LOPEZ

Back in 2019, Alexander Rossi finished in the top three in the IndyCar championship for a second straight season, yet since winning at Road America in June of that year, 40 races have passed without Rossi visiting Victory Lane. In 2020 he scored five top-three finishes, but his luck was so appalling elsewhere that he could still only muster ninth in the standings. Last year he slipped to 10th, with just one podium to his name.

Rossi was by no means flawless in this barren period, but usually his mistakes are the consequence of overreaching to overcome setbacks either earlier in the race or earlier in the season, and he's hardly unique in this regard. The only win he threw away with no extenuating circumstances was St Petersburg in 2020.

Long Beach earlier this month was Rossi's 100th IndyCar start and, three rounds into the 2022 season, his luck remains atrocious. Unfortunate strategy and a poor pitstop in St Pete left him 20th when he could have been in the top 10. At Texas Motor Speedway, he posted the first retirement of the day when an improperly fitted wiring loom failed. Then at Long Beach, where he dominated in 2018 and 2019, he was on for a front-row grid slot alongside team-mate Colton Herta when another team-mate, Romain Grosjean, shunted and brought out the red flags during the Firestone Fast Six shootout. Rossi thus started fifth, climbed to fourth, suffered a mediocre first pitstop and a bad

“A lot of performance exists at Andretti, yet the results aren't coming. That's the thing for me”

second stop and trailed home eighth. He now lies 18th in the championship, 78 points behind former title rival and current points leader Josef Newgarden.

“The silver lining is that the speed was there [at Long Beach],” says Rossi. “The dark cloud is that we didn't capitalise, and you have to do that to compensate for the tracks where you don't have the strongest car. Like, next is Barber – we don't go there expecting to be the best in the same way we did at Long Beach.”

The 2016 Indy 500 winner says such misfortunes are “easier to swallow when it's factors outside your control that have cost you, rather than it being self-induced,” before adding dolefully, “Mentally I'm fine... It's been going on so long that it's become an accepted state.”

But it's not something he'll accept indefinitely. Team owner

Michael Andretti wishes to retain Rossi, because he knows that, while across a whole season he'll be outqualified by Herta more often than not, they're close enough that there are days when the older driver (30 versus 22 years old) is superior. In other words, Rossi remains a potential championship contender.

Realistically, the seven-time IndyCar race winner is aware that he's less appealing than when he was last on the market three years ago. By his own admission, the introduction of the high-n-heavy aeroscreen affected him quite badly, so he and race engineer Jeremy Milless struggled for a season and a half to find a road course set-up that suited his driving style without cooking his tyres. But that hurdle overcome, Rossi hasn't forgotten how to be quick and he remains one of the most resolute drivers in the series, ready to wring everything from every opportunity.

So, does he want to stay? That may be a moot point since there are few comparable alternatives. Were Jimmie Johnson to quit his open-wheel dream, and/or Marcus Ericsson's Huski Chocolate money failed to materialise, nobody would spurn the opportunity of joining Chip Ganassi Racing, the best IndyCar team of the last quarter-century. Were there vacancies at Arrow McLaren SP or Ed Carpenter Racing, Rossi may even be persuaded to cut his bond with Honda Performance Development and join a Chevrolet team.

What's causing him the career dilemma is knowing the strength of the engineering department at Andretti but seeing his career and the #27 car's chances squandered by pitstop issues.

It's not a new problem for Andretti Autosport but, after the situation improved last year, it's taken a downturn again, and in Rossi's case it's unlikely to vastly improve. His crew line-up has changed for each race so far this year – not the way to establish slick coordination and consistency – and all teams are scrambling for staff as IndyCar remains a solid 26-car field and the IMSA car count is about to boom.

Rossi doesn't want to leave, but won't remain with things as they stand. “A lot of performance exists at Andretti, they put some very fast cars on the race track in the majority of races,” he says, “yet the results still aren't coming. That's the big thing for me. I love the people here, Michael has become a friend and I enjoy driving and working for him, I immensely enjoy working with Jeremy, and I had a great time with Rob [Edwards] as my strategist – him switching cars wasn't a decision by me – but equally Brian Barnhart has been an excellent replacement. I like driving for NAPA and AutoNation – they've been great partners, very supportive. So there are plenty of reasons to stay...”

“But it's hard to commit and sign up with things as they are at the moment. I have 10 to 12 years left, probably, and the next deal I sign is going to be a decent chunk of that. I need it to be right.” ❧

YOUR SAY

Driving between concrete walls is not motor racing, it is only because the cities/countries have paid a lot of money to F1 for it

GERT HANSEN

Not another grand prix in the middle of a city

As I read it, you praise the fact that Formula 1 is back in Las Vegas for 2023 (Pit + Paddock, 7 April). I think it is awful, one more race in the middle of a city, absolutely crazy.

More and more controversy, like in Abu Dhabi last year and Jeddah last month, and all the other times it has happened.

Driving between concrete walls is not motor racing, it is only because the cities/countries have paid a lot of money to F1 for it. It's a show, not sport, it is pleasure for the ultra-rich, not for common people.

I travel to many other motorsports events at Nurburgring, Spa, Imola, Monza, etc – the real race tracks, in real motorsports countries. Just like the football World Cup in Qatar, it is absolutely not OK, it is shameful for the sports organisations.

Gert Hansen
Denmark

There are issues around how the F1 calendar is put together and safety certainly needs to be seriously considered, but street racing has been a part of motorsport since it began, and city venues are often more accessible to fans than some bespoke circuits, where entry can be easily controlled. Each new venue should be assessed on its own merits – ed

SAFER option for F1?

After Jeddah and Melbourne, simple question: why isn't Formula 1 fronting concrete walls with SAFER barriers where appropriate?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland

Not looking peachy for McLaren

Is it just me or is the new 'peach' McLaren colour scheme horrible? Last year's car was so elegant and looked fantastic, so if it ain't broke... This year's car looks a mess – although opinion seems divided. Am I the only one?

Nick Keynes
By email

PS As a McLaren fan, maybe I'm blaming their colour scheme on their poor form. If they were winning races, I'd probably love it!



Pleased to see the end of Mercedes' dominance

For the first time in his Formula 1 career Lewis Hamilton does not have the big advantage of the fastest car and just his team-mate to beat (apart from the brilliance of Max Verstappen last year).

Now with both Ferraris and Red Bulls being fully on it, I wonder how long it will be before we hear that he is looking to retire or is speaking to Ferrari? I am pleased to see the end of Mercedes' dominance, but I do feel a bit sorry for George Russell.

Mike Kelly
London

Hamilton has not always had the fastest car (see, for example, McLaren in 2009) and has been a key reason why Mercedes has been so strong. The great drivers almost always end up in the best teams. Plus, why would someone at Hamilton's age and record not consider retirement if they found themselves fighting over fifth with no chance to improve? – ed

Clarification

Rainer Becker decided to pull in early from the Robert Brooks Trophy in his Porsche 550 RS Spyder at Goodwood (14 April, page 42) so he could prepare to participate in the subsequent Porsche 956/962 demonstration.

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FERRARI'S BIG CHANCE

CAN FERRARI GET IT RIGHT THIS TIME?

It's been a great start and even Charles Leclerc has already mentioned the championship, but has Ferrari banished the problems of the recent past?

MATT KEW

Excelling in Bahrain and Australia to win two of the opening three races of a new season. That strike rate at the dawn of Formula 1's second ground-effect era might offer Ferrari its best chance to end the 14-year drought since it last collected a drivers' or constructors' championship trophy. Or perhaps the run of form seems familiar. For it's also the way the Prancing Horse bolted out of the gate in both 2017 and 2018 before ultimately falling short. The question again then should be, can Ferrari see it through?

Given a record-breaking 23 races are still planned for this term as and when a replacement for the Russian Grand Prix is revealed, the true answer won't be known for some time. But plenty of positive indicators can already be spotted. Initially, F1's oldest team appears to have cut the factors that caused its recent realistic title bids to fail. Plus, the F1-75 seems a well-natured beast that has more to offer, rather than a troubled bucking bronco with stunted growth.

The latest Maranello creation has so far avoided the major pitfall

of 2017: unreliability. Sebastian Vettel led the points with only eight races to run as he diced with Lewis Hamilton to claim a fifth drivers' crown. On the team's home soil at Monza, round 13 of 20, the SF70H simply didn't have an answer to the pace of the Mercedes. Next time out in Singapore came the infamous startline tangle with stablemate Kimi Raikkonen and Max Verstappen, when the Red Bull ended up as the unsavoury filling in a Ferrari sandwich.

Then the true Achilles' heel was exposed. There was a grid penalty for an engine change in Malaysia; a spark plug issue forced a retirement in Japan; before another off-colour weekend in the US. That heaped the pressure on for Mexico, where Vettel made first-lap contact with Verstappen then Hamilton. The German came away with front-wing damage, the Brit with a puncture. But Hamilton's advantage was already enough to collect the title spoils with two races to spare. Vettel wound up 46 points short.

The driver hadn't covered himself in glory particularly, and neither >>



Polesitter
Leclerc leads at the
start in Melbourne,
on his way to a
dominant victory

FERRARI'S BIG CHANCE

was the Ferrari dependable enough. Wind on half a decade and, as Mercedes still seeks to unlock its W13, Red Bull has proved Ferrari's closest challenger. But its pair of RB18s only have a 50% finish record so far this season thanks to the double DNF in Bahrain and Verstappen pulling up in Australia with another fuel system fault. By comparison, the F1-75 has been relatively robust. The steering wheel glitch for Carlos Sainz Jr on the grid at Albert Park caused the most notable scare. Otherwise, it seems there's a remedy for the shortcoming of 2017.

"Reliability is part of the performance," says team principal Mattia Binotto. "To finish first, first you need to finish. It's something on which we are always keeping a really high priority. At the end of the championship, will that be a key factor? Certainly. It will be as much as overall performance is a key factor. All the elements need to be properly in place to win a championship."

It was lead driver Vettel who largely allowed the 2018 decorations to get away. That season represented the last time Ferrari was a serious contender, with the squad leading both points tables after 10 races. But then he crashed out in the now infamous wet German GP as Hamilton won from 14th. He was second in Hungary and won in Belgium, but never topped the table thereafter. Vettel spun in Italy while fighting Hamilton on lap one, before a hat-trick of races where Maranello slipped behind Mercedes' and Red Bull's pace.

Ferrari messed up its qualifying strategy in Japan, hoping to pounce by putting its drivers on intermediate tyres for Q3. Only the rain arrived too late, by which time rivals had set their banker laps in drier conditions to leave Vettel starting down in eighth. Hamilton led Valtteri Bottas for a Mercedes front-row lockout. Vettel then spun battling Verstappen and copped a penalty in the US for failing to slow sufficiently under a red flag to drop to fifth on the grid and fourth in the race. Meanwhile, Raikkonen picked up his final F1 win Stateside and outperformed his team-mate again in Brazil with a podium. It proved the Ferrari was largely good enough, but Vettel was letting the charge falter. Hamilton didn't have to be asked twice to wrap up perhaps his most impressive crown.

As for 2022, while Sainz reckons he and his engineers have found areas of untapped potential to close the gap to Leclerc, his spin into the gravel in Australia has created a 38-point deficit to his table-topping team-mate. With that, he has quickly made himself the tacit number two. Therefore, the internal focus must be on Leclerc, who many already consider to be the championship favourite. And so far, he is showing he has developed into a driver who can avoid the mistakes Vettel came to rue in 2018.

The Monegasque has barely put a foot wrong. His two successes prior to 2022 arrived in the consecutive Belgian and Italian GPs in 2019. In both, he almost cracked under the ever-growing pressure that the

"RELIABILITY IS PART OF THE PERFORMANCE. IT'S SOMETHING THAT IS ALWAYS A REALLY HIGH PRIORITY"

chasing Hamilton then Bottas were applying in the closing stages. Twice, Leclerc crossed the line with less than a second to spare.

So far this term, he has proved his credentials in wheel-to-wheel combat with Verstappen, notably outwitting his Dutch foe in Bahrain. In Australia, Leclerc demonstrated the breadth of his skillset by taking command of proceedings and never looking as though he might let first place slip. Pole, victory, fastest lap and leading from start to finish was the first grand slam for a Ferrari driver since Fernando Alonso in the 2010 Singapore GP.

What's more, Leclerc's mistakes across 2019-21 arrived when he was plying his trade in cars that were far from the benchmark up against the Mercedes and Red Bull. He had to take greater risks to put himself in contention. The F1-75 and its broad operating window – it hasn't gone off the boil at any of Sakhir, Jeddah or Albert Park – is yet to >>



Binotto says upgrades can wait until later in the season



Team has taken great leaps in how it analyses each weekend



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Package has remained the same since day one at Barcelona



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Ferrari and Red Bull are a class apart in 2022





force Leclerc down that risky route.

“I’ve had a growth from year to year that is linear,” says Leclerc. “I have a mindset that is just focusing on myself, on the job I have to do in the car, and not thinking too much about results and all that is around. Obviously seeing the last few years that have been very difficult, and now to be back at the top, gives a lot of motivation to the whole team, to me. It’s good to be here.”

Given how calculating, clean and quick Leclerc has been, there’s no looming threat that he will slip up and endure a flurry of errors like those that cost Vettel dearly. But relying on reliability plus the lead driver not repeating the mistakes of the past won’t necessarily get Ferrari over the line as and when the Red Bulls stop expiring. The team also needs to ensure it can consistently get the better of its chief rival by outdeveloping (or at least matching) the opposition design team led by Adrian Newey.

To see how Ferrari has fared in this respect in recent years, ‘supertimes’ offer a sound baseline. Here, the fastest lap set during

an entire grand prix weekend earns a perfect score of 0.000 and the remaining nine teams earn a percentage over that benchmark.

For example, after three races this season, Ferrari has an average score of 0.009, after setting the standard in Bahrain and Australia. Red Bull is next best with 0.168, and the leading duo have put clear air between themselves and Mercedes’ 0.932 effort.

For the sake of brevity, the broad strokes reflect that Ferrari is a touch hit-and-miss. In 2017 and 2018, it ended the season further off the pace than it had started, suggesting it lost the development race to the yardsticks planted by Mercedes. Ferrari’s major mid-season gain arrived in 2019, but that can be attributed to its controversial fuel sensor configuration that was later outlawed via a series of FIA technical directives. It subsequently started 2020 in the doldrums – it ended up closer but had more to gain – and, in 2021, didn’t develop its package to instead pool its resources into the radical shift to ground-effects.

That inconsistency should be a cause for concern given that, thus far in 2022, the main opposition is Red Bull. Even though the Milton



Oz podium-topper Leclerc has vaulted to a 34-point lead in the drivers' championship

Keynes operation didn't face the pressure of truly being in the heat of a title battle, it enjoyed more consistent improvement throughout the 2017, 2019 and 2020 campaigns per the 'supertimes'. And despite the data showing that Red Bull fell behind the curve in 2018, that campaign can realistically be added to the successful list. The RB14 was arguably the finest chassis come season's end. The Renault power unit unreliability in the second half disguises the upward trajectory, and the partnership ended thereafter.

The 2021 season was a murkier barometer. Red Bull was outshone by Mercedes as the Silver Arrows recovered from revised floor regulations to take the fight between Hamilton and Verstappen down to the wire. Meanwhile, Ferrari abandoned upgrading its car, hoping to steal an early march in 2022. That strategy call can now end its erratic development trend.

Mainly, Ferrari has much more in its arsenal this year courtesy of the revised Aerodynamic Testing Regulations that are now applied on a sliding scale depending on how a team fares in the constructors' >>



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THE CHALLENGE FACING SAINZ

Carlos Sainz Jr has had over a year to adapt to life at Ferrari, and the team has now given him a car capable of at least race wins. But, so far, the Spaniard reckons he felt more comfortable in the tepid 2021 challenger than in this year's thoroughbred.

It was Sainz who had the measure of Leclerc on paper last term. With four podiums to his team-mate's one, the newbie ranked two places higher in fifth in the standings. Hence the surprise that Sainz is struggling quite so much, and he sits 38 points adrift in third. But the results from last year disguise the fact that Leclerc won the qualifying battle 13-8 in a campaign where he came closer to winning (at Silverstone) and generally flew under the radar.

A torrid run of misfortune last time out in Australia also exaggerates the current picture somewhat. Sainz was hurt early in Q3 by Fernando Alonso's shunt and then, for his final run, the car struggled to fire up. That meant he had to head straight for a hot effort with no prep lap. Cooler tyres and a moment at Turn 10 tethered him to ninth fastest.

On Sunday, a late steering wheel change left him in the wrong torque map. He contended with anti-stall at the start and, in a bid to recover the lost ground, having dropped to 14th, Sainz was too eager passing Mick Schumacher and caught the wake of Zhou Guanyu to spin into the gravel and retire. A 17-race scoring streak was ended.

"THE SPECIFICS NEED TO STAY IN THE TEAM FOR THE SAKE OF PRIVACY"

He had been more competitive in the Bahrain season-opener. Although Sainz played rear-gunner in Ferrari's 1-2 only after Verstappen retired, the gap was put down to a lack of rear grip and subsequent confidence. Saudi Arabia told a similar story as he ran to a distant third, keeping Sergio Perez at bay after they swapped positions following the Red Bull driver emerging from the pits fractionally behind the Ferrari at the safety car line.

Sainz has remained coy on the cause of his deficit all along. "The technicalities and the specifics, I think they need to stay in the team for the sake of privacy and not giving away too much," he said at Jeddah. "It would be very difficult to explain." Regardless, he feels he is getting closer to Leclerc.

He's not doing a bad job, even with the challenge of having Leclerc as his benchmark. But three races in, still not at ease with the car, and off the back of a retirement already induced by overdriving, Sainz must not lose momentum and his equal footing at Ferrari by being recklessly impatient in his bid to change the tide.



Melbourne exit ended a run of 17 points finishes

HONE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Reliability hurt Vettel's championship chances in 2017

HONE/MOTORSPORTIMAGES



Ferrari had pace in 2018, but Vettel made too many errors

PRATIC/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

FERRARI'S RECENT CHALLENGES



Close victories for Leclerc in 2019 but consistency was lacking

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Engine rules clarification led to winless disaster in 2020

COATES/MOTORSPORTIMAGES



Improvements were made last year but 2022 was the focus

SUTTON/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

table at key points in the season. Ferrari was a paltry sixth in 2020 as its fuel flow quirk was canned. It was fourth midway through 2021, behind McLaren when the June cut-off arrived for the ATR. The upshot was that, to prepare for arguably the greatest aerodynamic overhaul in F1 history, Ferrari had 168 more windtunnel runs at its disposal than either Mercedes or Red Bull, and 1050 CFD items in hand.

That promising position is bolstered by the internal tweaks that Ferrari has made. As Sainz says: "It's been a few tough years for Ferrari. And these tough years, we've used them to rebuild a bit the team in the internal side, to try and make ourselves stronger, become better at what we do. We've used the regulation change of having to start from zero, and a blank piece of paper, to use this improvement in the way we work to put it into practice and suddenly be back at the top."

"I've always believed that Ferrari had the right people and the right mindset to be where we are right now. But we needed a blank sheet of paper because Red Bull and Mercedes with the previous regulations, they just had a very big advantage on the rest of the field. And we felt like that gap was very difficult to cut back without a reset. This reset has given us the opportunity and we've used it in a very good way. So now, it's our job to keep ourselves up there."

Since Ferrari declared it was focusing on the shift to ground-effect, it's highly unlikely to have wasted much of its aero allowance on a lacklustre 2021. Mercedes and Red Bull, by contrast, fought down to the wire. And although the red cars eventually usurped the papaya ones for third in the charts last season, Ferrari retains a greater ATR allowance than Mercedes and Red Bull until June at least.

That provides it with more capacity to develop during this crucial early stage, as everyone works to understand the real-world traits of the new breed of machinery. In other words, Ferrari is currently top of the pile and should have more in reserve than Mercedes and Red Bull to keep it there at a time when the learning curve for all teams is at its steepest.

It's not just the shake-up of the ATR and the radical technical revamp where the rules might have played into Ferrari's favour in its quest for silverware. The budget cap can work to its advantage also. It means Mercedes and Red Bull cannot throw an endless amount of cash (or windtunnel time) at their initial problems to resolve them, hoping to persevere through a bewildering array of tweaks to floors, sidepods and wings until they find the optimum solution. They must be leaner. Ferrari faces this limitation also, of course but, by the current form book, is starting from the better baseline.

That brings us to what Leclerc and Sainz already have at their disposal, a car that provides a great deal of optimism in the bids for drivers' and constructors' glory. So much so, Leclerc has already acknowledged he is in the title picture, saying: "We've got a very strong car. A very reliable car

"I ALWAYS BELIEVED FERRARI HAD THE RIGHT PEOPLE AND THE RIGHT MINDSET TO BE WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW"

too... so I hope it continues like this. If it does, we probably have chances for the championship, which obviously makes me smile after the last two years that have been difficult for the team and obviously for myself."

Testing at Barcelona included, the car appears to have worked at all four circuits visited so far. Leclerc's dominance at Albert Park might be considered an outlier given the track was resurfaced, but there's been no major flux in competitiveness across abrasive Bahrain and low-downforce Jeddah either. Only at the latter did Red Bull have an obvious trump card with its top-end straightline performance, which might leave Ferrari more vulnerable at higher-speed venues such as Baku (and, dare we suggest, at home at Monza).

But in the main, the evidence so far suggests a wide operating window to reduce the risk of the F1-75 embarking on a protracted run of poor form. It also implies that Ferrari is operationally slick — not rusty after its years away from the cut and thrust of a championship

fight — since there have been no clangers with car set-up that have allowed results to bleed away.

The machinery is not infallible, however. The most obvious and striking weakness carried by the F1-75 is its penchant for porpoising, with the oscillations rearing their head again rather prominently in Australia. But, unlike Mercedes, this rocking motion is only occurring at the end of straights rather than compromising balance through higher-speed corners. So, while it costs a small amount of time and does the Pirelli tyres no favours, it's not proved to be a critical flaw. That stops mechanics jacking up the rideheight to lose precious downforce.

Despite the violent-looking onboard replays, it is manageable in the cockpit, says Leclerc: "It's definitely something we want to tackle because it doesn't help us for consistency, especially once you have bouncing in a corner. We need to work on that. But [in Australia], it wasn't an issue. Or, I couldn't have gone faster if I didn't have the bouncing."

In view of the spending and windtunnel restrictions, Ferrari is already acting with caution. Aside from some low-drag fettling for Jeddah, it has so far brought only one upgraded part to the table in 2022. Unlike what was effectively a Mercedes 'W13B' breaking cover in Bahrain, or Red Bull sporting updated sidepods at the test, Ferrari has kept things modest while fully understanding a package it has maintained since day one at Barcelona. The tweak it donned in Australia was a modified diffuser, but that was only used in Friday practice. It is understood that this was simply to gather data to correlate with future, more sweeping developments without committing to burning through the ATR allocation.

There's further evidence of Ferrari's pragmatic upgrade tactics in so far as it won't usher in an array of changes this weekend at Imola, a home race and the first European round of the season, easing the logistical headache of freighting new parts. As a sprint weekend, a practice session is cut from the schedule and qualifying arrives a day early to limit the troubleshooting time. "We believe it will not be the right place," explains Binotto. "We will try to mitigate the issues we've got still so far — I'm thinking of the porpoising. We again try to work on that specific point. But for the upgrades and more, let me say a significant one, it will be for later on in the season."

It's all rather sensible. The question will be whether Ferrari is exercising too much caution. Given Verstappen's unreliability in Bahrain and Australia, his dissatisfaction with the RB18's balance at the latter, plus struggles on the hard tyres in Jeddah, he and his team are yet to execute the perfect weekend. Particularly given Red Bull's new-found prowess in a straight line and track record at developing a chassis, Ferrari must remain on the front foot for when its key rival inevitably stitches everything together.

For how the rest of the season plays out, Sainz and Leclerc have slightly differing views. Sainz acknowledges that Red Bull and Mercedes "are the favourite, because we haven't been in a title fight in the last few years. In the previous years, these teams have outdeveloped Ferrari, so we are still super-cautious."

Leclerc is a touch more assured: "To keep up with Red Bull in terms of development is going to be difficult, but [at Ferrari] it's the same team that did this car, that will work on the development for this year's car, so I am confident. There is no reason for us to be on the back foot because the guys at Maranello have done a great job building up this car for this year."

"There are some developments coming and I'm confident that it will go in the right direction. So, I wouldn't focus too much on the others. I think we need to focus on ourselves. Since the last two years, I really see a jump in the way we've analysed every weekend, in the way we have identified our weaknesses and how quick we were to react to try and get better in the places where we were struggling. I am confident the team can do a great job with development this year."

Leclerc has observed the changes going on behind closed doors for four years now, so it's reasonable to expect his confidence to be well-placed. That progress is now complemented by his own evolution as a driver in the combined effort to reach the F1 summit.

Ferrari is no stranger to false dawns in the turbo-hybrid era, but often that promise has arrived in testing only to fizzle out when the proper competition starts. In 2022, though, the good results are flooding in when it matters as Ferrari seeks to end the drought. ❧

BTCC PREVIEW

A formula for a Ford festival

Reigning champion Ash Sutton and Dan Cammish are lining up together as a superteam under the NAPA Racing banner from this weekend's BTCC opener. And their Focuses are bound to be a major, erm, focus

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP

What are your eyes going to be on during this weekend's opening British Touring Car Championship event at Donington Park? If you're a techy anorak, it'll be the performance of the cars with hybrid power. If you're an anything-else anorak, it's surely the progress of three-time and reigning champion Ash Sutton plus returning almost-champion Dan Cammish, united in a new Motorbase Performance Ford Focus superteam running under the banner of NAPA Racing.

Motorbase chief Pete Osborne, who assumed full ownership of the squad in early 2021, has pulled out all the stops here. His son Sam and two-time race winner Ollie Jackson continue in two of the cars, but another pair of brand-new Focuses has been built up for the

incoming stars. And there's one of those funny little small-world, closed-circle stories that are so prevalent in motorsport going on here too. Motorbase technical chief James Mundy, who led the design project on the fourth-generation Focus ST introduced in 2020, formerly ran the Jamun Racing Formula Ford squad with which Sutton starred in 2014, and which Cammish trounced with 24 wins from 24 in 2013 ("I still haven't got over that!" Mundy grins).

Sutton himself has brought the nucleus of the BMR Racing operation that was largely responsible for his title successes in the Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50 in 2020 and 2021. While Mundy is engineering his old nemesis Cammish, Sutton continues with Anglo-Italian engineer Antonio Carrozza (the duo have become inseparable as a working





Cammish (left) and Sutton bring a combined total of 32 race wins in the BTCC



“We sat there at one point with four or five offers, and the best was with Motorbase and NAPA”

partnership), Brenton Yule as number-one mechanic, and Tom Powell as data engineer. Yule and Powell have been taken on as Motorbase employees; Carrozza is working as a freelance contractor, but admits he has time for little else.

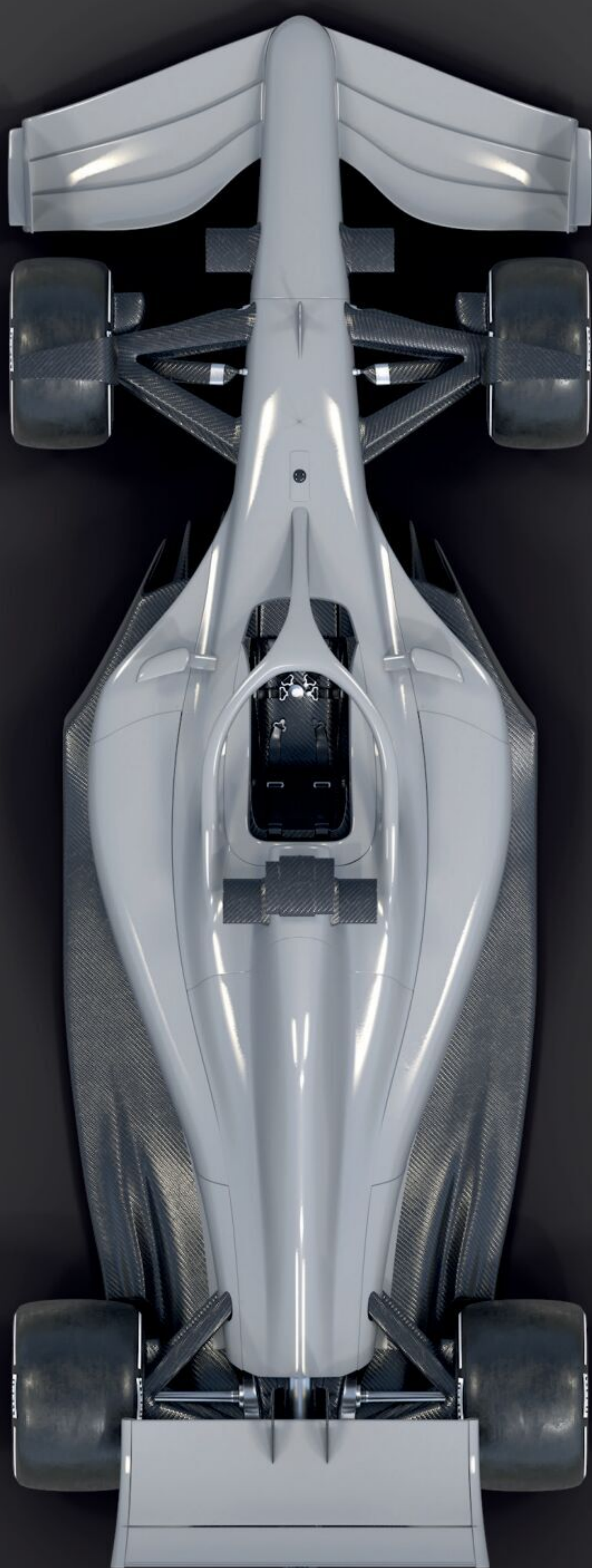
This little BMR axis within Motorbase represents a winding-down of the BTCC interests of Sutton's long-time mentor/manager and BMR founder Warren Scott. When it became clear that a split with Laser Tools was on the cards, Scott attempted to get a team of Jaguar XE NGTC cars up and running, with Cammish even mooted here as a team-mate to Sutton. “It would have been a really interesting project and I was looking forward to it,” admits Carrozza, who for the first time would have led the design on a tin-top challenger. “But this [Motorbase and the Ford] is a different challenge. This is good.”

“I spoke to Pete through the middle of the year, so that door was always open,” recaps Sutton. “We had a lot of offers come in from a few other teams as well. We were potentially moving away from Laser Tools Racing, but where I was going was a bit unknown at that point. I wasn't ever sat there going, ‘Ahh, I'm not going to have a drive’. It was just a case of you've got to make it work commercially, be in what I'd class as a good car, and have a good team around you. You've got to make all three things work, and we sat there at one point with four or five offers, working out which one fitted me best, and it was here with Motorbase and NAPA.”

And it means Sutton has, for the first time since late 2014, branched >>

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out from Scott: “Warren owned the team, and it led into him having that role essentially of managing and helping me. But we agreed that it had sort of come to an end at the back end of last year – not go our separate ways, but time to kind of do things by myself, and that’s when we realised there’s a lot more opportunities out there. That’s when I took the reins and made my own choice if that makes sense. There’s no bad feeling; he’s burnt out from it all and I need to go down my own path.”

Cammish, meanwhile, was unavoidably jettisoned by Team Dynamics over the 2020-21 off-season, halfway through a two-year deal, when Honda UK pulled its backing and the team found itself having to realign its commercial relationships. He remains friends with team boss Matt Neal and the squad: “Matt tried to help me out even when I wasn’t in the team. He looked at opportunities for me in World Touring Car and things like that, but I knew that really the chances of me going back there were very slim.” The Yorkshireman therefore made a brave step back to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB, a series he’d already won twice, despite a last-minute window of opportunity back in the BTCC when he stood in at Honda squad BTC Racing for the opening round.

“I had the chance to turn away from it [Porsches] at the last minute and go back to touring car racing,” he relates, “and I chose not to – that was quite a big leap of faith because I could have been quite badly beaten at the end of the day. I think they all thought I would be! To come away as a three-time champion, no one else has ever done that in Carrera Cup history, and to sign it off as the guy to beat in a Porsche over the last few years... I’m really proud of that achievement, and it’s propelled me back into touring cars in a fantastic place, so I wouldn’t change a thing.”

Thanks to Motorbase and NAPA, Cammish is effectively on the same deal as he was at Dynamics: “I don’t pay to drive, and I don’t get paid to drive, but my personal sponsors help me make a living. That is modern British Touring Cars. We’ve swapped the manufacturer days, but there’s still some good sponsors that help us do the job. NAPA is an



...who ran Sutton to title
glory in 2020 and 2021
(pictured) with Infiniti



Sutton gets down to business of extracting most from the Focus...

incredible sponsor to have on board." Sutton, too, relied on Scott and personal backers for funding, and is on board at the Kent squad without having to find any contribution.

"So far I would say me and Ash, you can't split us really," reports Cammish of pre-season testing. "We're both getting to the same result in different ways. I've always enjoyed the qualifying aspect, and maybe if I've got one string to my bow it might be that I get a little bit



...and is helped in that by engineer Carrozza...

"There's a lot to fit in what's already a very compact engine bay, especially on an FWD car"

more out of it in qualifying, but you can't underestimate how good Ash is as a racing driver – he always comes forward. So we're coming at it from two kind of different ways, but I think we'll meet in the middle and teach each other a little bit."

Motorbase has certainly prepared well for the new hybrid era. "I think we benefited from being one of the first teams that had hybrid kits available," points out Carrozza. "When I arrived in the team in early December, there was already a kit of parts at the factory, so you're already starting to look at installation. There's quite a lot of extra components to fit in what's already a very compact engine bay, especially on a front-wheel-drive car."

The team then began testing in early March at Brands Hatch with the hybrid kit on board – if not operational. Cammish was at the wheel then, before Sutton got his turn a week later. Then, as soon as the batteries were released by Cosworth, the Fords were the first on track at Snetterton along with Dynamics and the Ciceley Motorsport BMW squad. Of those Brands tests, Carrozza says: "We did a couple of tests with all the hybrid weight in, a lot of the hybrid packaging and plumbing, cooling pack and everything, that was all in but there was no battery to power it. So we did lots of testing with everything simulated."

"If you lifted the bonnet it and looked in, the electric motor was there, all the cooling pack, but there was no battery," adds Mundy. "Before we even hit the track we did two days at Ford's ETL [environmental test laboratory], and quite a bit of running at >>

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Dunton test track, so we were pretty well prepared.” Here, Carrozza also took a turn at the wheel.

The effective merging of the minds of two teams (Motorbase and BMR) has meant Carrozza has played a heavy role in the development of the Focus over the winter. “The nicest thing for me is that you’ve got Tony who’s come in with what I would class as a lot of knowledge, and the best thing about it is Motorbase have given him complete freedom: throw what you’ve got at us and we’ll assess it,” smiles Sutton. “A few things have been redesigned, especially towards the front end of the car but even inside the car — just the way we do things and the way the cars are built.” “Tony’s had a big influence,” adds Mundy. “The cooling pack’s completely different, and the hybrid installation itself has not been too difficult.”

Intriguingly, the old front/rear-wheel-drive equalisation argument has played its part too here. Sutton and Carrozza, of course, have jumped over the fence from the ‘proper’ axle doing the work. Even Sutton’s rookie BTCC season in 2016, in the Triple Eight MG, was with a front-driven car that had its roots in Super 2000 and used the old GPRM subframe rather than the contemporary RML equipment.

“The Focus is a little taller, a little shorter, eager to turn but looser. It’s quite twitchy”



Cammish leads his old Honda during testing

Effectively, the hybrid kit and battery means 70kg has been added to the base weight of the cars, but it’s not the same deal as carrying the old high success ballast levels of 75kg and 66kg. The lead for the ballast was boxed in the most advantageous position possible, whereas with the hybrid, points out Mundy, there’s a higher centre of gravity and “the polar moment of inertia’s changed for the front-wheel-drive cars”. Just front-wheel-drive cars?

“In theory the centre of gravity height of the hybrid installation has been equalised between front and rear-wheel drive, to get rid of that argument,” expands Carrozza. “At the very first meeting, everyone said, ‘The motor is high up and forwards on the front-wheel-drive car; it’s in the bellhousing on the rear-wheel-drive car and as low as it can possibly go; so they’ve equalised battery heights basically between the front and rear-wheel drive. From a height point of view there’s no advantage to the rear-wheel-drive car, but from a longitudinal position in the car there is a significant advantage from where their system’s packaged.”

So here’s the front/rear-wheel-drive BTCC spat to come then! But every cloud has a silver lining. “One of the nice things now is the car



Which of them will be smiling at Donington?

weight’s not changing between sessions,” offers Carrozza. “When you’re running success ballast, between every single session you’re changing car weight — unless you’re winning every race or not scoring any points — and it’s quite hard to dial the car in between the success ballasts. We can just dial the car in and when the chassis’s good, the chassis’s good — it just stays at that base weight.”

And how good is that chassis? Good enough for Sutton to top last week’s Thruxton test, looking as though he was

absolutely on it, in full-on Ashattack mode. Compared to the front-wheel-drive cars, including TCR, that he’s steered before, Sutton reckons: “This for sure is a little bit more of an animal and a beast when it comes to hanging onto it. If anything it was a good shock to the system. You hear the horrible, ‘Oh we’ve got understeer, tyres this, tyres that, deg,’ and I’m actually going, ‘Flipping hell, I’m hanging onto the thing here’. The car’s good, we’ve got a good balance, we’ve been playing around with it in testing to get a feel for changes and how the cars react to that, so ultimate pace we’re not 100% sure of where it lies, but just working with it and building that knowledge.”

Cammish has an excellent front-wheel-drive NGTC reference in the form of the Civic Type R FK8. “If you look at them side by side, it feels how it looks,” he states. “The Civic, it’s got that hunkered-down-low, quite long feel to it, so it’s got quite good high-speed stability. The Focus is a little bit taller, a little bit shorter, so a little bit more eager to turn but looser with it, and that’s exactly how it comes across so far. It’s quite twitchy, whereas the Civic was always quite planted.”

One frequent observation about the current-spec Focus is its strong



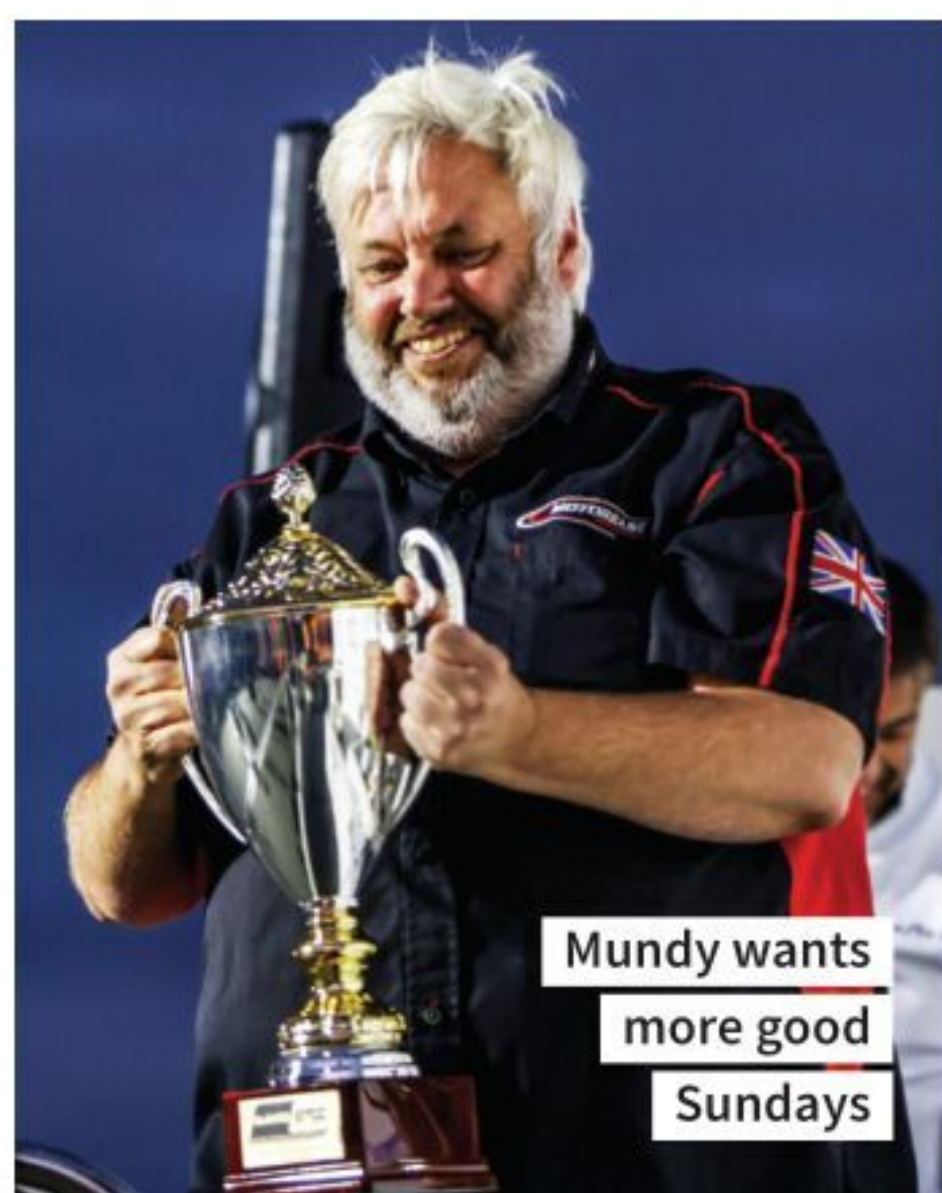
It's Chase Elliott. No, it's Alexander Rossi. Actually, it's NAPA's new BTCC contender

performance in the speed traps. This encourages speculation that the Mountune-built EcoBoost engines (Jackson's family owns the company) are performing extremely well. They are, but firmly within the parameters of what BTCC organiser TOCA allows without making any parity adjustments. Others say the Ford has strong aero, and Mundy has another observation: "You've got to come out of the corner, which is the real limiting factor. On a big saloon the drag is all the same, so it's more about corner exit and traction than aerodynamics or engine power."

"I can bring in an interesting side to that," chips in Carrozza. "We had the Levorg [in which Sutton won the 2017 title], which is a big old heavy estate; an Infiniti that was a nice sleek saloon; and then the Motorbase car which is a hatchback. And actually if you put them all in a windtunnel, then broadly the parasitic drag – the stuff that you can't change – there isn't that much difference between them. There's small changes, but when you're talking lap time for that drag it's very little."

"TOCA are looking so closely at our installed powers, and I think they have done a really good job the last few years to equalise it. Someone will always say, 'Oh look at that thing in the speed traps,' but it doesn't tell the whole story. Mid-corner speed and exit speed are not the same thing, and it depends how you want to put your lap time together."

One other strong suit of the current Focus is that, far removed from previous iterations of the car, it is good at switching on its tyres. Too much so at first, witness Rory Butcher's puncture-strewn disaster on the car's second week of competition in hot sunshine at the Brands GP circuit in the summer of 2020. But compensations have been made. Even so, last year, lead driver Jake Hill particularly found that he struggled to keep the soft Goodyear alive, but it appears that this compound will not be used in 2022 (although at the time of writing TOCA is yet to reveal the sporting regulations on tyres). Another



Mundy wants more good Sundays

potential little snag taken away. "The car does switch the tyres on, which suits us on the medium compound," says Mundy.

What can we expect, then? Definitely a title challenge, with potentially both Sutton and Cammish in the mix come October. For the series returnee it's a case of out of the frying pan and into the fire – he's gone from taking on young tyro Harry King plus Lorcan Hanafin and Kiern Jewiss in the Porsches to lining up alongside the current BTCC gold standard. "Yeah, I don't make life easy for myself!" jokes Cammish. "Having Ash is fantastic. He brings a wealth of experience, he's really fast, he's arguably the best touring car driver of the past few years along with Colin [Turkington].

From my side I'm in such a good place, because

if the wind had blown in a different direction I'd have a championship too in my second season [2019], and I wouldn't be here if I didn't think I could hold my own. Ash is viewed in such a good light, if I'm anything like close to where he is, or if I can beat him, if I dare to dream, that puts me in pretty good territory as well. I'm in a good place with that, it's a fantastic challenge and I think we'll push each other forward."

And Sutton? He wants to make history. He's one away from joining Turkington and Andy Rouse on a record four BTCC titles apiece, but both these tin-top standard-setters have won all of their crowns in rear-wheel-drive machinery. To win three in RWD cars and then another in FWD – well, nobody's ever even done one of each in the championship's 64-year history...

"It'd be fantastic," he ponders. "If I can achieve that, not only have I stamped my name in the history books to be the first to do it, but it just shows that I can jump in any car and do the job." As if anyone had any doubt about that. ❧

➔ P32 THINGS TO WATCH



BTCC PREVIEW

BTCC things to watch

Everyone's focusing on the new hybrid rules, but there are plenty of intriguing questions raised among the driver-team line-ups

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP

Dawn of hybrid means sunset for success ballast

The big talking point for the British Touring Car Championship during the build-up to this weekend's Donington Park season opener has been the introduction of the Cosworth hybrid system. The kit including battery has raised the base weight for cars by 70kg, but it does mean that each driver can benefit from a 10% increase in power – once a car has reached 120km/h (75mph) – for 15 seconds per lap.

It also means that the largely unpopular old success-ballast system has been done away with. Now, instead of adding weight to leading competitors, series organiser TOCA will cut the hybrid deployment available. For each qualifying session from round two at Brands Hatch onwards, the championship leader will not be allowed any hybrid use, and this increases in 1.5-second increments for second to 10th in the standings up to the full 15s for 11th downwards.

In races below 17 laps, the championship leader prior to race one each weekend will have their hybrid use cut by 10 laps, decreasing in one-lap increments for the rest of the top 10. In races over 17 laps, the scale is 15-13-11-9-7-5-4-3-2-1. As with the old ballast system, this is reapplied to the top 10 in races one and two for races two and three respectively. Therefore, the first time we see this new format will be race two at Donington, which, scheduled for 16 laps, will use the 10-9-8-etc system.

The qualifying hybrid rules penalise a series leader far more on short tracks

than longer circuits, and TOCA boss Alan Gow admits: "On a short circuit we might need to alter those numbers. For Brands Indy and Knockhill, they're the circuits where you think, 'OK, the disparity might be a bit different there'. If it's manifestly wrong, then you'd tweak it." The same goes for the figures overall, which will be amended if they are regarded as penalising successful drivers too much or too little.

How can you tell when hybrid is being used? Well, it won't be used at all on opening laps from the start or safety car restarts, but after that LED lights in the rear side windows will alert spectators, although if you're standing at the Craners at Donington you might need tele/periscopic vision to see when it's likely deployed on the back straight.

The BTCC is the first tin-top series to mandate hybrid usage, and Gow is pretty proud of that. "Part of that is exciting to be honest," he says. "When you're the first to do it, you haven't got any lessons to go from. People will learn from us. But I'm really glad we've done it. We had so many headwinds over the past couple of years, Cosworth, the suppliers and ourselves – the pandemic, the supply shortages which are still ongoing and the pricing of things – that the easiest thing to do would have to been to say, 'Let's delay it for a year'. But do you know what? Who knows what's going to happen next year? You could come up against another headwind. So you've just got to dig deep and get on and do it."



There should be 29 cars on the grid when the action kicks off at Donington

“When you’re the first to do hybrid, you haven’t got any lessons to go from”

Turkington in good shape as Hill joins

Four-time BTCC champion Colin Turkington believes that the adoption of the hybrid regulations can play into the hands of his West Surrey Racing squad and the BMW 330e M Sport. The Northern Irishman was quickest in the first two official tests at Donington and Croft, while new team-mate Jake Hill was second overall at Thruxton, a circuit where the rear-wheel-drive machine traditionally does not excel.

“I think the ballast certainly had its moment in the BTCC, it was very effective and created good racing, and generally the 3 Series coped with the ballast quite well,” says Turkington. “We’re used to running heavy, so I think that will stand us in good stead in 2022 [due to the extra hybrid weight]. Running 1370kg is nothing new for us. So we know where we need to be with the car, weight distribution, etc, and that’s probably why we’ve come out of the box quite quick, because we’ve got a good understanding of the base package.”

And what about those test times? “You can’t read too much into testing pace, but certainly the car seems fast out of the box, comfortable,” adds Turkington. “The hybrid aside, Dick [Bennetts, WSR boss] has invested a lot into the package, into the chassis, the aero. We’ve looked at everything to try and get back on top.”

While Turkington has a new BMW shell for 2022, Stephen Jelley retains his 2021 car and Hill takes the wheel of the ex-Tom Oliphant weapon. It’s a massive break for the Kentishman, who has spent most of his career as an underdog. “I don’t feel pressure, I just feel that I need to perform and match Colin or if not try and beat him,” states Hill. “I’ve got no place to hide now. Everyone’s been saying I’m quite good at it, and now I’m in the best car with the best team-mates I’ve got nowhere to hide. It’s just a case of getting on top of it now and doing the best job that I can.”



Turkington topped first two tests at Donington and Croft

From South Korea to a team in Suffolk via a specialist in Wiltshire

Some might say it's a masterstroke. While those using the brand-new M-Sport-built TOCA customer engine have lagged a bit in testing, Excelr8 Motorsport commissioned bespoke Hyundai powerplants from former TOCA supplier Swindon Powertrain for its squadron of i30 N machines, and lead driver Tom Ingram has been up there in testing.

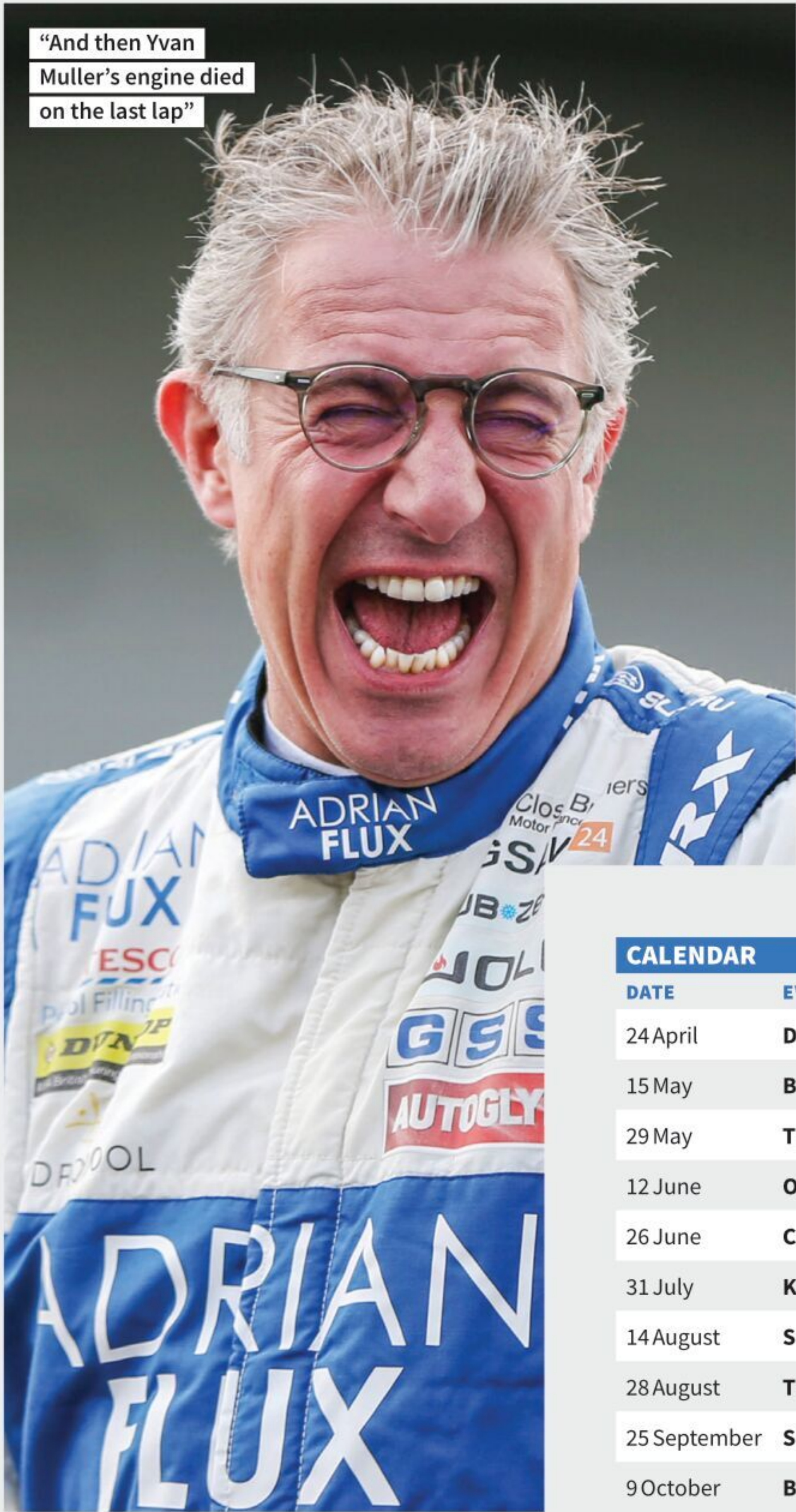
We can be sure that TOCA will, if it feels necessary, allow the customer-engine users some extra boost in time for Donington. That was, indeed, a possibility as we went to press. But for Ingram, who has used the Swindon/TOCA engine throughout his BTCC career to date, it was a case of getting to grips with what he already knows, despite the Hyundai block being completely new to NGTC competition.

"It feels good," asserts Ingram. "There's nothing crazy going on. I haven't jumped in it and gone, 'Oh my God, this feels insane, there's so much power', but equally I haven't jumped in it and gone, 'It feels a bit shit'. It feels exactly as it should do. Driveable, good top speed, good bottom end. If you'd said we had the same engine as we had last year, I'd say,

'Yeah, OK, it feels strong'. From a driveability point of view, from a comfort point of view, knowing how it works, I'm really happy. I'd like to think we can be close to the pace with it, but we've also got to remember it's a completely new engine philosophy for us with a new block. It's going to be a bit of a season of fettling and learning and understanding it."

Hmm, so could it be another nearly-man season for Ingram? One such was 2021, where he was often lumbered with 66kg of success ballast as second in the championship and, on a front-wheel-drive car, that hurt. Ingram describes the outgoing system as "a bit archaic", and that the i30 N was "a good car with ballast. We were the heaviest of the front-wheel-drive cars coming in every weekend, so we should be outqualified – that was the very concept of it. The car feels actually better than we had last year. There's a slightly different weight distribution in terms of where the battery is going and where the success ballast was, but I actually think we've got quite a good base to work from primarily because we've got the knowledge of what we had last year."

"And then Yvan Muller's engine died on the last lap"



Plato in quick Civic for farewell tour

Up to a few weeks ago, if someone had told you that a multiple BTCC champion in his mid-fifties would be competing this year in a Honda Civic Type R, you'd have assumed it would be Matt Neal returning with his Team Dynamics squad. Instead, a late deal ensures that Neal's old nemesis Jason Plato lines up with BTC Racing in a Dynamics-built machine for what he pledges will be his final season in the series.

It gives the two-time title winner a great chance to sign off on a high and prove that he's still got it, especially since he partners BTC regular Josh Cook, third in the points in 2021 and one of the big BTCC talents.

"I'm really excited about it because first impressions so far of the car are good," enthuses Plato, who jumps across from a Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall. "I've been against the Honda for many years, been the enemy, and I sat behind and in front of Josh a couple of times last year, and Dan Rowbottom, and Gordon Shedden. The Honda is particularly good in certain key areas, and certainly the last couple of years there were certain areas where the car I was in wasn't very good, and it's in those areas. So even after a few laps at Donington when I first jumped in the car it was, 'Oh Christ, this is really good here'."

"It's got really good, stretchy, elastic rear grip, and that means you can really lean on the rear, and you can set the rear up to move without it biting you, which then is good for the front end. But I've got to learn the car because it requires a different style. I'm a little bit at the moment too aggressive with my inputs on corner entry, because I don't need to hustle it in – it will go in. And I'm slowly working on that. Am I going to be as quick over one lap as Josh who's half my age? Biology would say probably not. But if I can get the car doing what I want it to do, then there's no reason why I can't challenge for the championship."

And what of the Dynamics Honda challenge? "We had a shocking year and still finished sixth," points out Shedden of his comeback season in 2021. "We finished the year in a much better position once everything aligned a bit more, and that's the form we need to start with this year."

CALENDAR	
DATE	EVENT
24 April	Donington Park
15 May	Brands Hatch Indy
29 May	Thruxton
12 June	Oulton Park
26 June	Croft
31 July	Knockhill
14 August	Snetterton
28 August	Thruxton
25 September	Silverstone
9 October	Brands Hatch GP



“It’s going to be a season of fettling and learning and understanding it”

The Collard odyssey continues

It crept under the radar a bit with the Plato fanfare, but Ricky Collard’s recruitment by Speedworks Motorsport to partner established leading light Rory Butcher in its Toyota Corolla line-up could be significant long term, because the Hampshireman wants his future to be in the BTCC.

Collard, remember, was a rival of the likes of Lando Norris, Colton Herta and Dan Ticktum in his single-seater days, and as a member of the BMW Junior Team was a winner of international GT3 races. But the BTCC is where the heart is for the son of Rob Collard, a 15-time race winner in the series.

Collard Jr did contest four rounds in 2018 with a WSR BMW standing in for his dad, and took a podium finish, but has faced a steep learning curve with the front-wheel-drive Toyota, especially as he was forced to miss the Croft test due to a bout of salmonella.

“Ever since the age of three, I’ve been stood on the other side of the fence, supporting my dad and going all around the country watching him, and also just being a fan of the touring cars,” he smiles. “Now 20 years later I’ve got my first opportunity of a full season, I’m super-excited for it. Rory’s pace is really quick. We saw that towards the end of last year. It is quite a difficult car to drive, the Corolla GR Sport, but I’m learning, he’s learning, the team are learning every day, and I’m hoping Rory can use his experience to develop the car, and I can just learn exactly where I’ve got to be.”



P46 TOCA SUPPORT PREVIEW

ENTRY LIST

NO	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	Ash Sutton	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST
9	Dan Cammish	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST
48	Ollie Jackson	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST
77	Sam Osborne	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST
3	Tom Chilton	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N
80	Tom Ingram	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N
96	Jack Butel	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N
123	Dan Lloyd	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N
6	Rory Butcher	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla GR Sport
21	Ricky Collard	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla GR Sport
11	Jason Plato	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R
66	Josh Cook	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R
99	Jade Edwards	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R
12	Stephen Jelley	West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport
24	Jake Hill	West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport
50	Colin Turkington	West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport
16	Aiden Moffat	Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50
17	Dexter Patterson	Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50
19	Bobby Thompson	Team Hard Cupra Leon
28	Nicolas Hamilton	Team Hard Cupra Leon
31	Jack Goff	Team Hard Cupra Leon
40	Aron Taylor-Smith	Team Hard Cupra Leon
62	Rick Parfitt	Team Hard Infiniti Q50
32	Dan Rowbottom	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R
52	Gordon Shedden	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R
33	Adam Morgan	Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330e M Sport
42	George Gamble	Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330e M Sport
97	Ash Hand	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra
777	Michael Crees	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra

Victorious Colombo (left) and Habsburg hitch a lift from Deletraz



JEP
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IMAGES

New arena, same story as Prema is premier

EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

PAUL RICARD (FRA)

17 APRIL

ROUND 1/6

Lorenzo Colombo, Louis Deletraz and Ferdinand Habsburg raced to victory at Paul Ricard as single-seater stalwart Prema Racing dominated on the Italian team's European Le Mans Series debut.

Paul Ricard invariably delivers fantastic sportscar racing, and the opening round of the ELMS proved no different. The opening stint of the four-hour race was very fast, giving the top 10 almost no opportunity to move forward. But halfway through the second hour, Prema started to impose itself to take the lead. It quickly became apparent that the team's trio had the pace to counter any attack from the established ELMS teams.

This meant that the battle for second and

best of the rest was the most fiercely fought. Those honours went to Algarve Pro Racing pair Bent Viscaal and Sophia Florsch, barely a month after the team lost its planned G-Drive Racing entries to international sporting sanctions. APR's unceasing efforts to remain on the grid were rewarded by an inspired strategy call to take advantage of a late full-course yellow, while Panis Racing finished third with Job van Uitert, Nico Jamin and Julien Canal.

But no one could live with Prema Racing, which won by a comfortable 11 seconds.

The LMP2 Pro-Am class was initially headed by TDS Racing's Vaillante-liveried ORECA after Mathias Beche's stunning qualifying effort gave the French team an overall pole position, but after the first stint it started to slip back. It was left to the TF Sport-run Racing Team Turkey to pick up the mantle and lead the way, with Jack

Aitken, Charlie Eastwood and Salih Yoluc in an impressive sixth overall and almost 40s ahead of the AF Corse car.

There was drama too in the LMP3 class, with Inter Europol looking set to take victory in what had quickly become a race of attrition. While other teams encountered issues, the familiar lime-green-and-yellow Ligier navigated a race littered with safety cars and punctures to lead the class. But the Polish-run Ligier wasn't as healthy as initially thought, with engine-related issues clearly affecting the pace. After a protracted hunt, Danish charger Malthe Jakobsen started the penultimate lap within striking distance. The Cool Racing Ligier driver, co-driving bronze duo Maurice Smith and Michael Benham, wasted no time, and went around the outside of the struggling leader to take victory. Inter Europol's day went from bad to worse when the car was excluded due to an irregularity in the car's differential. This elevated United Autosports (Bailey Voisin, Josh Caygill and Finn Gehrtsitz) to second and RLR MSport (Alex Kapadia, Nick Adcock and Michael Jensen) to third, although Inter Europol has signified its plan to appeal.

Ferrari and Porsche fought it out for GTE honours. The win went to Memo Gidley, Nicolas Varrone and Pierre Ehret in the Rinaldi Racing Ferrari, although the margin at the line was just over 0.1s. A hard-charging Gianmaria Bruni (Proton Porsche) forced Varrone to have his elbows out at the finish, while the second Proton 911 RSR completed the podium.

NELSON VALKENBURG

Right to left: van der Helm gets jump in pole car from Colombo, Hanson and Yoluc

CIRCUIT PAUL RICARD



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Busch grows roots in the dirt

NASCAR CUP
BRISTOL (USA)
17 APRIL
ROUND 9/36

Kyle Busch's 60th career victory in the NASCAR Cup Series may have been the most unexpected, since he was running a distant third as the field entered the final turn of the 250 laps at the Bristol Motor Speedway dirt track. Then Chase Briscoe got into leader Tyler Reddick, which sent both cars spinning out of control.



Busch benefited from last-corner snafu for victory

Reddick was able to straighten out his Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet and continue, but not before Busch's Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota nipped him at the chequered flag by 0.330 seconds and stole the victory. As he crossed the finish line, Busch yelled on his team radio: "I'll take it!"

Busch had been competitive throughout the event and had made reference several times to he and Briscoe (Stewart-Haas Racing Ford) having the fastest cars in the race. But the only time he managed to take the lead was off the final turn. That ended a 25-race winless streak for Busch and allowed him to tie seven-time Cup champion Richard Petty with at least one victory in 18 consecutive seasons. "Doesn't matter how you get them," beamed Busch. "This one means a lot. I can win on any surface here at Bristol. Bring it on, baby."

On losing out on the opportunity for his first career Cup win, Reddick said: "I don't think I did everything right, to be honest with you. Briscoe was able to run me back down there. Just looking at it, I should have done a little bit better job."

While Briscoe dropped to 22nd, 2021 Bristol dirt race winner Joey Logano was third from Kyle Larson and Ryan Blaney.

JIM UTTER

WEEKEND WINNERS

EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

PAUL RICARD (FRA)

LMP2 Louis Deletraz/Ferdinand Habsburg/Lorenzo Colombo
 Prema Racing (ORECA-Gibson 07)

LMP3 Malthe Jakobsen/Maurice Smith/Michael Benham
 Cool Racing (Ligier-Nissan JSP320)

GTE Memo Gidley/Nico Varrone/Pierre Ehret
 Rinaldi Racing (Ferrari 488 GTE Evo)

NASCAR CUP

BRISTOL (USA)

Kyle Busch
 Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

SUPER GT

OKAYAMA (JPN)

Kazuya Oshima/Kenta Yamashita
 Rookie Racing (Toyota GR Supra)

LE MANS CUP

PAUL RICARD (FRA)

Tom Dillmann/Alexander Mattschull
 Racing Spirit of Leman (Ligier-Nissan JSP320)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Win for Rookie pairing who aren't rookies

SUPER GT
OKAYAMA (JPN)
17 APRIL
ROUND 1/8

Toyota scored victory in the opening round of the Super GT season as all three manufacturers got a car on the podium in a thrilling race at Okayama.

From pole, Rookie Racing duo Kazuya Oshima and Kenta Yamashita repeated their 2021 triumph at the former Pacific Grand Prix venue, surviving a late scare that allowed the Team Kunimitsu Honda within 1.8 seconds of victory.

Yamashita had a lead of around 10s over Naoki Yamamoto's Honda in the closing stages, but lost time making light contact with a GT300 car that had spun following a late full-course-yellow period, allowing Yamamoto to close in.

Yamamoto was the star of the second stint as he fought his way up from fifth in the car he shares with Tadasuke Makino, including a superb double pass on the



Yamashita held on under late charge from Yamamoto

Cerumo Toyota and the Impul Nissan at the Turn 5 hairpin with 10 laps to go.

The Cerumo car of Hiroaki Ishiura and Yuji Tachikawa lost a further place to a charging Tsugio Matsuda, who booked Nissan a place on the podium on the new Z's debut. That was despite a disappointing qualifying showing for NISMO pair Matsuda and Ronnie Quintarelli, who lined up ninth but came into their own late on with their Michelin tyres holding up well in the warm spring weather.

Nissan had two cars in the top five, with the second NISMO-run Z of Katsumasa Chiyo and Mitsunori Takaboshi recovering from 14th on the grid to finish fifth. Less

fortunate were Impul's Kazuki Hiramine and Bertrand Baguette, who ran as high as second before tumbling to seventh, behind the leading TOM'S Toyota of Sho Tsuboi and GT500 debutant Giuliano Alesi, with a curious lack of pace in the latter stages.

Likewise dropping down the order was the SARD Toyota of Yuhi Sekiguchi and Yuichi Nakayama, who had qualified second and emerged from the pitstop phase in the same position, but was powerless to hold on and finished eighth.

JAMIE KLEIN

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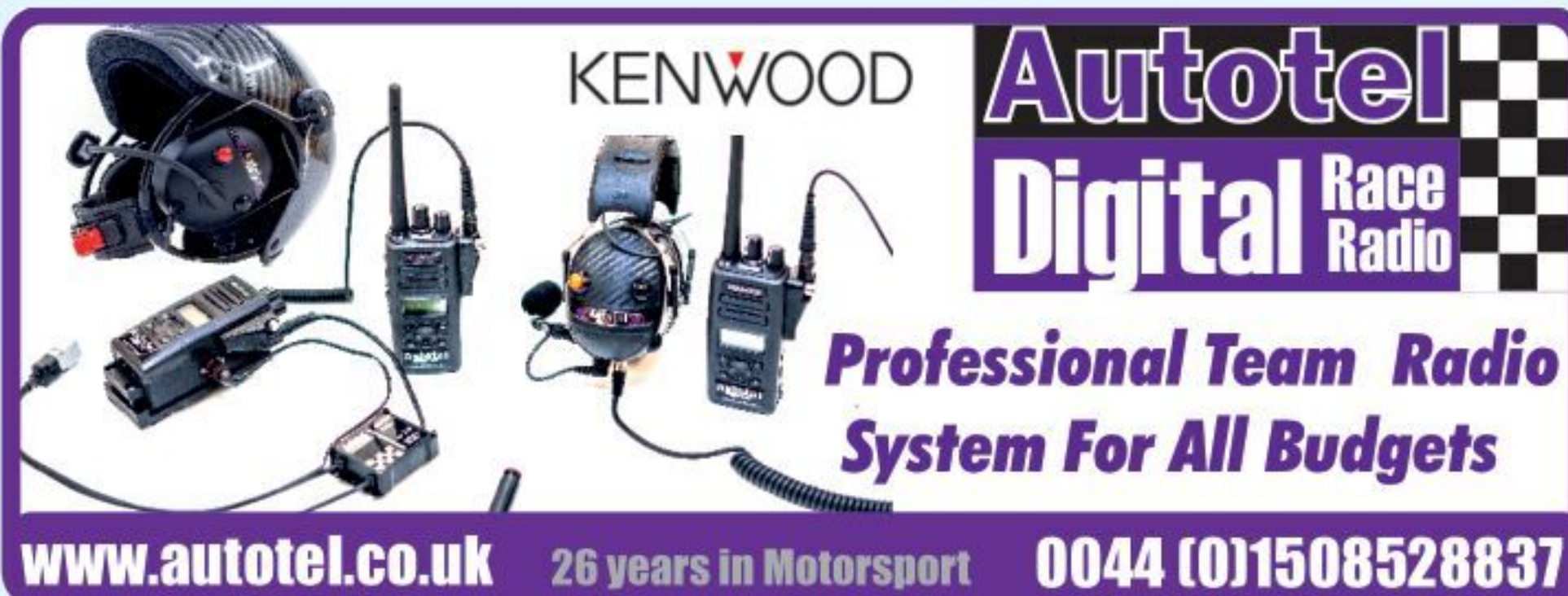
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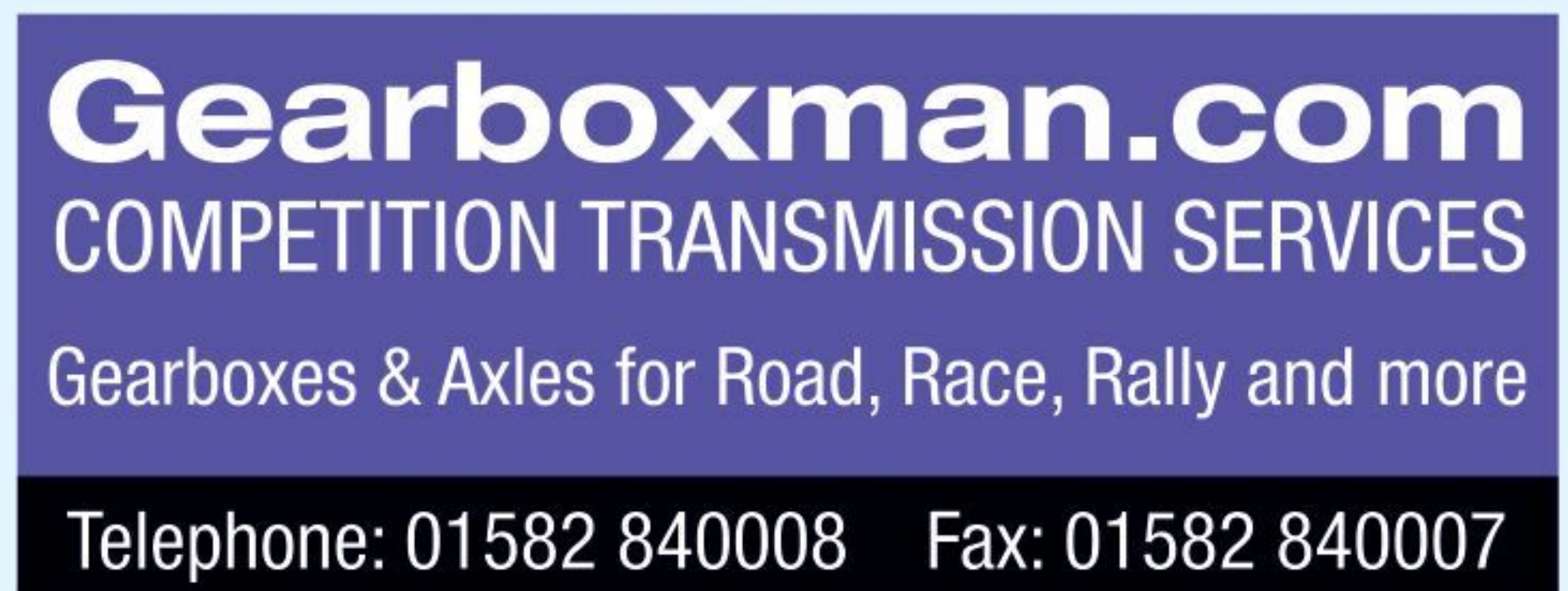


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- Ensure that ideas and designs are legal and to the standards of surface quality and aerodynamic refinement of the department, and coherent with the overall objectives of the team.
- Effective management of your own projects through the design, CFD, part preparation and wind tunnel test process, according to agreed deadlines and the requirements of the programme.
- Create CAD geometry
- Submit CFD cases, deliver CFD analysis and input for your area of the car to deadlines.
- Liaison with the Design team (Surfacers and Model Designers) to ensure the quality of surfaces and model parts back as required.
- Build an awareness of the full scale car design constraints in your area.
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- Summarise results and directions, collaborating with all stakeholders. Collect input, propose directions and lead the implementation of agreed actions.
- Continue to build an understanding of aerodynamic structures and behaviours around the car. Contribute to collaborative discussions and efforts to improve whole-car performance, offering ideas and taking on board feedback from others.
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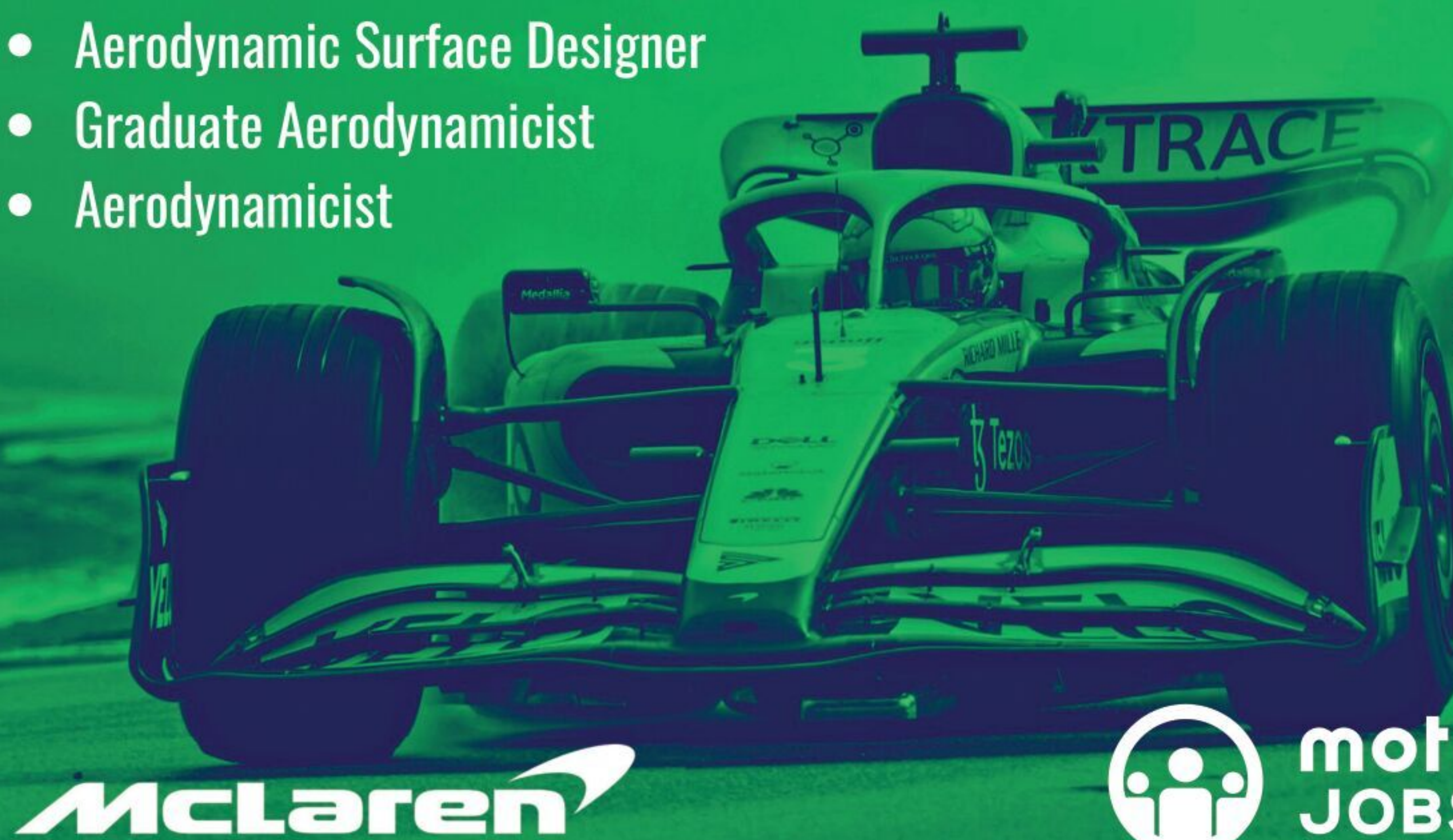


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The BTCC supporting stars to watch

Competitive entries mean plenty of intrigue for the TOCA categories



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TOCA SUPPORTS PREVIEW

The rising stars attempting to shine

There are plenty of promising talents among the BTCC support categories this year, and that makes picking the likely title contenders far from straightforward

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP AND PORSCHE



PORSCHE

Porsche Carrera Cup GB

To say that the Porsche Carrera Cup GB is looking competitive this season is an understatement. A glance at the list of reigning champions joining the grid alone is a sign of the quality in the Pro line-up. There's Ginetta GT4 Supercup title winner – and new Porsche GB Junior – Adam Smalley, British GT4 victor Gus Burton, Porsche Sprint Challenge GB dominator Theo Edgerton and, more left-field, Castle Combe Formula Ford 1600 ace Oliver White, who is making his long-desired move to sportscars. Add in 2017 British GT champion Seb Morris and 2014 British GT4 conqueror Jake Giddings, and it really is some field.

But perhaps it's two of the drivers who are not among the additions who have the best chance of taking the spoils. Kiern Jewiss and Will Martin were both race winners last season in a campaign that again featured a hugely talented grid. Martin, a 2019 Ginetta Junior frontrunner, took two triumphs and is now seeking to launch a full title bid. Meanwhile, 2018 British Formula 4 champion Jewiss

impressed after hitting the reset button on his career and winning on his debut weekend after switching from single-seaters.

With a bit more luck, Jewiss feels he could have figured in the final-round decider last term, and is optimistic about his chances this time around. "I'm feeling very confident but you never know what everyone else has got," he says. "The first few rounds is where we're going to have the advantage as second-year drivers. We've got to lay our stamp down and that sets the tone for the year."

Jewiss believes that the new 'Type 992' 911 GT3 Cup machine being introduced this year "is suiting me a little better", and will take advantage of his Team Parker Racing squad being the only team to have regularly run the car before, having entered last season's Porsche Supercup. Considering he ultimately fell 19 points short in 2021, Jewiss is concentrating on ensuring he maximises every scoring opportunity this year.



New Porsche Junior Smalley is one of many Carrera Cup contenders

“The biggest thing I want to improve is qualifying,” he states. “Pole and fastest-lap points make a difference, especially in a championship where so little points are given [just two markers separate the top two in non-reversed grid races].”

But Jewiss is aware the swathe of rookies could “jump straight in and be fast straight away”. And Smalley is targeting doing just that. He enters with the dual confidence boost of a dominant performance in the GT4 Supercup and impressing Porsche sufficiently to be chosen as the new Junior.

“The ultimate goal is to win the championship but I know it’s not going to be easy,” says Smalley. “I’m not putting too much pressure on myself, I’m going to take it round by round. Testing’s gone well but, until the chequered flag waves at the end of qualifying, we don’t know where we stand against everyone else.” Indeed, predicting a winner among the 10 Pros is nigh-on impossible with Jewiss and Smalley just two names likely to be in the mix.



F1 juniors (left to right): Gray, Guinchard and Ugochukwu

British Formula 4

There is a plethora of changes for British Formula 4 this year, with a new promoter, new car, new engine, new tyre supplier and new sponsors (see Autosport, 31 March). But another new element for 2022 is the number of Formula 1 juniors on the grid.

Never before have three teenagers affiliated with F1 teams competed against each other in British F4, and that makes for an intriguing subplot in the battle to start the new era in style.

One of those drivers is a familiar face: Williams-backed Oliver Gray took two wins en route to seventh in the standings last year with Fortec Motorsport. He has now switched to Carlin and is feeling “much more prepared” for his sophomore campaign. “You always feel a little bit more pressure, wanting to perform every week, but I feel like it definitely gives you more confidence,” he adds about his Williams recognition.

But given all the change in the series, Gray acknowledges that being a second-year driver does not bring all the usual benefits this year. Among the rookies aiming to take advantage of that is Mercedes F1 junior Daniel Guinchard. He admits that his selection by the eight-time constructors’ champion was a “big surprise”, but is already reaping the benefits.

Guinchard was in the Silver Arrows’ spotlight after making history by winning two British Karting titles in the same season last year with Argenti Motorsport, the team with which he graduates to F4. “When I stepped into F4, it didn’t feel like too big a jump compared to maybe how some other people felt because it was with the same family, I knew everyone around the team and it was the same faces,” he explains. “I think that’s definitely helped with the progression over the winter because I’ve felt at home since day one.”

Completing the F1 junior trio is McLaren’s Ugo Ugochukwu, who lines up alongside Gray at Carlin. He has already made several trips to Woking, and all three drivers have regularly been at the top of the times in pre-season testing.

But there is a host of others aiming to prove the F1 teams have backed the wrong drivers. Joseph Loake is the highest-placed from last year (sixth) to continue, staying with JHR for a second season after graduating from Fiesta Junior. Then there’s Guinchard’s Argenti team-mate Aiden Neate, who showed flashes of pace last year, while Carlin’s Louis Sharp could also be one to watch. Elsewhere, the feelgood story has to be Joel Pearson’s return to racing after battling cancer. Getting on the grid has been a major achievement for the Chris Dittmann Racing driver, but he is also keen to show his pace.



Coates is seeking elusive title victory this season

JEP

Mini Challenge

Few drivers have been as consistent a frontrunner without winning a title among the British Touring Car support series for as many years as Max Coates. The popular Yorkshireman has been a key contender in the Renault UK Clio Cup and Mini Challenge since 2016, but has never quite sealed a crown, although he has come very close on occasions. And he is looking to put that right this year.

Last season, Coates joined Graves Motorsport for his sophomore Mini campaign. The ambitious team was new to the JCW class, and he therefore had to temper expectations. But, with a year of learning under its belt, the squad has expanded significantly, with Coates and Bradley Gravett joined by Lewis Brown (third in last year's points), Cooper class champions Harry Nunn and Dominic Wheatley, Irish ace Alex Denning and ex-Scottish Legends star Ross Marshall.

"Last year was about us all gelling and ended with a pole and a win, and we're hoping that's the form we continue into 2022," says Coates. "More team-mates is hopefully an advantage, it certainly means we've got more resources and personnel in the team."

Coates is keen to get his campaign off to a strong start, something he admits

"has been my downfall in previous seasons". But it's going to be far from easy, with Coates estimating the packed grid features "10 to 12" race winners. "Of the top six last year, there's only one not returning so it's going to be tight," he adds.

One of those continuing is reigning champion Dan Zelos. He is staying with Excelr8 Motorsport, and that winning combination will be tough to beat as he seeks to make history by successfully defending his crown. With the quality of the opposition, Zelos admits that finishing in the final top three would be considered a success, but is not feeling the weight of expectation after last year's victory. "There's a lot of drivers that really stepped it up over the last few rounds of last season," he says. "Some people said, 'Are you going to have more pressure after winning last year?' But I was more determined than ever last year and I've now ticked that box. We've got a new tyre compound to master – I don't think anyone knows where they are, and we won't know until qualifying on Saturday."

Others likely to be in that frontrunning mix include Lux Motorsport's Jack Davidson – the form driver in the second half of 2021 – and Hybrid Tune's Sam Weller, who showed flashes of speed last year.

Ginetta GT4 Supercup

It's been a long wait for James Kellett. Six years after he first targeted a Ginetta GT4 Supercup move, the two-time GT5 Challenge champion is now finally set to make the full-time switch.

Kellett was runner-up in the 2014 Ginetta Junior contest and then claimed the GT5 crown the following year. But a planned progression to the top level of the Ginetta ladder never materialised, with Kellett unable to secure the budget, and he instead spent two years on the sidelines. "As a young driver, that was a massive shock to the system," he admits.

But he was able to "reboot" his career in 2018 as a new relationship with Century Motorsport yielded a dominant second GT5 title. He has since spent the past few seasons partnering amateur driver Alex Stevenson in the GT Cup before impressing on two cameo appearances in the GT4 Supercup at the end of 2021, when he took three wins.

It was a reminder of Kellett's talents and, with Stevenson's Wheldrake Classic Cars company and new Century sub-team Rosland Gold Racing, he has finally landed that full-time GT4 Supercup graduation. "I'm going into this year confident purely on the back of what I did last year," he says. "But it's a completely different car."

It's a familiar story on the BTCC bill, because the GT4 Supercup is yet another series adopting new machinery with the introduction of the G56. "Because it's a new car, everybody is all over the place with it," Kellett continues. "It's such a technical car compared to the old G55 – I've never driven a car with ABS or TC before, so I'm getting my head around that."



Kellett is finally making full-time
Ginetta GT4 Supercup graduation

With the addition of a V8 engine and 500bhp for the G56, it's not just the drivers feeling that extra power – the rear tyres are too. Kellett therefore believes that managing the rubber over a weekend will be a real challenge, and could have a major bearing on results.

While Kellett is seeking title glory on his return to the TOCA package, he is far from the only one to watch. Josh Rattican was runner-up

in the series last year and is continuing with Elite Motorsport, while reigning Ginetta Junior champion Aston Millar has made the move with new team DTO Motorsport. And there is still time for more entries to arrive since the campaign does not begin until the second BTCC round at Brands Hatch next month, meaning Kellett still has a little longer to wait to finally become a GT4 Supercup regular.



Winter Series win has given
Rowledge confidence

Ginetta Junior

Drivers who triumph in the end-of-season Ginetta Junior Winter Series have a pretty good track record of also succeeding in the subsequent full campaign. Of the 12 previous winter champions, eight have gone on to finish in the top two in the main series the following year. Josh Rowledge is now the latest seeking to join that list.

Rowledge moved to R Racing from Elite Motorsport for the winter contest and, after finishing seventh in the main championship in 2021, he was instantly on the pace. And R Racing boss Jamie Ross believes his charge is now only growing stronger. "I think it's given him a bit of confidence to know he can do it," says Ross of the winter victory. "He's proved it to himself and put him in a good place."

But Rowledge's task of replicating that glory will not be easy. It's another packed entry and features last year's runner-up Liam McNeilly, who will be desperate to go one better as he continues with the family Fox Motorsport squad. Other sophomore drivers to watch include Assetto's Harri Reynolds and Elite's Aqil Alibhai. But, given Ginetta Junior's notorious unpredictability, no one can truly be discounted from fighting at the front.



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RAM protests after losing on-road victory

BRITISH GT

Leading British GT Championship squad RAM Racing has protested the result of last Monday's second Oulton Park race after on-the-road winners Ian Loggie and Jules Gounon were dumped back to fifth position by a post-race penalty.

The race was red-flagged amid a rain shower while Gounon was handing over to Loggie in the pits following accidents on the approach to Druids. Some cars had already pitted, and others were yet to serve their success time penalties earned in race one.

The decision was taken to reset the field in the order in which the cars had run prior to the start of the pitstop window for the restart, with success seconds to be added to the car's overall time at the end of the shortened race.

Loggie, whose Mercedes-AMG GT3 had finished second in race one to Shaun Balfe, led the Audi R8 driver to the flag, but they were classified fifth and sixth respectively thanks to penalties of seven and 10 seconds, with the Paddock Motorsport McLaren of Kelvin Fletcher and Martin Plowman declared the winner.

"The way they decided to apply the 7s penalty from the first race was totally bizarre really," said Loggie. "How can you have the same penalty for a race that only lasts 20 minutes? If a race runs 20 minutes

and it's a 60-minute race with a 7s penalty, that should be pro-rata in my opinion. It should be 2.33 seconds."

RAM boss Dan Shufflebottom said: "There's nothing in the regulation unfortunately that applies to that situation, it's obviously [something] we need to look at. Effectively we were given the penalty for a one-hour race but had an 18-minute race. And without a regulation that says that should happen, we don't think it should have done. The regulations are not something that should be left to ambiguity; that's how I felt it was."

Autosport understands that a decision will be made by the meeting's Motorsport UK stewards, while RAM could appeal to the National Court if the result is upheld.

But some teams had no problem with British GT's interpretation. Barwell Motorsport boss Mark Lemmer said: "That was the only thing you can do in those circumstances. It's such a messy thing when the pit window opens just as a safety car with a weather choice. That was absolutely the correct procedure."

Century Motorsport's Nathan Freke agreed: "I have no issues. It was a tricky situation, no-one really knew what was going on. So I think red-flagging it and resetting it like they did probably was the only logical way of making it right."

JAMES NEWBOLD

TOUGH START FOR CENTURY'S NEW BMW M4

BRITISH GT

Century Motorsport gave the new BMW M4 GT3 its UK competition debut in the opening round of the British GT Championship at Oulton Park last weekend, but endured a series of setbacks due to accidents.

The car (below) hadn't turned a wheel prior to Friday's test, when Taiwanese driver Betty Chen hooked the car into the barrier exiting Cascades in FP2.

The crew missed qualifying while team boss Nathan Freke travelled to Calais to collect spare parts. But another crash for Chen exiting Druids in the Monday warm-up stopped the car from starting race one. It was repaired in time for race two, with series returnee Angus Fender starting from the pitlane before Chen took over and finished 13th.

"I felt for her because it's a little bit of circuit knowledge that she lacked and she paid a big price for it," said Freke. "The positives to take is the car looks quick, Angus did a good job and Betty was making improvements before she went off."

- Graham Davidson is eyeing further British GT outings after making a last-minute return to the series at Oulton Park.

The 2019 GT3 champion hadn't competed since the start of the pandemic, but partnered James Kell at Team Rocket RJN when Simon Watts tested positive for COVID-19.

Davidson qualified fourth in the McLaren 720S GT3 and moved up to second before contact with race leader Richard Neary put him into the barrier. This was followed by a fourth place in race two, moving up from 11th after the red flag.

JAMES NEWBOLD



New races for GT4 machines added to Classic

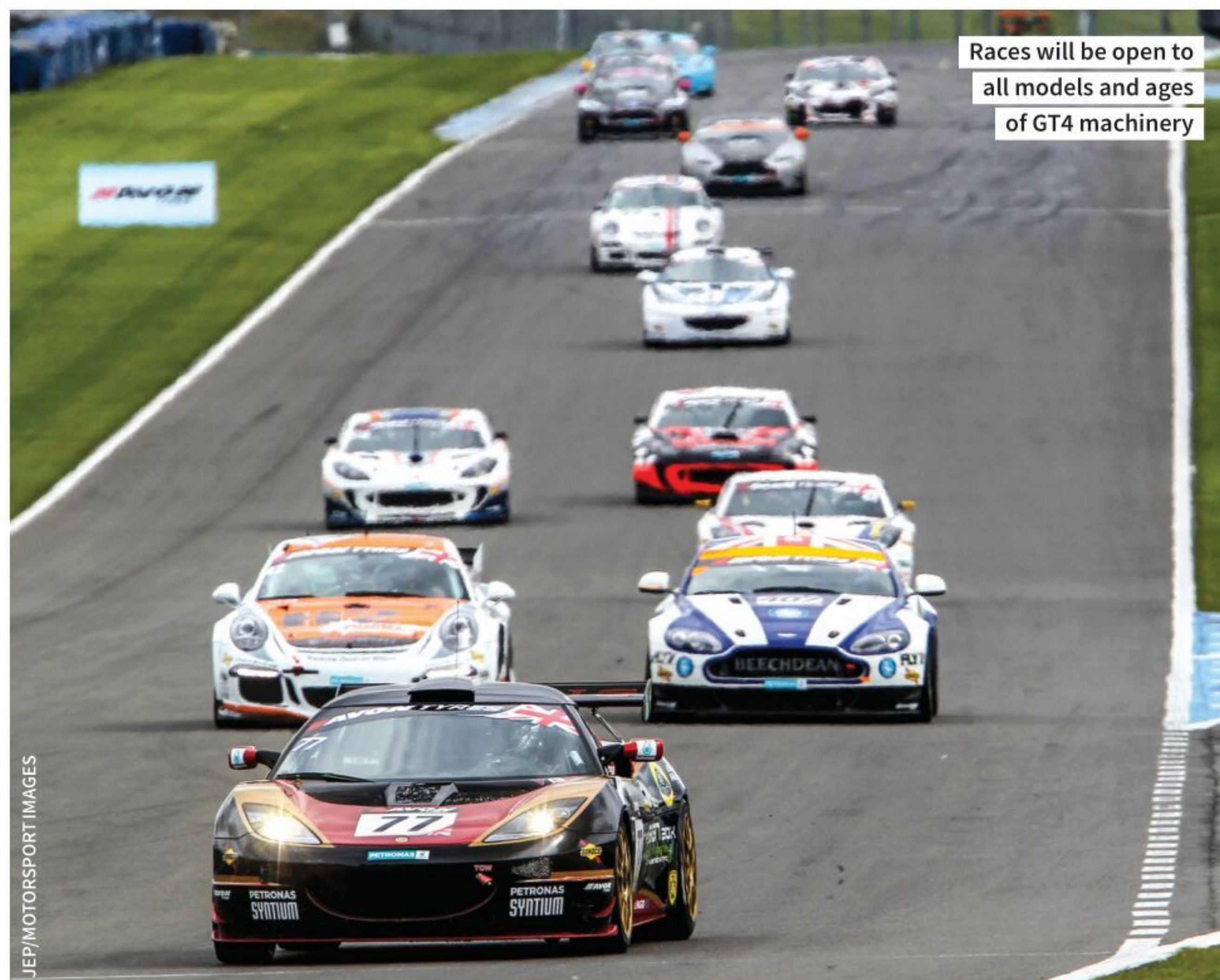
SILVERSTONE CLASSIC

A pair of races for GT4 cars at the Silverstone Classic could lead to the start of a new series under the wing of Masters Historic Racing.

The late August event will be open to all GT4 cars, regardless of age, and is the result of discussions between event promoter Nick Wigley and Masters founder Ron Maydon. With the backing of SRO Motorsport chief Stephane Ratel, the originator of the GT4 category in 2007, the two 30-minute sprint races will feature old and modern GT4 machines in a grid of up to 50 cars.

Although the idea is initially a one-off designed to further broaden the appeal of the event, Maydon admits it could lead to further races, particularly for the cars now out of homologation. Just as with recent sports-prototypes and GT3 cars in the Masters Endurance Legends series, Maydon says that further races for age-defined GT4 cars is an option for 2023 and beyond.

"We've been pleasantly surprised at the response to Masters Endurance Legends," said Maydon. "I'd been to a few test days at Donington and noticed a whole group of GT4 cars and I said to Nick that we could try something very new and very modern but aimed at a totally different audience to



what we normally have.

"Stephane Ratel was keen to be involved and so that's how it happened. The Silverstone races are for current cars and older cars, so let's see how it goes. In Endurance Legends we only allow the earlier cars: the ones that are no longer current. I'm open-eyed and optimistic and if there is an opportunity, I'd like to look at it."

Wigley added: "The addition of GT4 supercars adds yet another ace to The Classic's already impressive pack and

ensures this summer's on-track bill will be the most comprehensive ever, spanning the last 100 years of motor racing history."

The GT4s aren't the only current machinery set to feature at this year's event. It was also announced earlier this month that all seven of Lewis Hamilton's Formula 1 title-winning cars will be on display together for the first time, as part of the Silverstone Classic's 'Best of British' theme.

PAUL LAWRENCE

Brake problems force withdrawal of Ekris

BRITISH GT

Inspire Racing elected to withdraw its Ekris M4 GT4 from last weekend's British GT Championship season opener at Oulton Park after suffering brake problems throughout practice and qualifying.

The new team, headed by former British Touring Car Championship racer Richard Marsh, elected to enter the Dutch-built Ekris, which was homologated prior to the BMW-built model and was raced successfully during the 2017 GT4

European Championship.

But Marsh and three-time BTCC race winner Gareth Howell brought up the rear of the GT4 times in qualifying when the confidence-sapping brake problems persisted, prompting a decision to pull out of the races.

Howell said the team's lack of running – it had only completed a shakedown at a wet Donington Park prior to Friday's test session – had "bitten us a bit".

"We've thrown everything at it and scratched our heads all day," he said. "We don't have the same brakes



homologated to this car that BMW do. It has its own set of brakes that are very difficult to get hold of. It's quite a hard pad but we don't think it's just the pad; there's much more going on with the master cylinder."

Howell added that the team can't switch to Brembo brakes as used by the

BMW-built M4s, which leaves Inspire "at a bit of a crossroads with where we go from here". "We took a bit of a punt with this weekend and it hasn't worked out," he said. "But hopefully we can be back in the championship a little bit later in the season maybe."

JAMES NEWBOLD

Hard work to build car
paid off for Gibson and
team at Brands Hatch



Dream debut for Gibson's new steed leads to four victories

LEGENDS

Legends frontrunner Will Gibson came close to a maximum score at Brands Hatch last weekend using a car built in less than a fortnight.

Gibson took four wins and two further podiums from six races at the Kent circuit in a dream debut for the car constructed by a small team, led by Gibson and his wife Janine in their spare time.

Damage from Oulton Park's season-opening round allied to an already twisted chassis convinced Gibson to assemble a new car and engine around a Matt Roach Racing-supplied chassis. Under Legends regulations, his standing

outside the championship's top 12 also provided a rare opportunity to test the new car ahead of its race debut.

"I was shutting the workshop to customers at 6pm and then working through as late as we could," said Gibson. "Over the weekend that we had, we were doing 12-hour days on the car. We finished it off on Friday morning. The first time I drove the car flat-chat it was, 'Wow, this thing handles pretty damn well.'"

"We're a dad-and-lad team and most of the guys that help me aren't mechanics. I keep saying to them how much I appreciate all of the help, but to go out and take four wins I think shows them."

MARK PAULSON

Ex-F3 Cup champ Line races in GB4

GB4

Former F3 Cup driver George Line made an appearance in the new-for-2022 GB4 Championship at Oulton Park last weekend.

Line, who won the F3 Cup title on his debut in 2016 and has raced in the series every year since, competed with Graham Brunton Racing after being offered a drive at the last minute.

"James Gornall [2019 JCW Mini Challenge champion] works at MotorSport Vision Racing and it stems from a phonecall with him," said Line. "He said, 'Do you want to drive an F4 car?'"

The 26-year-old was at the wheel of a former MP Motorsport chassis but, with no previous running in the car, he could qualify no better than 11th of the 12 entrants.

Line's best performance

came in the opening race where he finished eighth, and ahead of GBR team-mates Chloe Grant and Logan Hannah.

"So far we're only making baby steps," added Line, who said his outing at Oulton is a one-off at this stage. "The racing is good, they [other drivers] give you room and race with respect. It's just a shame there's not more cars."

STEFAN MACKLEY

IN THE HEADLINES

NEW VIEW AT THRUXTON

Thruxton has opened a new viewing area for spectators that overlooks the high-speed Noble corner. Circuit manager Pat Blakeney said: "I'm delighted to be able to open up this viewing area to spectators as it's been on my wish list for a number of years. The view from here is absolutely stunning and one that spectators have previously never seen before."

LOCKIE OUT IN PORSCHE

GT stalwart Calum Lockie was a surprise late entrant for the CALM All Porsche Trophy at Donington Park on Monday when he shared a car with Roger Coy, a previous winner of the Pirelli Porsche championship in the early 2000s. The duo brought their 968, owned by Lockie and mainly used by him for corporate trackdays, home in 10th.

OPTIMUM TO BRITISH GT

Optimum Motorsport will return to British GT at next month's Silverstone 500 round with team regulars Joe Osborne and Nick Moss. Moss, who won the 2021 International GT Open finale with factory McLaren driver Osborne, will make his series debut aboard his familiar 720S GT3. For Osborne, it will be a first British GT appearance since his three-round programme alongside Stewart Proctor with Balfe Motorsport in 2020.

MATHEWS TURNS HEADS

An obscure South African racing car, the Mathews Special (below), attracted attention when it joined the 500 Owners Association's Formula 3 field for the first time at the Vintage Sports-Car Club's Cadwell Park meeting last Saturday. Sidelined by a broken throttle cable in practice, the unconventionally chassised JAP-engined machine started the second race only to lose its chain. Owner David Andrews is using the car to earn licence signatures towards racing the ex-works Reine Wisell 1970 F2 Chevron B17C.



Tooren delivers a masterclass at Santa Pod

DRAG RACING

Michel Tooren delivered a Dutch masterclass to win the Motorsport UK British Drag Racing Championship's opening round at Santa Pod, restored to its traditional Easter weekend after two years of COVID-19 cancellations and delays.

After securing pole in qualifying on Saturday, Tooren's Plymouth Barracuda beat British opponent Nick Davies (Pontiac Firebird) in Sunday's final by a margin indiscernible to the naked eye. Just 0.0071 seconds separated the pair at the finish line, with Tooren's 6.0624s elapsed time beating Davies's quicker 6.0355s on a holeshot. The two lanes are timed independently and the timers begin when the car moves, not when the light goes green. Tooren's better reaction time – 0.0591s to Davies's 0.0931s – made the crucial difference.

Reigning champion Kevin Slyfield's crew had to repair a damaged chassis during qualifying, but he managed to defeat France's Jean Dulamon by another slender margin



before falling to Tooren in the semi-final.

Seven-time champion Andy Robinson's new Camaro, still effectively in test mode after last year's late-season debut, showed healthy promise by qualifying second behind Tooren at 5.971s/245.39mph (top speed of the event), but succumbed to a minor transmission problem against Wayne Nicholson, who later took a career-best speed (232.77mph) en route to defeat by Davies in the semi-final.

Last summer, Annie Wallace had made headlines by scoring a win and a runner-up

in her first two Pro Mod races, but heroics were absent on this occasion. The family team battled mechanical difficulties during qualifying, and transmission woes thwarted her approach to the line against Davies.

Tooren's 5.942s pole-position qualifier (at 243.73mph) secured low elapsed time of the event. Robinson was allowed a test pass following his early exit and clocked 5.907s/245.53mph, unofficially the weekend's quickest, fastest figures and a hint of what the future might hold.

ROBIN JACKSON

Cronin targets fifth BRC crown with Polo switch



RALLYING

Four-time British Rally champion Keith Cronin is returning to the series full-time this year with the aim of matching Jimmy McRae's record five crowns.

Cronin contested selected rounds in a Ford Fiesta last season but is swapping to a Volkswagen Polo for a full attack this year, starting

with this weekend's closed-roads Rally Tendring & Clacton opener, an event that is joining the BRC schedule for the first time.

"I'm confident the work we did in 2021 will have paid off," said Cronin, who last won the title in 2017. "I'm looking forward to getting out there with the Polo. The top two in last year's BRC drove them, they're strong,

well-engineered cars, and seem to be suited to rallying in this part of the world."

Cronin will face stiff opposition from Osian Pryce, last year's runner-up, who is continuing with a Polo this season. Another Polo driver to watch will be Jason Pritchard, the Asphalt and Historic title winner making a return to the BRC after 11 years away.

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IN THE HEADLINES

PICKUPS' SPOTTERS CHANGE

NASCAR-style spotters will no longer be used at non-oval Pickup Trucks races. The trucks' radio systems will instead relay messages directly from race control. The change is intended to ensure drivers receive officials' directions faster, with reduced risk of miscommunication. Drivers committing three track-limits abuses in qualifying will now be parked up for the rest of that segment, and the series has tweaked its disciplinary system, allowing for three yellow cards before a red, up from two.

BARRY MORRIS TRIBUTES

MotorSport Vision Racing and the British Racing & Sports Car Club are among the organising clubs to have paid tribute to popular official Barry Morris, who died earlier this month. Morris was a well-respected clerk of the course, including for the MSV Trackdays categories, but had also undertaken a variety of other volunteer roles, such as a marshal, rescue unit crew member and a radio controller in race administration.

COOK IN A CORVETTE

British Touring Car racer Josh Cook shared the thundering Chevrolet Corvette of Peter Hallford in the Masters Historic Sports Car race at Donington Park on Saturday. "It's a handful but good fun," said Cook, who finished 11th and will also race a Lotus Cortina at the Donington Historic Festival later this month.

MENZIES' DEFENCE TO BEGIN

Wallace Menzies will open his bid for a third British Hillclimb title when the season begins at Prescott this Sunday. Menzies and his Gould GR59 (below) won the title in 2019 and again in 2021, with the 2020 season lost to COVID-19. Menzies faces another huge challenge in a field that includes the champions from 12 of the past 13 seasons. "We've got loads of opposition and it's genuinely wide open," said Menzies. "Everyone has been developing their cars over the winter."



BEN LAWRENCE

Success on Saturday persuaded
Bennett to race again on Monday



TOM BANKS

Bennett brace begins British Rallycross season at Lydden Hill

RALLYCROSS

Five years after first testing a rallycross Supercar at Lydden Hill, Extreme E driver Oliver Bennett returned to the Kent venue for the opening round of the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy and claimed victory on Saturday.

Then, having initially intended for his team to load up his BMW Mini Cooper after the first phase of the double-header, Bennett returned for round two, two days later. Despite intermittent transmission problems, he once again dominated to extend his points advantage.

The Bristol driver was pushed hard in the early stages of the round two final by reigning champion Derek Tohill. The Irishman was Bennett's closest challenger

through the weekend with his Ford Fiesta, but he had to give best to rising star Patrick O'Donovan in round one. On his Supercar debut, the 18-year-old's Fiesta was third in the opening qualifier, then recovered from hitting a barrier in Q2 to start on the front row of the final. He took an early joker lap, then climbed the order to claim an emphatic debut second place.

O'Donovan had a more challenging day on Monday, and ultimately retired from the final with a broken gear lever. Six-time champion Julian Godfrey scored solid points with fourth in round one and third in round two, each time flanked by fellow former title winner Ollie O'Donovan, Patrick's father, giving his Proton Iriz Supercar its debut.

HAL RIDGE

Roberts makes racing comeback

HISTORIC FF2000

Ex-Formula Ford 1600 frontrunner Ollie Roberts ended a 15-year break from the sport to make his Historic FF2000 debut at Brands Hatch earlier this month.

Roberts had a deal to move to Formula 3 in 2008 until a sponsor fell through when he was on his way to Oulton

Park for the opening race. He walked away from motorsport and built a career in the City, before deciding during the lockdown that it was time to go racing again.

He bought a Reynard SF79 from Matt Wrigley and entrusted it to his former Formula Ford engineer Brian Souley to race-prepare in time for the season opener.

"I always vowed that, if there was an opportunity, I'd do some more racing," said Roberts, who took a best result of 11th. "The break during lockdown got me thinking. I tested the car for the first time on the Friday and it felt great and I don't think we're too far off the pace. I'm loving being back."

PAUL LAWRENCE

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An opening round to remember

A red-flag stoppage caused confusion in the second Oulton Park race, but a thrilling opener was the perfect demonstration of the quality in the series

JAMES NEWBOLD

Martin Plowman summarised events fairly well after team-mate Kelvin Fletcher had clinched a remarkable maiden British GT victory for their Paddock Motorsport outfit in a madcap second race at Oulton Park on Monday from 14th on the grid. “I think like a lot of people we were a bit confused,” he said. “I didn’t know what was going on half the time.”

The race result remains provisional at the time of writing following a protest by RAM Racing into the application of race one’s success seconds to the post-race order (see page 51), citing the lack of a specific regulation to cover the eventuality of a red flag during the pitstop cycle.

It certainly was an unprecedented situation, and contributed to what British GT returnee Benji Hetherington rightly described as “one of the most bizarre races” he’d ever encountered, with a proliferation of post-race penalties – including 14 seconds added to the race time of every GT4 Silver crew – muddling the order.

“Obviously, the circumstances were out of everyone’s control,” remarked Valluga Racing Porsche boss Hetherington, who was classified fifth in GT4. “I think to be fair, British GT handled it really well.”

Naturally, not everybody agreed, but most believed it was the only thing British GT could do under the circumstances. But is it what the weekend will be remembered for? Of course not.

“The phenomenal scrap between Adam Carroll and Jules Gounon will live long in the memory”

It’s the phenomenal scrap between Adam Carroll and Jules Gounon that will live long in the memory, a battle that showcased the very best of British GT and left Oulton Park enthralled. The respect between the two combatants after running nose to tail for lap after lap, with AMG factory driver Gounon inching alongside and crossing the line ahead to start the final tour, was obvious for all to see, the pair embracing each other in parc ferme after two inch-perfect drives. “He said he absolutely loved that, it was one of the best races he’d ever had,” relayed Carroll. “You can’t get closer than that.”

A watching Shaun Balfe, Carroll’s team-mate and boss, was full of praise for both drivers. “I had no doubt that if Adam couldn’t keep Jules behind, there was probably a very small number of drivers that could,” he said. “The respect importantly that Jules

gave Adam, knowing that Adam was just quick enough, there was enough respect to give the spectators and British GT in round one what it really needs, which is some good close racing, exciting to watch. It’s what we want to be part of.”

Was it the best defensive drive of Carroll’s esteemed career, Autosport wondered? “For a win, probably yes,” replied the 2008-09 A1GP champion. “But sometimes you’re trying that hard for fifth and nobody sees it!” See it we certainly did.

Gounon won’t contest every round this year, but the 2017 Spa 24 Hours winner already has plenty of new admirers in the paddock after taking Oulton by storm. His remarkable 1m32.384s pole lap was four tenths quicker than anybody, and Carroll alone could halt his irrepressible race one charge.

“I had a mega race with ‘chicken nugget’, it was brilliant,” said Fox Motorsport’s Jamie Stanley, who finished third with Nick Halstead. “Had I not come across the GT4 car, I probably could have kept Gounon there for a bit longer. We were a bit unlucky there, but fair play to him, he took his moment, he pounced.”

Gounon’s co-driver Ian Loggie was full of wonder too. “I know people talk about him as one of the best GT drivers in the world but, when you see a display like that, it’s just mind-blowing really,” he said. “It’s a privilege to watch it. Already the amount I’ve learned that now I’d take as read, it’s just incredible.”

If Gounon stole the show, he was only the tip of the iceberg. The strength in depth this year is in plentiful supply and, with 18 GT3 cars on the grid, it was a real scrap even to make it into the points on Monday – with well-fancied Barwell Lamborghini pairing Sandy Mitchell and Adam Balon missing out in race two after a 10s stop/go penalty for Mitchell spinning Marcus Clutton. “It’s probably our worst weekend I think for seven years, so it can only go one way from here,” remarked Barwell boss Mark Lemmer.

Several teams believe the new DHF Pirelli tyre has given an edge to the front-engined Mercedes, with one disgruntled paddock figure claiming that the Balance of Performance was amiss. “You might as well give them the trophy to fight over it now,” he said.

But Carroll’s stern defence and the chaos of race two showed that nothing can ever be taken as read in British GT. McLaren certainly wasn’t expected to shine at Oulton, yet a podium for Fox in race one – as several teams made errors with pitstop timing – and victory in race two for Paddock bodes well for their seasons.

“We’re still learning this new tyre, we’re learning every time we go out,” said Plowman. “I think, once we nail the set-up and know how to get this tyre in the window, then we’ll be a consistent contender.” Even if the outcome of that second race couldn’t please everybody, there’s a lot to like about British GT right now. ❧

➔ P58 BRITISH GT REPORT

British GT back with a bang as thriller is followed by disruption

OULTON PARK
BRITISH GT
16 & 18 APRIL

Two teams proved the class of the opening British GT meeting at Oulton Park. Adam Carroll and Shaun Balfe (Balfe Audi) narrowly beat Jules Gounon/Ian Loggie (RAM Mercedes) to win a breathless first race, before the order was reversed for the second. But a bizarre set of circumstances meant the first and second cars on the road were classified fifth and sixth as Kelvin Fletcher and Martin Plowman's Paddock McLaren came from 14th on the grid to top the podium after a mid-race stoppage.

Poleman Balfe lost out at the start of the opener as his tyres took their time to heat up. He tumbled to sixth on lap one as Richard Neary (Abba Mercedes) headed returning 2019 champion Graham Davidson (Rocket RJN McLaren), Morgan Tillbrook (Enduro McLaren) and 2 Seas Mercedes pair James Cottingham and Kevin Tse.

Through traffic, the leaders were tightly bunched and Davidson was ready to pounce when Neary was baulked up Clay Hill. But,

as Neary moved back to the right, Davidson was already there and was edged onto the grass on a collision course with the barriers.

A frustrated Neary received a stop/go penalty for the contact, plus another for a fractionally short pitstop. That double whammy should have handed the lead to Tillbrook after Tse pitted a lap later than the rest, but he had missed his pitbox as the GT3 runners streamed in and had to go around again, leaving team-mate Marcus Clutton to fight back to eighth. Lewis Williamson (in for Cottingham) took over in front after Neary's penalty, but also had a stop/go to serve following a team error with the timer. "It was like gala bingo," remarked Balfe of the flurry of penalties. "We had no idea what was going on!"

That cycled Carroll back to the lead, but Gounon was zeroing in. Loggie had started 10th after struggling with tyre pick-up, but advanced to eighth at the start and ran patiently behind GT3 debutant Nick Halstead (Fox McLaren) early on. When Gounon climbed aboard, he scythed past pitstop gainer Phil Keen (WPI Lamborghini) and Jamie Stanley (in for Halstead), then



caught Carroll at a second per lap. The two ran nose to tail for the final 15 minutes and a RAM victory appeared a formality.

But Carroll held firm, staving off a bold Gounon attempt around the outside at Lodge after he'd been held up in traffic on the penultimate lap. Gounon crossed the line fractionally ahead, but Carroll retook the place on the inside at Lodge and claimed a first British GT win since Oulton Park in 2016, while Stanley held off Keen for third.

Gounon set a new qualifying lap record on his way to race-two pole and bolted away from Carroll as Euan Hankey (7TSIX McLaren), Clutton and Jamie Caroline (RAM Mercedes) shuffled third-starter Sandy Mitchell (Barwell Lamborghini) back to sixth. Plowman, meanwhile, capitalised on Will Tregurtha (Assetto Bentley) punting Keen into a spin at Cascades, forcing Stanley off in avoidance, to take 10th.

Gounon's four-second advantage was wiped out by a safety car, caused by Freddie



MORE AUDI SUCCESS AS FIELDING AND WILLIAMS WIN OPENER

Stellar Audi pair Richard Williams and Sennan Fielding scored their first GT4 win since 2019 despite a pitstop punishment, and finished first on the road in the second before post-race penalties were applied.

Race-one poleman Williams pulled fifth gear too early on the run to Old Hall at the start, which allowed Benji Hetherington (in his first British GT outing since 2013) to snatch an early lead. But the Valluga Porsche boss recognised Williams was quicker and didn't fight him hard, remaining comfortably clear of the battle for third between Jamie Orton (Parker Porsche), Marco Signoretti (Academy

Mustang) and Tom Edgar (Speedworks Toyota).

Leading Pro-Am entry Matt Topham (Newbridge Aston) held seventh and was looking good to advance up the order courtesy of a shorter pitstop relative to the Silver crews. Sure enough, Darren Turner rejoined second behind Fielding, but both cars were too short in the pits and, like Orton's team-mate Seb Hopkins, would have to come in again to serve penalties. Turner couldn't get the Vantage to select first as he tried to exit the penalty box and so lost more vital seconds.

Hetherington's team-mate Ross Wylie moved into the lead, but ran out of tyres

and was usurped by the flying Fielding, while Josh Miller (R Racing Aston) also moved ahead for second late on. A rueful Turner finished fifth, less than a second adrift of Wylie in third.

Few doubted that Steller had the edge on pace, but it had needed others to drop the ball too. "We are due a bit of luck," was Williams's assessment.

Turner had pole for race two, but was jumped at the start by Fielding, as a change of brakes for Will Burns (Century BMW) brought the reigning champion to life in third after struggling for pace in qualifying and race one.

The red flags were a boon for Newbridge,



Tomlinson assaulting GT4 rival Moh Ritson at Shell Oils, but he escaped again at the restart as Plowman zapped Lewis Proctor (Greystone McLaren) for ninth. Rain then hit and, on lap 15, Caroline and Proctor both aquaplaned off approaching Druids – with the latter clearing the barrier. Mitchell then tagged Clutton into a spin at Lodge as the remaining dry-shod runners tiptoed in for wets. But, with several cars mid-pitstop, the race was red-flagged, creating confusion as success penalties for Gounon/Loggie (7s) and Carroll/Balfe (10s) had yet to be taken.

After a half-hour delay to repair the barriers, the race resumed behind the safety car with the field back in its pre-pitstop order and all cars on slicks, success seconds to be added post-race – a decision that led to RAM protesting the result (see News).

Following two slow laps, Loggie led Balfe and Mia Flewitt (in for Hankey), with Fletcher now seventh behind Tillbrook, Adam Balon (in for Mitchell) and Alex

Malykhin (Redline Lamborghini) after the exit of Caroline and Williamson (oil leak). As the top two gapped Flewitt, Malykhin was next to fall with a spin at Druids, before Balon peeled in to serve a 10s stop/go for the Clutton contact. Barwell's resultant non-score compounded a difficult day, having finished only ninth in race one as a hit from Tse's co-driver Chris Froggatt had left Mitchell with left-rear tyre damage.

After Tillbrook was sidelined by an electrical glitch, Fletcher dived past Flewitt into Hislops with seven laps to go. From 9.3s behind Loggie at this stage, he made use of the clear air as Loggie began to suffer with his tyres and got the gap below the 7s marker two laps from home. Heavy GT4 traffic for Loggie and Balfe only confirmed the inevitable as a radio-troubled Fletcher claimed victory from the Nearys and Tse/Froggatt (up from 17th) after Flewitt also lost ground in traffic.

JAMES NEWBOLD

RACE RESULTS

GT3

Race 1 (37 laps) 1 Shaun Balfe/Adam Carroll (Audi R8 LMS Evo II); 2 Ian Loggie/Jules Gounon (Mercedes-AMG) +0.455s; 3 Nick Halstead/Jamie Stanley (McLaren 720S); 4 Michael Igoe/Phil Keen (Lamborghini Huracan Evo); 5 James Cottingham/Lewis Williamson (Mercedes); 6 Mia Flewitt/Euan Hankey (McLaren).

Fastest lap Gounon 1m33.857s (103.25mph). **Pole** Balfe. **Starters** 17.

Race 2 (29 laps) 1 Kelvin Fletcher/Martin Plowman (McLaren); 2 Richard Neary/Sam Neary (Mercedes) +2.726s; 3 Kevin Tse/Chris Froggatt (Mercedes); 4 Graham Davidson/James Kell (McLaren); 5 Loggie/Gounon; 6 Balfe/Carroll. **FL** Gounon 1m33.862s (103.25mph). **P** Gounon. **S** 18.

Points 1 Balfe/Carroll 35; 2 Loggie/Gounon 30; 3 Fletcher/Plowman 25; 4 Igoe/Keen 20; 5 Neary/Neary 18; 6 Halstead/Stanley 17.

GT4

Race 1 (34 laps) 1 Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding (Audi R8 LMS); 2 Jamie Day/Josh Miller (Aston Martin Vantage) +5.058s; 3 Benji Hetherington/Ross Wylie (Porsche 718 Cayman RS CS); 4 Marco Signoretti/Matt Cowley (Ford Mustang); 5 Matt Topham/Darren Turner (Aston Martin); 6 Jack Brown/Will Burns (BMW M4). **FL** Fielding 1m43.277s (93.83mph). **P** Williams. **S** 12.

Race 2 (29 laps) 1 Topham/Turner; 2 Brown/Burns +15.142s; 3 Williams/Fielding; 4 Tom Edgar/Jack Mitchell (Toyota GR Supra); 5 Hetherington/Wylie; 6 Day/Miller. **FL** Fielding 1m43.059s (94.03mph). **P** Turner. **S** 12.

Points 1 Williams/Fielding 40; 2 Topham/Turner 35; =3 Miller/Day and Brown/Burns 26; 5 Hetherington/Wylie 25; 6 Edgar/Mitchell 16.

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

as Topham's Silver class rivals all had 14s added to their race time. Leader Williams had an additional 10s after his race-one win and, although he managed to put Betty Chen's GT3 BMW between himself and Topham, there was little prospect of making up 24s. He was ultimately classified third behind winner Topham and Burns's team-mate Jack Brown, who kept the pressure on Topham throughout. Edgar and 2018 GT4 champion Jack Mitchell took fourth.

"Last year we weren't even at round one," reflected Topham, "so just to be here and getting some points, we're already ahead."

JAMES NEWBOLD

Steller crew was fortunate to win after pitstop penalty



Browning beats them all for GB3 brace

OULTON PARK
MSVR
16 & 18 APRIL

Luke Browning asserted his dominance on the opening round of the GB3 Championship at Oulton Park, as he took two lights-to-flag victories.

The 2020 British F4 champion had no problem adapting to the new-for-2022 Tatuus MSV-022 machine, placing his Hitech GP-run car on pole for the first two races. The closest his rivals came to challenging was off the line but, once Browning had the holeshot each time, he was never headed, cruising to victory by around 10 seconds in both races.

“For sure [the start was key] as it’s so difficult to overtake,” said the 20-year-old after winning at his local track. “It feels amazing [to win] and being at home is something special.”

Roberto Faria was his closest challenger on both occasions, but the Carlin driver’s focus was on those behind him as he withstood constant pressure from an impressive Matthew Rees in the opener. Despite the difficulty of following in the heavily aero-dependent cars, the 2021 British F4 champion kept under the Brazilian’s rear wing almost throughout but failed to find an opening.

“It was maybe not the best for the tyres, but for me it was psychological to show I was there, but credit to him he didn’t make a mistake,” said Rees.

McKenzy Cresswell was another impressive debutant in the opener, as he took fourth for Chris Dittmann Racing



No one got near Hitech GP driver Browning in the opening two GB3 races

ahead of fellow rookie John Bennett (Elite Motorsport), who passed Joel Granfors on the last lap. The Fortec Motorsports driver was stuck in fifth gear for the final tour and eventually finished sixth, having lost the opportunity to start from the front row having been demoted five places for a collision with Branden Oxley in qualifying.

The Swede did keep his front-row start for the second race, but lost out to Faria off the line and came home third from Rees, Bennett and Tom Lebbon (Elite), who had also been on the receiving end of a qualifying grid penalty for race one.

Mikkel Grundtvig (Fortec) took another fully reversed-grid victory, having never been headed from the start as Douglas Motorsport’s Tommy Smith came home second. David Morales completed the podium for Arden having pulled off an audacious overtake on Nick Gilkes, looking to the outside at the high-speed

Island Bend before taking to the inside at the Shell Oils hairpin. Gilkes, Oxley and Zak Taylor (Fortec) completed the top six.

Browning made progress from his 19th on the grid, climbing to 16th before contact with Lebbon at the Hislops chicane put him out with broken right-front suspension on lap five of 14. However, he still left the Cheshire venue with the championship lead, with Faria – who finished 14th in race three – just seven points in arrears.

Alex Walker extended his points lead in the GB4 Championship after the Elite driver also took two lights-to-flag victories. Much like Browning, the Briton romped away in both races and was never challenged.

Main title rival Tom Mills finished last in Saturday’s opening race having stalled on the grid after burning his clutch out, but fought through from fifth to second in race two, pulling off a neat switchback on Max Marzorati exiting Lodge for the spot.

Nikolas Taylor – winner of the inaugural



Grady (r) makes a storming start to Ginetta GT5 finale, passing earlier winners Jenkins (l) and Hodgkiss

WEEKEND WINNERS

GB3

Race 1 (all 14 laps) 1 Luke Browning; 2 Roberto Faria +10.258s; 3 Matthew Rees; 4 McKenzie Cresswell; 5 John Bennett; 6 Joel Granfors.

Fastest lap Browning 1m29.766s (107.96mph).

Pole Browning. **Starters** 21.

Race 2 1 Browning; 2 Faria +8.924s; 3 Granfors; 4 Rees; 5 Bennett; 6 Tom Lebbon. **FL** Browning 1m29.205s (108.64mph). **P** Browning. **S** 21.

Race 3 1 Mikkel Grundtvig; 2 Tommy Smith +5.841s; 3 David Morales; 4 Nick Gilkes; 5 Branden Oxley; 6 Zak Taylor. **FL** Morales 1m30.419s (107.18mph). **P** Grundtvig. **S** 21.

Points 1 Browning 70; 2 Faria 63; 3 Bennett 47; 4= Rees 45; 4= Granfors 45; 4= Cresswell 45.

GB4

Races 1 & 2 Alex Walker

Race 3 Jarrod Waberski

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Race 1 Nat Hodgkiss

Race 2 Will Jenkins

Race 3 Connor Grady

NORTHERN SALOON & SPORTSCARS

Races 1 & 2 Paul Brydon (BMW M3)

TCR UK

Race 1 Chris Smiley (Honda Civic Type R FK7)

Race 2 Jessica Hawkins (Cupra TCR)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

GB4 race at Snetterton – endured two torrid starts from the front row, which derailed any hopes he had of pushing Walker for the lead, with the Fortec driver only able to salvage sixth and third.

Jarrold Waberski handed Kevin Mills Racing its maiden win in GB4 in the reversed-grid race, pulling alongside front-row starters Logan Hannah and Jessica Edgar on the run to Old Hall. With the inside line, the South African pulled clear from Edgar as Marzorati claimed third, which moved him to second in the standings and 32 points behind Walker.

Will Jenkins recovered from the disappointment of retiring from the opening Ginetta GT5 Challenge race with a cracked clutch plate to dominate race two – the Ginetta Junior graduate passing race one winner Nat Hodgkiss into Hislops.

Both were jumped by Connor Grady in race three, having swept into the lead around the outside at Old Hall from fourth on the grid. A shortened race due to a crash and track curfew guaranteed him victory.

Paul Brydon was utterly dominant in his BMW M3 in both Northern Saloon and Sportscar races, although his margin of victory in the second race was far less as Matt Cobb's newly built Volkswagen Beetle kept him in sight.

STEFAN MACKLEY

ALL SMILES FOR CHRIS ON TCR UK DEBUT



Ex-British Touring Car Championship drivers came to the fore in TCR UK, as both Chris Smiley and Jessica Hawkins won on their debut weekends in the championship.

Smiley adapted to life behind the wheel of his Honda Civic Type R FK7 with relative ease despite having only driven it for the first time on Friday ahead of the event after it was brought over from Italy.

That didn't stop him from putting the car on pole, though, and he led the impressive 24-car field away for Monday's opening 25-minute race.

Having got into the lead, he came under early pressure from fellow front-row starter Isaac Smith, who in turn was shadowed by Max Hart as the leading trio pulled away from two-time and reigning TCR UK champion Lewis Kent, who was at the wheel of a new Hyundai Veloster.

As Smiley began to edge away, Smith's attentions turned to defending from Hart, but he had to concede the runner-up spot on lap nine of 15 after Hart executed a perfect cutback on the exit of Lodge before completing the move into Old Hall.

He then closed to within 1.5 seconds of Smiley at the flag, but had to settle for second as Smith completed the podium,



with Bruce Winfield's SEAT Cupra TCR fourth having got the better of Kent.

"That's what we're looking at," said Smiley, when asked about his plans for the full season. "We saw that at the start of the year it was going to have 25-26 cars and any national championship with 25-26 cars is doing something right."

It was Hawkins's turn to star in the partially reversed-grid sequel, which began with her getting the better of Area Motorsport team-mate Jamie Tonks off the line before a safety car was called to retrieve Kieran Griffin's VW Golf GTI, which had been hit off on the start/finish straight.

Another safety car was called shortly after the restart when Steve Gales went off at Lodge but, when racing resumed once again, Hawkins made a decisive break from Jac Constable's similar Cupra.

Constable found himself defending from Hart, the Hyundai i30 N driver having climbed from ninth before moving into second with a sweeping move around the outside of Constable at Old Hall and completing the pass down Cascades.

Constable soon retired while Hart hunted down a 2.4s gap to Hawkins but, despite constant pressure, was unable to find a way through.

"We had a problem in qualifying with the rear anti-roll bar and the turbo pipe came off in the first race, so this race was the first time we had a problem-free run," said Hawkins, who became the first female winner in the series.

Behind the leading pair, Callum Newsham's Cupra recovered to third having dropped as low as fifth at one stage in the race. Smith (VW Golf GTI) was fourth, while Smiley finished his weekend in fifth having started the second race from 10th courtesy of his race-one victory.

STEFAN MACKLEY

The Holden dropped back at the start of each race, but its grunt told in the final results



Wilson's Monaro thunders to victory

BRANDS HATCH BARC 16-17 APRIL

Andy Wilson's raucous Holden Monaro earned a pair of Classic Thunder victories at Brands Hatch last weekend by twice chasing down faster-starting machinery. One green-flag lap around the short Indy circuit wasn't enough to heat the ex-British GT machine's hard tyres, despite warm Easter weather, and left polesitter Wilson slipping to fourth at the start of each race.

In the first, Colin Joyce built a six-second lead before slowing the pace of his Duratec-powered Ford Escort Mk1

when Paul Eaton's Holden Commodore dropped oil. Once Wilson had dispatched Joyce at Paddock Hill Bend – he had already cleared Rod Birley (BMW E36) and Malcolm Harding (Escort Mk2) – he eased to a 3s win. Harding claimed Blue Oval Saloon Series honours but was pipped on the line for third overall by the Nissan Skyline of James Janicki, who was returning after 18 months on the sidelines.

Joyce and Harding both escaped in race two, Harding taking the lead with an inside pass at Druids before Joyce slowed a couple of laps later with an alternator issue. After thundering past Ryan Steel's Peugeot EW-powered Citroen Saxo,

Wilson then closed the 5s gap to Harding but could find no way through for a few laps, which allowed Janicki to close in. Wilson eventually made a move stick at Graham Hill Bend, with Janicki powering past Harding half a lap later.

Like their more modern Australian counterpart, the big American V8s of multiple BOSS champion Piers Grange (Ford Mustang) and Alan Greenhalgh (Ford Falcon) were also given a thorough workout by smaller machinery in Pre-'66 Touring Cars. Despite each giving away more than three litres in cubic capacity, Barry Sime's Mini and the Ford Anglia of Robyn Slater, joined initially by champion James Ibbotson's Hillman Imp, chased hard but couldn't engineer a way past.

Grange took his first Pre-'66 win after nudging Greenhalgh at McLaren, but succumbed to a heavy vibration in the transmission a day later, when Greenhalgh took the honours from Sime. Slater, fourth and third, was slowed by a misfire in race two, only claiming an overall podium after Pat Kenneally's Lotus Cortina was hit with a 15s track-limits penalty.

Pickup Trucks champion George Turiccki began his latest title defence with two wins. Fastest in both qualifying segments, Turiccki had to start each race from sixth on the partially reversed grid. He made light work of the handicap in race one, leading within a lap and a half before



Mustang and Falcon won Pre-'66 races but smaller-engined cars put them under pressure



Corker Datsun topped
Pre-'83 Touring Cars opener



There was a lot for Gibson
to celebrate in Legends



Turiccki (28) picked up a
double win at Brands

gradually easing clear as Allen Cooper and Mark Willis exchanged second place.

Progress was harder in race two for Turiccki, who eventually usurped Reece Jones from the lead just after half-distance. Jones fought back tenaciously, but Turiccki repelled him to win a thrilling contest by 0.2s, while Dale Gent shadowed the pair.

In Legends, Will Gibson bounced back from a difficult opening round at Oulton Park with four wins and two further podiums yielding "the best weekend we've ever had". Only multi-champions Miles Rudman and John Mickel offered any real challenge to the Surrey man's pace and racecraft. The pair beat him in Saturday's first heat when Gibson was drawn near the back of the grid, and again in Sunday's final, where Mickel just held off Rudman as Gibson recovered from being tipped into a spin at Druids.

In between, Gibson scored two dominant wins – by Legends standards – and pipped Rudman in a further two, one of which Rudman had started from the pitlane after being caught up in a race-stopping shunt.

After opening his British Truck Racing title defence with a dominant victory, Ryan Smith looked set for a repeat in race two, only to lose out to Dave Jenkins on the final lap when he tangled with a backmarker at Clearways. Sunday's three reversed-grid races brought wins for Jenkins, Stuart Oliver and Simon Reid. Smith had been in

pursuit on each occasion, although he dropped to third behind 21-year-old Bradley Smith on countback in the twice-stopped race four, suggesting that his rebodied truck, now styled as a Daimler Freightliner, remains the one to beat.

While Andy Cripps jumped Dave Griffin at the start of both Pre-'93 Touring Car races, his BMW E36 M3 had no answer to Griffin's pace in the similar Diet Coke-liveried example. Cripps also slipped behind Michael Dugdale's version on Sunday.

Behind the BMWs, Jonathan Corker took Pre-'83 honours for the first time on Saturday in his Datsun 510 by passing the baulked Escort Mk1 of Stephen Primett into Surtees on the final lap. After Corker delayed himself by hesitating following a jumped start, Primett enjoyed a scrap with Mark Thomas in race two until gearbox oil leaking from Thomas's Ford Capri caused him to be called in. Thomas had risen to third from the back of the grid a day earlier, having failed to set a qualifying time.

Steve McDermid picked up the pieces as Fergus Campbell and Will Sharpe clashed while disputing the lead of both MG Owners' Club races. McDermid was also delayed when Sharpe's attempt to round Campbell in race one ended with him in the Paddock Hill gravel. But the reigning champion picked off Jack Woodcock and then inherited victory when Steve Darbey was penalised for passing under yellows.

WEEKEND WINNERS

CLASSIC THUNDER/BOSS

Races 1 & 2 Andy Wilson (Holden Monaro)

PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

Race 1 Piers Grange (Ford Mustang)

Race 2 Alan Greenhalgh (Ford Falcon Sprint)

PICKUP TRUCKS

Races 1 & 2 George Turiccki

LEGENDS

Race 1 Miles Rudman

Races 2, 3, 4 & 5 Will Gibson

Race 6 John Mickel

BRITISH TRUCK RACING

Race 1 Ryan Smith (Daimler, below)

Races 2 & 3 Dave Jenkins (MAN TGX)

Race 4 Stuart Oliver (Volvo VNL)

Race 5 Simon Reid (Iveco Stralis)

PRE-'83 & PRE-'93 TOURING CARS

Races 1 & 2 Dave Griffin (BMW E36 M3)

MG OWNERS' CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Steve McDermid (ZR 170)

PRE-'03 TOURING CARS/ JAGUAR CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Don Hughes (Peugeot 306 XSi)

KUMHO BMWs

Races 1 & 2 Niall Bradley (E46)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Contact on Cooper Straight in the sequel pitched the battling duo off at Surtees, handing McDermid a clear run to victory ahead of Sharpe and Campbell.

While regular pacesetter Gary Prebble laboured with a misfire on his Honda Civic, Don Hughes (Peugeot 306) twice triumphed in Pre-'03 Touring Cars. Ross Craig's Civic kept Hughes in sight in the opener, which Prebble led for a few laps mid-race, but was beaten by 17s in race two. Tom Robinson took the concurrent Jaguar Challenge both times, bumping past James Ramm at Druids in the first, before enjoying an on-track battle with Craig until his tyres went off during a more commanding victory on Sunday.

Invitation class entrant Niall Bradley scored two relatively untroubled Kumho BMW successes, leading home Jason West and Brad Sheehan in the two races.

MARK PAULSON

Mallock's U2 edges out dogged Terrier

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR MASTERS HISTORIC
15-16 APRIL

Ray Mallock (U2 Mk2) and Chris Drake (Terrier T4 Series 1) twice battled mightily at the head of the front-engined Formula Junior races during the Donington Park Masters Historic meeting over Easter.

Mallock, in his 53rd season of racing, got ahead from the start on Friday in the 25-minute encounter, but Drake chased hard and worked the Terrier ahead mid-race when Mallock was more cautious on some dropped oil. Even though he built a slender lead, Drake could never relax as Mallock's pursuit was relentless. Over the closing stages, Mallock was right on Drake's tail, and dived ahead to win by 0.6 seconds.

"We love our racing and we love our cars – there's lots of respect," said Mallock after winning in the car designed and built by his father. It was more of the same on Saturday, when Mallock came back strong in the closing stages to beat the Terrier once again, this time by 0.8s.

The opening rear-engined Formula Junior race was all about Alex Ames in his ex-Mike Hailwood Brabham BT6, despite a slight concern over his clutch. He went clear from the start as Clive Richards gave chase in his Lotus 22, but Ames was able to control the race from the front. On Saturday, Ames elected to go from the back of the grid and battled to the lead, despite a determined challenge by Richards.

An entertaining hour-long Pre-'66 Touring Car race ended in victory for the Ford Mustang of Craig Davies after a fine contest with the Ford Falcon of Julian Thomas and Calum Lockie.

In the early laps, four mighty V8s delivered a stunning spectacle but, as the



race developed, it was the Falcons of Thomas and Sam Tordoff that pulled clear. With an extra 40s added on to his pitstop as a pro driver going solo, Tordoff was up against it, but his race ended soon after the stop with a broken manifold.

Meanwhile, Lockie – in for Thomas – took a handy lead over Davies after the stops before a safety car for the removal of some debris allowed Davies to close up and move ahead of the tyre-stricken Falcon.

Thomas and Lockie got their win in the Gentleman Drivers enduro, where their Daytona Cobra was the class of the field. "He's driven faultlessly all weekend," said Lockie of his racing partner. John Spiers and Nigel Greensall ran a good second in their TVR Griffith 200.

Will Nuthall (Cooper T53) was dominant in the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association races and rocketed clear on Friday, while his main rival Peter Horsman started from the pitlane as a reserve entry. Speed

differentials were enormous, and Nuthall also had to cope with a prodigious amount of oil on the track, but won at a canter.

Second place became a wonderfully sonorous battle between the V8s of Nick Fennell (Lotus 25) and Tim Child, first time out in a Brabham BT3/4, while Horsman worked his way through to sixth at the flag. Race two was pretty much a repeat as Nuthall again romped away from Child and Horsman.

Martin Stretton seemed to have done enough in the opening Historic F1 race as he warmed his Tyrrell 012 up for the Monaco Historique next month. But by mid-race Stretton was in trouble as a misfire set in and the car started cutting out due to a lack of fuel pressure. The problem got worse as the race developed, and allowed the chasing Steve Hartley to move his McLaren MP4/1 onto Stretton's tail and then ahead when the leading Tyrrell coughed again on the exit of Redgate. Stretton struggled home second and parked the Tyrrell just after the flag.

Polesitter and opening-lap leader Ken Tyrrell (Tyrrell 011) drove a fine race and battled long to keep Greg Thornton (Lotus 91/5) behind. Eventually, the Lotus racer edged ahead to take the final podium position after Tyrrell ran too deep at Redgate.

Stretton elected to go from the pits on Saturday, but sliced through the field to take the lead. With Hartley an early retirement, Thornton gamely tried to hold onto the fleeing Tyrrell but came up short.

Elsewhere, in Masters Sports Cars, Andy Willis (Lola T212) capitalised when Tom Bradshaw's Chevron B19 refused to restart after the pitstops.

PAUL LAWRENCE



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICK WALKER



TYRRELL MAKING STRIDES WITH TYRRELL Ken Tyrrell showcased progress in Historic Formula 1 by taking pole in his Tyrrell 011. The 53-year-old American, who shares the name of the team founder, had done some racing at home before coming to Europe. “I did three events last year and I love coming here,” said Tyrrell. “This was kind of a big step [racing in Europe] and it’s so unbelievable. The car is now working superbly. It’s more about me getting up to speed than the car.”



TART DRIVES EX-BRABHAM CAR Andrew Tart drove the Cooper T53 of Rudi Friedrichs when the German was kept at home by family commitments. The 1960 ex-Jack Brabham car, a part of the Australian’s championship-winning season, is prepared by Tart. “It was all ready to go,” said Tart, whose only previous experience of the car was a few testing laps at Brands Hatch. “It’s great to have the chance to drive such a famous car.” A failed crown wheel and pinion sidelined Tart on the first grid.

WEEKEND WINNERS



FORMULA JUNIOR FRONT-ENGINE

Races 1 & 2 Ray Mallock (U2 Mk2)

FORMULA JUNIOR REAR-ENGINE

Races 1 & 2 Alex Ames (Brabham BT6, above)

PRE-’66 TOURING CARS

Craig Davies (Ford Mustang)

GENTLEMAN DRIVERS

Julian Thomas/Calum Lockie
(Cobra Daytona Coupe)

PRE-’66 GRAND PRIX CARS

Races 1 & 2 Will Nuthall (Cooper T53)

MASTERS RACING LEGENDS

Race 1 Steve Hartley (McLaren MP4/1, below)
Race 2 Martin Stretton (Tyrrell 012)

MASTERS SPORTS CAR LEGENDS

Andy Willis (Lola T212)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



FALCON SOARS AGAIN AFTER REBUILD Sam Tordoff raced his Ford Falcon for the first time after a bare-shell rebuild by the Jordan Racing Team over the winter. The ex-Mike Gardiner Falcon was raced last season by the former British Touring Car competitor. “The plan was always to start again with it and do Masters Historic Touring Cars,” said Tordoff. He will do a full Masters season with it and will also share a Lotus Elan with his father John in Gentleman Drivers races.

Aaron Smith was in the thick of the Mini Miglia action, taking a win and a second place



Mini battlers put on a sizzling show at Snetterton

SNETTERTON
BRSCC
16-17 APRIL

Rupert Deeth and Aaron Smith shared the Mini Miglia spoils after two action-packed races at Snetterton last weekend.

Jeff Smith had much of the early lead in their first encounter, swapping and changing with Deeth, until Aaron Smith joined them. It was still any one from three on the last lap, with Jeff Smith ahead and Deeth retaking Aaron Smith at Agostini. But it still wasn't settled – the lead changed again on the Bentley Straight, with Deeth claiming the win from Aaron and Jeff Smith.

Five abreast into Riches at the start was just a taster of what was to come in race two. It was a three-way fight again, with Kane Astin joining the Smiths. Aaron Smith claimed a last-lap victory, with Jeff back into second exiting Wilson, which left Astin to settle for a close third.

The Mini Se7ens were equally entertaining with Mike Jordan, Connor O'Brien and Joe Thompson battling throughout both races. O'Brien had the early advantage in the opener, before he got into constant place swapping with Jordan. Jordan finally clinched it when O'Brien locked up into Brundle and ran wide, the gap just 0.402 seconds.

There was another duel in the second race, but it was for second between Jordan and Thompson, after O'Brien made a decisive break in the opening laps. Jordan and Thompson repeatedly outbraked each other into Riches, with Thompson clinching it on the last tour, leaving Jordan to reclaim third from Spencer Wanstall.

No one could stop Fraser Fenwick in the Mk1 Mazda MX-5s as he secured a treble victory. He was shadowed for most of race one by Tom Smith, until they swapped at Brundle a lap from home. But Fenwick wasn't about to surrender and was back in charge around the outside at Nelson on the final tour, taking the first of the weekend's

Wilson shines in season opener

CADWELL PARK
VSCC
16 APRIL

A glorious Easter Saturday was the picture-perfect starting point for the Vintage Sports-Car Club's pure track action this season at Cadwell Park.

Competing in father Chris's Cooper-Norton for the first time, Alex Wilson was the only driver to lap the 2.17-mile circuit inside two minutes in practice for 500cc F3 before dominating both races. Pursuer Ewan Cameron's JAP-engined Mk8 was left breathless, with Simon Dedman third both times in his shiny Norton-powered Mk10.

The Melville & Geoghegan Trophies contest attracted the owner-driver-mechanic group's customary array of splendid machinery. Mark Brett shot his torquey Ford V8-powered Ballamy Special away quickest and on to a rare outright victory.

Sue Darbyshire (Morgan Super Aero) and top qualifier Adam Moody (Riley TT Sprite) ambushed Max Sowerby (Talbot Lago T23), but Sowerby regained third before the flag. Jeremy Flann (Frazer Nash Super Sports), Richard Lake and Edward Bradley (Aston Martins) as well as Nigel Dowding (Riley Brooklands) chased spiritedly.

With the Frazer Nash marque on the cusp of its centenary, its vibrant races continued to thrill. David Johnson (Super Sports) led the 28-strong field initially, before Mark Walker grunted his 4.2-litre V-twin GN Thunderbug past to win. Paul Weston (Frazer Nash TT Replica) shadowed runner-up Johnson home, with Andy Cawley (Super Sports) and Westie Mitchell (in Jane Arnold-Forster's tourer) the top Anzani-engined runners in seventh and eighth respectively.

Jonathan Cobb (FN-Ford) won the Len Thompson Memorial race for VSCC Specials after pressure from Anthony Seber (Wolseley Hornet). Favourite James



Baxter stalled the polesitting Riley-ERA, but thankfully everybody missed him. Baxter hared after them, only to lose a wheel at The Mountain within a lap!

Justin Maeers (ex-Jack Brabham Cooper T51) and Charlie Martin in Maeers's T53 traded the Ron Flockhart and Richard Seaman Trophies race lead, Martin's extra 500cc prevailing. Baxter was third in the repaired Riley-ERA, ahead of Nick Topliss (ERA R4A) and Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (FN Super Sports), who earned Vintage Seaman honours.

Fenwick proved unstoppable in MX-5s, winning all three races



wins over Smith by 0.127s, with Seb Fisher snatching a late third from Jason Greatrex.

Greatrex had the initial lead in race two, before a series of swaps and changes with Fenwick commenced. Fenwick finally made it stick from Wilson on lap seven of nine, with Greatrex followed to the flag by son Callum. Fenwick completed his hat-trick with consummate ease, after Greatrex Sr lost out to an early challenge from Luke Pullen. Mike Comber claimed second, with Pullen just holding off Greatrex for third.

Richard Amos was able to capitalise on a final-lap coming-together between James Cossins and Patrick Fletcher at Brundle to win the first MX-5 Supercup race. Cossins managed to recover to hold onto second.

Adam Bessell opened up an early lead in race two, with Amos and Fletcher heading

the pursuit. But there was fluid down at the Bombhole and Bessell was off with Amos almost following, handing Fletcher the advantage. Bessell swiftly recovered to get back ahead on the last lap to win, despite the best efforts of Fletcher.

Colin Bysouth was first on the road in the finale, but was given a penalty for an avoidable collision, handing Amos win number two from Will Blackwell-Chambers.

C1 Endurance victory went to Ardcor Modelmakers' John Ardis and Mike Graham after a strong performance throughout the five-hour race. Oakley Motorsport pair Harry Newman-Oakley and Graham Oakley took second from Emax crew James and Jake Little with Stuart Ratcliffe at Oggies with 20 minutes remaining.

PETER SCHERER

Brett took Melville win aboard Ballamy-Ford



Mike Painter's Triple-M Register MG hopes were dashed when the Kayne Special's gearlever snapped as he grabbed second at the start, leaving Charles Goddard (MG PA-PB) a surprised 72-second winner over Duncan Potter (Montlhery Midget) and Simon Jackson (PB).

Charles Maeers (GN Parker Special) outran the spectacular Sandford Andrews (Morgan Super Aero) in the Under 30s scratch race. Wolseley pilot David Seber's patient chase of Harry Painter (MG PA) netted third when Painter's

engine started fluffing.

As rivals fell, Ian Baxter's Alta claimed the first allcomers scratch race with Blakeney-Edwards's Nash in pursuit. Alistair Littlewood's road-equipped Bentley couldn't match Stuart Morley's racing version in a straight fight in the second scratch race, but took the second handicap spoils. James Miles's Austin 7 Monoposto went under the handicapper's radar in the opening multi-start race.

MARCUS PYE

WEEKEND WINNERS

SNETTERTON

MINI MIGLIA

Race 1 Rupert Deeth

Race 2 Aaron Smith

MINI SE7EN

Race 1 Mike Jordan

Race 2 Connor O'Brien

MAZDA MX-5s

Races 1, 2 & 3 Fraser Fenwick

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP

Races 1 & 3 Richard Amos

Race 2 Adam Bessell

C1 ENDURANCE

Ardcor Modelmakers

(John Ardis/Mike Graham)

MAZDA MX-5 CLUBMAN

Race 1 Thomas Langford

Race 2 Declan McDonnell

ZEO PROTOTYPES

Races 1 & 2 Mike Jenvey (Jenvey Gunn TS6)

CLUBSPORT TROPHY

David Shead/Malcolm Edeson (BMW Compact)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

CADWELL PARK

500cc F3

Races 1 & 2 Alex Wilson (Cooper-Norton Mk10)

MELVILLE & GEOGHEGAN TROPHIES

Mark Brett (Ballamy-Ford LMB V8 Special)

FRAZER NASH/GN

Mark Walker (GN Thunderbug)

LEN THOMPSON MEMORIAL TROPHY

Jonathan Cobb (Frazer Nash-Ford)

SEAMAN & FLOCKHART TROPHIES

Charlie Martin (Cooper-Climax T53)

TRIPLE-M REGISTER

Charles Goddard (MG PA-PB)

UNDER 30s SCRATCH

Charles Maeers (Parker-GN, below)

ALLCOMERS SCRATCH

Race 1 Ian Baxter (Alta 61 IS)

Race 2 Stuart Morley (Bentley 3/4½)

ALLCOMERS HANDICAP

Race 1 James Miles (Austin 7 Special)

Race 2 Alistair Littlewood (Bentley 3/4½)



For full results visit: theresultslive.co.uk



Felix (left) and Josh Fisher got a little too close for comfort at times

OLLIEREAD

Fisher brothers catch an FF1600 win apiece on Howard's Day

CASTLE COMBE
CCRC
18 APRIL

"I went straight over to apologise – I locked up [hit him] and sent him straight on," said Felix Fisher, who inadvertently cannoned his TM Ray GR05 into brother Josh's Wayne Poole/RHE Van Diemen JL14 over the grass at the Esses, then won a gripping Formula Ford championship opener on Easter Monday's 10th Howard's Day, named for circuit saviour Strawford.

Josh lost very little time on the grass, rejoining at Old Paddock, but repelled fellow champion Luke Cooper (Swift Cooper SC20), only to "bin it" at Tower and finish fifth behind first-time podium finisher Kieran Attwood and James Hadfield. In the sequel, the Fishers traded the lead several times, touching wheels at Quarry – "where I'd parked it on the apex," said Josh, before he prevailed. Cooper slipped to third ahead of Attwood, with

double class winners Nathan Ward (Swift SC92), David Cobbold (Van Diemen RF89) and Ben Mitchell (1971 Merlyn Mk20) nose to tail in fifth, sixth and seventh!

Without brother Gary, whose SEAT's gearbox failed in qualifying, Adam Prebble won the Combe Saloon opener in the Interceptor Racing Vauxhall Astra turbo from the Audi TTs of Tony Hutchings and Mini graduate Dave Spiller. A broken alternator kept Prebble from race two, but an epic Audi duel ensued. No matter what Spiller threw at Hutchings, the vastly experienced leader placed his older car to thwart Grant Motorsport's debutant.

Formula 3 racer Alex Fores, 21, mastered Steve Lansley's 2.4-litre, 330bhp Ford Duratec-powered Caterham to win both resident GT races, reducing the class lap record to 1m06.863s (99.60mph). Returnee Nigel Mustill, driving another Volvo S60 silhouette – the 2011 Spa 12 Hours winner, reconfigured with a seven-litre Chevrolet LS7 engine – pushed Fores initially. Keith Butcher, enjoying his 5.2-litre Audi R8, shadowed Mustill to the chequer. Second time out, Doug Watson, whose Ferrari 458 lost a wheel in qualifying, charged to second, passing Butcher and Jamie Sturges's VW Golf TCR.

Craig Tomkinson won both Hot Hatch races, remarkably since an off in qualifying left his two-litre Vauxhall Nova's steering askew and him having to hold it in gear in the second stanza. He outran the closely matched Nick Gwinnett (Renault Clio) and Will Self (Peugeot 205 GTI), who bagged a second and a third apiece. Shaun Deacon (Peugeot 106 GTI) was uncatchable in Class C, finishing fifth and fourth overall respectively. Shaun Goverd's Citroen AX



Tomkinson battled steering woes to take Hot Hatch spoils

OLLIEREAD

RACE WINNERS

CASTLE COMBE FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Felix Fisher (Ray GR05)

Race 2 Josh Fisher (Van Diemen JL14)

CASTLE COMBE SALOON CARS

Race 1 Adam Prebble (Vauxhall Astra)

Race 2 Tony Hutchings (Audi TT)

CASTLE COMBE GTs

Races 1 & 2 Alex Fores (Caterham CSR)

CASTLE COMBE HOT HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Craig Tomkinson (Vauxhall Nova)

BCV8s

Races 1 & 2 James Wheeler (B GT V8)

SPORTS SPECIALS

Races 1 & 2 Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

broke first time out, but he hurtled through to claim B gold later.

Two stonking MG BCV8 races featured James Wheeler manage water temperature issues and a bizarre gearbox problem respectively to extend this season's unbeaten record. Neil Fowler and Simon Cripps joined Wheeler on the podium both times, threatening throughout the latter as the 400bhp GT V8 trio carved safely through gaggles of traffic. Andrew Young in his sonorous six-cylinder MGC GT twice got the better of Jim Bryan's GT V8 in Class C qualifying order.

The 750 Motor Club's Sports Specials also entertained, Andy Hiley batting the lap record down to 1m09.963s (95.19mph) in a typically accomplished double with his self-built Chronos. The Yorkshireman finished clear of Martin Gambling (who led race two for a couple of laps), Paul Boyd and Clive Hudson in Eclipses. Stuart Thompson (MK Indy RR) and Warren Vessey (Fisher Fury) each beat the other by a whisker in Class B.

MARCUS PYE

Pollard at the double as 750MC attracts big grids

DONINGTON PARK
750MC
18 APRIL

Huge grids were the theme of the day at Donington Park on Monday for the visit of the 750 Motor Club.

Formula Vee sported an impressive 38-car entry. Craig Pollard (WEV) was the first winner, having traded places with both reigning champion James Harridge and series regular Daniel Hands. Harridge dropped out first with a broken gear linkage on his Maverick, leaving Hands in charge, but he then lost the steering on his AHS and retired, promoting Craig Bell to second.

Both Harridge and Hands repaired their cars in time for race two, with Harridge stuck to Pollard all the way and even leading for a short time late on. The duo were separated by just 0.26 seconds on the line, but Pollard just pulled ahead to take the win, while Hands was third.

The 45 Toyota MR2s were divided into three groups, which were meant to race



Both Formula Vee races were close contests topped by Pollard

STEVE JONES

each other twice in three races. Multiple champion Shaun Traynor was the pacesetter with two wins. The first was relatively straightforward over 2021 champion Aaron Cooke, who was demoted to sixth for track-limits abuses, giving Paul Cook second.

Then, in the second race, it was Adam Lockwood who gave Traynor a hard time. Cooke did not get the chance to try again as the meeting overran and the finale was axed.

Club Enduro had another supersized grid. Robert Baker and Carl Swift continued their winning ways in their SEAT, ahead of Andy Marston in a BMW M3. Both had been hoping for a safety car during the pitstop window, which did not occur, but Marston's last-minute stop meant that he was not able to get on the back of the Baker/Swift car.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER



Ashworth (left) just beat Cull in Equipe GTS drag race

RICHARD STYLES

TVRs top all four Equipe thrillers

SNETTERTON
EQUIPE
18 APRIL

Lapping traffic looked to have cost Mark Ashworth victory in the second of the Snetterton Equipe GTS races as he allowed Rob Cull's similar TVR Grantura to sneak past at the Bombhole. But Cull slipped up at Wilson on the final lap, handing the lead back to Ashworth, who just kept his rival at bay at the finish line by the narrowest of margins.

Cull took advantage of a chaotic start to power into the lead in the opener, chased by the enthusiastically driven MGB of Babak Farsian, who was unseated from second place on the final tour by Ashworth.

The chequered flag ended a fascinating duel for victory in the first Equipe Libre

event between the TVR Griffith 400s of Christian Douglas and Matt Holben, while Nigel Winchester was penalised back to fourth, behind Rick Willmott's E-type, for a starting infringement.

Winchester's start was legal in race two and propelled him into the lead, which he lost mid-race to Douglas, before Holben demoted the Shelby 260 driver to third.

A healthy grid of Snetterton Saloons lined up behind Jasver Sapra, who easily raced his BMW M3 to victory. James Mumbray profited from Bryan Bransom's early retirement to secure second from the fast-closing Karl Cattliff's similar M3.

Having fought off the early challenges of Brian Arculus, the Elva Mk4 of Shaun Bromley won the Fifties Sports Car Racing event at a canter.

LEWIS BEALES

RACE WINNERS

DONINGTON PARK **FORMULA VEE**

Races 1 & 2 Craig Pollard (WEV Vee)

TOYOTA MR2s

Races 1 & 2 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

CLUB ENDURO

Robert Baker/Carl Swift (SEAT Leon TCR)

CALM ALL PORSCHE TROPHY

Matthew Kyle-Henney/Toby Barlow (Cayman S)

BIKESPORTS

Race 1 Richard Wise (Mittell MC-41R)

Race 2 Joe Stables (Radical PR6)

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

SNETTERTON **EQUIPE GTS**

Race 1 Rob Cull (TVR Grantura Mk3)

Race 2 Mark Ashworth (TVR Grantura Mk3)

EQUIPE LIBRE, PRE-'63 AND '50s

Races 1 & 2 Christian Douglas (TVR Griffith)

SNETTERTON SALOONS

Jasver Sapra (BMW E46 M3)

FIFTIES SPORTS CAR RACING

Shaun Bromley (Elva Mk4)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

FINISHING STRAIGHT



A behind-the-scenes look cut short



YOUTUBE DOCUMENTARY SERIES WEC FULL ACCESS

The World Endurance Championship is the latest high-profile motorsport category to pander to the social media masses and launch its own mini-documentary series, charting the highs and lows from the premier class of endurance racing.

But unlike the likes of Formula 1's *Drive to Survive* or *MotoGP Unlimited*, which use streaming platforms Netflix and Amazon respectively, WEC's efforts are self-contained on the championship's YouTube channel, meaning no subscription fee is needed to access the series.

Also unlike the other two series, which recount the 2021 campaigns, *WEC Full Access* follows the current 2022 season, keeping it more relevant and up to date for its audience. All ticks in the box to try to increase the exposure of the championship.

As the name suggests, the series offers a chance to look behind the scenes across the various classes, from Hypercar to GTE. There's the usual bread and butter of what you'd expect, with footage in abundance of drivers in dialogue with engineers,

disgruntled headshakes and hand gestures imitating the movement of the cars.

These clips are spliced with cinematic shots of the Sebring International Raceway, including the customary slow-motion flapping of the American flag, which film director Michael Bay would be proud of. There's also input from IMSA president John Doonan and 2014 WEC champion Anthony Davidson, the latter likely to be the voice of authority throughout the coming episodes.

By far the most memorable moment from the opening two episodes is ironically the use of archive footage from the 1965 12 Hours of Sebring, where a deluge made the track and pit area resemble something more of a river.

But perhaps the most refreshing aspect of the series is the voice it gives to the fans (including 'fan of the year 2019', because

obviously that's a thing). It showcases the atmosphere at a downtime Sebring concert, and fans give their earliest memories and what the race and motorsport mean to them.

The point here is that it provides a different perspective to the usual documentary offerings from F1 and MotoGP that, while making a product for a wider mainstream audience, arguably neglect the diehard fans.

Imagine the anger and frustration of fans in the wake of the Belgian Grand Prix debacle last year being showcased in *DTS* via interviews, offering a true reflection of what the sport's lifeblood were thinking in that moment.

Without doubt the biggest criticism of the videos is their run-time, with the opening two episodes each lasting just over six minutes. You could argue in this day and





age, where consumers want short bursts of content, it was the right way to go, but having to wait a week for another bitesize piece of content does seem a stretch.

The intent is to have 24 episodes (because everything in endurance racing must revolve around said number), with four episodes after each round of the six-race season. The problem with this approach is that the opening race of the year – 1000 Miles of Sebring – took place in mid-March, but by the time the final episode from that round will be streamed, it will be nearly two months after the event.

Granted, the YouTube comments section can be a dark place at the best of times, but reaction to this decision is unsurprisingly on the negative side.

There's certainly no shortage of footage available, so it's surprising that the videos haven't been made longer, even if producers wanted to stick to releasing one a week. And yes, while there is a 'Movie of the Race' also available, which stretches to 52 minutes, it's a shame more isn't made of the behind-the-scenes footage, which seems to be a necessity for any fanbase in 2022.

STEFAN MACKLEY

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Emilia Romagna GP F1 World Championship Round 4/23

Imola, Italy

24 April

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355

TV Highlights

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

Rally Croatia World Rally Championship Round 3/13

Zagreb, Croatia

21-24 April

TV Live BT Sport 3, Sun 0730

TV Highlights BT Sport 3, Fri 2300, Sun 0100, Sun 2300, Red Bull TV, Fri 2100, Sat 2100, Sun 2100

FIA Formula 2 Round 3/13

Imola, Italy

23-24 April

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 1650, Sun 0915

FIA Formula 3 Round 2/9

Imola, Italy

23-24 April

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 0930, Sun 0745

Porsche Supercup

Round 1/8

Imola, Italy

24 April

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1105, Eurosport 2, Sun 1100

Super Formula

Round 2/7

Suzuka, Japan

24 April

TV Live on Motorsport.tv, Sun 0630



Formula Regional European by Alpine

Round 1/10

Monza, Italy

23-24 April

ADAC GT Masters

Round 1/7

Oschersleben, Germany

23-24 April

TV Live on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0820, Sat 1150, Sun 0820, Sun 1150

NASCAR Cup

Round 10/36

Talladega, USA

24 April

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sun 1930

NASCAR Xfinity

Round 9/33

Talladega, USA

23 April

MotoGP

Round 5/21

Algarve Circuit, Portugal

24 April

TV Live BT Sport 2, Sun 1230

TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

UK MOTORSPORT

Donington BTCC (BARC)

23-24 April

BTCC, British F4, Ginetta GT5 Challenge, Ginetta Junior, Mini Challenge, Porsche Carrera Cup

TV Live ITV4, Sun 1050

Kirkistown 500MRCI

23 April

Fiestas, Mazda MX-5, NI FF1600, Roadsports, Saloons/GTs, Superkarts

Snetterton HSCC

23-24 April

70s Road Sports/80s Sports

& GT, Classic FF1600, Classic/Modern, Ecurie Classic, Historic F3, Historic FF1600, Historic FF2000, Historic Roadsports, Historic Touring Cars, Monoposto

Thruxton CSCC

23-24 April

Classic K, Future Classics, Magnificent Sevens, Modern Classics, New Millennium, Open Series, Slicks Series, Swinging Sixties, Special Saloons & Modsports, Tin Tops, Turbo Tin Tops

Cadwell Park BARC

23-24 April

2CV, Caterham Graduates (Sigma 135/Sigma 150/Sigmamax), CNC Heads, Hyundai Coupe Cup, JSCC, Superkarts

Silverstone MSVR

23-24 April

Bernie's V8s/Historic Outlaws, Clubmans, Focus Cup, MSVT Trackday Championship, MSVT Trackday Trophy, Sports 2000, Toyo Tires Racing Saloons, Turismo X/Elise Trophy, United FF1600

Knockhill KMSC

24 April

Legends, Modsports, Super Lap Scotland

British Rally Championship

Rally Tending and Clacton

Round 1/7

Clacton, England

23-24 April

British Hillclimb Championship

Round 1/13

Prescott, England

23-24 April



FROM THE ARCHIVE

All hell breaks loose at Paddock Hill Bend as a battle for fifth place ends in tears during a British Touring Car Championship bash at Brands Hatch in April 1996. Kelvin Burt and James

Thompson had been challenging Paul Radisich's Ford Mondeo when the Volvo 850 and Vauxhall Vectra came together. A big grin has probably spread across the face of reigning champion John Cleland as he sails

past the scene in his Vectra. Up ahead, Frank Biela scored his third win on the trot in his game-changing Audi A4 quattro. A star-studded podium was completed by Alain Menu (Renault) and Joachim Winkelhock (BMW).

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GARY HAWKINS
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MY FAVOURITE... CAR

Mercedes C11

KARL WENDLINGER



MAIN AND INSET: DAIMLERAG



Karl Wendlinger isn't short of quality candidates when it comes to choosing a favourite car from his career. But while he had more success with the Chrysler Viper and enjoyed giantkilling qualifying performances with the 1993 Sauber C12 Formula 1 car, the Austrian doesn't hesitate to choose the Sauber-run Mercedes C11. He made just four race appearances in the Group C contender across 1990 and 1991, winning once, but it left a huge impression.

The C11 won seven out of the eight races it started in 1990 to smash the opposition in the final year of the FIA world sportscar championship's fuel-limited formula. Wendlinger, who joined Jochen Mass in four races that year aboard the Mercedes junior team #2 entry also raced by Michael Schumacher and Heinz-Harald Frentzen, first raced the twin-turbo V8 C11 at Monza after pedalling the old C9 at Suzuka. Second in both, the reigning German Formula 3 champion won on his next turn at Spa after the sister Mauro Baldi/Jean-Louis Schlesser car hit engine trouble, but finished down in ninth in the shortened Montreal race due to a puncture.

"The C11 was very fast, very competitive, but it was not so difficult to drive," says Wendlinger. "It had lots of downforce, especially on the rear axle. And if you were a little bit too fast somewhere, then there was a slight understeer, which is easier to correct than an oversteer."

"The engine was really comfortable to drive, very good pickup, nice rev band to drive with, good torque, good power. It was in total – car and engine was a very good compromise."

His final C11 outing at Le Mans in 1991 – Mercedes elected not to enter its perennially unreliable C291, powered by the 3.5-litre normally aspirated engines now mandated in the world championship – promised much but was tinged with mechanical dramas en route to fifth. Still, Wendlinger has fond memories of a car that helped launch his career.

"It was the step into professional motor racing," he says. "Out of being an F3 driver, cleaning the car and washing the rims, into a factory team. It was an important step and it was successful driving in a very competitive car, so this is maybe why it's my number one car."

JAMES NEWBOLD



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