

**Max Verstappen 2022 F1 title special**

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13 OCTOBER 2022

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**MAX VERSTAPPEN**

**'Max has been truly dominant'**

**CHRISTIAN HORNER**

INCLUDING  
**Verstappen's  
road to the  
2022 title**

**PLUS**

More **F1** confusion from the FIA

Ingram takes **BTCC** title in fantastic finale



Well done to Jake on an outstanding season in the BTCC - 4 mega years together



24 JAKE HILL



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# Congratulations to Verstappen as F1 stumbles over its rules

Yet more confusion hung over Max Verstappen's Formula 1 world title clincher last weekend. But, unlike in 2021, there can be absolutely no doubt about who the star performer has been this season.

Verstappen has been brilliant this year and took the title in fine style as F1 finally got going in the wet at Suzuka. Matt Kew talks you through the bizarre events, as well as Verstappen's sublime performance as the Dutchman scored his 12th victory of the campaign, on page 16. Verstappen is now just one win off the season record, a tally that does not reflect how hard he's had to work or how quick Ferrari was early on.

Verstappen aside, the events of last weekend raised more questions about how F1 is run and the wording of certain rules, not to mention recovery vehicles being on track (p4). Alex Kalinauckas takes a look at what the FIA has to do next to restore confidence on p12. Dealing with cost-cap breaches is high on the list of challenges...

Away from F1, the feel-good story of the UK racing weekend was surely Tom Ingram taking an emotional first British Touring Car crown at Brands Hatch (p38). The championship has had a reputation in the past for dubious driving standards but the respect shown by the title protagonists was a pleasure to watch. Any one of Ingram, Ash Sutton, Jake Hill and Colin Turkington would have made a worthy 2022 champion, but it was Ingram who delivered. Marcus Simmons was there to watch him fulfil his lifetime's ambition.



*Kevin Turner*

**Kevin Turner**  
Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK**  
**20 OCTOBER**

**What Ferrari does next**  
We look at what the famous team needs to do after another F1 defeat

## Have your say, get in touch

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# PIT + Paddock

Sainz's Ferrari is recovered after tractor incident



## F1 drivers furious as Japan tractor scare echoes Bianchi tragedy

### FORMULA 1

The FIA has launched an investigation into the safety procedures at last weekend's Japanese Grand Prix after Formula 1 drivers fumed at the "unacceptable" use of a recovery vehicle on the circuit while they drove in wet conditions.

Following Carlos Sainz's crash on the opening lap at Suzuka, the safety car was deployed before a red flag was shown due to heavy rain and poor visibility. But Pierre Gasly was left fuming over the radio when he narrowly passed a recovery vehicle that was tending to Sainz's car at Turn 12. "What is this tractor on track?" Gasly shouted on team radio. "I passed next to it. This is unacceptable. Remember what has

happened. I can't believe this."

The incident came eight years after Jules Bianchi sustained severe head injuries when he collided with a recovery vehicle after going off track in wet conditions at Suzuka. The Frenchman died nine months later.

"I don't understand how eight years later in similar conditions we can still see a crane, not even on the gravel but on the racing line," Gasly said after the race. "It is just not respectful towards Jules, towards his family, towards his loved ones and all of us. It was a dramatic incident and I think on that day we learned we don't want to see any tractors in this kind of conditions."

"If I would have lost the car in a similar way as Carlos lost it on the lap before... I was doing 200km/h [124mph] but it is not the matter, even 100km/h, if I would have lost it and hit a 12-tonne crane, I would be dead right now."

Gasly was not alone in his anger. Sergio Perez called it "the lowest thing I've seen in years", while Grand Prix Drivers' Association directors George Russell and Sebastian Vettel said that the FIA must refrain from using recovery vehicles when cars are still on the track.

"It's not worth the risk," said Russell. "These cars are sometimes harder to control under safety car conditions than when we're going fast. So we talk about safety, talk about going slow for safety. If anything,

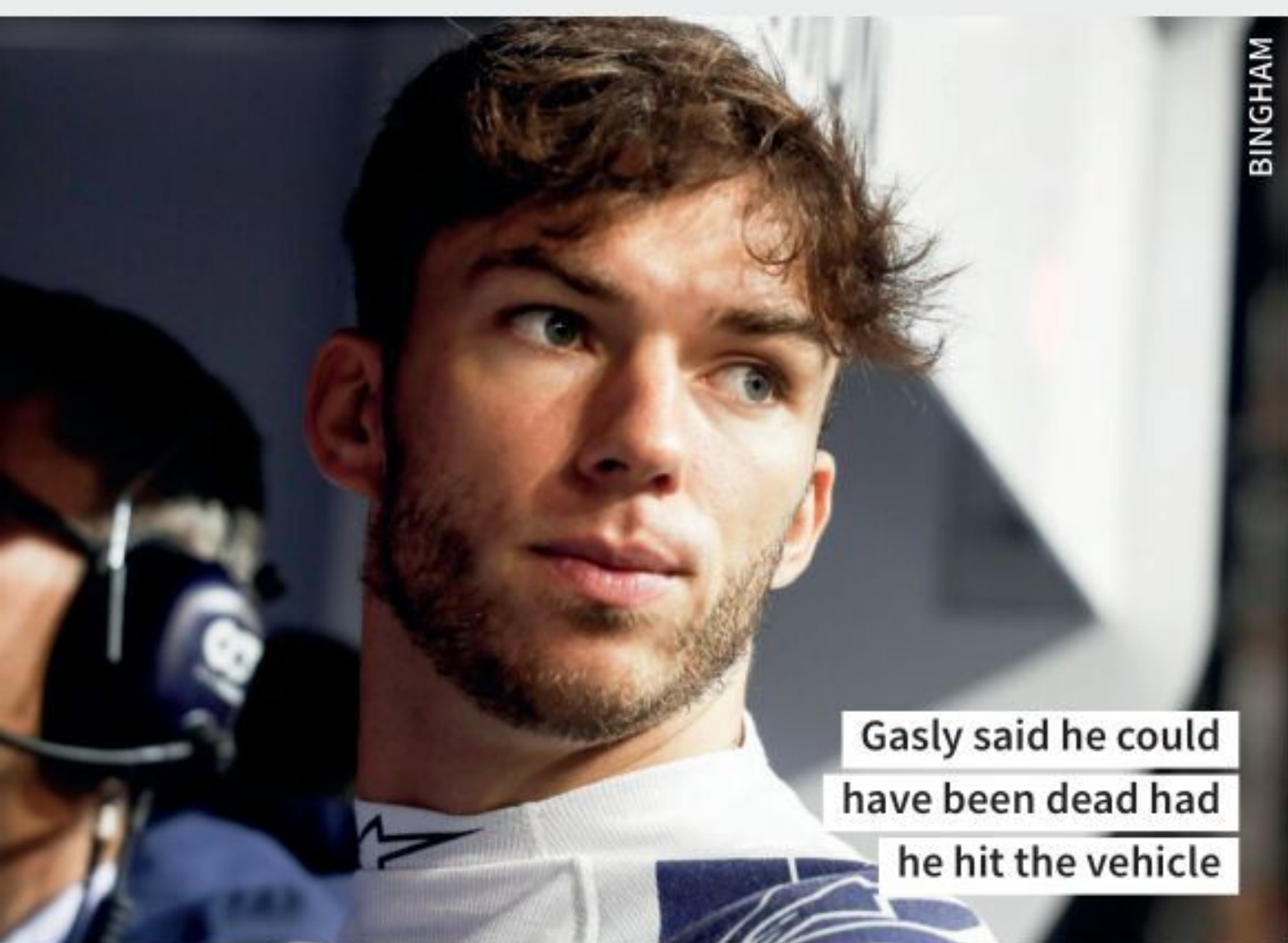
it's almost counterintuitive."

"I think we must just understand that today was one of these odd days where things could have gone wrong – and then somebody might pay the price," added Vettel.

The FIA explained that recovery vehicles are routinely used under safety cars or red flags to attend to stricken cars, as in the recent Italian and Singapore GPs. But it said that it would launch a "thorough review" given the driver feedback. "This is part of the common practice of debrief and analysis of all race incidents to ensure continual improvements of processes and procedures," said an FIA spokesperson.

The FIA noted during the race that Gasly was speeding under the red flag once he had passed the crash site. Gasly admitted to this, resulting in a 20-second post-race time penalty and two points on his superlicence.

It was not the only FIA confusion that unfolded at Suzuka amid bizarre scenes in which Max Verstappen found out he was world champion during his parc ferme interview. Charles Leclerc, whose second place on the road was expected to mean that Verstappen had not quite put the crown beyond reach, received a five-second time penalty after the race for going off track in his last-lap fight with Sergio Perez. This relegated to Leclerc to third, but this was not expected to crown Verstappen given the reduced race distance.



Gasly said he could have been dead had he hit the vehicle

BINGHAM

# Red Bull found in breach of cost-cap rules for 2021

## FORMULA 1

The FIA has declared that Red Bull was in breach Formula 1's cost cap for the 2021 season, putting the team at risk of punishment.

Rumours emerged at the recent Singapore Grand Prix that Red Bull and Aston Martin had breached the financial regulations for last year, leading to denials from both teams. But when the FIA issued teams on Monday with their cost-cap compliance certificates for 2021, it revealed that nine of the 10 had stayed within the \$145million maximum, with Red Bull the exception.

The FIA claimed that Red Bull's breach was a "minor overspend", which means it was within 5% of the budget cap for the year. Aston Martin was found responsible of a procedural infringement but did meet the cost cap.

The findings come after Red Bull expressed confidence in recent weeks that it had complied with the cost cap, even going as far as considering action for "defamatory" statements by rivals suggesting it had not. The team remained steadfast in the view that it had complied even after the FIA announcement, saying in a statement that it was "surprised" and felt "disappointment".

"Our 2021 submission was below the cost cap limit, so we need to carefully review the FIA's findings as our belief remains that the relevant costs are under the 2021 cost cap amount," read the statement. "Despite the conjecture and positioning of others, there is of course a process under the regulations with the FIA which we will respectfully follow while we consider all the options available to us."

No details have been given on the



extent of the Red Bull breach, but the FIA's Cost Cap Administration is now set to discuss next steps with the team.

For a minor overspend, officials will discuss an Accepted Breach Agreement with Red Bull in which the team would need to admit guilt and terms of punishment be agreed. Should a deal not be struck, the case would be referred to F1's Cost Cap Adjudication Panel, which could impose sanctions such as a public reprimand, a reduction of future cost caps, limitations on testing or even a points deduction.

But the case is set to ignite a big political battle, with both Ferrari and Mercedes previously stating that any cost cap breach had to be dealt with severely, particularly in the context of last year's close title fight between Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton.

Hamilton said at last weekend's Japanese Grand Prix, prior to the FIA's announcement, that a breach would "question our values and the integrity" of F1, noting how the cost cap held back Mercedes' developments last year. "If we had another half a million to spend, we would have been in a different position at some of the following races if we had brought another floor, which we could have easily done," he said.

LUKE SMITH & JAMIE KLEIN



But a quirk of the FIA regulations meant that because the race resumed after the initial red flag, even though it only scraped over 50% distance, when the three-hour time limit kicked in this meant that full points could be awarded. The wording of the ruling was adjusted after last year's two-lap farce at Spa, only for the loophole to remain.

"It's a mistake that wasn't included after the issues in Spa last year," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner. "The regulations obviously haven't been mopped up. We were under the strong impression that only with 75% of the race, full points will be scored. So we felt we were going to be one point short."

Verstappen went to the cool-down room still unsure whether he was champion, with confirmation only arriving via the FIA's media delegate. But he saw the bright side, saying: "I don't mind that it was a little bit confusing. I find it actually quite funny."

LUKE SMITH & ADAM COOPER

P16 JAPANESE GP



# Gasly Alpine deal gives de Vries his F1 chance

## FORMULA 1

Pierre Gasly will race for Alpine in Formula 1 next year after signing a multi-year deal, which has opened up the door for Nyck de Vries to get his long-awaited F1 chance replacing the Frenchman at AlphaTauri.

After losing Fernando Alonso to Aston Martin and intended replacement Oscar Piastri to McLaren, Alpine turned its attention to Gasly to form an all-French line-up with Esteban Ocon.

Red Bull made clear that it would only release Gasly from his contract for 2023 if it had a replacement lined up. Talks accelerated with de Vries after his impressive F1 debut last month as a stand-in for Williams at Monza, where

he finished ninth.

Gasly will end a nine-year association with Red Bull when he joins Alpine, but he said it “very quickly” became clear it was the right move to further his F1 career. “It’s the right time to take off on my own, grab this opportunity with a manufacturer,” he added. “I definitely believe in this project and I’m very excited about it.”

Gasly and future team-mate Ocon had a falling out in their junior teams, but both said it was now behind them and that they are confident of working well together. “We have had our ups and downs in our relationship,” Gasly admitted, “but I do believe this is also an opportunity for us to clear a bit what’s happened in the past.



I’m definitely not worried.”

De Vries joins AlphaTauri after a meandering career since winning the Formula 2 title in 2019 – he has raced at Le Mans, won the Formula E championship for Mercedes and served as an F1 reserve for three teams this year.

AlphaTauri had originally set its sights on Colton Herta, but after de Vries’s Monza cameo – and encouragement

from “big brother” Max Verstappen to give Red Bull advisor Helmut Marko a call about the seat – the Dutchman entered the frame.

“Monza just took any potential question marks and doubts away people might have had,” said de Vries. “Clearly all the stars were aligned for that weekend.”

**LUKE SMITH & RONALD VORDING**

# IMSA champions link up in United WEC squad

## WEC

IMSA SportsCar Championship title winners Tom Blomqvist and Oliver Jarvis will continue their partnership in the World Endurance Championship next year. The Meyer Shank Racing Acura (right) team-mates this season will join forces in one of United Autosports’ LMP2 ORECA in 2023.

Blomqvist comes into the line-up of the #23 United ORECA-Gibson 07 alongside Jarvis and 16-year-old American Josh Pierson in place of Alex Lynn, who will be racing for the Ganassi Cadillac squad in the WEC.

The deal brings the 28-year-old Brit back to the WEC a year on from his second-place finish in the P2 points with Jota.

“United Autosports have proven themselves as one of the top teams in the world of endurance racing and I’m thrilled to be working with all of the team,” said



Blomqvist. “I had a successful year with Olly, winning the IMSA championship together, so teaming up with him and Josh makes for a really exciting line-up! It’s great to be back in the WEC paddock, returning

to the Le Mans 24 Hours and in the ultra-competitive LMP2 category.”

Jarvis described Blomqvist as “a great addition” to the team and that it will be “great to continue with him in WEC”.

Team boss Richard Dean added: “We are delighted to welcome Tom to our team for

WEC 2023, and to have Olly stay with us for a second season cements a super-strong line-up alongside Josh for next year.”

Blomqvist will dovetail his WEC campaign with remaining at Shank for next year. This means he is set to miss the Algarve round, which clashes with the Long Beach IMSA weekend. Jarvis has yet to be confirmed with the American team for 2023.

Long-term team-mates and 2019-20 WEC P2 title winners Filipe Albuquerque and Phil Hanson will drive United’s second ORECA P2 car in the 2023 WEC. The team has yet to name the third driver for the line-up.

**GARY WATKINS**



**BTCC** Jason Plato bowed out of the British Touring Car Championship at Brands Hatch last weekend, 25 years after his debut (inset) and with a series record of 97 wins from his 658 starts. Plato, 55 tomorrow (Friday), responded to rumours that he might have changed his mind about quitting following his season with the BTC Racing Honda squad. “If there was a really exciting three-year deal with a manufacturer, which there isn’t, then of course I would,” he said, “but those deals don’t exist anymore. I want to bow out of this when I still know I can do the job. I couldn’t live with myself if I wasn’t quick enough anymore.” Plato is pictured with hugely popular BTCC steward, veteran official and former BARC chief Dennis Carter, for whom Brands was also his swansong before retirement. **Photos by JEP**

## Collard joins Plato on drive into BTCC sunset

### BTCC

While Jason Plato was taking part in his final British Touring Car Championship event at Brands Hatch last weekend, so too was another driver – one who was only eight months old at the time of Plato’s series debut!

But while Plato is keen to extend his driving career into the GT3 arena, Ricky Collard has decided to hang up his helmet completely after a tricky first full debut season in the BTCC.

Collard, the son of multiple BTCC race winner Rob and

grandson of hot rod legend Mick ‘Duffy’ Collard, was runner-up to Lando Norris in the first FIA Formula 4 series to be held in the UK in 2015, placed second in BRDC British F3 in 2016, and was a race winner in ADAC GT Masters as a BMW junior plus the Blancpain GT Endurance Cup in an Aston Martin.

The 26-year-old joined the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla team for his first taste of front-wheel-drive competition in 2022, but finished 16th after an incident-packed season.

“The sport’s changing a lot



– there’s a reason why people like Jason are retiring,” said Collard. “I’d love to have had a more successful time [in BTCC], but for various reasons it just hasn’t happened – it’s emotionally and mentally not nice to be beaten up by things

outside of my control.”

Collard says he has a “one-way ticket to Australia” and that he wants to exit the sport completely. “I’ve had an absolute blast, but there’s more to life than racing cars,” he added.

**MARCUS SIMMONS**

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## W Series cans the rest of its season

BLOXHAM  
motorsport  
IMAGES

### W SERIES

The W Series will not complete the final three races of its 2022 season due to fundraising issues, but is “extremely confident” of returning next year.

During the recent Singapore Grand Prix support round, it emerged that the female-only series may not be able to complete its campaign after the collapse of a contracted deal with an American investor. A one-week deadline was set to decide on whether the final races – at the US GP before a double-header finale at the Mexican GP – would go ahead, before W Series announced on Monday that the season had been curtailed.

W Series said the decision was “made to

focus on the longer-term fundraising process to enable the longevity and financial health of W Series into 2023.”

The decision means that Jamie Chadwick is crowned W Series champion for a third time, 50 points clear after winning five of the seven races this season. Despite the financial issues, W Series anticipates that it will be able to pay out the prize money, including the £450,000 for Chadwick.

W Series CEO Catherine Bond Muir claimed that there had been significant interest from potential investors since news emerged of the financial difficulties, giving her confidence of a return in 2023.

“We’ve had offers from a number of people, but the problem is getting money

in doesn’t happen at the shake of a money tree, and people have got to go through due diligence,” explained Bond Muir. “We could have kept it on for a couple of weeks, but we just had to make a pragmatic call. The big message is that I am extremely confident that W Series will be here next year.”

W Series has always operated on funding every seat, meaning drivers are not required to bring their own backing, something Bond Muir is committed to protecting. “We want to keep the DNA of W Series going, and it is our intention to still be providing all of the expenses for the drivers,” she said. “We’ve always said we’re about finding the fastest drivers, not the richest drivers.”

LUKE SMITH

## Ticktum stays at NIO 333; Turvey in FE limbo

### FORMULA E

Dan Ticktum will remain at NIO 333 for a second season in Formula E, completing the line-up alongside the incoming Sergio Sette Camara as Oliver Turvey exits the squad.

Following a solid first season, in which he scored a point in Rome and broke into the qualifying duels in Seoul, Ticktum and NIO 333 were expected to take up an

option for a second year for the start of the Gen3 era.

Ticktum said that he has already experienced the team’s new ER9 Gen3 car, which has undergone testing at Mallory Park and Varano.

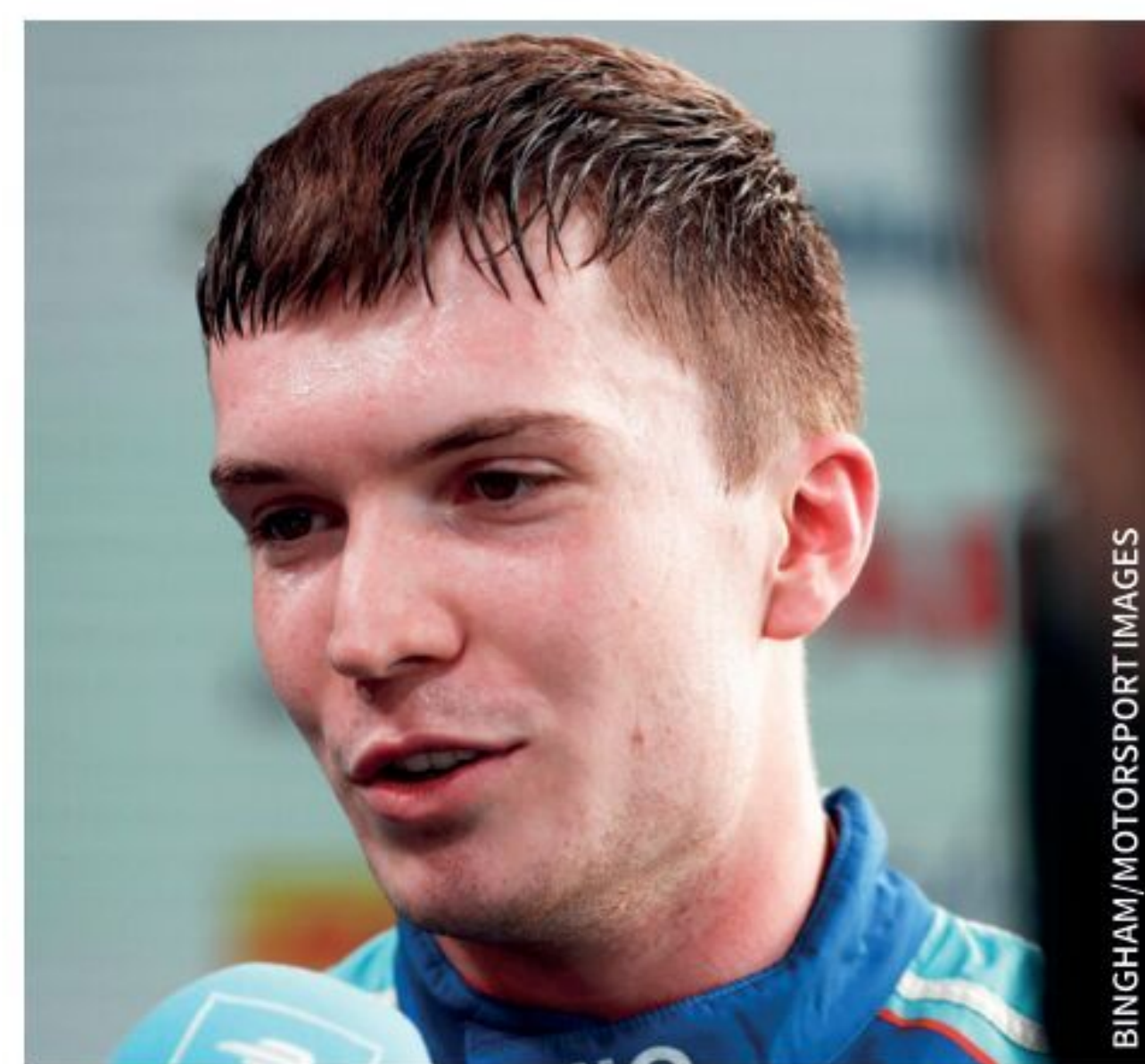
“It’s big step forward from the Gen2 – I’ve really enjoyed it so far, I have to say,” said Ticktum. “I’m really looking forward to getting cracking with this new era of electric racing.”

With Sette Camara

moving across from Dragon Penske following a series of strong drives, this leaves no room for Turvey after eight years with the squad under its various guises of Team China Racing and NextEV.

Turvey has been linked to FE newcomer McLaren, for which he was a long-time F1 test driver, but it is understood that Mercedes reserve Jake Hughes will take the seat alongside Rene Rast.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



BINGHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## IN THE HEADLINES

## FERRARI TO UNVEIL LMH

Ferrari will unveil its 2023 Le Mans Hypercar World Endurance Championship challenger on 30 October. The launch has been set for the Sunday of the Ferrari Challenge world finals weekend at Imola.

## VAN DER LINDE FOR DAYTONA

New DTM champion Sheldon van der Linde will drive one of the two BMW M Hybrid V8 LMDhs at the Daytona and Sebring IMSA SportsCar Championship enduros next year. The South African has been named for the Rahal squad for the opening races along with DTM stablemate Marco Wittmann. BMW now has a roster of seven drivers: full-timers Augusto Farfus, Nick Yelloly, Connor De Phillippi and Philipp Eng, plus Colton Herta, who will join the squad for the Daytona 24 Hours in January.

## CHILTON STAYS AT EXCELR8

British Touring Car Championship veteran Tom Chilton will remain for 2023 with Excelr8 Motorsport, where new champion Tom Ingram has long been committed until the end of next season. The team's confirmation last Saturday morning added that Chilton, whose form in the ex-Chris Smiley Hyundai i30 N has improved since the mid-season test, will get an all-new car for the campaign.

## FERRUCCI GETS FOYT #14

Santino Ferrucci will drive AJ Foyt Racing's famed #14 car in 2023, his first full-time IndyCar season since 2020. The controversial ex-F2 racer joins rookie Benjamin Pedersen.

## NAGLE CALLS TIME ON CAREER

Veteran World Rally Championship co-driver Paul Nagle will retire from the sport following this month's Rally Spain. The Irishman won five WRC events alongside Kris Meeke, and has spent the past few seasons with Craig Breen, for whom he will call notes in Spain for the last time in the M-Sport Ford Puma.



# Tin-top silly season ramps up

## BTCC

The British Touring Car Championship silly season was in full swing at last weekend's 2022 season finale at Brands Hatch, with some of the title contenders involved in the grapevine gossip.

First, veteran Tom Chilton took himself off the market (see right). Then attentions turned to Jake Hill, who went on to finish third in the points at the end of his first season with the West Surrey Racing BMW squad. His car has been run under the MB Motorsport banner of manager Mark Blundell's MB Partners, and talk that MB could go it alone if a deal to remain at WSR is not secured began to gain traction. The conjecture was that MB could take over Ciceley Motorsport's two BMWs, with Adam Morgan – whose family owns Ciceley – moving to WSR... or even targeted to join the MB line-up.

WSR chief Dick Bennetts said he wants to keep Hill, "but it's not Jake's call; it's MB's call". Morgan added: "As far as I'm concerned, I'm still Ciceley Motorsport all the way." And Blundell described it as "just a straightforward business analysis study –

nothing more than that. As we are today our focus is on WSR and MB Motorsport in the configuration we've been in this season."

Independent of any silly-season chat, Hill said on Sunday: "I just hope that we can come back and do it all again next year. I would rather retire from touring car racing than drive anywhere else."

Parallel to this was what BTCC runner-up Ash Sutton and his Motorbase team-mates will race in 2023. The plot to build a rear-wheel-drive version of the 4WD Audi A5 has hit the skids. NGTC rules state that a 4WD base car must run as RWD if the engine is longitudinal, but FWD if it is transverse – as with the A5. A vote among the teams to tweak this rule, introduced when Rob Austin's RWD A4 appeared a decade ago, did not carry a sufficiently significant majority to pass.

Motorbase boss Pete Osborne played down talk that attentions had turned to a RWD Mercedes C-Class. "We're looking at every car, but there's nothing at the moment," he said. "We're now looking at whether to park it and go with the Ford Focus again because of time constraints."

MARCUS SIMMONS

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Rossiter (below) has raced for Peugeot in WEC this season



## Rossiter retires to run Maserati

### FORMULA E

Peugeot World Endurance Championship driver James Rossiter has called time on his racing career to become Maserati's team principal in Formula E and succeed Jerome D'Ambrosio at the helm of the squad formerly known as Venturi.

The Briton moves over from the DS Techeetah team, where he served as sporting director and previously as a reserve driver, to lead Maserati's efforts as the Italian manufacturer joins FE.

Following the team's rebrand from Venturi, former principal D'Ambrosio left the operation, and Rossiter's links to Maserati parent company Stellantis have helped to bring the 39-year-old on board in place of the Belgian.

Rossiter explained that the time spent as a sporting director with Techeetah

afforded him "huge insight" into the demands of team leadership and helped ease the transition to the pitwall.

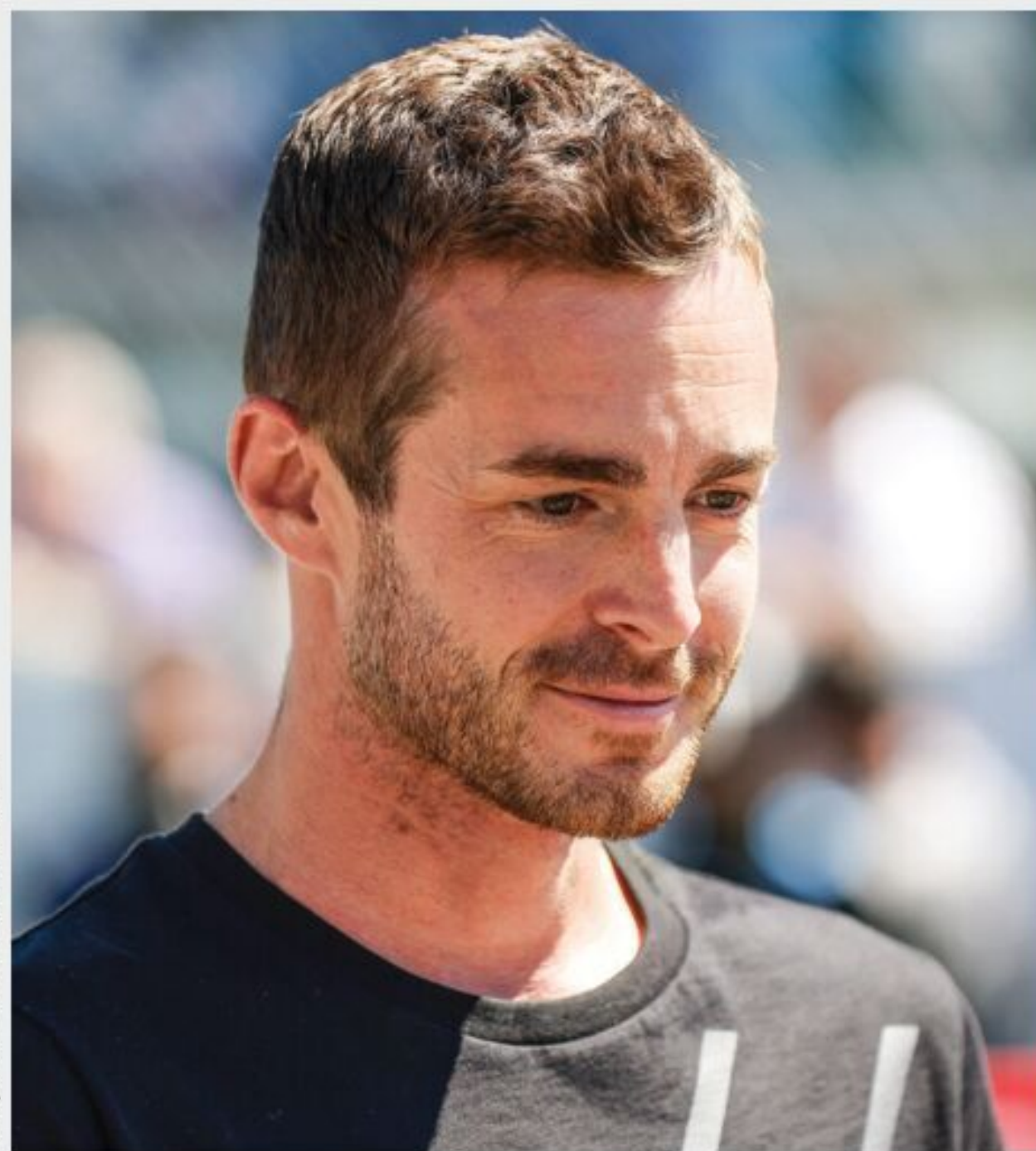
"The preparation I think over the last three years has been what enabled me to take this step," said Rossiter. "It's been an amazing process to go through from driving a car, to working with the management of the team, to working on the sporting side on the track, and really having a huge insight into what it really takes to be a team leader. And that enabled me the opportunity to look at what I needed to develop in myself over the last three years to be in the right position to take this opportunity."

"So I'm incredibly grateful for that. And it's obviously been an amazing three years doing that together with [Stellantis]."

Rossiter was a test driver for the Honda and Super Aguri Formula 1 teams while racing in Formula 3, and looked set for a race drive in 2010 with the abortive US F1 entry. He subsequently raced in both Super GT and Super Formula in Japan, dovetailing that with drives in the World Endurance Championship and a Force India F1 reserve role in 2012. Most recently, Rossiter was called up in place of Kevin Magnussen to race Peugeot's new 9X8 Le Mans Hypercar in the WEC this year.

Nico Muller, who joins Peugeot for 2023 and drove his last race for Audi in last weekend's DTM finale, looks likely to take over from Rossiter for the WEC season finale in Bahrain to partner regular drivers Loic Duval and Gustavo Menezes. The Swiss has already tested the 9X8 at Monza.

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## MERC PROTEGE ARON STEPS UP TO F3 AT PREMA

### FORMULA 3

Mercedes Formula 1 protege Paul Aron is to step up to the FIA Formula 3 Championship with top team Prema Racing for next season.

The 18-year-old Estonian is making the move from the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine, in which he lies in third position with Prema. He took part in the recent official post-season F3 test at Jerez with Prema, driving all three days alongside Ferrari junior and FRECA points leader Dino Beganovic and Williams-backed Zak O'Sullivan, who are also strongly linked with seats at the squad for next season.

Aron has spent all but one year of his car racing career with Prema, as did older brother Ralf, who won the Italian Formula 4 title with the team as well as five races in the F3 European Championship. Aron Sr is now Prema's team manager in the World Endurance Championship and European Le Mans Series after hanging up his helmet at the end of 2018.

Prema chief Rene Rosin said: "It will be a learning year, but we are sure there will be many chances to challenge for high-profile results, so our goal is to push right from the winter preparations to be ready."

Aron (below) is the second driver confirmed for FIA F3 next season after fellow FRECA race winner Gabriel Bortoletto. The Brazilian, who has joined Fernando Alonso's management stable, will race with Trident.

**MARCUS SIMMONS**





# What the FIA should do next

*By clarifying or tweaking some specific rules and actively embracing transparency and dialogue, the governing body can build on all the positives of recent seasons*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

**L**iberty Media has established its position in making Formula 1 bigger and better than ever before. At the same time, it is frustrated by the rules scandals that have cropped up of late and tarnished F1's image.

In the aftermath of last weekend's controversial Japanese Grand Prix, the FIA and its procedures are firmly in the spotlight for some, crosshairs for others. And this includes the revelations from its Cost Cap Administration announcement.

In essence, the FIA's job is rule enforcement. But its safety focus is vital too. And it must do everything against the backdrop of constantly changing global societies. With that in mind, here are several relatively simple steps the FIA should consider to improve its standing inside the F1 paddock and with followers of the sport.

In response to the CCA release, Red Bull registered its "surprise and disappointment" at the findings. The exact nature of 'minor' cost cap offences range from a \$1- \$7.25million (as 5% of the \$145m 2021 cost cap) overspend and, with the team's final figure in that range not known, conspiracy theories are going wild. For all parties, it would be better if the full nature of the transgression was revealed to soothe the trust issues exposed by the lack of information so far — but the FIA is clear it is releasing what it can based on what it agreed with the teams when the rules were made.

For now, people are watching the clip of F1 sporting boss Ross Brawn saying at the 2019 US GP that "if you fraudulently breach the

**"At Suzuka, a tractor being on track in wet conditions is a horrifically bad thing"**

financial regulations, you will be losing your championship". That is heaping pressure on both Red Bull and the FIA in the court of public opinion. People expect justice if it's promised, although the 'minor' nature of the breach suggests fraud itself hasn't been committed.

Remember here the private "settlement" over Ferrari's 2019 engine, which incensed its rivals. The pandemic and Ferrari's subsequent performance crash soothed that anger, but it was the behind-closed-doors nature that made it so controversial. Accusations of cover-ups need to be avoided if F1's cost cap and the good it has brought are to be maintained.

At Suzuka, a tractor being on track in wet conditions is a horrifically bad thing. The FIA has race control procedures in place for sending recovery vehicles onto circuits, which makes it all the more confusing. The drivers were justifiably angry, with the location adding emotion.

This cannot be allowed to occur. Maybe those procedures need tweaking following the investigation now under way.

Red Bull didn't tell Max Verstappen he'd finished and won the race until he was halfway around what turned out to be his cooldown lap. Ferrari told Charles Leclerc he still had a lap to go too. This came down to F1's three-hour event time rule having a hard cut-off and no 'plus-one-lap' — as is the case for the two-hour rule. But if even the teams didn't understand this, it's a major safety problem that needs clarifying.

Ahead of 2022, F1's race suspension rules were rewritten to make it easier to understand how fewer points would be awarded in the event of circumstances similar to last year's Belgian GP. There, two laps behind the safety car after a lengthy rain delay was declared a 'race'. But F1 nearly got a repeat last weekend, with full points awarded because the rule rewording hadn't removed a long-present clause. This means that if a race is running when the three-hour rule is reached, even if it's only a few laps old after a very long delay, then full points are given. Baffling and needs changing.

Red Bull's unawareness of this led to the unedifying scenes of Verstappen being told he was champion during his parc ferme interviews — and even then, he wasn't sure it was right. This was a poor look for a championship supposed to be cutting-edge.

Plenty of what is going wrong in these unfortunate and rare situations is that many people don't understand what is happening and why. Add the lack of information regarding certain decisions and it's clear why FIA transparency is being questioned.

Questions are always allowed, but this was made much worse by the decision to drop the post-race media sessions held by the late Charlie Whiting and then Michael Masi until Jeddah 2021. They were removed to offer a level of protection to the new race directors and because the FIA pointed out that officials in other sports — such as a football referee — aren't interviewed after an event. But other sports are relatively simple and the same issues crop up repeatedly. By bringing these post-race sessions back, and staging regular press events with Mohammed Ben Sulayem (which hasn't happened since he took the helm of the FIA), much of what F1 officiating is missing would be addressed.

But after Spa, Abu Dhabi and Suzuka, it feels like something much bigger is needed too. How about ahead of the 2023 campaign the FIA and F1 hold a televised event where all the major issues of recent seasons are addressed and discussed? This could also cover new rule changes, such as the raise in floor height coming for next year. And then become annual, eventually changing into a celebration.

The FIA deserves enormous credit for so much of what it does. Getting in the pandemic seasons was impressive and the new car designs have been received positively. But its good work and F1's popularity wave are surely at risk if calls for reform are not heeded. ❧



# A year of learning

*The 2021 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award winner has had a tricky rookie season in FIA Formula 3 but still has a lot to look forward to*

ZAK O'SULLIVAN

**H**ow to rate my first season in the FIA Formula 3 Championship is a tricky one. It's something I haven't really experienced before. There was a lot of learning. As a team, we struggled a bit to get on top of the car, all year. So, in that sense, there were some difficulties, but I think from my side I learned quite a bit. I was really having to maximise any opportunity with the car; I was strong at some rounds and that really helped me develop.

It was a pretty interesting experience, because all previous years I've been in a car capable of winning races and championships, so I had a lot of success with Carlin in British F4 and in GB3. With Carlin in F3 this year we had some good weekends, Silverstone being a highlight where I think a bit of track knowledge helped me out – we had pole and finished second. In Hungary, where I was fourth, we made the right call on tyres and took an opportunity where others maybe didn't. So, it's been a unique year, but one that I've enjoyed through the highs and the lows.

In previous years, I could more or less fully focus on my driving and what I had to do, whereas this year it was working on my driving on one side but, almost even more so, trying to work with the team to improve the car. I really enjoyed that element, trying to work out the areas where we were lacking. So, although it wasn't the results I would have wanted, I think it gave me another side of it, where I had to look elsewhere and see what we can improve on and be quite observant of what other teams were doing.

It was pretty cool driving the Dallara F3 car. It's a really nice car to drive. I think it's the right power to downforce ratio, especially in qualifying. The car's got really good aero in high speeds, which you really feel. You have to set the car up differently for the race. You automatically run less downforce, so the tyre degradation is higher. That took a bit of getting used to, especially in the early races at Bahrain where you're driving on sandpaper.

On one lap, the car is fun to drive; in the race it's slightly different. Also, switching tyre compounds round to round was quite tricky, trying to work out where the tyre needed to be in the right window.

Some rounds, you'd be perfectly in the window and the qualifying lap would be there and other times it wouldn't.

Later this month I'll get to drive a Formula 1 car for winning the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award. It will be my first time and quite an awkward one: I'll be driving the Aston Martin F1 car but I'm a Williams Academy driver. I've seen some of the emails between the Williams and Aston Martin comms teams, which have been quite amusing. I'm sure my neck will not stand up for the whole day, but I'm looking forward to it anyway.

I did a seat-fit at Aston Martin last month and did some sim stuff. They're a bit limited on what they could show me because of the Williams link. They can't send me too much stuff to prepare, so I get

## “I've been super-involved with Williams, more so than I ever predicted”

given the driver manual on the morning. I'll be part of an elite few who have driven a turbo-hybrid F1 car, so that will be pretty cool.

I've been super-involved with Williams, more so than I ever predicted. I've been to two of the races as race support, and then do a lot in the simulator. I didn't expect to be that involved, which is really refreshing. It's interesting because some of the issues that they are facing in F1 are very similar to what I've been dealing with this year.

Being a part of the BRDC SuperStars programme is awesome. Having two big British names backing me in the BRDC and Williams is amazing. The BRDC is so influential with Silverstone and keeping British motorsport at its peak. Andy Meyrick is always available on the phone. He's been through most of the steps, issues and problems we have throughout his career. So, it's nice to have someone to lean on if you really need it. Also in the programme, a few of the drivers race in F3. Even some of the drivers higher up you can often text. I did that just before the Autosport Award tests last year, trying to get any info I could from Tom Gamble, who won it before.

Now the season is over I'll be relaxing and switching off a bit. Initially F2 was the plan for next year but something changed last-minute so now it's F3. I've just finished the three-day test with Prema Racing and I really enjoyed my time. It was a new environment, many of the things are quite similar, but there's no secret that Prema is very strong in F3. The pace was quite strong, but the focus was getting to know all the team, new personnel for me, and some new languages as well, so a bit of a learning curve. 🏁

O'Sullivan leads fellow Brit Jonny Edgar in Bahrain back in March



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# 20 TEAM CHAMPIONS 22



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# YOUR SAY

*The intermediate tyre is what its name implies, and no good for the rain seen at Suzuka on Sunday*

STEPHEN YATES

## When it's wet, race on wets

What's the point in Formula 1 having wet weather tyres available to use, yet when it is wet, they (the FIA, FOM, teams, etc) don't (won't?) let the drivers out in the rain? The intermediate tyre is what its name implies, and no good for the rain seen at Suzuka on Sunday. Some of the greatest drives have come in the wet (Lewis Hamilton at Silverstone in 2008, and Max Verstappen in Brazil in 2016 are prime 21st century examples).

As for the points situation at the end, these rules need looking at again, as they don't seem to be clear (full points for a race that barely got over 50% distance?). Does the sport never learn from the past?

**Stephen Yates**

By email

## Too much of a good thing

I totally agree with previous comments regarding the number of F1 races (Your Say, 29 September and 6 October). Twenty races would be about right. I know it's a money-making exercise for F1, but we are getting to the point of overkill – too much of a good thing, especially with the sprint races. Fewer races and more teams.

**Michael Beach**

By email

## It should be a non-contact sport

To the multitude of tin-top drivers now buying into the 'if you ain't rubbin' you ain't racing' mantra, it must be said that when red flags fly, or you are repeatedly running behind the safety car, you certainly ain't racing. And as for your sponsors, the only people gaining enhanced brand exposure are the likes of JCB and John Deere, who build the plant used in recoveries. It also makes proceedings incredibly tedious for those watching on, either trackside or on TV.

After the horrific (but luckily non-injurious) incidents witnessed at Hockenheim and Brands Hatch at the weekend, can it again be impressed on the participants that motor racing has always supposed to have been a non-contact sport – after all, everybody knows what it says on the back of every ticket...

**Graeme Innes-Johnstone**

Elland



STEVE HINDLE

## Have your say, get in touch

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# RACE CENTRE



FORMULA 1

## VERSTAPPEN TAKES TITLE AMID CONFUSION

*There were many odd and controversial moments as F1 returned to Suzuka, but there was no doubt about the star. Max Verstappen is now a two-time world champion*

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY RED BULL AND



**motorsport**  
IMAGES



**MAX**  
**WORLD**  
**CHAMPION**  
**2022**

He's done it.  
Hasn't he? Red Bull  
celebrates  
Verstappen's second  
title at Suzuka

**DRIVERS' CHAMPION**  
MAX VERSTAPPEN  
**1**  
**2022**

**T**he latest case of motorsport's top flight making heavy weather of heavy weather, total fury from drivers over when recovery vehicles should be on circuit, a track limits penalty that a gravel trap might have prevented, confusion concerning the length of a race and how points are awarded, plus the champion only learning of his success between interviews. Certainly, last weekend's Japanese Grand Prix wasn't short of conflict and drama, and the FIA has again emerged from a Formula 1 title decider being pounded with criticism.

The governing body has many questions to which it must provide satisfactory answers. Until those arrive, the fallout should not overshadow what was a mesmeric wet-weather victory from Max Verstappen. One that, unbeknown to us all at the chequered flag, had fittingly secured the Red Bull driver back-to-back world championships.

## A CONFUSING FINISH FOR THE CHAMPION

Ever since Charles Leclerc crashed out of the lead of the French GP back in late July to hand Verstappen a 63-point cushion, it hasn't felt like a 'will he, won't he?' story. The coronation thereafter seemed inevitable. Even the Dutchman admitted that, departing Paul Ricard, his reaction had been "this is a gap which we cannot give away anymore". But as he crossed the line in a time-restricted and sodden Suzuka affair, there definitely was a 'has he, hasn't he?' story. The driver, his team, media and fans didn't think he'd sealed the deal.

In response to the 2021 Belgian GP washout, for this season the FIA voted in new rules concerning the allocation of points in the event of a heavily interrupted race. As the lap counter last weekend eventually climbed to 28, over half of the scheduled 53 tours had been completed in the battle to cram in as much racing before the three-hour event time limit elapsed and evening drew in. But since under 75% of the distance was covered, many thought Verstappen would be awarded 19 points for his win rather than the full 25.

But, as per the updated regulations, reduced points are only handed out if the race is suspended and "cannot be resumed". Although the exact wording has exposed a scenario where a race being called off after three laps is still worthy of full points, Verstappen was wholly entitled to the 25 score. But even for those who had grasped this, a group that didn't include Red Bull, still it seemed that the title would have to wait until later this month at the United States GP.

Verstappen had romped clear to victory by nearly half a minute. But with Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez not passing the Ferrari of Leclerc to create a rolling roadblock, the leader hadn't been free to pit for a fresh set of intermediate tyres. That deprived him of a go at nicking the bonus point for fastest lap, set by Alfa Romeo driver Zhou Guanyu. As such, with Leclerc clinging on against Perez to cross the line in second, Verstappen was one point short of a successful title defence.



Verstappen made up for his sluggish getaway by finding grip on the outside

To muddy the water that bit more, Verstappen's race engineer Gianpiero Lambiase radioed his driver to explain that he wasn't entirely sure whether the contest was even over... If the on-track action runs up to its regulated two-hour limit, when the countdown timer hits zero, there's one more lap to run. But at Suzuka, because of the protracted 127-minute pause between the red flag and the rain showers abating enough for racing to resume, the limiting factor was the three-hour duration of the whole event itself. In that scenario, there's no 'plus one lap' – it's a hard and fast cut-off. And, given such cases are rare, the swift appearance of the chequered flag caught many off guard.

All told, as Verstappen navigated Degner Curve once again, there was no initial celebration from team boss Christian Horner about his driver chalking a 32nd grand prix win to draw level with Fernando Alonso – let alone any mention of championship glory. No, Lambiase instead said: "OK, Max, there seems to be some confusion over whether the race is over. We do think it is. But just bring it home." Leclerc also had to ask: "Is it over?" Back in the RB18, there was silence for 17s before Horner jumped on the line to congratulate his driver on winning the race only. Then Verstappen could begin waving to the drenched spectators before parking in the pitlane.

Leclerc has a narrow lead as most are lost in a ball of spray following the start





ETHERINGTON

After hopping out of the cockpit, he followed the standard win procedure of throwing himself into the Red Bull crew, walking to the FIA weighing scales and then chatting with Perez, who talked his team-mate through a last-lap incident with Leclerc for which the Ferrari driver was now under investigation. Again, as normal, Verstappen waited for the parc ferme interviews, talked through his long afternoon with question master Johnny Herbert, and walked off.

Then the FIA media delegate revealed to Verstappen that his title rival Leclerc had dropped to third with a five-second penalty for cutting the chicane to gain an advantage in his defence against Perez. This was the first time Verstappen learned his coronation might be on the cards. As news spread to a now whooping Red Bull crew, Herbert attempted another chat. Verstappen muddled through a sentence and then couldn't contain his composure. He dived back into the crowd of mechanics, this time for a proper celebration. The grandstands went wild.

He later explained the sequence: "I had no clue what they were going to decide with the points. Once I crossed the line, I was like, 'OK, that was an amazing race. Good points again. But not world champion yet.' Then I did my interview after the race. And then suddenly, my mechanics started to cheer, and I was like, 'What's going on?'"

## "I DID MY INTERVIEW AFTER THE RACE AND THEN MY MECHANICS STARTED TO CHEER. 'WHAT'S GOING ON?'"

"Then I realised that Checo was second instead of Charles. But I still didn't know if it was full points, half points or whatever is 75%. [The FIA media delegate] came to me and he said that I was the world champion. So, then we celebrated. Then suddenly people were telling me, 'No, you're still missing a point.' So, it was like, 'Oh, that's amazing. That's a bit weird.' But then eventually we had enough points so then we were world champion again."

Even in the driver cool-down room, Verstappen was still questioning it: "No, I'm not. I am? You sure? Because people keep telling me different things." Horner reckoned he wasn't certain of his driver's achievement until the twilight podium ceremony. It was quite the bewildering turn of events considering that for so long it had looked as though the grand prix would be abandoned following only one uninterrupted lap. >>



Full-wet  
Pirellis were  
mandatory at the  
restart, but a switch to  
intermediates was  
soon vital



## THE BATTLE TO RUN THE RACE

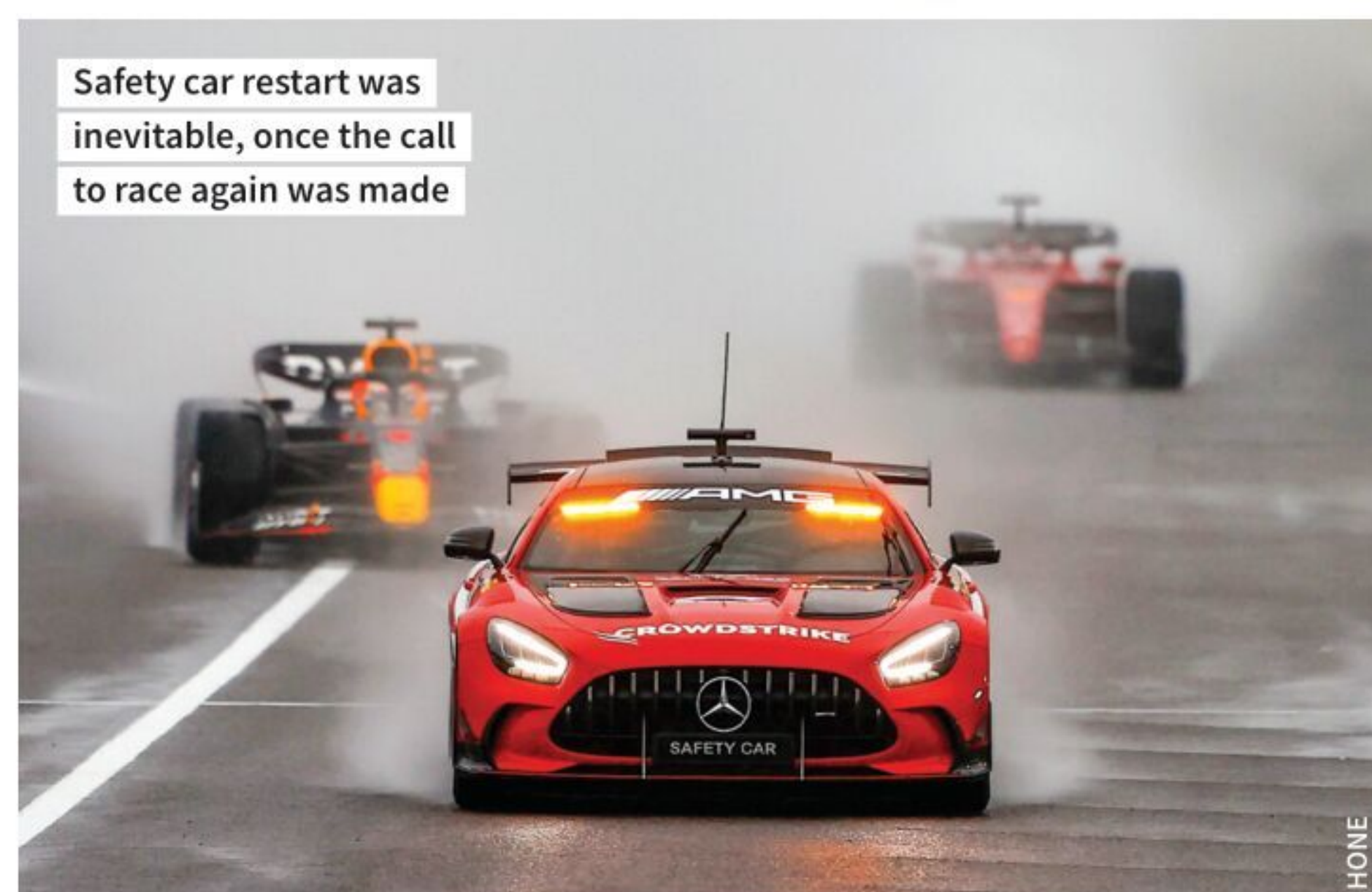
After COVID canned trips to Suzuka for two seasons, F1 once again opted to travel to the coastal circuit in early October — right at the end of typhoon season. The championship therefore got what it deserved when Friday running was soaking wet. In those slippery conditions, Ferrari looked strong when Carlos Sainz dared a brief race simulation, although that was set to be virtually meaningless because, 48 hours before the race, the weather forecast predicted rain to hit shortly after the chequered flag.

When Verstappen topped the hour of dry practice on Saturday before seizing pole over Leclerc by one hundredth of a second, despite running slower on his final lap owing to damage (see qualifying panel), it looked as though it might pave the way for a thrilling climax — 24 hours before lights out, the meteorologists reckoned a shower would now arrive in time to disrupt the final stint. Perhaps Ferrari would come on song in the closing damp stages after Verstappen took an early command.

Overnight, the radar changed again, and it began to rain in the lead-up

to the race. Unlike the previous round in Singapore, though, the start time wasn't delayed. But there was enough standing water to force everyone onto the green-walled intermediate tyres for what would remain a proper standing start. As he had done seven days earlier to trigger anti-stall, Verstappen was going to attempt to pull away in second gear to cut wheelspin. He tried prepping the clutch on the way to the grid but had a "terrible" launch. Likewise when he scrabbled out of his grid box to dictate the formation lap. Nevertheless, he refused to deviate from the plan and would simply accept his getaway "was not going to be amazing".

How right he was. The revs fell away so considerably once Verstappen had started rolling that his head violently juddered back and forth. That created an opportunity for front-row rival Leclerc to draw alongside and then begin to edge ahead. The Ferrari had first place by half a car length and the inside line into the double-apex first right-hander. But Verstappen kept his foot in on the outside, which — as is often the case in the wet — offered more grip. That enabled a committed Verstappen to



Safety car restart was  
inevitable, once the call  
to race again was made

**“THERE WAS GRIP ON THE OUTSIDE SO I COULD BRAKE LATER. IT WAS CLOSE BUT THAT’S WHAT PEOPLE LIKE”**

slice around the outside and retake the lead. “There was quite a bit of grip on the outside, so that’s where I could brake a little bit later,” explained Verstappen. “It was very close but that’s what people like to see.”

With the advantage of clear visibility, he completed a clean opening lap. The same could not be said of the pack behind. Ninth-starting Sebastian Vettel tagged with Alonso into Turn 1 to spin into the gravel. Rookie Zhou rotated by himself, while Alex Albon and Kevin Magnussen made light contact that was sufficient to damage the Williams FW44’s radiator to cause a leak and kill the engine from a lack of water pressure.



Leclerc heads Perez at the finish, but the positions would soon be switched



Ocon kept his head and fourth place by holding off a charging Hamilton

Also in the wars was Sainz. The Spaniard had dropped behind Perez to fourth when he backed off into the first bend after being blinded by the spray. His bid to regain the lost ground was hastily curtailed. As he pulled through the gears on the run through Turn 12, the fat rear Pirellis caught a patch of standing water. The car snapped violently sideways to render Sainz a passenger as his Ferrari skated into the outside barrier before coming to rest on the track, where he was fortunate not to be collected.

With the Williams stricken, the Ferrari out with a terminally damaged rear wing, and Pierre Gasly crawling round (after starting from the pitlane due to wing changes and a suspension tweak, the AlphaTauri racer careered into the advertising hoarding ripped off in Sainz's impact), the safety car was deployed. A lap and a half later, at 1408 local time, in view of the treacherous conditions, the marshals reached for the red flags to halt proceedings.

After the field returned to the pitlane, newly confirmed 2023 Alpine driver Gasly was filmed blowing his top. Little wonder. In the low visibility, after pitting for a new front wing and full wets, he'd dived past a tractor that was on track to collect the wrecked Ferrari. The whole grid had, as it turned out, gone past the recovery vehicle, but Gasly – attempting to close to the pack – had done so approaching 155mph.

That near-miss at a track where Jules Bianchi's fatal crash in 2014 prompted the introduction of the halo created an almighty talking point, before race control said the contest would be restarted at 1450. Then, with two minutes to go, there was a change of heart and the procedure suspended indefinitely. With periodic heavy showers, the grandstands began to clear. Alpine rounded up the non-F1 media flown to Japan for the revealing of its awkwardly named 'Fernando Alonso' edition sportscar – an ill-timed tribute to the departing two-time champion – and sent them home on a bus. It looked as though the race was spent.

Lewis Hamilton did take to social media to write: "Let's get going... give it a shot". Then, rather unexpectedly, at 1604, another message flashed up from race direction. The event would get going again in 11 minutes. Albeit behind the safety car, with a rolling start and full-wet tyres mandated, it did. >>

## QUALIFYING



The way Max Verstappen changed tack after qualifying was more than a little amusing. He'd prompted Lando Norris to take evasive action out of the famous 130R bend when, while weaving to put heat into the tyres before a hot lap in Q3, the Dutchman's heavy right foot caused the Red Bull to snap sideways. A quick-reacting Norris headed for the grass to avoid a nasty shunt. Soon after, Verstappen pulled alongside the McLaren and held his hand up by way of an apology.

That acknowledgement of guilt wasn't enough for the stewards, and Verstappen was placed under investigation. So, to pre-emptively clear his name, the Red Bull driver instead went on the attack, as though he were a pupil devising an excuse before being dragged in front of the headmaster. "If you're just a bit more respectful..." he said. "I don't think anyone is trying to pass into that last chicane. By trying to pass me, you create that kind of problem."

It took 90 minutes for Verstappen to escape without a penalty, instead copping a reprimand for 'temporarily losing control'. Regardless, what mattered is that his fifth pole position of the season stood.

A sodden Friday meant the teams had to assess all three slick compounds in FP3, so proper qualifying simulations were rare. As such, there was no clear gauge of form, just the educated guess that, as at Spa, the Red Bull chassis could handle the high downforce needed to excel at Suzuka, while the rebadged Honda engine would be ultra-strong through the high-speed final sector.

That turned out to be true. Verstappen dashed round in 1m29.304s midway through Q3, didn't improve on his final flier, and yet still claimed pole. On his last go, he ran wide over the kerbs to shed carbonfibre that hurt him in the first and last sectors, so he ran slower overall. But both Ferraris cooked their rear Pirellis in the opening half of the lap so couldn't neatly put the power down through the final chicane.

Verstappen escaped with a slender 0.01s in hand, while Charles Leclerc – who had struggled to tame the twitching Ferrari throughout practice – managed to pip his team-mate. The fastest middle sector of anyone guaranteed that as Carlos Sainz ran 0.057s off the pace. "I overcooked a tyre going into that last chicane and it cost me lap time – I'm a bit fed up of being half a tenth off pole," reckoned the Spaniard.

Sergio Perez, meanwhile, held his usual station four tenths adrift of his stablemate, while the draggy Mercedes could only muster sixth (Lewis Hamilton) and eighth (George Russell).

**"RED BULL COULD HANDLE THE HIGH DOWNFORCE WHILE THE HONDA WOULD BE COMPETITIVE IN THE FINAL SECTOR"**



VERSTAPPEN SHOWS HIS CLASS

So, 135 minutes after the first formation lap, the grid was rolling again. The safety car led an out-, full and in-lap, during which time the drivers had ample opportunity to report poor visibility but sound enough track conditions. There was, of course, one person with a clear view ahead. So, with 38 minutes left, Verstappen made it count by leading away cleanly to prevent Leclerc having so much as a sniff. He then extracted an impressive 1.3s advantage at the end of what was now the sixth tour.

Vettel and Nicholas Latifi, though, had dropped to the foot of the order after pitting immediately for inters – to again raise questions over F1’s extreme caution when it comes to racing in wet weather. The Aston Martin and Williams were clumsily released side by side, but there was nothing poorly executed about Latifi’s next sectors, which turned purple on the timing screens to indicate that the crossover had arrived.

Verstappen dived for the pits and was serviced in 2.7s as the team double-stacked Perez. The arrival of the second Red Bull meant that Leclerc was held in his pitbox for a total stop time of 3.8s. Apart from lap 10, when the Ferrari was 0.5s quicker than Verstappen on the inters, there was no indication that Leclerc could repeat his work from Singapore to close to the leading RB18 and mount a late challenge for the win. Ferrari’s Friday pace in the damp had gone.

During what would be his final stint as a one-time champion, Verstappen was remarkable. He consistently lapped 1-1.5s faster than his red-clad adversary, who was showing only top-six pace as the track ever so gradually dried. Partly, that performance came with the advantage of good visibility. A drop-off in Ferrari pace and rear tyre management since the FIA porpoising-related technical directive came into effect at Spa also contributed. Its longer-standing front-graining issues played a part, too. As did the development of the lighter Red Bull RB18, which has a front-bias weight distribution to suit Verstappen’s hatred of understeer.

But for however much those factors combined, the talent from the cockpit still shone through on this gloomy day. And, at the same time as Leclerc was struggling to nurse his rubber, Verstappen was able to conserve his and still hold the fastest sustained pace of anyone. “The car was very good, but also we were looking after the tyres quite well,” he said. “We could keep the front tyres alive, which around here is quite tough on these intermediate tyres. That’s basically what gave me such a pace advantage because in that first sector, if you have a bit more front grip, that helps a lot. It was very enjoyable.”

The payoff for that affinity was Verstappen disappearing up the road to an exquisite 26.763s triumph ahead of the Ferrari. It was his 12th win of the campaign to now sit only one short of the season record shared by

TRACK



Verstappen dominated the 38-minute Japanese GP to officially win by more than 27s



A winner's trophy, but the title? Verstappen was as confused as anyone

## “CHARLES WAS MAKING IT HARD. THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET HIM WAS IF I PUSHED HIM INTO A MISTAKE”

Italian was baffled by the rapid workings out of the stewards. Also relating it to the week-old precedent, he wanted to know why Perez was able to argue his case but Leclerc deemed straight away bang to rights without being allowed to give his version of events. Finally, Leclerc had actually lost time going off-road so had not gained in any way.

The FIA reasoning cited “numerous driver briefings where the race directors advised that an advantage would be considered as having gained if you go off track and return in the same position whilst defending”. Further referencing the similar incidents and penalties copped by Zhou in Saudi Arabia and Alonso in Miami, the stewards made a convincing case.

Either way, Leclerc must now fight to even come away from this once-promising season even as the runner-up. Perez has now jumped the Ferrari racer to second by one point, his reward for being the ultimate wingman when it really counts, and having now played an active role in Verstappen clinching both of his titles on the day.

For the final four rounds this term, with one championship now settled, Red Bull can notch its first constructors’ crown since 2013 next time out should it simply match or outscore Ferrari at Austin. As for next year, given how strong the car, team and driver are, more world titles look a real possibility. If that is the case, perhaps it will be third time lucky for Verstappen should he ever want to seal the glory in anything resembling a conventional fashion. ❧

Michael Schumacher (2004) and Vettel (2013).

Officially, though, Verstappen won by 27.066s over Perez. The Mexican also had the legs on Leclerc, but by a more modest half-second per lap. That was still quick enough to close to the rear of the F1-75 and even attempt a couple of half-hearted lunges to keep the Monegasque on his toes. But with the Ferrari driver defending well, Perez had another idea. He said: “Charles was making it really hard so I knew that the only way I could get him was if I pushed him into a mistake.”

Leclerc refused to crack until he was three corners from home. Then, without the risk of becoming beached in a gravel trap, he ran straight on through the first part of the right-left chicane. He’d departed the track 0.5s ahead of Perez but rejoined it with only a tenth in hand. He ran Perez as far as he reasonably could to the edge of the circuit to just hold onto second place at the flag by 0.303s. But then he was placed under investigation and ultimately copped the 5s penalty that would finally extinguish any small remaining hope that he might still fight for the title.

Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto was initially incensed. After 151 minutes were needed to punish Perez’s safety car infringements in Singapore, the

**NEXT F1 REPORT**

**US GRAND PRIX  
27 OCTOBER ISSUE**

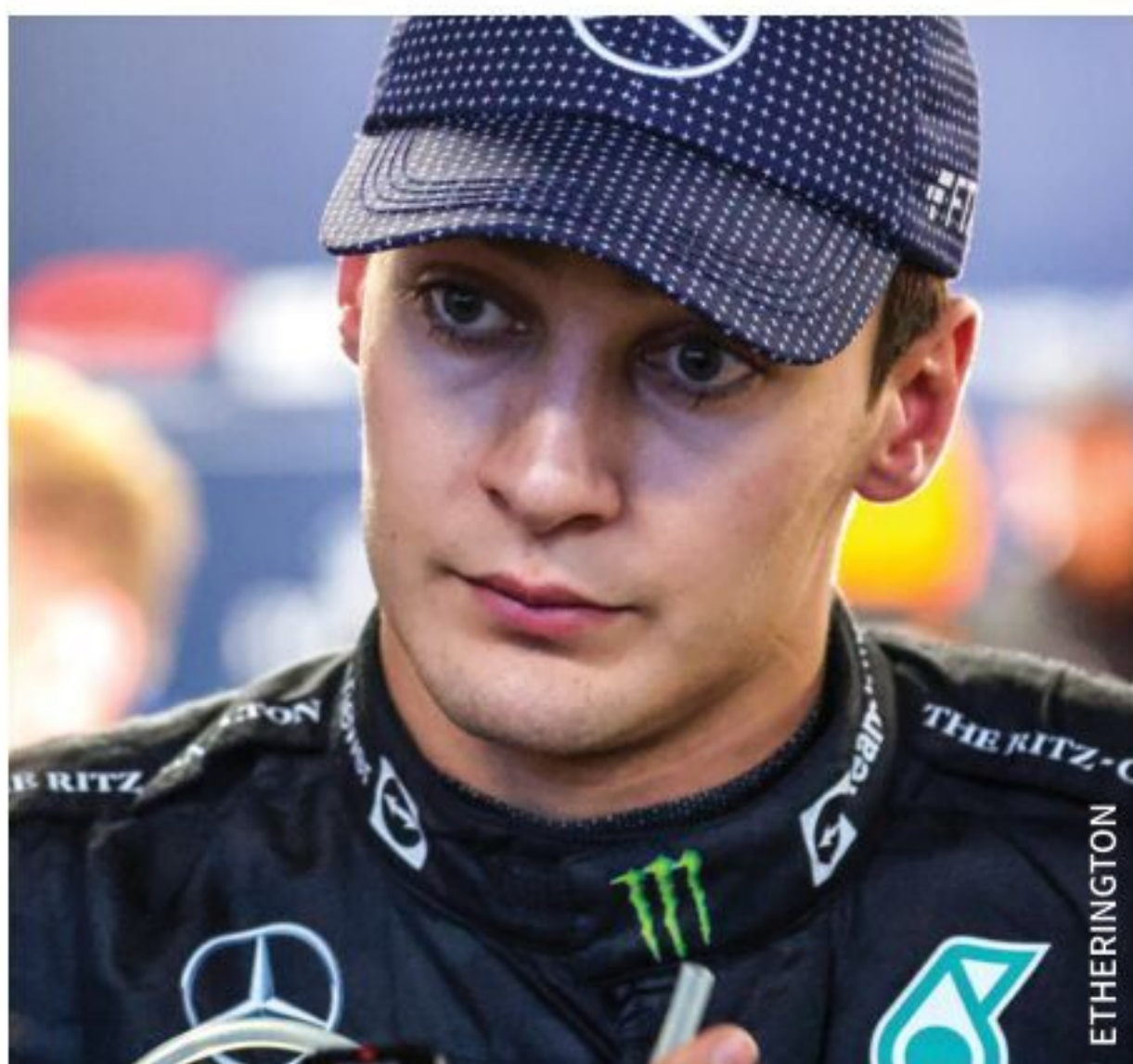
## LACK OF STRAIGHTLINE SPEED HURTS MERCS

Lewis Hamilton was left to rue Mercedes' lack of straightline speed at Suzuka after finishing fifth following a race-long battle with Esteban Ocon.

Hamilton tracked Ocon before and after their seventh-lap stops for the preferred intermediate tyre. He had been running under a second behind when they were called in, which is what the gap generally stayed at other than a few occasions when Hamilton dropped back before closing in again on the Alpine. He regularly got a good run out of Spoon and on the long run to 130R but, without DRS in the wet conditions, he never got a chance to pass because the W13's extra drag meant it was shipping 4mph to the Ocon's car in the speed trap.

In the other Mercedes, George Russell was able to make passes, but was frustrated to lose time in his squad's double-stack stop while switching from full wets to intermediates behind Hamilton.

Russell had chased Hamilton and Fernando Alonso in seventh in the initial post-restart stages, but double-stacking meant he reckoned he "probably lost 10 seconds", and so ran 11th after the stops. He later passed Yuki Tsunoda and Nicholas Latifi with pouncing moves at the top of the Esses sequence, as well as getting past Lando Norris's McLaren, but lost seventh to the Alpine of the charging Alonso on the last lap.



## Ocon leads the way as Alpine repasses McLaren

Esteban Ocon's superb defence against Lewis Hamilton netted Alpine's best result of 2022 and that, combined with Fernando Alonso's battling drive to seventh, meant the blue-and-pink team moved back ahead of McLaren in the fight for fourth in the constructors' championship.

Just a week after Alpine's double retirement in Singapore meant McLaren had climbed in front in that constructors' scrap, Ocon took the A522's upgraded floor, introduced in Singapore, to fifth on the Suzuka grid. Gaining confidence with every dry-conditions lap on Saturday, he beat the Mercedes pair and Alonso, and was only headed by the Red Bull and Ferrari drivers.

After holding his place ahead of Hamilton at the first start and the rolling restart, Ocon then defied one of Formula 1's greatest wet-weather drivers with fine car control and

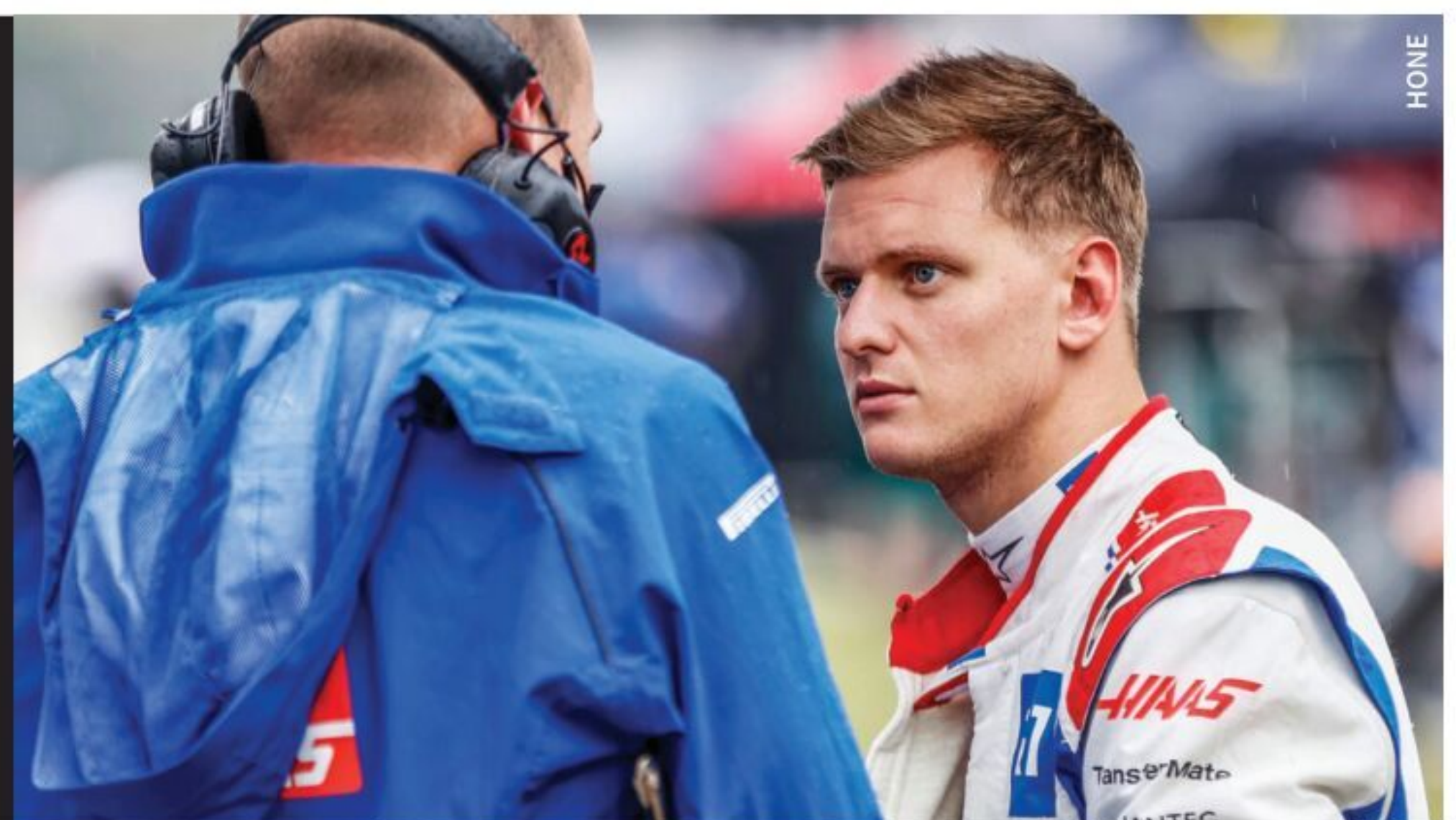
positioning to prevent the Mercedes from mounting a pass. He finished fourth after gaining a place from Carlos Sainz's first-lap crash, and this topped Ocon's previous best result of 2022: fifth in Hungary.

"I was looking more in the back [into my mirrors] than in the front in that race," said Ocon. "We knew it was going to be tough to keep the Mercs behind. I think it was a matter of time until we could really show what the car was capable of. And we were able to do that this weekend in general. We were fast in all conditions."

At McLaren, which is now 13 points behind Alpine in the constructors' table, Lando Norris scored the final point just in front of team-mate Daniel Ricciardo. Being the third driver to take inters helped the Briton gain back the places he lost due to wheelspin and a Turn 1 exit slide at the standing start, but he couldn't overcome the Williams of Nicholas Latifi late on.

**"WE DID HAVE SOMETHING TO LOSE: WE WERE IN A POINTS-PAYING POSITION"**

Mick Schumacher on why it was worth Haas keeping him out for four extra laps before taking the intermediates compared to the leaders, which meant he briefly led. The team hoped another stoppage would help him retain a lofty place, but he ended up last over the line after falling back and then pitting anyway.





SBLOXHAM

## LATIFI SCORES HIS FIRST POINTS OF 2022

Nicholas Latifi moved ahead of his one-off team-mate Nyck de Vries in the 2022 drivers' championship with his ninth-place finish at Suzuka. That equalled the soon-to-be AlphaTauri racer's result when replacing Alex Albon in Italy and Albon's own best finish from Miami.

Key to Latifi's result was Williams pitting him behind the safety car coming in for the restart, ahead of Aston Martin driver Sebastian Vettel – a call Williams said Latifi “was part of the decision to make”. Although Vettel got ahead with a quicker service and running side by side down the wide pitlane, Latifi showed pace immediately on the intermediates to gain versus his rivals. He slipped back behind George Russell and Fernando Alonso late on, but defied the closely following Lando Norris and Daniel Ricciardo to the finish.

Albon stopped on lap one before the red flag following minor contact with Kevin Magnussen's Haas, which damaged his radiator and caused his retirement just down the track from Carlos Sainz's crash.

## Vettel pips Alonso after dramatic start and finish

Sebastian Vettel edged Fernando Alonso by 0.011 seconds to claim sixth in the Japanese Grand Prix, with the pair clashing at the start and end of the truncated race.

Vettel made a better getaway from ninth at the start, so much so that he drew alongside the wheel-spinning Alpine and squirmed onto the white line at the edge of the track to Alonso's left. But when turning in for the first corner, he hit Alonso on the inside and spun off, dropping to the back. He and Aston then considered pitting immediately ahead of the restart if Vettel felt the time was right for intermediates, which it was. That

and getting out of the pits just ahead of Nicholas Latifi launched him back into the points-paying positions when the majority of the pack piled into the pits over the next two laps.

Alonso was the last of five drivers – after Zhou Guanyu, Lance Stroll, Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda – to stop again for more inters, coming in six laps before the race ended. Alonso charged from ninth to get Latifi and George Russell using his fresh rubber but ran out of time to pass Vettel. He made a last-gasp lunge at the chicane, but clattering the inside kerb and having to catch a snap of oversteer meant the Aston surged back ahead.



HONE

### Q&A

#### CHRISTIAN HORNER RED BULL TEAM PRINCIPAL

##### Was that a champion's drive from Verstappen?

I mean, to put 25 seconds on Charles in 20-odd laps was a massive performance. So, [I'm] absolutely delighted with the outcome. Max is a truly deserving champion.

##### How did he keep his tyres in shape with such strong pace?

There's a huge amount going on. The circuit actually started to dry



THOMPSON/GETTY/RED BULL

up. And these tyres don't like the energy. Particularly in the first sector, you can do an awful lot of damage to them. Max just controlled the slip, controlled the temperature,

looked after those tyres. And, in the end, had an awful lot in hand.

##### What about his slower start against Leclerc?

We had a horrible start, he got quite a lot of wheelspin. But then he went for the old karting line around the outside. And he was fully committed. I talked to him

in the [red flag] break and he said, 'Look, I was going for it.' Charles gave him enough space and he made the move stick. It was great racing, those first two corners.

##### Can you enjoy this title win more than 2021?

To do it with four races remaining, it's truly a remarkable performance. Max has been on another planet this year. He has dominated this championship, driven with such maturity, such conviction. [That was] far less controversial than the last race in Abu Dhabi, which was a titanic battle last year.

##### When did you find out he was champion?

When Jenson Button announced him as a world champion up [on the podium]. We were debating on the pitwall, 'Do we pit him, did we have enough of a window [for the fastest lap bonus point]?' But then all the things that can go wrong, you think why take a risk for that one point here? We [also] felt that was no assurance that Checo was going to make the move on Charles. So, the expectation at the pitwall was we've got one point to go and get in Austin. But, as it transpired, we got more than enough points and didn't need the fastest lap.



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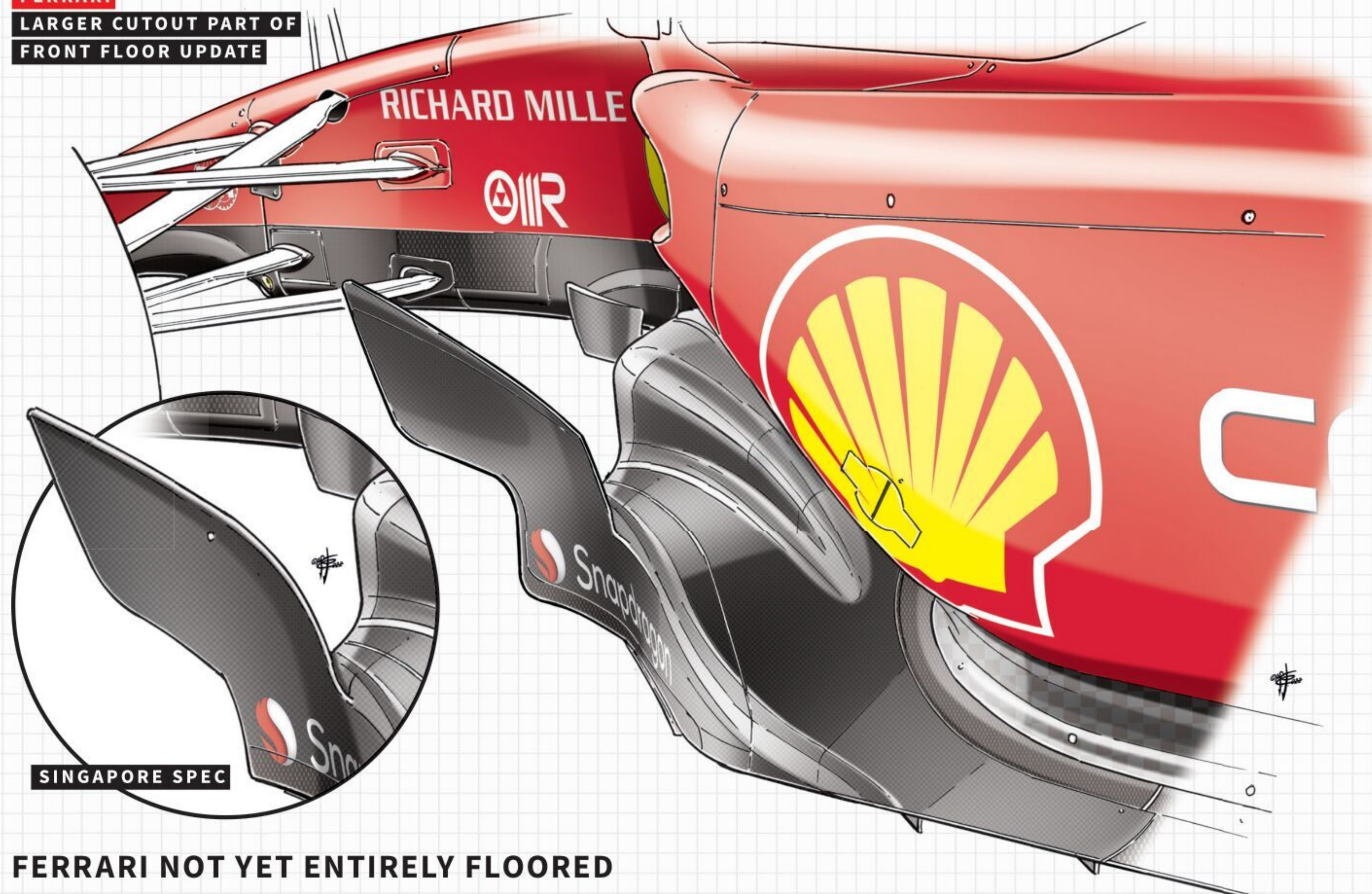
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# DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA

**FERRARI**

**LARGER CUTOUT PART OF FRONT FLOOR UPDATE**



## FERRARI NOT YET ENTIRELY FLOORED

Although the odds of a Ferrari constructors' title look increasingly long, the team has still been adding updates to its F1-75 to coax more performance from the floor. The potency of developments at Ferrari seemed to peter out quite quickly, but nonetheless the team has tweaked the front floor structure in a bid to improve the situation. The leading edge has

been brought further forward and a larger cutout features to try to introduce a marginally different flow set-up moving around the floor area.

Ferrari says this update, paired with changes further back on the floor, is not Suzuka-specific and aims to "improve aerodynamic performance through the entire car operating envelope".

Few other updates were brought so soon after

Singapore. AlphaTauri and Aston Martin made minor changes to their rear wing and beam wing respectively to contend with the demands of the Suzuka circuit, while Williams also had a Suzuka-specific update to its bodywork, with reduced flow around the radiator because cooling is rarely critical at the Japanese circuit.

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**

## ALFA WING CHANGES BRING STABILITY

Alfa Romeo's initial progress in the Formula 1 pecking order at the start of the year has stagnated considerably in recent rounds, although that's largely down to the C42's weight advantage becoming diluted over the season as the other teams have made their machinery lighter.

The team has, however, introduced a revised front wing, where the chord length of the outboard structures has been reduced to open up a clear slot at the wing's trailing edge. This is similar to the design that Mercedes introduced earlier this season, keeping to within the regulations where the wing elements must merge directly into

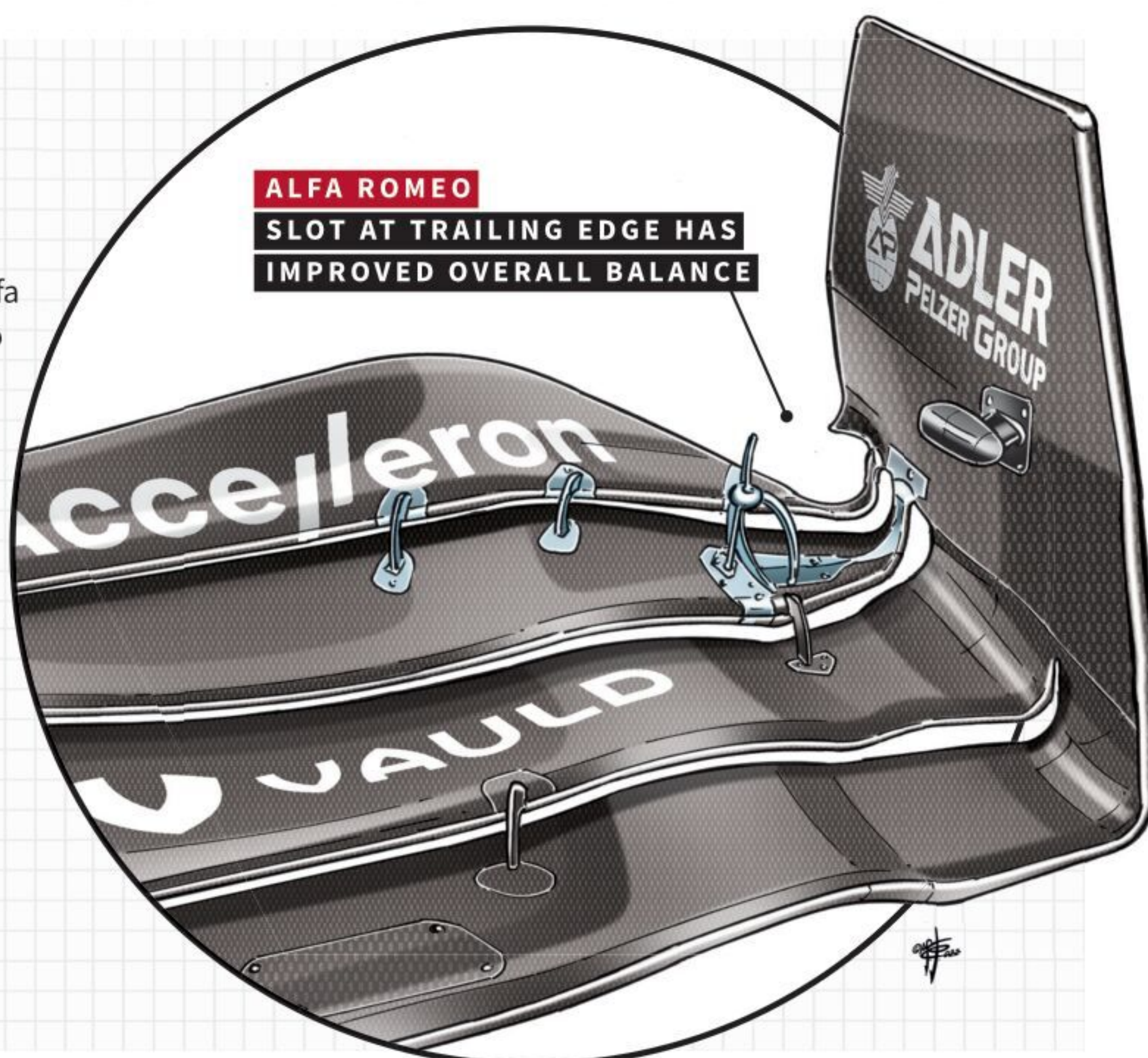
the endplate, but reducing the size of the attachment points.

In the pre-race technical notes, Alfa Romeo noted that the design was to improve overall balance, and Valtteri Bottas felt that the improvement was palpable. "It definitely gave us a bit of stability in the high-speed," he noted after practice. "That's what I felt, which is what it needed to do. It definitely would have been nicer to have it earlier, but better late than never. And I think also we have something coming for Austin. But it's also the case that whatever we find this year, I think it's going to benefit us next year."

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**

**ALFA ROMEO**

**SLOT AT TRAILING EDGE HAS IMPROVED OVERALL BALANCE**



20 Gasly #10  
1m31.322s

18 Stroll #18  
1m31.419s

16 Albon #23  
1m31.311s

14 Zhou #24  
1m30.953s

12 Bottas #77  
1m30.709s

11 Ricciardo #3  
1m30.659s

19 Latifi #6  
1m31.511s

17 Magnussen #20  
1m31.352s

15 Schumacher #47  
1m31.439s

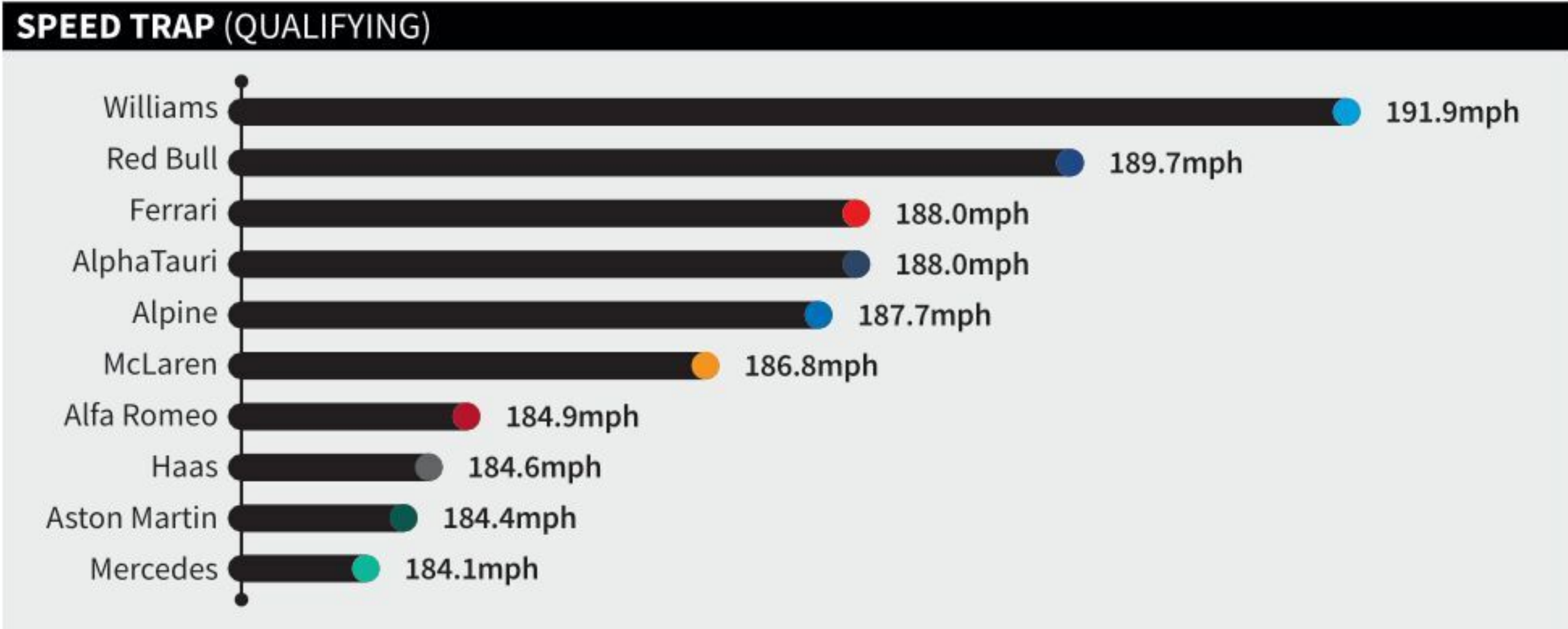
13 Tsunoda #22  
1m30.808s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Alonso	1m42.248s	1	Russell	1m41.935s	1	Verstappen	1m30.671s
2	Sainz	1m42.563s	2	Hamilton	1m42.170s	2	Sainz	1m30.965s
3	Leclerc	1m42.634s	3	Verstappen	1m42.786s	3	Leclerc	1m30.980s
4	Ocon	1m43.022s	4	Perez	1m42.834s	4	Alonso	1m31.320s
5	Magnussen	1m43.258s	5	Magnussen	1m43.187s	5	Perez	1m31.514s
6	Verstappen	1m43.362s	6	Sainz	1m43.204s	6	Russell	1m31.530s
7	Schumacher	1m43.761s	7	Alonso	1m43.533s	7	Hamilton	1m31.589s
8	Norris	1m43.889s	8	Bottas	1m43.733s	8	Norris	1m31.747s
9	Bottas	1m43.969s	9	Ocon	1m43.884s	9	Ocon	1m31.750s
10	Perez	1m44.234s	10	Zhou	1m44.525s	10	Stroll	1m31.838s
11	Zhou	1m44.429s	11	Leclerc	1m44.709s	11	Ricciardo	1m31.860s
12	Ricciardo	1m44.486s	12	Latifi	1m44.962s	12	Albon	1m31.946s
13	Hamilton	1m44.558s	13	Albon	1m45.039s	13	Bottas	1m31.971s
14	Stroll	1m44.570s	14	Tsunoda	1m45.257s	14	Vettel	1m32.222s
15	Albon	1m44.791s	15	Vettel	1m45.261s	15	Magnussen	1m32.290s
16	Gasly	1m44.878s	16	Norris	1m45.885s	16	Schumacher	1m32.366s
17	Latifi	1m45.424s	17	Ricciardo	1m46.030s	17	Tsunoda	1m32.377s
18	Russell	1m46.103s	18	Stroll	1m46.776s	18	Zhou	1m32.385s
19	Tsunoda	1m46.192s	19	Gasly	1m47.109s	19	Latifi	1m32.868s
20	Vettel	1m48.090s	20	Schumacher	no time	20	Gasly	1m32.881s

WEATHER Wet, air 15-17C track 19-22C

WEATHER Wet, air 16-17C track 18-19C

WEATHER Cloudy, air 21-22C track 28-30C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m30.224s	1	Perez	1m29.925s	1	Verstappen	1m29.304s
2	Sainz	1m30.336s	2	Alonso	1m30.343s	2	Leclerc	1m29.314s
3	Leclerc	1m30.402s	3	Verstappen	1m30.346s	3	Sainz	1m29.361s
4	Alonso	1m30.603s	4	Ocon	1m30.357s	4	Perez	1m29.709s
5	Perez	1m30.622s	5	Hamilton	1m30.443s	5	Ocon	1m30.165s
6	Ocon	1m30.696s	6	Sainz	1m30.444s	6	Hamilton	1m30.261s
7	Russell	1m30.865s	7	Russell	1m30.465s	7	Alonso	1m30.322s
8	Ricciardo	1m30.880s	8	Norris	1m30.473s	8	Russell	1m30.389s
9	Norris	1m30.881s	9	Leclerc	1m30.486s	9	Vettel	1m30.554s
10	Zhou	1m30.894s	10	Vettel	1m30.656s	10	Norris	1m31.003s
11	Hamilton	1m30.906s	11	Ricciardo	1m30.659s			
12	Tsunoda	1m31.130s	12	Bottas	1m30.709s			
13	Schumacher	1m31.152s	13	Tsunoda	1m30.808s			
14	Bottas	1m31.226s	14	Zhou	1m30.953s			
15	Vettel	1m31.256s	15	Schumacher	1m31.439s			
16	Albon	1m31.311s						
17	Gasly	1m31.322s						
18	Magnussen	1m31.352s						
19	Stroll	1m31.419s						
20	Latifi	1m31.511s						

WEATHER Cloudy, air 19-21C track 25-27C

NEXT RACE

23 OCTOBER

UNITED STATES GP

Austin

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	366	1	1
2 Perez	253	1	1
3 Leclerc	252	1	1
4 Russell	207	2	1
5 Sainz	202	1	1
6 Hamilton	180	2	3
7 Norris	101	3	3
8 Ocon	78	4	5
9 Alonso	65	5	2
10 Bottas	46	5	5
11 Vettel	32	6	9
12 Ricciardo	29	5	6
13 Gasly	23	5	6
14 Magnussen	22	5	4
15 Stroll	13	6	10
16 Schumacher	12	6	6
17 Tsunoda	11	7	8
18 Zhou	6	8	9
19 Albon	4	9	9
20 Latifi	2	9	10
21 de Vries	2	9	13
22 Hulkenberg	0	12	17

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
1 Red Bull		619
2 Ferrari		454
3 Mercedes		387
4 Alpine		143
5 McLaren		130
6 Alfa Romeo		52
7 Aston Martin		45
8 Haas		34
9 AlphaTauri		34
10 Williams		8

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Hamilton	10	6	Russell
Verstappen	14	3	Perez
Leclerc	13	3	Sainz
Ricciardo	1	16	Norris
Alonso	7	8	Ocon
Gasly	9	7	Tsunoda
Vettel	10	6	Stroll
Stroll	1	1	Hulkenberg
Latifi	2	14	Albon
Latifi	0	1	de Vries
Zhou	5	12	Bottas
Magnussen	13	5	Schumacher

WINS		FASTEST LAPS	
Verstappen	12	Verstappen	5
Leclerc	3	Leclerc	3
Perez	2	Perez	3
Sainz	1	Sainz	2

POLE POSITIONS		FASTEST LAPS	
Leclerc	9	Hamilton	2
Verstappen	5	Sainz	2
Sainz	2	Norris	1
Perez	1	Russell	1
Russell	1	Zhou	1

Sessions ignored when a driver could not record a representative time

## STARTING GRID

10 Norris #4 1m31.003s	9 Vettel #5 1m30.554s	8 Russell #63 1m30.389s	7 Alonso #14 1m30.322s	6 Hamilton #44 1m30.261s	5 Ocon #31 1m30.165s	4 Perez #11 1m29.709s	3 Sainz #55 1m29.361s	2 Leclerc #16 1m29.314s	1 Verstappen #1 1m29.304s
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## RACE RESULTS ROUND 18/22 (28 LAPS - 100.85 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull	3h01m44.004s	27	In, Wn, In
2	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull	+27.066s		In, Wn, In
3	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+31.763s		In, Wn, In
4	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+39.685s		In, Wn, In
5	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+40.326s		Iu, Wn, Iu
6	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+46.358s		In, Wn, In
7	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Alpine-Renault	+46.369s	1	In, Wn, In, In
8	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+47.661s		In, Wn, Iu
9	Nicholas Latifi (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m10.143s		In, Wn, In
10	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+1m10.782s		In, Wn, In
11	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+1m12.877s		In, Wn, In
12	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m13.904s		In, Wn, In, In
13	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	+1m15.599s		In, Wn, In, In
14	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m26.016s		In, Wn, In
15	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m26.496s		In, Wn, In
16	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m27.043s		In, Wn, In, In
17	Mick Schumacher (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m32.523s		In, Wn, In
18	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	+1m48.091s		In, Wn, Wn, In, In
R	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	0 laps-accident		In
R	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	0 laps-accident damage		In

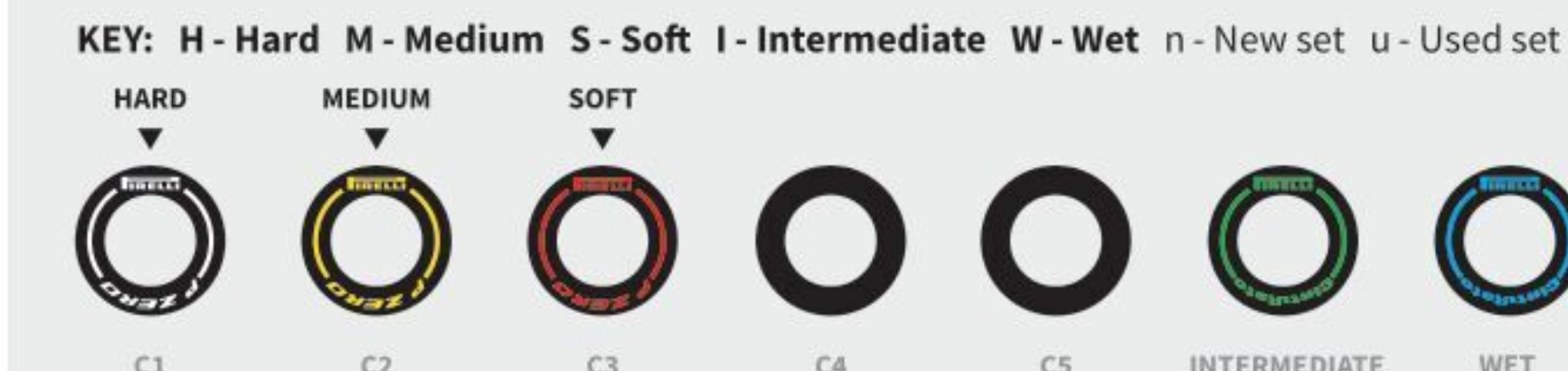
## FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Zhou	1m44.411s	-	20
2	Alonso	1m44.412s	+0.001s	25
3	Leclerc	1m44.489s	+0.078s	10
4	Verstappen	1m44.911s	+0.500s	10
5	Stroll	1m45.205s	+0.794s	21
6	Gasly	1m45.387s	+0.976s	22
7	Hamilton	1m45.530s	+1.119s	11
8	Tsunoda	1m45.893s	+1.482s	22
9	Perez	1m46.120s	+1.709s	11
10	Schumacher	1m46.545s	+2.134s	13
11	Ocon	1m46.559s	+2.148s	11
12	Vettel	1m46.964s	+2.553s	13
13	Russell	1m47.004s	+2.593s	21
14	Bottas	1m47.820s	+3.409s	11
15	Ricciardo	1m47.843s	+3.432s	11
16	Magnussen	1m48.072s	+3.661s	10
17	Norris	1m48.175s	+3.764s	8
18	Latifi	1m48.371s	+3.960s	12
-	Sainz	no time	-	-
-	Albon	no time	-	-

WEATHER Wet and cloudy, air 16-18C track 18-21C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 33.294mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 124.411mph

## TYRES



## RACE BRIEFING

### GRID PENALTIES

**LATIFI** Five-place penalty for causing a collision at previous race  
**GASLY** Required to start from the pitlane - specification changed under parc ferme conditions

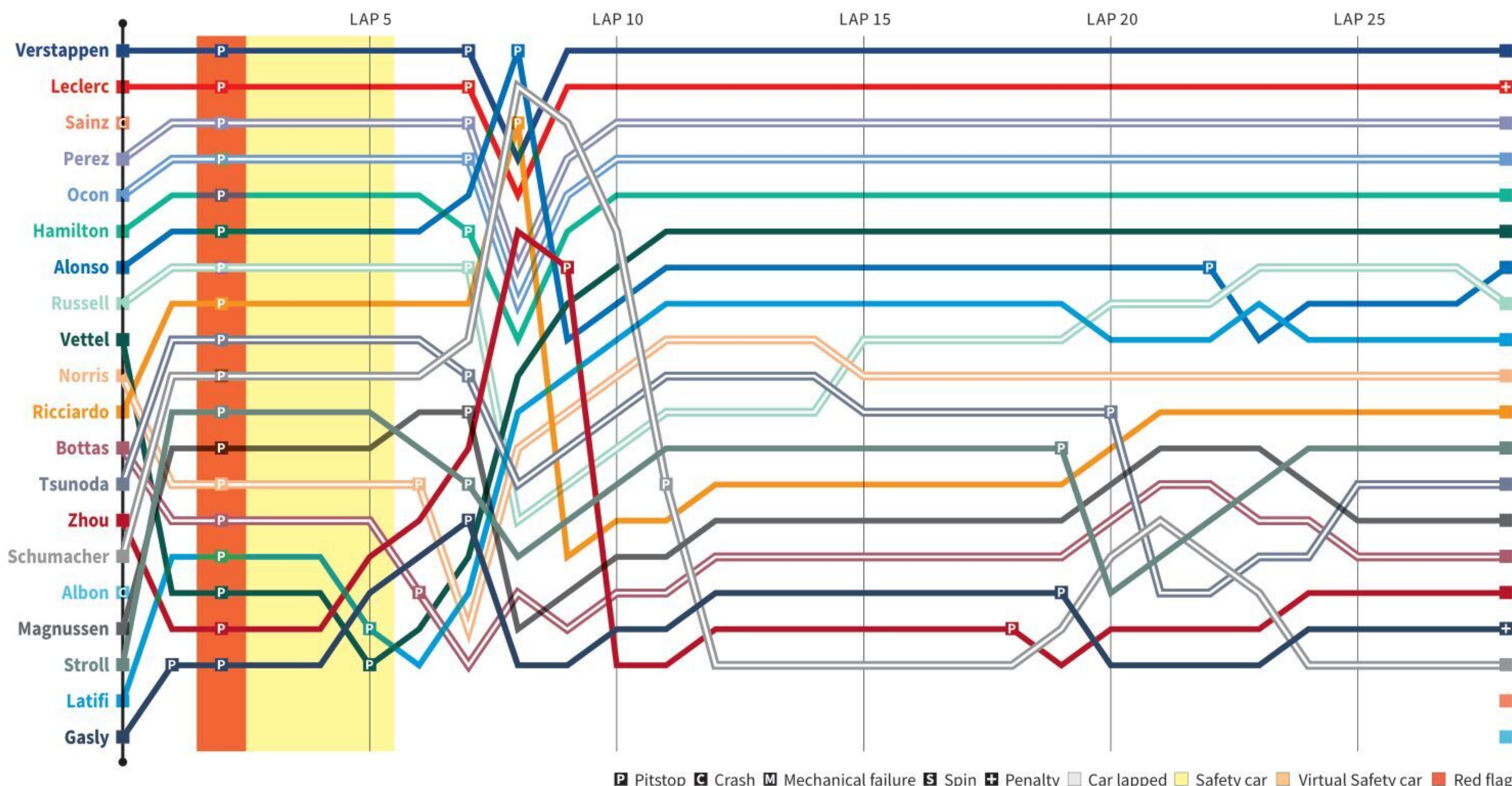
### RACE PENALTIES

**LECLERC** Five-second penalty and one licence point for leaving the track and gaining an unfair advantage  
**GASLY** 20s penalty and two licence points for speeding under red flag conditions

STAT  
**136**

Zhou is the 136th driver to score a fastest lap in a world championship race

## LAP CHART What happened, when



# VERSTAPPEN AND OCON SCORE BIG IN JAPAN

*The now double champion delivered a performance worthy of his status, Alpine's man gave his all – and there's praise where it's due for Latifi*

MATT KEW

## MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **6th** — Result **5th**

**8** Merc's drag was so extreme that despite the wet conditions rewarding its higher downforce, Hamilton was powerless in a straight line. Those factors outside of his control considered, he returns to a good score, his eight underpinned by besting Russell in qualifying and running Ocon close in the GP.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **8th** — Result **8th**

**7** Is right to bemoan losing seven places to the Mercedes double-stack pitstop at the restart. But he put himself in a position to suffer by qualifying 0.128s slower than Hamilton and behind Alonso. That said, his recovery and beautiful passes on Tsunoda, Latifi and Norris redeem his rating.

## RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

**10** Performance worthy of wrapping up the title earns full marks. Not losing pole for very near-miss with Norris or running wide, shedding a duct and bleeding time late in Q3 narrowly stops him from dropping a score. Otherwise, his unmatched speed in wet race conditions cannot be faulted.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **4th** — Result **2nd**

**8** Struggling with Q3 understeer to lap four tenths adrift of his team-mate has to limit the rating. But he did raise his game on Sunday. While still slower than the lead RB18, Perez had enough to force Leclerc into a critical mistake that ultimately decided the title to fulfil his number two role.

## FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **2nd** — Result **3rd**

**6** To qualify for a top grade relies on a driver having made no major errors. But cutting the chicane to cop a penalty is a big mistake. Also, the pace was lacklustre. Further, Verstappen left the door open for Leclerc to seize pole. Even if it was only by 0.01 seconds, he didn't seize his chance.



CARLOS SAINZ

Started **3rd** — Result **R**

**4** Hard to see what he could have done to avoid aquaplaning into the wall. But, it must be said, no one else managed it. He is further docked for his caution into Turn 1 to fall behind Perez, a day after struggling to control tyre temperatures to fall short of Leclerc in Q3. A lacklustre weekend.

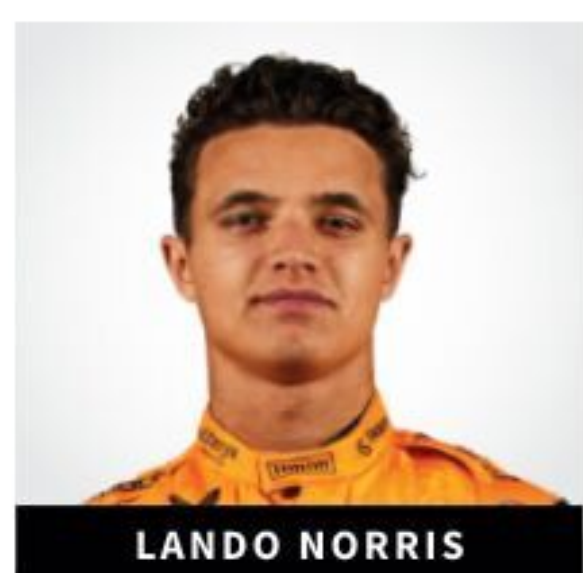
## McLAREN



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **11th** — Result **11th**

**6** Considering he pitted for inters a lap later than most, holding station in 11th is a cool return – he only inherited one spot from Sainz retiring. The race pace on two-laps-newer tyres was marginally better than Norris's. But he drops a point to his team-mate because he mucked up to miss Q3.



LANDO NORRIS

Started **10th** — Result **10th**

**7** To finish where he started in 10th was a good under-the-radar comeback from Norris, who received a first-lap whack from Stroll to ship three places. McLaren's pace across both cars was slow, so a point is a fine return. Also gains kudos for avoiding a nasty Q3 smash with Verstappen.

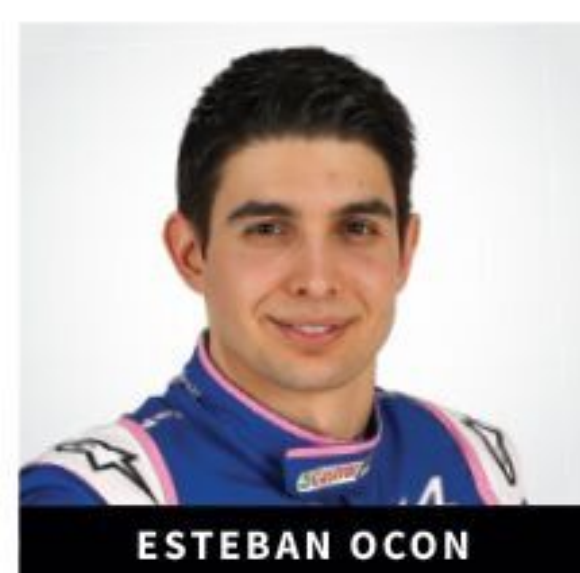
## ALPINE



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **7th** — Result **7th**

**8** Must be marked down for his Q3 run. He didn't put his three best sectors together so lost out to Ocon and let Hamilton split the Alpines. But the pace returned in the race. He pitted late for new intermediates, but his lap times were second only to Verstappen's. Just missed out on sixth to Vettel.

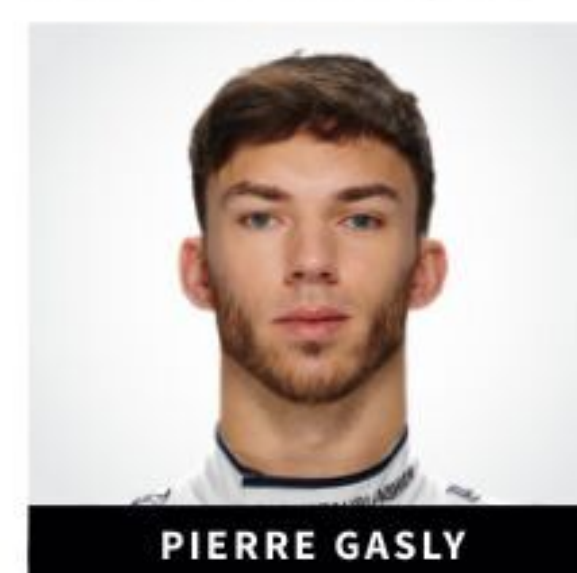


ESTEBAN OCON

Started **5th** — Result **4th**

**10** Was he quite as brilliant as fellow 10 out of 10 scorer Verstappen? No. But nothing more could have realistically been asked of him. Streaked ahead of Alonso and both Mercs in a very impressive Saturday showing, and took fourth in the race after defending superbly from Hamilton.

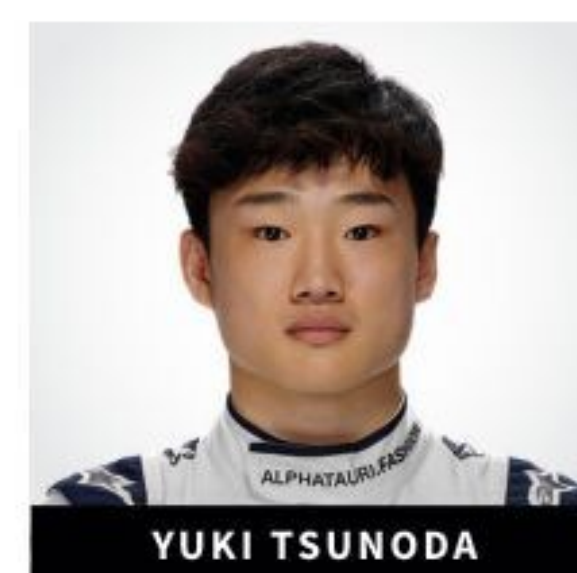
## ALPHATAURI



PIERRE GASLY

Started **20th** — Result **18th**

**4** A sensitive one to score. While the scenes with the tractor were terrifying, he exceeded the red flag speed limit by 32mph to earn a 20s penalty that dropped him one spot. That's a major no-no. Opted for a pitlane start after brake issues in qualifying, which Tsunoda managed far better to reach Q2.



YUKI TSUNODA

Started **13th** — Result **13th**

**7** Score benefits from the fact that he executed a clean weekend. Everyone behind him in the classification notably dropped the ball either compared to their team-mate in qualifying or being clumsy at one point in the race. Didn't have the pace for points, so had to settle for converting 13th.



## ASTON MARTIN



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Started 9th — Result 6th

**7** Maximised strong Aston pace to land joint-best grid slot of final season. Also gained three places overall and beat Alonso by 0.011s in a photo finish. It was all so stellar apart from the first-lap spill with the Alpine. He put himself in a high-risk position to hit the gravel to fall to 16th, so can't score higher.



LANCE STROLL

Started 18th — Result 12th

**7** A decent redemption arc. When the Aston was a Q3 contender, he ran second slowest. That hurt his rating heading into the GP. But earns credit for first-lap heroics, gaining seven places. Second stop for inters dropped him four spots but he recovered three of them in closing laps.

## WILLIAMS



NICHOLAS LATIFI

Started 19th — Result 9th

**8** A generous eight, but opportunities to score him this high are rare so he gets benefit of the doubt. Against: he was slowest in qualifying. At least that meant he didn't feel the pain of a full five-place grid drop earned in Singapore. For: his early switch to inters paid off well, the pace was sound, and he raced smartly.



ALEX ALBON

Started 16th — Result R

**5** Replays suggest he probably created his own downfall. After an ace initial launch, he drops back. In the poor visibility, he appears to wander too far over to hit Magnussen. The damaged radiator and water leak would end his race on lap one. The saving grace is that he easily covered Latifi in qualifying.

## ALFA ROMEO



ZHOU GUANYU

Started 14th — Result 16th

**5** Delivered sound qualifying to run well enough in Q2 but customary gap to Bottas was still there. He must be marked down for dropping it all by himself on lap one. At the restart, lost out by gambling for another tour on full wets. Kudos for the fastest lap, though, after stopping again for more inters.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started 12th — Result 15th

**6** A fair to middling outing. Mostly neat Q2 lap was just a tenth short of a Q3 appearance, although a place in the top 10 was only borderline attainable for Alfa. Struggled with the first-lap visibility to drop two places before losing speed in a dice with Ricciardo to be passed by Magnussen.

## HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started 17th — Result 14th

**5** Scarce highlights were gaining five places on lap one, although four of those were free gifts, before passing Bottas on the approach to Spoon Curve. Otherwise, the Dane lost time on Saturday at the hairpin on his final Q1 flier, having already been looking slower than Schumacher.



MICK SCHUMACHER

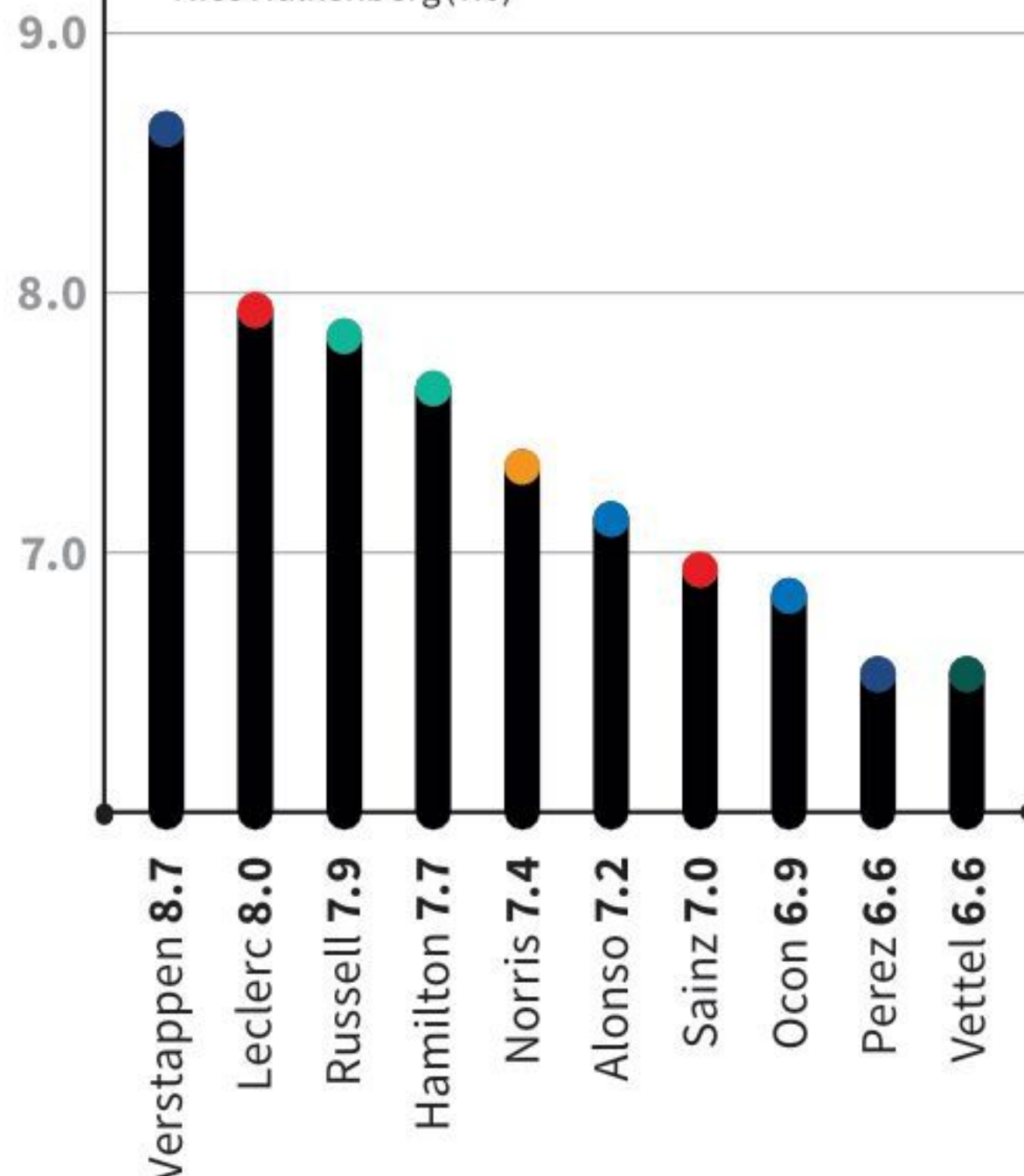
Started 15th — Result 17th

**5** Tough one to rate as bold team call to stay on full wets massively backfired to leave him a sitting duck. He did notably recover from his poor FP1 in-lap shunt to have Magnussen well beaten in qualifying, but the German could have started even higher had he not run way too deep into the chicane.

## TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS

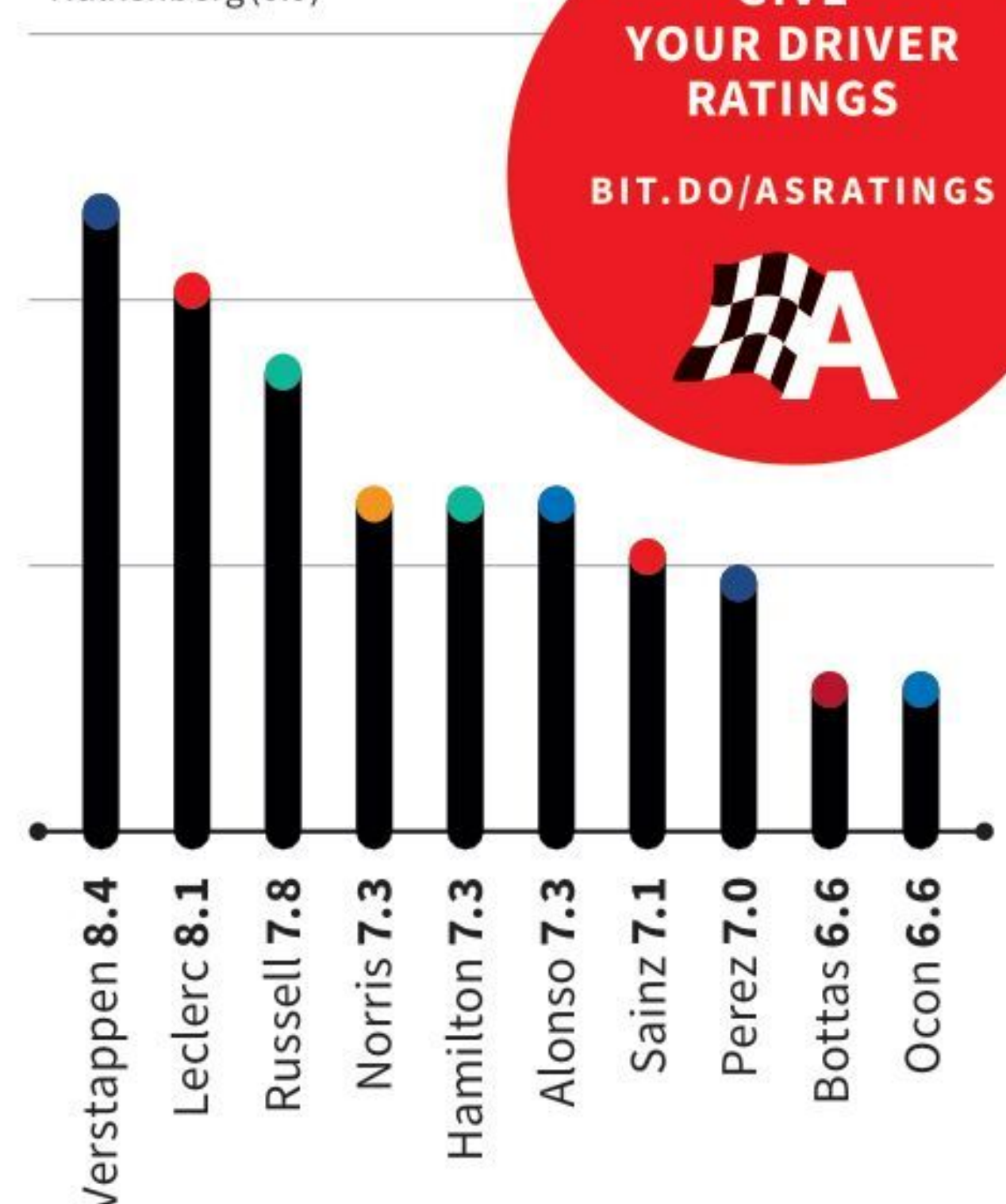
## AUTOSPORT'S RATING AFTER ROUND 18\*

\* Excludes de Vries (10.0) and Nico Hulkenberg (7.0)



## READERS' RATING AFTER ROUND 18\*

\* Excludes de Vries (9.8) and Hulkenberg (6.9)



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VERSTAPPEN'S ROAD TO THE TITLE

# MAX'S (SECOND) ROAD TO THE CROWN

*Verstappen's charge to his second consecutive Formula 1 world championship has been more dominant and less acrimonious than the controversial circumstances in which he won his first.*

*Here's how he took control of the 2022 season*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS AND MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY



**motorsport**  
IMAGES





## SLIPPERY RB18 BREAKS COVER

Although the pecking order was far from clear, two teams emerged strongest from the two pre-season tests in Spain and Bahrain. McLaren fell away from the leading group with brake issues in the latter, where Mercedes' radical 'no-pod' W13 proved to be a disaster, undone by dramatic porpoising.

Red Bull and Ferrari were the pacesetters but, given Red Bull's propensity for not revealing its full hand in testing, and Ferrari's recovery from two fallow years at this stage still being incomplete, there was no single favourite heading into the opening round.

The two teams had very different initial design philosophies. Red Bull's RB18 was revealed as relatively simple in the first test in Spain, but its Bahrain update included the heavily undercut sidepod approach that Aston Martin and Williams would go on to adopt. The car prioritises aerodynamic efficiency over peak loads, which, allied with the rebadged Honda engine's potent punch, means Red Bull enjoys a very high top speed and the RB18 is adaptable to every track type.

Ferrari's F1-75, by contrast, is more of the approach Red Bull took in the previous era — a car that packs on the downforce and is most competitive on tracks with lots of corners and few straights. It makes its time up in the turns and loses out to Red Bull at peak acceleration, although the Italian team took steps to trim out drag after the early events, and this made things closer. But, critically, the Ferrari has proved to be less flexible and generally harder on its tyres, which added up to a race pace advantage that Verstappen rarely blew.

## VERSTAPPEN GETS PAYBACK IN DRS DUEL WITH LECLERC

Leclerc was set to draw first blood in 2022 even before Verstappen retired from the Bahrain curtain-raiser with a fuel system failure. And there were no two ways about it: the Ferrari racer outwitted his rival by checking his pace over the DRS detection lines at Sakir to temporarily sacrifice track position. But the payoff was handsome, as the F1-75 gained the overtaking aid to surge back past the leading Red Bull and emerged ahead in three great battles.

But Verstappen responded at the first time of asking in round two in Saudi Arabia, which will surely be remembered for the nearby missile strike and oh-so-close driver boycott. After the teams were reassured that the defence systems were robust enough to counteract any further attack and the race commenced, Verstappen got off the mark.

Granted, his pole-winning team-mate Sergio Perez was thwarted by an ill-timed safety car period induced by Nicholas Latifi shunting. Nevertheless, Verstappen showed he'd spent the better part of two races watching the rear of Leclerc's car and understanding how the

Monegasque was placing his machine and consuming his rear Pirellis.

So, five laps from the flag, having had enough of being toyed with, Verstappen stamped on the anchors over the DRS detection line, locking his fronts. Crucially, Leclerc had nipped ahead, which gave Verstappen a double whammy of the slipstream and DRS. As the rear wing flap snapped open, he then shot past the Ferrari to settle the second of two thrilling races and claimed the first victory of his title defence.

## FERRARI ENGINES EXPIRE AS VERSTAPPEN OUTRUNS PEREZ

Not helped by a second fuel system fault in Australia — a round Leclerc dominated anyway — Verstappen rocked up in Spain trailing Leclerc by 19 points. The Ferrari ace then landed a fourth pole from six races and led from the off. He got further helped by Verstappen going off at Turn 4 and was surely romping home to the spoils with an advantage of 13 seconds.

That was until lap 27 of 66 on Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya, when his Ferrari's turbo and MGU-H cried enough and died. Verstappen picked up the pieces to take the win and, for the first time in 2022, he had the points lead. Unbeknown at the time, he would keep hold of it for the rest of the campaign.

With the RB18 still overweight at this point and the Ferrari engine enjoying the superior acceleration out of slow corners, the tighter Barcelona circuit was seemingly ready-made to suit the Prancing Horse. But it blew the opportunity. That meant a fightback was required at a track that, on paper, favoured Red Bull.

Step forward, Baku. In Azerbaijan, sure enough, Leclerc was





Verstappen played the DRS game to perfection to hit back in Saudi Arabia



Not risking all in battle and being happy with second place in Austria a wise choice for Verstappen

again leading to the tune of 13s (though admittedly on a different strategy, with the result still in the balance). Then disaster struck once more. “Problem! Problem!” he cried as the engine let go and smoke filled his mirrors.

To compound Leclerc’s misery, Verstappen again took the win after fighting back past Perez, the Mexican moving aside under team orders for the second time in two races. All told, Verstappen entered the summer with his status as the number one driver at Red Bull double underlined, and with 34 points in hand over a crestfallen and stunned Leclerc.

## STRATEGY SHAMBLES RELIEVES THE PRESSURE ON RED BULL

Just before Azerbaijan, one race had summed up Ferrari’s 2022 strategy shambles better than any other: Monaco. There, Leclerc started on pole. Had the race been dry, he seemed set to drive into the distance and take a famous home win. How that psychological boost to his title chances would have turned out will never be known.

When the rain came down — so sudden and hard that the water swell shorted the start-lights gantry and contributed to the FIA delaying the start for an hour and opting for a tame safety car opening — Leclerc still had it under control. He easily pulled clear of Carlos Sainz but, when conditions dried, Ferrari’s challenge fell apart. Leclerc obeyed the team’s call to move to the intermediate tyres, while Sainz was resolute in wanting to go straight to slick rubber.

This might have won the Spaniard the race, but when he got held up by Nicholas Latifi on his out-lap it gave eventual winner Perez critical seconds to seize a surprise lead. Leclerc also might have rescued a

podium ahead of Verstappen but for being held up by Alex Albon just after making his stop for inters. But the win was gone when Ferrari allowed its strategies to diverge. Then it called Leclerc in for a slicks-service double-stack it didn’t have time for, with Sainz in the pitlane ahead. Its result from an early 1-2 turned into a 2-4 finish, with its title contender off the podium.

Further engine penalty pain followed Leclerc’s Baku retirement when he had to battle back from a Canada grid drop, before another bizarre Ferrari strategy call cost him at Silverstone. There, the team failed to pit him under the late safety car when it had more than enough time to make the call it gave to eventual winner Sainz. And then in Hungary came its famous decision to run the hard tyre that cost Leclerc all pace against the charging, brilliant Verstappen. There, the Red Bull won despite a spin, and had also benefited from Ferrari costing Leclerc points at Silverstone, when the Red Bull had been taken out of the lead after a piece of AlphaTauri bodywork became lodged in its floor.

## VERSTAPPEN ‘HAPPY’ TO NOT WIN

Briefly back to Monaco... There, it seemed that Verstappen was content to accept the circumstances set before him that stymied his shot at getting close to the win. In dry conditions, Leclerc was untouchable, but the rain meant that Perez’s late Q3 crash actually helped him in his battle with his team-mate, since it ensured track position at the venue where passing is all but impossible in modern F1.

Verstappen had been set to join Leclerc on the front row given his sector-one pace behind Perez and Sainz (also caught up in the Mexican’s crash). His fury was immediate over the radio, before he quickly changed tack. He knew solid points were still on.

A better example of Verstappen showing the champion’s trait of maximising even a bad day came in Austria. This was a comprehensive defeat for Red Bull, when Ferrari had one of its rare days this season with better tyre degradation. Leclerc even passed Verstappen for the lead three times, but the Dutchman did not fight him for every piece of asphalt, as he seemingly had against Lewis Hamilton in 2021.

Second in Austria was still a solid haul, albeit helped by the charging Sainz retiring with a fiery engine failure. Had the battle been tighter over the course of the season, this would have been an important opportunity to bank points, when Verstappen already had a commanding lead.

## LECLERC CRASHES OUT OF THE LEAD IN FRANCE

This was the moment when the title was truly lost. Coming into the weekend, Leclerc had trimmed Verstappen’s lead to 38 points with >>



Monaco summed up Ferrari’s propensity for strategic ball-dropping

his battling victory in Austria. The scrap for pole was as close as ever, with Red Bull and Verstappen still ominously fast in a straight line and starting the race in second.

That factor was what Leclerc had to overcome once he'd aced the start. He did, and the fight at the front quickly boiled down to a two-horse race. Verstappen was hotly pursuing in the sweltering conditions, so much so that he got a track-limits violation. Red Bull was trying to pressure Ferrari into eating up its tyres *a la* Imola and Miami, where Verstappen had also taken fine wins, but Leclerc was holding on magnificently with his pace high and not dropping back into Verstappen's DRS clutches.

Leclerc's excellent opening stint pushed Red Bull off its optimum one-stop strategy plan and the race was poised to be a tense thriller, with the leader running long and another late-race passing battle surely coming. Then that expectation was dashed.

Leclerc turned in for Le Beausset too hot and too hard compared to the previous lap on what was to be an unfinished 18th tour of 53 – on very stressed tyres. He spun into the barriers and couldn't get out, once again roaring his fury. All the misfortune to that point – bar an understandable Imola spin chasing the leading Red Bulls – had not been of his making. This one was and it was a devastating blow as Verstappen then waltzed off to the first of five successive wins and a dominant title position.

## THE UPDATED, LIGHTER RB18 EMERGES

A considerable factor in Leclerc snaring six poles from the first eight rounds was the agility of the Ferrari F1-75. Unlike that lithe creation, the first iteration of the Red Bull RB18 exceeded the new minimum weight limit of 798kg, thought to be by as much as 20kg. Every kilo it initially carried over the Ferrari contributed a greater percentage of its overall mass when the fuel tanks were dry and the car was at its lightest – in qualifying and at the end of a race.

That issue meant there was little scope during the early events to tune it to Verstappen's driving style, a big factor in why Perez was initially much closer as team-mate this year. Verstappen needs to trust the front axle to grip and is then more than happy to handle any oversteer from an unsettled rear. To begin with in 2022, though, this was limited by a rear-bias weight distribution that couldn't be moved due to the weight problem.

But after the summer break, a slimmed-down RB18 came on song. Now under the weight limit, the team could choose where to position ballast. That allowed it to place the weight over the nose and gave Verstappen the front-end grip he thrives on.

Red Bull technical director Pierre Wache explains: "At the



beginning of the season, we didn't have the possibility to move the weight. It was part of the set-up. [Then], it went in favour of Max."

This was empathic when Verstappen came out of the summer break at Spa in form more dominant than ever and completed a hat-trick of victories. Further reflecting the development of the RB18, Perez's results notably declined from this point until victory in Singapore, because the evolved car hurt him just as much as it suited his stablemate.

## VERSTAPPEN'S SPA SUPREMACY OVERTURNS GRID PENALTY

The afternoon's work turned in by Verstappen at the Belgian Grand Prix will take some beating as his greatest F1 drive, although there will surely be plenty more to choose from. Saddled by a tactical gearbox and engine change at that event, he waded into qualifying knowing he would serve a grid drop. Nevertheless, he bolted across the timing line some six tenths clear of next-fastest Sainz and was 0.8s quicker than his team-mate.

That might have seemed in vain given that he then lined up 14th on the grid (although he did gain a place when Pierre Gasly was forced to start from the pitlane). But Verstappen dispatched three cars at La Source on lap one alone, and then survived the mid-pack cut and thrust on that tour.

As those around him took to the grass and showered his helmet in dust, Verstappen removed a visor tear-off. Incidentally, it flew straight into the brake duct of the chasing Leclerc, who was also recovering from another grid penalty, forcing the Ferrari into making an unscheduled stop. The title race had petered out already by this





Fourteenth-place grid slot converted into victory in a display of brilliance at Spa

point, but this freak rotten luck for Leclerc certainly didn't help.

With the red car in strife yet again, Verstappen continued his ascent and, remarkably, by lap 12 of 44 he had taken the lead for the first time. Aided by faultless strategy and pitstops from Red Bull, he reached the chequered flag 17.8s clear of Perez and a further 9s ahead of Sainz, having started six rows behind them on the grid. This signed off a truly mesmeric performance. Leclerc, meanwhile, mustered fifth on the road but sixth place in the results due to a penalty for speeding in the pitlane.

## MAX SECURES SECOND HOME WIN, FERRARI DENIED ANOTHER

After his crushing Spa win, Verstappen headed to Zandvoort. This was his second home race in succession given his Belgian-Dutch heritage, but the event on the outskirts of Amsterdam was a show for one driver only compared to the mix of fans who flock to Spa each year. In front of heaving, partying grandstands, Verstappen delivered another victory, just as he had in 2021.

Last year, Verstappen took pole and controlled a rapid but not-action-packed race with Hamilton. This time, he had to see off threats on multiple fronts after Leclerc had blown his chance of taking yet another 2022 pole.

Verstappen had things under control over the Ferrari during the early stages, but it suddenly seemed that the charging, one-stopping Mercedes pair posed the bigger threat. The late-race safety car aided Verstappen's chances, but his pace in all conditions was brilliant.

His points lead therefore stood at 109 heading to Ferrari's home race at Monza, where Red Bull opted to give Verstappen another

internal combustion engine on Honda's advice with the season run-in looming. This left him requiring another charge from seventh on the grid, and seemingly had Leclerc on course for another famous win in front of the tifosi.

But with the RB18 now the class of the 2022 field, if not an all-time great car, by lap three Verstappen had surged to run in range of the lead. He took over when Ferrari stopped Leclerc under the early virtual safety car activation, and sealed it when the Monegasque's pace on the two-stopper was no match for his speed on the single-stop strategy.

There was a controversial ending when the late safety car caused by Daniel Ricciardo's Lesmo stoppage meant the race finished neutralised, but Verstappen had the pace to cover all attacks. Ferrari did everything right for a change, but it was well beaten and the gap to Leclerc had grown to 116 points.

## CONFUSING JAPANESE GP AND LECLERC PENALTY CONFIRM TITLE

After a protracted period of operational excellence, Red Bull made a rare mistake by underfuelling Verstappen for Q3 in Singapore. This meant that, to provide a sample, he had to abort a lap that looked a certainty to secure pole. Forced to make progress from eighth on the grid, his early pace to pass was strong before he overcooked it under braking while battling Lando Norris to ultimately finish down in seventh position. While the maths was never in his favour at Marina Bay, Verstappen missed the first opportunity to secure his second world title.

Then came a return to Suzuka for the first time since 2019. Here, the team was sound again. So, despite Verstappen dropping time late in Q3 after sustaining minor damage, his early banker effort was still sufficient to land a fifth pole of 2022 ahead of Leclerc. The Ferrari driver did launch well though in wet conditions to force Verstappen to keep his foot in to carry more speed through the first corner to cement first place. But a litany of opening-lap shunts and terrible weather created a two-hour red-flag interlude.

When the time-limited race finally got under way, Verstappen was simply imperious. He was 1.5s per lap quicker than Leclerc to take the win by 26.8s. But without fastest lap, he looked to be one point short of the title to leave the coronation waiting until Austin.

Then a late 5s penalty for Leclerc aborting the Suzuka chicane to gain an advantage before squeezing Perez to the edge of the track dropped the Monegasque to third in the classification. As such, the points picture took a dramatic last twist. Unfittingly after his dominance that day and in 2022, a confused Verstappen was left to find out of his title success simply from the post-race interviews. ❧



Another victory at Zandvoort in front of crazy-gang home supporters



Victory at Suzuka – although the big news didn't break until later



# Nearly-man no more as Ingram is crowned

*The Excelr8 Hyundai ace was unstoppable at Brands to take a double win and put himself in the box seat against Sutton, Hill and Turkington*

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

Ingram soaks up relentless pressure from Hill in the closing laps of race two

In the immediate aftermath of becoming king of the British Touring Car Championship for the first time, while the tears were yet to dry up and the voice was yet to not choke up, Tom Ingram said this had been his dream since he peered up at the lofty heights of Matt Neal when he met the future three-time champion at the Autosport International show as an impressionable five-year-old.

Later on, still with a distinct hint of quiver in his speech, even after all the pageantry and fireworks and lengthy ceremonies that go with the crowning of a BTCC champion, he stood outside the Excelr8 Motorsport garage in the Brands Hatch pitlane and wound on a year or so, to when the little Ingram nerded out on binge-watching the 1999 season review video and began a hero-worship of Laurent Aiello. How amazing, he mused, was it to see his name on that trophy along with the French tin-top legend's?

And there was a decided hint of the ever-classy Aiello in Ingram's performance last weekend. He arrived at Brands third in the points behind leader Ash Sutton and second-placed Jake Hill, with Colin Turkington the rank outsider. But as soon as qualifying began it looked like this title was going to go only one way: in the direction of the #80 Excelr8 Hyundai i30 N Fastback.

Like Aiello when he did his thing with that RML Nissan Primera, Ingram had an almost invincible package at his disposal in the form of the Hyundai at Brands. That, and the untraditional sunshine of a Brands October weekend, turned this title showdown merely into one that was tense, when everyone had expected it to be the crash-bang-wallop, unpredictable, twisting-and-turning climax to which BTCC aficionados have become accustomed.

Just when he needed it, Ingram had perfection in his hands. All four of his hot laps – two on each of his sets of new Goodyear tyres – were good enough for a comfortable pole. The best of them put him clear by a monster gap of 0.410 seconds, the biggest polewinning margin in a dry BTCC qualifying session since 2017. When a late red flag prompted a clock reset to allow five minutes more of the session, Ingram casually got out of the Hyundai and watched the action on the Excelr8 garage TV screen. "It was outrageous," he emphasised. "I've driven cars and karts and stuff all my life, and only one other time did I have the perfect car – that was a long time ago [when Ingram won a Ginetta G55 race at Rockingham in 2013 by over half a minute], and today I had it again. Of all the days to have a perfect car... And there's not a nano-milligram of criticism for it. It was incredible on braking, on corner entry, corner exit, stability, smash-kerbs."

The closest of Ingram's title rivals was Sutton in third and, >>

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with team-mate Dan Cammish lining up one spot behind, that duo of blue-and-yellow NAPA-liveried Ford Focuses did look a potential worry for the opposition on the second row. But it wasn't easy for Sutton, whose final effort lifted him from 13th position. "It was balls on the line," related the reigning and three-time champion. "On the first run I didn't switch the tyres on in the correct way. I was tucked up behind 'Cammo' and I just didn't get the lap together. And when I found out what Tom had done I thought, 'I've got to dig deep here.'"

Right behind those Fords in fifth place was Hill, on his beloved local track in his West Surrey Racing-run BMW 330e M Sport. "I honestly don't think I could have got much more out of it," he professed. "There was probably half a tenth to a tenth left, but I went off two or three times. And I just think Ingram's car is stupidly fast..."

For poor old Turkington, there was a return of the hybrid woes that had played a large part in destroying his weekend previous time out at Silverstone, before which he had topped the championship standings. He qualified his WSR BMW 10th, meaning the title was even more of a long shot. Normally the epitome of implacable calm, he was fuming: "It was just a nightmare of a session. The hybrid failed again just as the tyres were at their peak. Back to the box for a system reset, back out, and it malfunctioned for a second time. I'm in the pits when the track's at its best. I'm massively frustrated because the car felt good, but I spent more time in the pits than on track."

What this did ensure was an outbreak of vintage Turkington racing. Thanks to the reliability of the WSR package and his own relentless consistency, he's usually Mr Percentage in battle. This time there was no point in that – there was nothing to lose.





Outgoing champ Sutton  
hugs his successor

## “When I found out what Tom had done I thought, ‘I’ve got to dig deep here’”

Scrapper Hill is the polar opposite, and the BMW boys helped contribute to a thrilling first race.

Not that it was action-packed at the front. Rory Butcher, for the second year running building a fine finish to a season with the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla, was the driver alongside Ingram on the front row. And this duo sailed away at the front. Ingram was “happy to drive around and play it safe”, just monitoring his mirrors; for Butcher, his late-season form means once again it’s a season of what might have been. “This has been a tough track for us [in 2021] with the Corolla, but we feel we’re at a sweet spot,” offered the Scot. “We were a lot quicker [than Ingram] in the high-speed corners, but he was a bit quicker on the straights.”

It was war behind them. During an early safety car period, a concertina effect had caused Sutton to run into the back of Butcher – this broke a turbo inlet, and the damage to the turbo cost him an estimated 40-50bhp. He’d already had contact with Hill away from the start, when the BMW got pincer as it tried to squeeze between the two Fords – Hill at least secured fourth when Cammish ran wide at Druids. Now it was game on for Hill, but Sutton put in a masterclass of aggressive defence. During the ensuing battle, the Kentishman would lose places to the impudent Bobby Thompson in his Team Hard Cupra Leon, Adam Morgan’s Ciceley Motorsport BMW, and Turkington, but each time Hill would pick himself up, dust himself off and immediately reclaim the position. Finally, with two and a half laps remaining, he set Sutton up beautifully and got the momentum to make the pass into Sheene Curve. But by then Ingram and Butcher were long gone.

Hill’s pass and Sutton’s lost momentum caused Morgan to check up, allowing the charging Turkington into fifth. He too latched onto Sutton, and narrowly failed in his quest for fourth as he drew alongside on the sprint to the chequered flag.

The points were now in Ingram’s favour, but with the rear-wheel-drive BMW of Hill third on the grid for race two this was far from comfortable. Butcher, however, made a cracking start to draw alongside Ingram, but the Hyundai held on. Once Hill had switched on his tyres, he began to home in on Butcher, passing the Toyota >>

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into Druids on the eighth lap of 15. Then he hunted down Ingram, and with four laps remaining the leader was having to defend. But the exertions had caused the BMW's rear tyres to fade. Hill remained close, but a Ford Capri-style opposite-lock slide through Sheene Curve on the penultimate lap told the story.

Ingram kept cool to win again. Together with pole and both fastest laps so far, plus the lap leader point from both races, he had a perfect score from the weekend. But this one had been tough. "That was probably the most pressure I've ever been under, not in terms of somebody being behind because I've done races like that, but more the [championship] situation that was going on," he sighed. "If I dropped the ball there, Jake was coming through, that was points off, and it was making the last race harder. It was exhausting because I couldn't afford a single mistake – if I was a foot away from an apex, Jake was going to fill that gap with his car, I knew it. And when you've got somebody like Jake, who's bloody quick, who's punchy, who's aggressive, it's very tense. It really was heavy going, but satisfying to be able to get it done."

The BMW was dynamite around the high-speed curves of the GP circuit, but the Hyundai seemed to have an edge when they got to the straights. "As soon as I got out onto the GP loop it was mine every time," said Hill. "I was so much quicker than everyone else out the back. For a start I love it, and the car worked well out the back too. I'm taking nothing away from Tom, he's done a great job. He is a deserving champion, but that thing was wound up to kingdom come for this weekend – that's the fastest I've ever seen it!"

Turkington probed for half the race to chisel an opening to pass Sutton for fourth, and finally managed it at Surtees. With just under three laps to go, he then grabbed third from Butcher into Druids, and he immediately slashed the gap to Ingram and Hill. But it was too late – Turkington's dream of a record-breaking fifth BTCC crown was over. "I gave my best, but I always needed the sort of impossible to happen," he mused. "I needed all the others to have a problem, so I just had to really go for it and attack and score points and keep the pressure on. I hung in there until race two but obviously that was me out of it."

Sutton was still just about in it, but this was another tough race for him. After Turkington had passed him, Sutton had to put on another mighty defence from the Ciceley BMWs of Morgan and George Gamble (although the BTCC rookie was carrying a five-second penalty for lining up just ahead of his grid box). Again, that Motorbase Ford looked sluggish, even with the turbo running fine. "We also picked up a lot of damage in race one from contact with Jake at the start, and then getting pushed around a lot, so we didn't really know where the car was at balance-wise," explained Sutton. "So we made a couple of little tweaks based on what we'd learned in the past, which wasn't enough. So race one hindered us in two ways – a) on the horsepower side of it, and b) on not having a true read on the balance. We got the true read we needed in race two, we made the changes for race three, and it was miles better, but too late in the day unfortunately."

Better it may have been, yet still Sutton had to mount another huge defence of fourth position in the finale. Behind him, team-



Last race, last lap, last corner: Crees rolls his Astra at Clearways

mate Cammish was doing a sound job of backing up Ingram and Hill, before the BMW pulled off another sweet pass on the Hyundai into Sheene Curve. Half a lap later, Morgan tried a move on Sutton at Paddock, tapped the rear of the Ford as the door was shut, and then got severely checked up at Druids. That caught Cammish out, who inadvertently hit Morgan, delayed himself – and Hill and Ingram swept ahead.

The situation now for Hill was that the only way he could win the title was if he could pass Sutton for fourth, and somehow Ingram was eliminated. Time and again he probed the battle-scarred rear of the Ford until, going into the final lap, he tried the high, wide and handsome line into Paddock Hill Bend, hoping for Sutton's defence to allow him a cutback up the hill to Druids. But straight into the gap screamed Ingram. There was minor contact between the Hyundai and BMW, which dropped two wheels into the gravel and lost two further places in a flash. Ingram crossed the line fifth, and he was champion: "I was more than happy just to sit there, not take any risk and sort of cruise around to it. But Jake had to do something and try and go around the outside of Ash, so there was a gap, and I thought I may as well fill it, even if it's the last lap and I've effectively got enough points to win it. I'm never ever going to not go for a gap because that's not me."

Up front, Ingram's team-mate Dan Lloyd added further to the jubilation for Excelr8 by steering his Hyundai home to victory. Thompson vacated second when his Cupra's engine went up in smoke under an early safety car, then Josh Cook grabbed the position from Morgan despite being forced onto the grass as he made the move into Surtees. Cook caught Lloyd, but a BTC



Lloyd beat Cook to win final race of season...



...while Butcher was on form all weekend



## “That was probably the most pressure I’ve ever been under. I couldn’t afford a single mistake”

Racing Honda Civic that traditionally lacks straightline speed was going to be kids’ birthday party plastic cutlery in a gunfight against the Hyundai. Butcher completed an excellent day with third.

But, as the modest Lloyd pointed out: “I don’t suppose anyone noticed me!” All eyes had instead been on the title battle. Sutton’s defence did get some criticism from Morgan – “I was Suttoned” – and Hill. “He’s not particularly racing that fair this weekend,” said Hill. “It’s a shame. I know you’ve got to fight for everything you can, but there comes a point where, mate, you’ve got to stop being like that. Me and Ingram, look at how well we raced in race two.”

Sutton will rightly point out that his defence was hard, but within the regulations. That’s the hallmark of a touring car great when the chips are down. And it nicked him second in the points from Hill.

Then Sutton saw Ingram celebrating in pace ferme, and he had an idea. He peeled the champion’s number 1 off his Ford, went over to give Ingram a massive manhug, and stuck the #1 onto the rear window of the Hyundai. “You don’t really see many drivers do that and pass it on, and it didn’t happen to me, so I wanted to be one of the first to do that,” shrugged Sutton. “I know what it’s like to win your first title, and he was full of emotion, so it just makes it that little bit better seeing that number 1.”

“What a beautiful gesture by Ash,” bubbled Ingram. “I think we’ve all had a good amount of respect for each other over this year. We’re all sportsmen, we all want to win more than we can breathe. Sometimes that comes across as aggression, sometimes it comes across as anger, sometimes it comes across as all sorts of different emotions, and sometimes you look at it and go, ‘That’s a bit shit or that was wrong’, but it’s because we’re so passionate about what we do, and we want to win more than anything else. But the lovely thing is, in that last race Jake and I spent half a lap wheel to wheel. Now, if I wanted to I could have fired him, I could have tipped him off on the grass – I had every opportunity if I wanted to get rid of him, and I didn’t. Likewise, he could have done the same thing to me. We’re so passionate about what we do.”

And somewhere, a little kid will be binge-watching 2022 BTCC highlights, inspired into a life ambition by a hero called Tom Ingram. 🍷

## THOMPSON’S CUPRA RUNNETH OVER



Such is the nature of the Jack Sears Trophy – a BTCC sub-class for those who have never scored an overall podium finish or won the JST itself – that it can sometimes be a rather uninspiring contest won by the not-quite-good-enough driver who does the least-mediocre job.

This year it’s been different. Former Carrera Cup GB ace George Gamble was the hot favourite in a Ciceley Motorsport BMW, but the team has suffered persistent maddening problems with electronics shutdowns, and he’s also been involved in a few scrapes. Fellow rookie Ash Hand has been rapid too when he had the chance in his 2017-vintage Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra – the oldest car on the grid.

But both have been upstaged by Bobby Thompson, who has been something of a revelation this year in the Team Hard Cupra Leon steered last season by Jack Goff. Thompson came close to JST honours in 2020, before a

Croft barrel-roll in his Trade Price Cars Audi pummelled his finances into oblivion. At Brands last weekend, he put that right, and his 11th JST ‘class’ win of the season in race one wrapped up the title for him. Not that he was playing it safe. Thompson had qualified the Cupra, a car he says is still on the development curve, a superb sixth, and proved a proper fly in the ointment among overall championship contenders Jake Hill and Colin Turkington – as he had every right to. He only got bumped down to an eventual seventh thanks to contact from Hill at Graham Hill Bend.

Another JST win came in the second race thanks to Gamble’s false-start penalty, before his engine failure in the finale cost him what would have been his second overall podium of 2022. Thompson wants to stay at Hard in 2023 – most other teams are out of reach on budget, but this 26-year-old deserves a shot at a proper long-term BTCC career.



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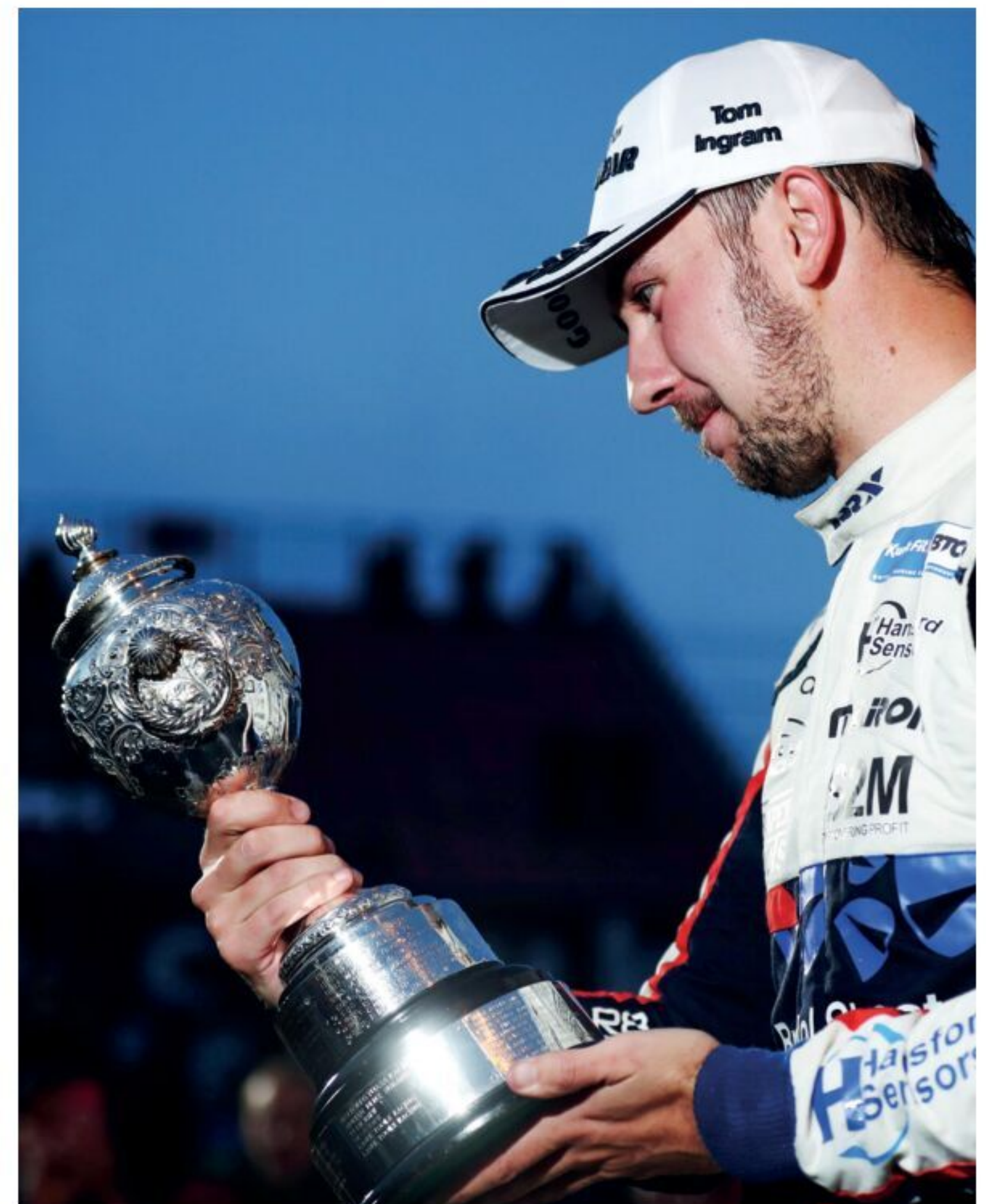
**RESULTS ROUND 10/10, BRANDS HATCH (GBR), 9 OCTOBER RACE 1 (18 LAPS – 43.797 MILES)**

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	<b>Tom Ingram</b> (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	32m40.611s
2	<b>Rory Butcher</b> (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+0.581s
3	<b>Jake Hill</b> (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+8.644s
4	<b>Ash Sutton</b> (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+10.408s
5	<b>Colin Turkington</b> (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+10.524s
6	<b>Adam Morgan</b> (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / BMW 330e M Sport	+10.779s
7	<b>Bobby Thompson</b> (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+11.190s
8	<b>George Gamble</b> (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / BMW 330e M Sport	+11.504s
9	<b>Dan Cammish</b> (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+12.259s
10	<b>Stephen Jelley</b> (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+12.728s
11	<b>Josh Cook</b> (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+12.795s
12	<b>Dan Rowbottom</b> (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	+13.199s
13	<b>Dan Lloyd</b> (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+13.690s
14	<b>Ricky Collard</b> (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+13.974s
15	<b>Aiden Moffat</b> (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	+14.764s
16	<b>Tom Chilton</b> (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+17.040s
17	<b>Jason Plato</b> (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+17.488s
18	<b>Ash Hand</b> (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+19.234s
19	<b>Jack Butel</b> (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+20.059s
20	<b>Michael Crees</b> (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+24.602s
21	<b>Nicolas Hamilton</b> (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+25.509s
22	<b>Jade Edwards</b> (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	-2 laps
R	<b>Sam Osborne</b> (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	16 laps-spun off
R	<b>Ollie Jackson</b> (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	14 laps-accident
R	<b>Dexter Patterson</b> (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	14 laps-accident
R	<b>Gordon Shedden</b> (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	13 laps-engine/damage
R	<b>Rick Parfitt</b> (GBR)	Team Hard / Infiniti Q50	6 laps-accident
R	<b>Carl Boardley</b> (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	6 laps-accident
R	<b>Aron Taylor-Smith</b> (IRL)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	0 laps-spun off

**Winner's average speed** 80.42mph. **Fastest lap** Ingram 1m31.293s, 95.95mph.

**QUALIFYING**

**1 Ingram** 1m29.529s; **2 Butcher** 1m29.939s; **3 Sutton** 1m29.940s; **4 Cammish** 1m29.957s; **5 Hill** 1m30.030s; **6 Thompson** 1m30.045s; **7 Patterson** 1m30.171s; **8 Morgan** 1m30.177s; **9 Cook** 1m30.227s; **10 Turkington** 1m30.242s; **11 Jelley** 1m30.298s; **12 Lloyd** 1m30.333s; **13 Gamble** 1m30.338s; **14 Shedden** 1m30.363s; **15 Rowbottom** 1m30.370s; **16 Hand** 1m30.429s; **17 Plato** 1m30.457s; **18 Collard** 1m30.603s; **19 Moffat** 1m30.603s; **20 Crees** 1m30.638s; **21 Taylor-Smith** 1m30.646s; **22 Chilton** 1m30.688s; **23 Jackson** 1m30.755s; **24 Edwards** 1m31.127s; **25 Butel** 1m31.221s; **26 Boardley** 1m31.446s; **27 Osborne** 1m31.510s; **28 Parfitt** 1m32.107s; **29 Hamilton** 1m32.233s.



**GRID RACE 2** Decided by result of Race 1.

**RACE 2** (15 LAPS – 36.498 MILES)

**1 Ingram** 23m02.565s; **2 Hill** +0.673s; **3 Turkington** +0.981s; **4 Butcher** +4.693s; **5 Sutton** +6.758s; **6 Morgan** +6.908s; **7 Cook** +9.854s; **8 Cammish** +10.177s; **9 Thompson** +11.301s; **10 Lloyd** +11.786s; **11 Gamble** +12.415s; **12 Moffat** +12.812s; **13 Rowbottom** +13.553s; **14 Chilton** +13.877s; **15 Jelley** +14.204s; **16 Collard** +14.988s; **17 Hand** +17.666s; **18 Plato** +18.046s; **19 Shedden** +19.543s; **20 Patterson** +19.772s; **21 Crees** +26.729s; **22 Osborne** +27.126s; **23 Jackson** +27.786s; **24 Butel** +28.916s; **25 Edwards** +33.184s; **26 Parfitt** +34.302s; **R Taylor-Smith** 11 laps-puncture; **R Hamilton** 1 lap-puncture; **R Boardley** 0 laps-mechanical.

**Winner's average speed** 95.03mph.

**Fastest lap** Ingram 1m30.875s, 96.39mph.

**GRID RACE 3** Decided by result of Race 2, with top 10 reversed.

**RACE 3** (17 LAPS – 41.365 MILES)

**1 Lloyd** 27m43.343s; **2 Cook** +0.724s; **3 Butcher** +4.409s; **4 Sutton** +8.555s; **5 Ingram** +9.479s; **6 Gamble** +9.831s; **7 Hill** +10.327s; **8 Cammish** +11.472s; **9 Jelley** +17.304s; **10 Moffat** +21.511s; **11 Collard** +21.733s; **12 Turkington** +21.932s; **13 Shedden** +22.219s; **14 Patterson** +22.332s; **15 Hand** +22.644s; **16 Osborne** +23.308s; **17 Plato** +23.593s; **18 Chilton** +24.120s; **19 Butel** +24.713s; **20 Taylor-Smith** +25.167s; **21 Edwards** +25.388s; **22 Jackson** +25.713s; **R Crees** 16 laps-accident; **R Morgan** 16 laps-sensor; **R Rowbottom** 12 laps-accident damage; **R Hamilton** 10 laps-lost power; **R Boardley** 8 laps-lost power; **R Thompson** 2 laps-engine; **R Parfitt** 1 lap-off.

**Winner's average speed** 89.52mph.

**Fastest lap** Cook 1m30.568s, 96.71mph.

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

**1 Ingram** 394; **2 Sutton** 382; **3 Hill** 381; **4 Turkington** 348; **5 Butcher** 318; **6 Cook** 296; **7 Shedden** 248; **8 Cammish** 207; **9 Morgan** 193; **10 Lloyd** 192.

**SEASON REVIEW****3 NOVEMBER ISSUE**

The full story of how Tom Ingram fulfilled his boyhood dream of being crowned BTCC champion.

BATHURST 1000

# Van Gisbergen and Tander give Holden ideal sign-off

*The Triple Eight duo added to their own impressive records at the Great Race as Australia's defunct GM brand bid the event adieu with a suitable bang*

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

PHOTOGRAPHY HORSBURGH/EDGE  motorsport  
IMAGES

Triple Eight found a suitable ending to the Holden brand's time at Bathurst. An era has come to a close



**T**he Holden era of the Bathurst 1000 came to a fitting end as Shane van Gisbergen and Garth Tander swept to victory for Triple

Eight Race Engineering. Two years after the pair took the final Bathurst 1000 win for a factory Holden team, they strengthened their respective positions in Holden history by winning the final ever Great Race for the now-defunct brand.

Van Gisbergen, Tander and Triple Eight arrived as the clear favourites, but the weather proved to be a serious curveball. Early predictions were that there would be non-stop rain across the week. There was rain, a lot of it, and plenty of mud. But the wet weather was inconsistent and never quite seemed to follow the forecast.

Thursday's two practice sessions, for example, were held in mostly dry conditions. Will Davison dipped straight down to a mid-2m04s in the opening session while van Gisbergen made a quiet start with a 2m05.324s.

In the dedicated co-driver session later

in the day, however, the #97 showed its hand. A bitumen sealant, laid by the Bathurst Regional Council several days earlier, briefly brought the track alive. Tander took full advantage of the grip, setting a 2m04.135s on his second run. That would wind up being the fastest time of the entire weekend.

By Friday there was talk that the race, or at least part of it, might be held in dry conditions. But before that, there was plenty of moisture to contend with. Davison set the dry pace again in the morning, before the rain set in for the afternoon. As the times slipped into the 2m30s, van Gisbergen was able to master the conditions to lead the field and cement his position as favourite for provisional pole.

But a wet qualifying session on Friday evening didn't pan out for the Kiwi. Having gone fourth fastest with his banker, van Gisbergen went out for one last crack at top spot at the end of the session. He was fastest through the first sector, before coming across Macauley Jones at the top of the Mountain. Having seen the Brad Jones Racing Holden run wide at Hell Corner from a distance, van Gisbergen thought Jones had buttoned out of the lap. Jones, struggling for grip, was actually only a tenth down on his best of the session and wanted to press on.

The outcome was an awkward clash that left Jones parked in the wall at the Esses. Van Gisbergen's lap was ruined and he copped a three-place grid penalty for his efforts. That meant even if he topped Saturday's Shootout, the best he could start would be fourth.

As it turned out he never even got that chance. Torrential rain set in two hours

before the single-lap dash for pole on Saturday afternoon and water began to stream down the steep sections of the circuit. Officials did their best to divert it off the track but the rain was relentless. Ultimately they decided the Shootout couldn't go ahead.

The first five rows of the grid were instead determined by Friday qualifying, which meant van Gisbergen was demoted from fourth to seventh on the grid. Cam Waters' provisional pole, meanwhile, turned into the proper pole for the Great Race.

The rain cleared on Saturday night and the track was dry for the race start on Sunday morning. Mostly. There were still pools of standing water on the exit of Hell Corner, which provided an action-packed start to the race. A number of drivers were caught out by the puddles, Jack Perkins and Jamie Whincup left facing the wrong way. Whincup escaped damage but Perkins was clipped by Zak Best. Perkins limped back to the pits but the Best/Thomas Randle car was out on the spot.

There was more drama at the lap-five restart. Zane Goddard went for an ambitious passing move on Greg Murphy at The Chase, outraking himself and firing off the road. After splashing through the mud he bounced back onto the track at the exit of The Chase, where he collided with both Dale Wood and Matt Campbell. A dejected Goddard would later cop a \$10,000 (£5700) fine for his unsafe re-entry.

After a ropery start from pole, co-driver James Moffat was able to claw his way back into contention in the Monster Ford Mustang before handing over to Waters at the end of the second stint. Tander, meanwhile, stayed out of trouble and >>



All smiles: Tander (left) and van Gisbergen

## WILDCARDS TAME THEIR RETURN

While it was Triple Eight's wildcard that finished best of the one-off entries in the Great Race, it was the third Erebus car that made the biggest splash.

The Boost Mobile-backed wildcard pairing of Richie Stanaway and Greg Murphy was an intriguing prospect heading into the weekend, given four-time Great Race winner Murphy hadn't raced at Bathurst since 2014, and Stanaway had walked away from the sport entirely after a tough 2019 season.

It was hard to tell if they'd be up to it, and not just from the outside. Murphy himself was nervous that he'd be too slow. The relief in his voice when he set a respectful

2m05.871s in Thursday's co-driver practice, a full second faster than his famous Lap of the Gods, was obvious.

However it was Stanaway that really starred, particularly in the wet. He qualified the car fifth (which later became fourth once Shane van Gisbergen took his penalty) on Friday and had the Shootout taken place in the wet, he would have been a contender for pole. The fact that he was one of the few drivers that criticised the cancellation spoke volumes.

From that second row start a conservative Murphy lost ground in the first stint, as expected, while the car suffered a more significant



setback when Murphy was punted into a spin at Griffins Bend by Jake Kosteki on lap 61. Still, the pair battled their way to a respectable 11th place at the finish.

The comeback now has Stanaway contemplating a sensational full-time return to Supercars competition: "I would consider coming back if the

opportunity is right. I definitely qualified ahead of some people I shouldn't have, after three years on the couch. I pulled my cool suit out, which I haven't used since my last race, and it smelled like the inside of a museum.

"I don't think there will be anyone else on the grid with that sort of situation..."

was running fifth when he handed over to van Gisbergen.

It was during that stop that Triple Eight fed van Gisbergen into the lane right in the path of Davison, earning the #97 a five-second penalty – which couldn't be served during a safety car pitstop.

Another caution on lap 31 led most of the field, including van Gisbergen, to stop for a third time. But, knowing that a green stop was needed to clear the penalty, Triple Eight left van Gisbergen out during the next caution on lap 42 so that he would at least have track position and clear air to build a margin.

When the race went green on lap 45

**“In classic van Gisbergen style he only did what he needed, ensuring cars copped his dirty air”**

van Gisbergen cleared out, however it was still the Waters/Moffat car that was the effective leader. That was until Brodie Kosteki tried to pass Moffat at The Cutting, but instead tipped the Mustang into a spin that demoted it to 21st on the road.

From that point on the race continued to play into Triple Eight's hands. Van Gisbergen led by eight seconds before stopping to hand the car back to Tander. A safety car the following lap allowed Tander to stay out when everyone else pitted, effectively equalising the strategy and ensuring he was the proper race leader.

Tander continued to lead until lap 101 when he pitted to hand the car over to van Gisbergen for a triple stint to the flag. By lap 119 van Gisbergen had the race well under control with a 17-second gap over second-placed Kosteki. At that point the gap evaporated due to a safety car when Todd Hazelwood crashed at Griffins Bend. That erased van Gisbergen's margin, but as long as he had track position



Mostert and Coulthard claimed second place for Walkinshaw Andretti

he would be hard to beat.

For the final two stints the lead group was van Gisbergen, Kosteki, Chaz Mostert, Broc Feeney and a recovering Waters. In classic van Gisbergen style he only did what he needed, ensuring the cars next in line were always close enough to be copping his dirty air. Feeney's podium hopes disappeared on lap 127 when he outbraked himself at The Chase trying desperately to hold off Waters.

An eighth and final caution on lap 142, prompted by Davison burying his Mustang in the wall at Griffins, changed the running order behind van Gisbergen. Having pitted the lap before the caution, Mostert was racing to get to the control line on the exit of Hell Corner before Kosteki could get in and out of the lane. Mostert ultimately got lucky, Kosteki almost getting out first, only to find his path at the pit exit blocked by a recovery vehicle making its way up Mountain Straight.

Despite Erebus Motorsport's complaints, Mostert was able to keep

second place. Kosteki then dropped off the podium altogether at the lap 147 restart when Waters barged into third place at Griffins.

From there it was a green run home, van Gisbergen crossing the line a second clear of Mostert and Waters to seal a second Great Race crown and a fifth for Tander. All seven of their collective wins have come driving Holdens, making it a fitting end to the brand's non-stop Bathurst 1000 history.

The Kosteki/David Russell entry came home fourth followed by the Feeney/Whincup car, which recovered well after that first-lap spin. Lee Holdsworth and Matt Payne finished sixth, making Payne the best-placed rookie. Anton De Pasquale and Tony D'Alberto came home seventh, an earlier sniff at the podium having been undone by a slow brake rotor change.

Craig Lowndes and rookie Declan Fraser were the best of the three wildcards in the field, their eighth place ensuring Triple Eight ended up with three cars in the Top 10. Bryce Fullwood and Dean Fiore snuck under the radar to come home ninth for Brad Jones Racing.

Erebus Motorsport, meanwhile, managed to repair the Will Brown/Perkins car after its lap-one bingle fast enough that it only lost a lap, which it quickly recovered thanks to the 'lucky dog' rule (lapped runners can unlap themselves). From there Brown and Perkins combined to finish a credible 10th.

Van Gisbergen will head to the penultimate round of the season on the Gold Coast poised to seal the 2022 title, with his series lead out to 567 points thanks to his record-breaking 19 wins. ❧



Suitably named Waters took what turned out to be pole in wet qualifying

STEPHEN V. KING



**RESULTS BATHURST 1000, ROUND 11/13, MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS), 9 OCTOBER (161 LAPS – 621.553 MILES)**

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	<b>Shane van Gisbergen</b> (NZL) <b>Garth Tander</b> (AUS)	Triple Eight Race Engineering / Holden Commodore ZB	6h41m53.7221s
2	<b>Chaz Mostert</b> (AUS) <b>Fabian Coulthard</b> (NZL)	Walkinshaw Andretti United / Holden Commodore ZB	+1.0991s
3	<b>Cameron Waters</b> (AUS) <b>James Moffat</b> (AUS)	Tickford Racing / Ford Mustang	+5.9875s
4	<b>Brodie Kostecki</b> (AUS) <b>David Russell</b> (AUS)	Erebus Motorsport / Holden Commodore ZB	+10.1572s
5	<b>Broc Feeney</b> (AUS) <b>Jamie Whincup</b> (AUS)	Triple Eight Race Engineering / Holden Commodore ZB	+15.0853s
6	<b>Lee Holdsworth</b> (AUS) <b>Matthew Payne</b> (NZL)	Grove Racing / Ford Mustang	+15.7835s
7	<b>Anton De Pasquale</b> (AUS) <b>Tony D'Alberto</b> (AUS)	Dick Johnson Racing / Ford Mustang	+18.8110s
8	<b>Craig Lowndes</b> (AUS) <b>Declan Fraser</b> (AUS)	Triple Eight Race Engineering / Holden Commodore ZB	+19.7505s
9	<b>Bryce Fullwood</b> (AUS) <b>Dean Fiore</b> (AUS)	Brad Jones Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	+21.7230s
10	<b>William Brown</b> (AUS) <b>Jack Perkins</b> (AUS)	Erebus Motorsport / Holden Commodore ZB	+22.6732s
11	<b>Richie Stanaway</b> (NZL) <b>Greg Murphy</b> (NZL)	Erebus Motorsport / Holden Commodore ZB	+23.6628s
12	<b>James Golding</b> (AUS) <b>Dylan O'Keeffe</b> (AUS)	PremiAir Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	+23.8208s
13	<b>Macauley Jones</b> (AUS) <b>Jordan Boys</b> (AUS)	Brad Jones Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	+24.6649s
14	<b>Jack Le Brocq</b> (AUS) <b>Aaron Seton</b> (AUS)	Matt Stone Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	+32.5777s
15	<b>Mark Winterbottom</b> (AUS) <b>Michael Caruso</b> (AUS)	Team 18 / Holden Commodore ZB	+33.6527s
16	<b>Scott Pye</b> (AUS) <b>Tyler Everingham</b> (AUS)	Team 18 / Holden Commodore ZB	+34.3750s
17	<b>Jake Kostecki</b> (AUS) <b>Kurt Kostecki</b> (AUS)	Tickford Racing / Ford Mustang	+54.0462s
18	<b>Matt Chahda</b> (AUS) <b>Jaylyn Robotham</b> (AUS)	Matt Chahda Motorsport / Holden Commodore ZB	+1m58.3461s
19	<b>Tim Slade</b> (AUS) <b>Tim Blanchard</b> (AUS)	Blanchard Racing Team / Ford Mustang	+2m04.7078s
20	<b>Todd Hazelwood</b> (AUS) <b>Jayden Ojeda</b> (AUS)	Matt Stone Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	-2 laps
21	<b>Chris Pither</b> (NZL) <b>Cameron Hill</b> (AUS)	PremiAir Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	-8 laps
22	<b>Nick Percat</b> (AUS) <b>Warren Luff</b> (AUS)	Walkinshaw Andretti United / Holden Commodore ZB	-13 laps
R	<b>Will Davison</b> (AUS) <b>Alex Davison</b> (AUS)	Dick Johnson Racing / Ford Mustang	141 laps
R	<b>Jack Smith</b> (AUS) <b>Jaxon Evans</b> (NZL)	Brad Jones Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	138 laps
R	<b>James Courtney</b> (AUS) <b>Zane Goddard</b> (AUS)	Tickford Racing / Ford Mustang	4 laps
R	<b>Andre Heimgartner</b> (NZL) <b>Dale Wood</b> (AUS)	Brad Jones Racing / Holden Commodore ZB	4 laps
R	<b>David Reynolds</b> (AUS) <b>Matt Campbell</b> (AUS)	Grove Racing / Ford Mustang	4 laps
R	<b>Tom Randle</b> (AUS) <b>Zak Best</b> (AUS)	Tickford Racing / Ford Mustang	0 laps

**QUALIFYING TOP 10 SHOOTOUT**

Cancelled – decided by Friday qualifying

**QUALIFYING 1** Waters 2m23.6168s; **2** Holdsworth 2m23.8296s; **3** Mostert 2m23.8361s; **4** van Gisbergen 2m24.0665s\*; **5** Stanaway 2m24.3527s; **6** W Davison 2m24.4223s; **7** Percat 2m24.5634s; **8** Courtney 2m24.6455s; **9** B Kostecki 2m24.7897s; **10** Brown 2m25.0004s; **11** De Pasquale 2m25.0082s; **12** Heimgartner 2m25.0130s; **13** Golding 2m25.0149s; **14** Whincup 2m25.1274s; **15** Randle 2m25.1522s; **16** Lowndes 2m25.3524s; **17** J Kostecki 2m25.4653s; **18** Reynolds 2m25.4724s; **19** Hazelwood 2m26.0743s; **20** Pye 2m26.0764s; **21** Pither 2m26.4082s; **22** Jones 2m26.6575s; **23** Winterbottom 2m27.0162s; **24** Fullwood 2m27.1369s; **25** Le Brocq 2m27.5240s; **26** Chahda 2m28.2437s; **27** Smith 2m28.3813s; **28** Slade 2m31.3185s.  
\* three-place grid penalty.

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

**1** van Gisbergen 3082; **2** Waters 2515; **3** De Pasquale 2305; **4** Mostert 2280; **5** W Davison 2180; **6** Feeney 2074; **7** Reynolds 1742; **8** B Kostecki 1725; **9** Heimgartner 1592; **10** Winterbottom 1549.

**Winners' average speed** 92.793mph. **Fastest lap** van Gisbergen 2m06.2663s, 110.069mph.

# Van der Linde ends BMW DTM title drought

**DTM**  
**HOCKENHEIM (DEU)**  
**8-9 OCTOBER**  
**ROUND 8/8**

Sheldon van der Linde lived up to the promise he showed in the Class 1 era to clinch the 2022 DTM title and end a six-year championship drought for his employer BMW.

Van der Linde has always been rated highly in the paddock since he made his DTM debut in 2019 but never really had a chance to fight for regular wins, let alone put together a bid for the championship. However, that changed this year as BMW introduced the new M4 GT3 car that addressed the majority of the weaknesses of its bulky predecessor, making it more suitable to a sprint racing championship like the DTM.

It meant the South African was able to score three wins in the first nine races of the year and carry a healthy 11-point lead into the title decider at Hockenheim last weekend.

The Schubert driver would have preferred an easy run converting that championship advantage into a successful title assault, but the weekend tested his abilities both on and off the track as he had to produce two inspired podium drives in order to beat Lucas Auer and Rene Rast to the crown.

The first test of his mental strength came after the opening qualifying when he picked up a 10-place grid penalty for a tyre infringement on his team's part, leaving him 16th in the starting order for the first race. In response, van der Linde put together a champion's drive, breaking inside the top 10 on the opening lap and avoiding



the chaos that led the race to be red-flagged to finish second and limit the damage to race winner Auer.

Van der Linde then had to head to Sunday's final race knowing his championship lead had been diminished to just two points and there was a real chance he could suffer a heart-breaking defeat.

Qualifying boosted his title hopes after he put his car fifth on the grid, six places ahead of Auer in a session truncated by a crash for Red Bull's Felipe Fraga, but there was still all to play for in the main race.

As polesitter Rast lost the lead at the start, van der Linde pulled off a brilliant double pass on the Audis of Dev Gore and Marius Zug on the second lap, and then moved up to third when Clemens Schmid

retired with a puncture.

With Auer struggling with 25kg of success ballast on his car en route to seventh and Rast not scoring the win he needed to depart Audi as a four-time champion, a podium finish was more than enough

for 23-year-old van der Linde to become BMW's first DTM champion since Marco Wittmann in 2016 – Wittmann winning the race ahead of Rast.

The championship was also significant for BMW after a relatively lean period for the Munich-based manufacturer in the DTM, including the two years in the Class 1 engine era from 2019-20 where it played second fiddle to Audi.

The manufacturers' title, however, still went to the Volkswagen Group marque as Audi beat Mercedes by 28 points in the final reckoning.

Unusually for a weekend where the title was decided, much of the headlines were dominated by a multi-car pile-up in Saturday's race that renewed criticism





Sheldon van der Linde (31) clinched DTM title  
Inset: classy crown for new champion

GRUPPECGBH

about the driving standards in the DTM.

A number of incidents took place in the opening laps, but Dennis Olsen's crash was the biggest of all as he smashed into the barrier at Turn 8 at high speed, the impact kicking the engine out of his Porsche and into the path of Nick Cassidy's Ferrari. The errant motor immediately caught fire and the Kiwi was lucky that it didn't penetrate the window of his car, instead falling back on track where it was recovered by the marshals.

The fiery crash was triggered by fellow Porsche driver Thomas Preining and Mercedes' David Schumacher coming to blows in the lead-up to the same corner, with Olsen being hit in the rear by Audi's Ricardo Feller as they tried to take evasive action.

No driver was seriously hurt in any of the incidents that marred the race, but seven cars were damaged beyond repair. That led to a disappointingly diminished grid for Sunday's season finale.

RACHIT THUKRAL



Carnage in first race  
depleted field for second

**RESULTS ROUND 8/8, HOCKENHEIM (DEU), 8-9 OCTOBER RACE 1 (30 LAPS - 85.265 MILES)**

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	<b>Lucas Auer</b> (AUT)	Winward Racing / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	1h34m18.676s
2	<b>Sheldon van der Linde</b> (ZAF)	Schubert Motorsport / BMW M4 GT3	+0.681s
3	<b>Marco Wittmann</b> (DEU)	Walkenhorst Motorsport / BMW M4 GT3	+1.907s
4	<b>Dev Gore</b> (USA)	Team Rosberg / Audi R8 LMS Evo II	+3.099s
5	<b>Rene Rast</b> (DEU)	Abt Sportsline / Audi R8 LMS Evo II	+5.053s
6	<b>Philipp Eng</b> (AUT)	Schubert Motorsport / BMW M4 GT3	+5.849s
7	<b>Mirko Bortolotti</b> (ITA)	GRT Grasser Racing / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	+6.296s
8	<b>Nico Muller</b> (CHE)	Team Rosberg / Audi R8 LMS Evo II	+9.324s
9	<b>Luca Stolz</b> (DEU)	HRT / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	+14.350s
10	<b>Maximilian Buhk</b> (DEU)	Mucke Motorsport / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	+19.652s
11	<b>Maro Engel</b> (DEU)	GruppeM Racing / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	+20.105s
12	<b>Kelvin van der Linde</b> (ZAF)	Abt Sportsline / Audi R8 LMS Evo II	+21.259s
13	<b>Felipe Fraga</b> (BRA)	AF Corse / Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo	+21.822s
14	<b>Christian Engelhart</b> (DEU)	SSR Performance / Porsche 911 GT3-R	+22.486s
15	<b>Maximilian Gotz</b> (DEU)	Winward Racing / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	+31.218s
16	<b>Leon Kohler</b> (DEU)	Walkenhorst Motorsport / BMW M4 GT3	+41.545s
R	<b>Alessio Deledda</b> (ITA)	GRT Grasser Racing / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	19 laps-technical
R	<b>David Schumacher</b> (DEU)	Winward Racing / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Clemens Schmid</b> (AUT)	GRT Grasser Racing / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Thomas Preining</b> (AUT)	Team Bernhard / Porsche 911 GT3-R	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Ricardo Feller</b> (CHE)	Abt Sportsline / Audi R8 LMS Evo II	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Rolf Ineichen</b> (CHE)	GRT Grasser Racing / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Marius Zug</b> (DEU)	Attempto Racing / Audi R8 LMS Evo II	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Nick Cassidy</b> (NZL)	AF Corse / Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Mikael Grenier</b> (CAN)	GruppeM Racing / Mercedes AMG GT3 Evo	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Dennis Olsen</b> (NOR)	SSR Performance / Porsche 911 GT3-R	6 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Arjun Maini</b> (IND)	HRT / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	0 laps-accident damage

**Winner's average speed** 54.244mph. **Fastest lap** **S van der Linde** 1m38.369s, 104.013mph.

**QUALIFYING 1** **1 Auer** 1m36.479s; **2 Stolz** 1m36.540s; **3 Bortolotti** 1m36.627s; **4 Wittmann** 1m36.637s; **5 Engel** 1m36.651s; **6 S van der Linde** 1m36.708s; **7 K van der Linde** 1m36.759s; **8 Preining** 1m36.762s; **9 Rast** 1m36.842s; **10 Muller** 1m36.859s; **11 Schmid** 1m36.880s; **12 Buhk** 1m36.891s; **13 Eng** 1m36.966s; **14 Maini** 1m36.970s; **15 Ineichen** 1m36.979s; **16 Schumacher** 1m37.009s; **17 Cassidy** 1m37.010s; **18 Gore** 1m37.016s; **19 Fraga** 1m37.037s; **20 Olsen** 1m37.135s; **21 Engelhart** 1m37.158s; **22 Feller** 1m37.179s; **23 Kohler** 1m37.268s; **24 Grenier** 1m37.291s; **25 Gotz** 1m37.294s; **26 Zug** 1m37.382s; **27 Deledda** 1m37.667s.

**RACE 2 (34 LAPS - 96.633 MILES)**

**1 Wittmann** 57m03.832s; **2 Rast** +4.425s; **3 S van der Linde** +14.793s; **4 Zug** +15.084s; **5 K van der Linde** +23.821s; **6 Muller** +41.011s; **7 Auer** +41.433s; **8 Kohler** +41.557s; **9 Stolz** +42.360s; **10 Deledda** +58.164s; **11 Gore** +1m30.349s; **12 Feller** +1m32.716s; **R Engel** 23 laps-suspension failure; **R Schmid** 22 laps-puncture; **R Buhk** 13 laps-gearbox damage; **R Eng** 4 laps-tyre damage; **R Bortolotti** 4 laps-tyre damage; **R Engelhart** 1 lap-accident damage; **R Gotz** 0 laps-accident damage.

**Winner's average speed** 101.605mph. **Fastest lap** **Wittmann** 1m38.640s, 103.728mph.

**QUALIFYING 2** **1 Rast** 1m36.817s; **2 Schmid** 1m37.235s; **3 Zug** 1m37.606s; **4 Wittmann** 1m37.816s; **5 Muller** 1m38.336s; **6 S van der Linde** 1m38.522s; **7 Gore** 1m38.638s; **8 Engelhart** 1m38.652s; **9 Gotz** 1m38.658s; **10 Kohler** 1m38.787s; **11 Auer** 1m38.881s; **12 Engel** 1m39.112s; **13 Stolz** 1m39.157s; **14 Deledda** 1m39.260s; **15 Fraga** 1m39.266s; **16 Eng** 1m39.337s; **17 Buhk** 1m39.786s; **18 Bortolotti** 1m40.656s; **19 K van der Linde** 1m41.740s; **20 Feller** 1m43.856s.

**CHAMPIONSHIP** **1 S van der Linde** 164; **2 Auer** 153; **3 Rast** 149; **4 Bortolotti** 121; **5 Preining** 116; **6 Stolz** 108; **7 Muller** 105; **8 Wittmann** 98; **9 K van der Linde** 90; **10 Olsen** 89.

**DTM SEASON  
REVIEW  
10 NOVEMBER  
ISSUE**

The route to the  
title for Sheldon  
van der Linde.

Mercedes-AMG  
claimed IGTC makes'  
title thanks to Craft  
Bamboo victory

MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

## Marciello holds off Fuoco in Brickyard GT thriller

**INTERCONTINENTAL GT CHALLENGE**  
**INDIANAPOLIS (USA)**  
**9 OCTOBER**  
**ROUND 3/4**

Daniel Juncadella, Daniel Morad and Raffaele Marciello came from the back of the grid to win the Indianapolis 8 Hour for Craft Bamboo Racing, clinching Mercedes-AMG the Intercontinental GT Challenge manufacturers' title in the process.

The trio started from 15th after missing out on the top-10 shootout because of an ill-timed red flag in qualifying. But silver-rated Morad put in a mighty performance to rise to second before two hours of the race had been completed.

The Canadian, whose Mercedes ran in the throwback colours of Hong Kong-based ex-Formula 1 team Theodore Racing, chased another car that had started at the back.

Daniel Serra stormed into the lead in AF Corse's Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo 2020 from 18th.

Approaching the halfway mark, the lead swapped hands under bizarre circumstances. Ulysse de Pauw, now in the leading Ferrari, tagged team-mate Pierre Ragues in the sister car into a spin at Turn 1. De Pauw's subsequent drivethrough penalty allowed the Craft Bamboo Mercedes into the lead, with Juncadella out front at half-distance.

A caution period with just over two hours remaining brought the two cars back on a level footing and Antonio Fuoco, now installed in the Ferrari, made the most of an opportunity shortly after the restart. The Italian slipped his Ferrari past Marciello's Mercedes on the infield to take the lead, but the rapid Italian racer didn't take long to return the favour – recapturing the lead from Fuoco with just 90 minutes of racing left on the clock.

As the sun set over Indiana, Fuoco then kept chipping away at Marciello's lead, bringing it down to just half a second with five minutes remaining. The two drivers even briefly went side by side as Fuoco attempted a pass on the final lap, but Marciello had none of it. The German manufacturer captured a fourth consecutive IGTC win after Kyalami, Bathurst and Spa to seal the makes' title.

Fuoco, Serra and de Pauw finished second, with American stalwart Turner Motorsport completing the overall podium thanks to Robby Foley, Michael Dinan and John Edwards. Ragues, Davide Rigon and Miguel Molina finished a troubled run fourth in the second AF Corse Ferrari, with polesitter Winward Racing rounding out the top five.

Further down, honours in the Pro-Am class went to the Bimmerworld trio of Chandler Hull, Bill Auberlen and Richard Heistand. They held off the SunEnergy1 Mercedes driven by Dominik Baumann, Kenny Habul and Martin Konrad, who locked up the IGTC Pro-Am Challenge title in the process.

In addition to the Intercontinental GT Challenge, the event also formed a round of the GT World Challenge America for a number of US teams. While those final results were led by Turner Motorsports, the most notable success story was found in the Pro-Am class. There, the Racers Edge Motorsport duo of Ashton Harrison and Mario Farnbacher, joined by Christina Nielsen, secured the championship with a third-placed finish in class.

DAVEY EUWEMA



Praying to the God of Indy  
or kissing the yard of  
bricks? You decide

MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

# Bell chimes in with a perfect tyre gamble

**NASCAR CUP**  
**CHARLOTTE (USA)**  
**9 OCTOBER**  
**ROUND 32/36**

A desperate gamble paid off handsomely for Christopher Bell as he won his way into the semi-final round of the NASCAR Cup Series playoffs. Unable to advance in the playoffs on points, Bell needed a win in last Sunday's race at the Charlotte Roval, but it appeared unlikely until two late cautions dramatically altered the outcome.

On the first caution, Bell's Joe Gibbs Racing team brought him down pitroad for four new tyres while most lead-lap cars remained on the track. On the restart, Kevin Harvick emerged as the leader as several cars piled up in Turn 1.

Bell had made his way up to second when the caution was displayed again to repair the kerbing in the backstretch chicane.

Bell, on the newer tyres, then powered past Harvick in Turn 1 on the restart to overtime and cruised to the surprise victory as several cars ran off course on the final lap.

"You just got to be there at the end of



Tyre gamble having paid off, Bell lights up his rears in celebration

these things," said Bell. "I keep watching all these races where the fastest car doesn't always win. No secret that road courses have not been our strength this year. We were just there at the right time. We weren't in position to win, we rolled the dice, gambled and it paid off for us."

Joining Bell in the semi-final are Chase Elliott, Ryan Blaney, Joey Logano, Denny Hamlin, William Byron, Ross Chastain and Chase Briscoe.

Reigning champion Kyle Larson was among the four drivers eliminated from further title contention, joining Austin

Cindric, Daniel Suarez and Alex Bowman, who missed his second consecutive race with concussion symptoms.

"I just made way too many mistakes all year long – made another one today," said Larson, who hit the wall in the final stage and required extensive repairs on pitroad. "Ultimately it cost us an opportunity to go chase another championship. Just extremely mad at myself. We'll come back stronger."

Kyle Busch ended up third in the race, AJ Allmendinger was fourth and Justin Haley rounded out the top five.

**JIM UTTER**

# Kristoffersson blows doors off

**WORLD RALLYCROSS**  
**SPA (BEL)**  
**8-9 OCTOBER**  
**ROUND 4/6**

Johan Kristoffersson took significant steps towards securing his fifth World Rallycross Championship with the 32nd and 33rd victories of his stellar career at Spa – although not everything proceeded according to plan.

On Saturday, the Swede played himself in and didn't win any of his heats, the progression race or his semi-final before lining up fourth for the final itself. He made up two places at the start as the



Kristoffersson leads Sunday's final

squabbling Niclas Gronholm and Kevin Hansen focused on each other. Then at the Raidillon hairpin Gronholm triggered a concertina-effect that pushed Kristoffersson's Volkswagen RX1e into leader Timmy Hansen, who was spun around. The reigning champion survived the moment to score an easy win from Kevin Hansen and Gustav Bergstrom.

The following day Kristoffersson really blew the doors off – literally. In his heat he kept his foot in despite a right-rear puncture, which ripped a door off his Volkswagen. But following sterling work from the Kristoffersson Motorsport crew, Kristoffersson charged through the rest of the day, started the final from pole and made a textbook launch to lead all the way. Gronholm made up for his Saturday faux pas to beat Bergstrom to second.

The double win leaves Kristoffersson 41 points clear with two weekends left to play. "The team is delivering a perfect car every time and we worked on our starts today – they weren't the best yesterday," he said. "I have to say, the championship is looking pretty good now."

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### INTERCONTINENTAL GT CHALLENGE INDIANAPOLIS (USA)

Daniel Juncadella/Daniel Morad/  
 Raffaele Marciello  
 Craft Bamboo Racing  
 (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

### NASCAR CUP CHARLOTTE (USA)

Christopher Bell  
 Joe Gibbs Racing  
 (Toyota Camry)

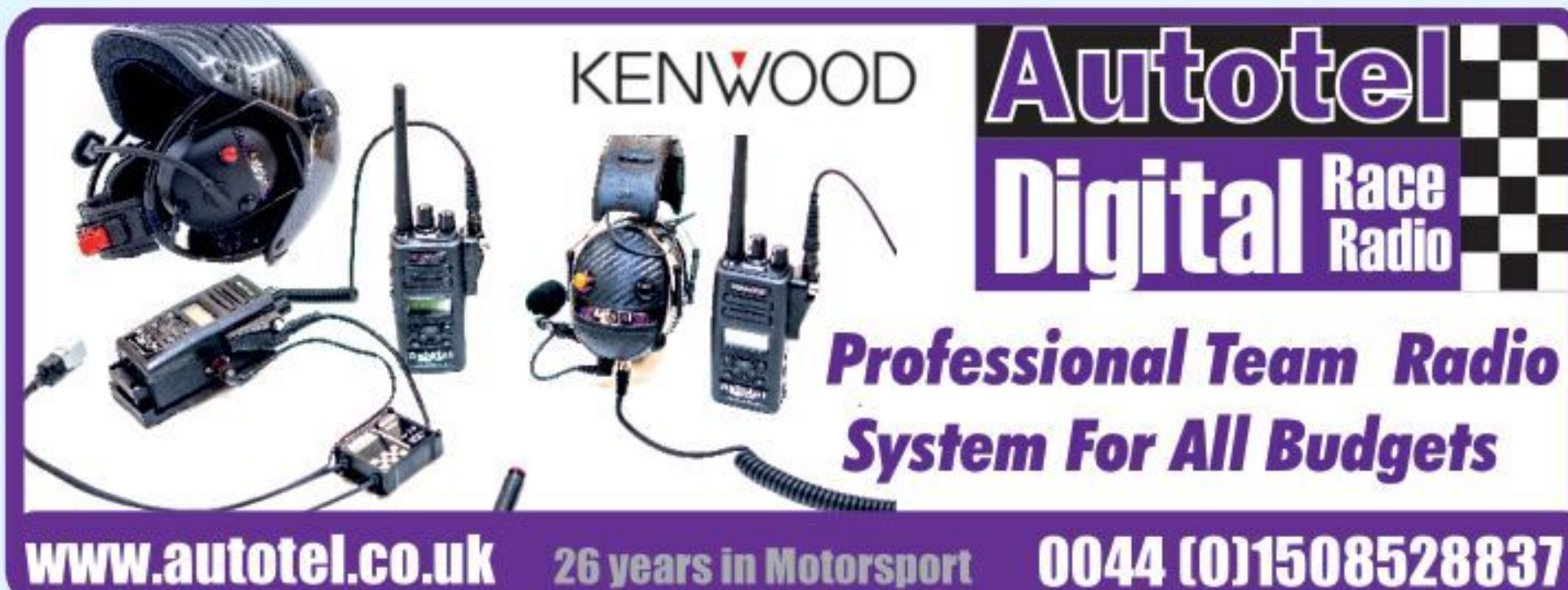
### WORLD RALLYCROSS SPA (BEL)

**Race 1** Johan Kristoffersson  
 Kristoffersson Motorsport  
 (Volkswagen Polo RX1e)  
**Race 2** Johan Kristoffersson  
 Kristoffersson Motorsport  
 (Volkswagen Polo RX1e)

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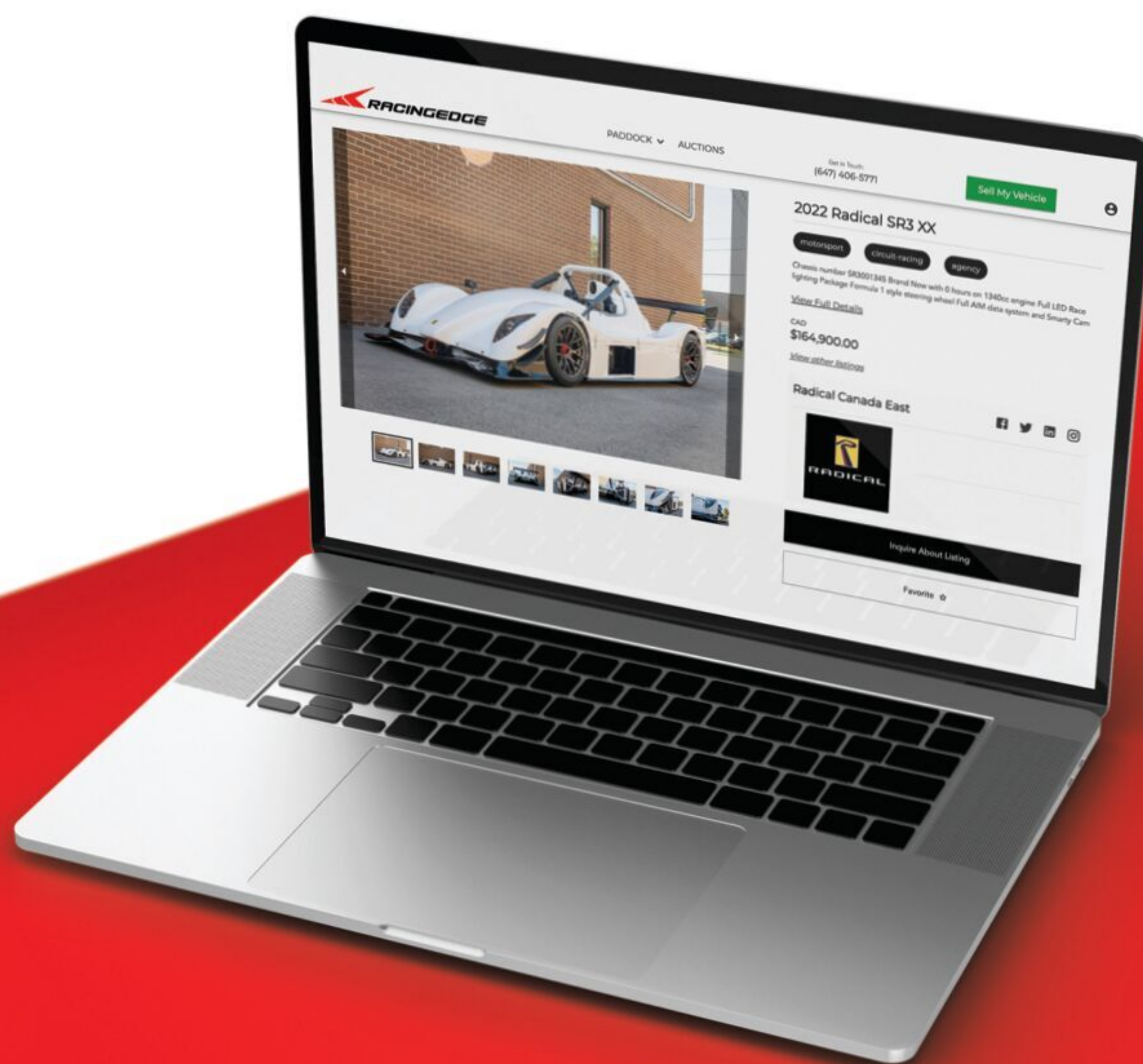


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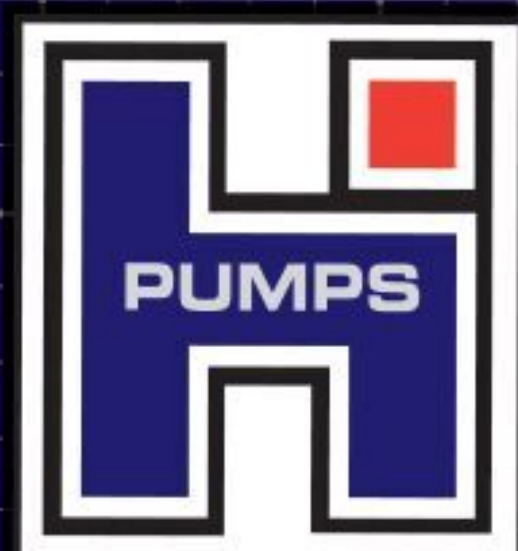


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**BRITISH F4 Dunne lands title in bizarre style**

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JAMES ROBERTS

# BRSCC launches new Audi TT Cup series

## BRSCC

The British Racing & Sports Car Club has launched a new Audi TT Cup Racing category for next year, which is open to Mk2 models of the German sportscar.

Rollcage manufacturer SW Motorsports has developed a comprehensive parts kit that allows cars to be built for the series for less than £12,000. Manual or DSG turbocharged two-litre TFSI models of the 250bhp front-wheel-drive car can compete.

Even before the category was launched publicly, there was already strong interest with 11 cars either built or in the process of being finished – many of these having been created by BRSCC partners or suppliers.

The club's chief operating officer Paul McErlean believes the "stunning" cars will be a hit and can fill the gap between entry level and more expensive categories. "The car in terms of performance is quite astonishing for the cost," he said.

"The cars are incredible – the kit is £8000 and that's everything, splitters, spoilers, differential, rollers, suspension, it's [the value] blown us away.

"We wanted to find that middle market car that sits above a Mazda and a Compact, and sits below a TCR car and I think this is it. It's right for this period we're going through economically and everyone gets out of the car with a smile on their face. Everyone's focus is to build this as quickly and successfully as possible."

Shaun Woods of SW Motorsports added: "After designing and fitting cages to a few Audi TTs, I approached the BRSCC to discuss whether they'd be interested in supporting a single-make race series based on the Mk2 version.

"When we then started looking into it more closely, we concluded that by working with some fantastic technical partners, and by managing the build costs properly, complete race cars could be built for sub-£12k."

Given the interest, the series is set to feature standalone grids from the start of next season. It is the second new category launched by the BRSCC this month, following the announcement of its new electric single-seater Formula Foundation-E concept last week.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

# BROWN TO RACE LEON AS TCR UK BACK TO BRSCC

## TCR UK

Mini Challenge frontrunner Lewis Brown will make his TCR UK debut later this month ahead of a planned full campaign next year.

Brown will join Chameleon Motorsport's expanded line-up of Cupra Leon Competition TCRs (below) for the Snetterton finale on 23 October alongside team principal Neil Trotter, who switches from the older Cupra TCR model.

Brown finished third in the premier JCW class of last year's Mini Challenge but slipped to 10th in this season's standings. He took six race victories in a five-year spell in the category after winning the 2017 Ginetta GT5 Challenge.

"It's undoubtedly going to be a step up from the Mini Challenge," said Brown. "Going from the JCW to effectively a touring car is going to throw a lot of learning curves at me as a driver, but I'm really excited for the challenge.

"Snetterton should be a strong track for the Cupra – the big straights and fast corners will suit the car. So, paired with the confidence I already have in the car, we'll be targeting top-five finishes and, if I can get on the podium, even better."

TCR UK will return to being administered by the British Racing & Sports Car Club in 2023 after two years with Club Time Attack. It has announced provisional dates for a seven-round calendar beginning at Snetterton in April and featuring a return to Knockhill for the first time since its inaugural season in 2018.

MARK PAULSON



JEFF BLOXHAM

# Dunne: 'Right decision' to miss Brands F4

## BRITISH F4

Alex Dunne says the decision to skip the Brands Hatch British Formula 4 finale and instead race at Monza paid off as he provisionally sealed the title as well as climbing to second in the Italian standings.

Hitech GP driver Dunne could not quite clinch the British crown at the penultimate event at Silverstone last month. But with nearest rival Oliver Gray needing to win all three contests in Kent and start at the back in the reversed-grid race – to get the maximum points for places gained – it was very unlikely Dunne would miss out.

When Carlin racer Gray qualified second, Dunne was finally crowned, although the result remains provisional with a National Court appeal pending into a collision between the pair at Silverstone.

"There's a lot of people in the past that have raced in this championship that are top-level drivers now so winning such a prestigious championship, and winning it by such a margin, with three races to go,



British F4 title is heading Dunne's way even after missing final round



JEP/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

is special," said Dunne after taking the title.

"It definitely was the right decision [to skip Brands]. It's good for the CV as well to be top three in the Italian championship and win the British championship so I think it was a better choice for my career."

Heavy rain at Monza meant the second race was suspended and the third was not held, but Dunne still moved to second in the standings with runner-up in race one.

He admitted it was "disappointing" to miss Brands and to not be able to properly celebrate his success. "I received a couple of videos of my cardboard cutout having some

fun at the party, which was quite funny, but I would've loved to have been there," he said.

Dunne is now waiting to see if he gets through to the world final of the Ferrari Driver Academy scouting programme, after taking part in an event in Italy last month. The outcome of that will influence his 2023 plans, with Dunne saying: "I think definitely it will be F3 of some form but I don't really know what championship."

Meanwhile, Carlin has announced its first driver for the 2023 British F4 campaign: India-born Singaporean karter Dion Gowda.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

## Maiden Brazil Scholarship winner announced



Martins will compete in the Formula Ford Festival

### FF1600 FESTIVAL

Wallace Martins has been named as the inaugural winner of the Team Brazil Scholarship, and will race at this year's Formula Ford Festival.

The 19-year-old, a Brazilian Formula Vee champion who has also raced in Formula Delta in his home country, beat

five other finalists to win the prize. The programme has been put together by two-time Castle Combe FF1600 champion Luke Cooper and his wife, as well as his family Swift Cooper team.

Martins will conduct a simulator session at iZone before three days of testing at the wheel of a Swift SC20 ahead of the Festival,

which takes place next weekend at Brands Hatch.

Cooper said: "This is going to be completely new for him and he's not going to have much time to get used to the car in comparison to most other people. The main goal is to make it into the final and see what happens from there."

**STEFAN MACKLEY**

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# Davidson to race 2 Seas Mercedes at Donington

## BRITISH GT

Graham Davidson will join 2 Seas Motorsport for the final round of the British GT season at Donington Park this weekend – the third different team he has driven for this year.

The 2019 overall GT3 champion will race a Mercedes-AMG alongside Aaron Walker, the team's junior driver who has been competing in Fiesta Junior this season, for the two-hour race.

Davidson previously raced in the opening round at Oulton Park with Team Rocket RJN's McLaren 720S GT3, taking a best result of sixth, before joining Paddock Motorsport for the races at Snetterton and Spa in its McLaren.

Elsewhere, ex-Formula E driver Alexander Sims continues in Century Motorsport's BMW after his podium at Brands Hatch, with new team-mate and Ginetta graduate Darren Leung.



Newly crowned GT Cup champions Simon Orange and Michael O'Brien will race their McLaren 720S (see p75), while Redline's Alex Malykhin and James Dorlin, who clinched the Silver-Am championship at the previous Brands Hatch round, have opted to miss the event.

The RAM Racing Mercedes of John Ferguson and Ulysse De Pauw will also be absent after Ferguson's practice crash at Brands.

➔ P67 OPINION

# Clarke to return to racing as 14 cars expected for GB4 finale

## GB4

Oliver Clarke will return to racing for the first time since 2020 at Donington Park this weekend in the GB4 Championship with Hillspeed, as a season high of at least 14 cars is expected for the final round.

The 19-year-old raced with the squad in the 2020 British F3 Championship, now known as GB3, finishing eighth in the standings with two podiums to his name. Since then, he's been on the sidelines apart from a number of test days.

"I'm buzzing to be back racing, especially with the Hillspeed guys, and looking forward to doing my bit in trying to help

win the GB4 teams' championship," said the Briton. "When I tested the car at Donington I was quick out of the box, even though I've been on the sidelines for some time, so I'm feeling pretty confident we should be able to challenge up at the front."

Other new additions to the grid will be Ginetta Junior runner-up Will Macintyre, who joins Elite Motorsport for a "learning" weekend as he eyes a single-seater switch next year, and fellow Junior driver Aqil Alibhai, the South African with new team Scorpio Motorsport for the final three races.

Meanwhile, in GB3, Japan's Ayato Iwasaki will join Elite for Donington after contesting two rounds of Japanese F4.



## IN THE HEADLINES

### GINETTA DRIVING BANS

Ginetta Junior race winner Sonny Smith became the second driver from R Racing's stable to earn an automatic three-month ban this year for notching up 12 points on his licence. Smith was forced onto the sidelines for last weekend's Brands Hatch finale after being disqualified and handed four points for a collision last time out at Silverstone. Assetto driver Harri Reynolds also reached 12 points on his licence during the course of the Kent weekend, having "braketested" Freddie Slater after taking the flag in race one.

### SCOTTISH FF1600 CHAMP

Michael Gray has been confirmed as the Scottish Formula Ford 1600 champion after the final scheduled round of the season was called off due to a lack of numbers. Having not run since the away round at Croft in May, the future of the single-seater category in Scotland has been placed in doubt. Despite this, Gray was able to celebrate his first FF1600 title after winning four of the five races.

### McLAREN CENTRE STAGE

A number of McLaren Formula 1 cars will appear at this year's Velocity International event at Laguna Seca in the US, including Ayrton Senna's 1990 title-winning car, MP4/5B-07, and Alain Prost's MP4/2B-3, which won the 1985 crown. Guest drivers will include 1978 F1 world champion Mario Andretti and two-time champion Mika Hakkinen.

### HILTON'S ALFA IN ACTION

Mike Hilton debuted his Alfa Romeo 4C in the final round of the Alfa Romeo Championship at Oulton Park last weekend. The rear-engined sportscar (below) is the only one of its kind racing in the UK and had been built, but never raced, by its previous owner. Hilton has only had it for a short time and his first serious drive in it was a wet test session at Oulton on the Friday. He was fourth in Saturday's race due to a sticking gearbox after starting on pole.





## Norman Lackford 1944-2022

### OBITUARY

One of club racing's greatest stalwarts, Norman Lackford died on 6 October, peacefully at home with wife Rachel at his side. He had battled cancer since 2017, but competed stoically while undergoing every possible treatment to complete a 50-plus year career.

Norman's enthusiasm and drive was infectious. Racer and sportscar engineer brother Robin, 13 years his junior, recalls him "dragging me to Crystal Palace as a six-year-old. That day 'ruined' the rest of my life..."

Electro-mechanical engineer Norman was working for PA company Tannoy when he started racing a one-litre Ford Anglia in 1969. He subsequently built an Escort around its MAE engine, but it was for the unusual Fiat 850 coupe – Imp then 1300cc BDA-powered – that Special

Saloon fanatics will remember him.

"He bought a single-seater [a Formula 3 Chevron B9], threw the chassis away and we built a spaceframe centre section to take its corners," said Robin. "It wasn't good but, after it caught fire, we rebuilt it and got it going well. We'd started with a body from Derek Walker's moulds, then went on a Strand Fibreglass course and made our own. It was all funny shapes."

In the 1990s, Norman – who ran the Greater London Council's school security department – and Rachel relocated from Orpington to West Cornwall. There they built their Saxon sports-racer, debuted in 1996 and, with Castle Combe now their local circuit, won its Special GT class title three times.

"Rachel was the backbone of Norman's racing," said Robin. "If the car wanted something, she'd go without



shoes!" They ultimately switched to Radicals, campaigning a Prosport and a PR6 at Castle Combe and in 750 Motor Club Bikesports and Open Sportscar Series events until 2021. There was an emotional sendoff at Combe last year when Norman raced there for the final time.

**MARCUS PYE**

## MSV fined for failings over fatal Oulton bike crash

### MOTORSPORT VISION

Oulton Park operator MotorSport Vision has been fined over £400,000 for safety failings following the death of a motorbike rider during a trackday at the Cheshire circuit nine years ago.

Michael Carson was killed on 5 October 2013 when, having fallen from his bike at the blind Hill Top section of track between Island Hairpin and

the Hislops chicane following contact with another rider, he was then struck by a number of bikes. Four other riders were hurt in the incident with two suffering life-changing injuries.

Cheshire West and Chester Council brought the prosecution to Chester Crown Court alleging that MSV failed to respond to a similar incident in May that year when a rider had fallen at the same part of the track, although he was not hit.

There were no marshals in that area and CCTV cameras were deemed inadequate.

MSV pleaded guilty to a breach of health and safety law and was fined £158,000 and ordered to pay £250,000 in prosecution costs.

MSV says it has made a number of improvements since the accident. In a statement, it said: "We are constantly reviewing our operational and safety procedures and ensure

that these evolve in line with advances in technology. Similarly, we seek to learn from any incidents that inevitably do take place to determine if changes are required. It is a matter of deep regret that on this occasion in May 2013 that opportunity was missed. We have learned from this and continue to strive to offer the safest possible venues for the enjoyment of all motorsport activities."

# Newbery's livery to transform in Brands fundraiser

## LEGENDS

The livery of James Newbery's Legends car is set to undergo a dramatic transformation during the course of the category's Brands Hatch finale next month as part of a fundraising initiative for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

Newbery's distinctive car has sported the colours of the Mater character from Disney's film *Cars* this year but these will be gradually tweaked throughout the course of the six races in Kent on 5-6 November.

He hopes to raise £2500 for MND research, a cause that is close to Newbery's heart as his father Paddy died from the disease in 2020.

"We've spent a long time working on our plans for the Brands Hatch finale, and we think what we're doing with #2Mater is pretty exciting, will be a lot of fun for the fans to watch – especially all of the kids – and is certainly



something unique as well," he said. "It's going to take a lot of work across the weekend for our family-run team, but we're buzzing to see how it all turns out. Hopefully as we've planned!"

"Motor Neurone Disease is something which has directly impacted my family, losing my father two years ago to this awful, indiscriminate disease, and so supporting MNDA is something we've been doing to try and help raise awareness.

"We're very much looking forward to Brands Hatch and hopeful plenty of fans will dig deep and help us to raise our target of £2500."

# Vee champion Pollard plots European historic outings

## 750MC

Formula Vee champion Craig Pollard expects to defend his title in 2023 but is also eyeing outings in historic monoposto racing in Europe.

The 29-year-old from Bury St Edmunds secured his second FVee title at Cadwell Park last month, ahead of this weekend's Mallory Park finale, having largely dominated the season in the ex-Graham Gant championship-winning WEV.

Finance director Pollard said: "My father restored Jaguar E-types and would drive

me down to Angoulême in France for the historic street race there when I was a kid, so I've always been interested in historics.

"We are potentially looking at purchasing a slicks-and-wings Monoposto car and doing a couple of races – the chance to race at places like Zandvoort or Spa would be cool and it would be a few weekends away from the pressures of a championship.

"But it won't be a full season, so it makes sense to keep going in Vees to keep me fully sharp."

CARL MCKELLAR



## IN THE HEADLINES

### BIRD FLIES TO JERSEY WIN

GT racer Frank Bird returned to rallying last weekend to win the Jersey Rally in his Ford Fiesta Rally2. Bird and co-driver Jack Morton dominated the closed-road event to finish well clear of the Ford Escort Mk2 of Richard Fishleigh and Jason McCullough. Bird said: "It was such a demanding two days with 26 stages that were only just wide enough for the car in places."

### DONEGAL RALLY POSTPONED

Following the tragic explosion at a filling station in Creeslough in County Donegal, Saturday's Donegal Harvest Rally was postponed. A statement from the Donegal Motor Club said: "In light of the serious incident, Donegal Motor Club, in consultation with Motorsport Ireland, has decided to postpone the 2022 Donegal Harvest Rally. Our thoughts are with all who have been affected at this time." One of the stages was due to start close to Creeslough.

### MINI CALENDAR IS REVEALED

The top JCW class of the Mini Challenge will continue to appear at seven of the 10 British Touring Car events next year after its provisional 2023 calendar was announced. At the Thruxton, Croft and Donington Park Grand Prix rounds, it will be replaced by the Coopers of the Mini Challenge Trophy, which will also appear at both Brands Hatch Truck events and Snetterton and Silverstone British Automobile Racing Club meetings.

### COATES'S ROUSE TRIBUTE

Mini Challenge racer Max Coates paid tribute to his friend Chrissy Rouse, who was killed following a British Superbike accident at Donington Park, by changing his number to Rouse's 69 (below) for the Brands Hatch event last weekend. Rouse died four days after the Donington incident, when he crashed heavily and was struck by a following rider. Coates just missed out on taking a poignant podium in the final race.



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# All to play for at Donington

*The final rounds of British GT, GB3 and GB4 take place this weekend, with championships up for grabs in all of them*

STEFAN MACKLEY

**“W**e’re totally committed to getting it done.” Ian Loggie’s comment in the wake of last month’s British GT meeting at Brands Hatch will finally be put to the test this weekend, as the concluding round of the 2022 season takes place.

The RAM Racing Mercedes-AMG driver is in prime position to take the coveted GT3 crown at Donington Park, with a healthy 24.5-point lead over his nearest rivals, no success penalty to serve and GT ace Jules Gounon alongside him again after recovering from a back injury.

It’s a foregone conclusion, right? Well, not if you’re Adam Balon and Sandy Mitchell, who sit second in the standings. They brought themselves firmly into contention after finishing runner-up last time out at Brands – despite Balon being tipped into a spin by Loggie – but it means the Barwell Lamborghini Huracan crew will need to serve a 15-second success penalty during the two-hour race. Factor in that Loggie only needs to finish fifth to guarantee himself the title even if Mitchell/Balon win and it means luck and/or misfortune will need to play a part for Mitchell to add to his 2020 success. “Obviously, with us having a success penalty and the Loggie car not having one we need to be quite a lot quicker or rely on them having an issue or drama,” admits Mitchell.

Also in the running are James Cottingham/Lewis Williamson

**“We need to be quite a lot quicker or rely on them having an issue or drama”**

(2 Seas Mercedes) and Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (Enduro McLaren 720S), but being 33 and 34 points behind respectively, and with only 37.5 available, it would take a minor miracle for either crew to emerge on top.

With that being said, the Enduro pairing did take victory at the circuit earlier in the year, but will need to overcome a 20s success penalty following their win at Brands, while Cottingham/Williamson will have to triumph for the first time this season to stand any chance.

On paper, the title battle is closer in the GT4 class, with the Newbridge Aston Martin of Matt Topham and Darren Turner top of the standings, but by only 12.5 points from Sennan Fielding and Richard Williams (Steller Audi R8 LMS). The two leading crews finished first and second respectively at Brands, so will have 20s

and 15s of success penalties to serve. But being a Pro-Am pairing means Topham/Turner will actually serve less time in the pits than the all-Silver line-up of Fielding/Williams and that could be crucial should a caution period appear at the ‘right’ moment.

Also in the running is the R Racing Aston of Josh Miller and Jamie Day, which sits 20.5 points behind but, with no success penalties to serve, it means the Silver pairing have a realistic shot at glory, as all three crews have two victories to their names this season.

It’s not just in British GT where titles will be decided at Donington, as the GB3 and GB4 championships also go down to the wire. In the former, just 16.5 points separate Luke Browning and Joel Granfors, who have traded the top spot of the table throughout the season. It was Granfors who held the lead heading into the Brands meeting by 11.5 points, but a non-score in the full-reversed-grid race has put him on the back foot.

“I think it’s going to go down to the last race unless someone DNFs,” says the Swede. “We were quick at Donington last time with a pole so hopefully we can keep the pace that we have.”

While the Fortec driver did claim a pole earlier in the year at the venue, he couldn’t convert it into a win as both he and Browning were eliminated in the same accident. Browning, meanwhile, leads having amassed five wins compared with just two for Granfors, but the Hitech GP driver has had to battle back after a difficult Silverstone event where the team was thrown out of qualifying for a technical infringement. Even with 35 points available to the winner in each of the first two races, the title could well be decided by the final full-reversed-grid encounter, with points on offer for each position gained – an area where Granfors has already accrued 9.5 more points than Browning.

In GB4, any one of five drivers are still within a shot of the title, although realistically the battle is between Nikolas Taylor and Max Marzorati, with the gap between the pair only 31 points – less than a race win.

But Marzorati may need to do something he’s not done yet this season and win – the Hillspeed driver having yet to take a single victory, instead relying on 10 podiums and retirements from others to keep himself in contention. In contrast, Taylor has amassed nine wins, but three retirements already this year means the Fortec driver can’t afford another slip-up.

Kevin Mills Racing duo Jarrod Waberski and Tom Mills sit 62 and 91 points behind, respectively, while Elite’s Jack Sherwood is still on paper in with a shot, albeit 97 points in arrears. With a prize fund of £50,000 going to the inaugural champion, though, expect things to heat up with a thrilling weekend of championship battles – that also includes deciders for the Ginetta GT5 Challenge and Porsche Sprint Challenge GB – on the horizon. 🏁

TOCA SUPPORTS BRANDS HATCH 8-9 OCTOBER

# Title glory for Jewiss as Martin crashes

## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

It was not how Kiern Jewiss wanted to secure the Porsche Carrera Cup GB title. Red flags flying after closest rival Will Martin mounted the barriers exiting Paddock Hill Bend meant there was not the usual fanfare as he crossed the line, but it was still another impressive weekend for the Team Parker racer.

Jewiss did lose out to fellow front-row starter Gus Burton off the line in the opener but responded instantly, diving inside the Century machine in the tiniest of gaps towards Druids to retake the lead.

But there was no time for Burton to retaliate when a lengthy safety car period followed with four cars colliding out of Graham Hill Bend. Then, just after the restart, there was contact between Theo Edgerton and Martin for a second time, resulting in Martin spearing backwards into the tyres and mounting them, a push for which Edgerton was disqualified.

Thankfully, Martin and the nearby marshals were all OK and the Richardson Racing driver was even back out again later in the day. "It's super frustrating but it's part of racing – there was nothing I could do," he said philosophically.



Jewiss twice topped the Pro class, while Martin was sent into the tyres

Red flags flew and, with the race not being restarted, it was an anticlimactic way for Jewiss to seal the title. "It doesn't feel right – there was no crossing the line with a P1 pitboard and seeing the team celebrating," he admitted. "I made a typical bad start but I redeemed myself very quickly. I didn't need to go for it [the move on Burton] but I wanted to do it – I made the mistake in F4 [when winning the 2018 title] of backing down and I lost too many points."

Jewiss could not quite end the year with a win, either. Another bold move on Burton up the inside of Druids resulted in contact this time but, while he moved into third, his steering was damaged. He did pick off Adam Smalley on lap two but had no answer to Charles Rainford, the Pro-Am runner taking a remarkable overall win for the small CCK Motorsport squad.



"To go and beat the big boys is a dream come true," said Rainford. "It wasn't like those guys were battling, I had to work for it with the safety car restart."

That meant seven different drivers were victorious in another entertaining campaign, but Jewiss's five wins ensured that he had the most to celebrate, despite the unusual circumstances.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

# Weller is the winner as Denning stars again in Minis

## MINI CHALLENGE

While Sam Weller clinched the title in the first race after an excellent campaign, rookie Mini Challenge sensation Alex Denning kept up his late-season record as the man in form at Brands Hatch with two wins.

Irish youngster Denning built a big

margin on the opening lap of race one as Jack Mitchell made some superb outside passes to move into second. Ronan Pearson was third ahead of Hybrid Tune racer Weller, who did enough to secure the crown.

Denning had it much tougher at the start of race two. A wobble for the Graves Motorsport man at Paddock allowed

fast-starting Weller in front, then Mitchell got the lead out of Druids, before Denning repassed both of them into Hawthorn. After an early safety car, Denning built an enormous lead while the smoking Mini of Weller kept Mitchell at bay, as a misfire for Pearson allowed Sam Smith into fourth.

Ex-Mazda MX-5 king Smith was on a mission in the reversed-grid finale, taking to the grass into Paddock at the start to move up into second behind Pearson. Another safety car outing preceded a sudden engine drama for Pearson, and Mitchell jumped both Weller and Smith to move into the lead. Mitchell's JW Bird Motorsport car was hanging on from the Hybrid Tune machine of Smith when the ex-BTCC and GT racer ran wide onto the grass at Sheene Curve. With red flags curtailing the Minis early for a second time of the weekend, it was Smith ahead, from Mitchell, Weller and Max Coates.

MARCUS SIMMONS



Hybrid Tune driver Weller kept up his remarkable consistency right to the finish

JEP  
motorsport  
IMAGES

# Kellett crowned, but no final win

## GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

There was an unfamiliar pattern to the last-ever Ginetta GT4 Supercup weekend as James Kellett failed to win at least one race at an event for the first time this year. But he did win the largest prize of them all as he wrapped up the title in a shortened opener.

After qualifying ended early with Tom Emson fastest, Kellett was determined to seal the crown in style. He went for a bold move around the outside at Hawthorn, but

Emson was having none of it. Slight contact meant Kellett was delayed, with Aston Millar sneaking through. "If I had been a bit more brave, it would've worked but I didn't want to risk too much," said Kellett. "If it was at the start of the year, I would've had my elbows out more!"

DTO Motorsport driver Millar's tenure in second place was shortlived as he ran wide at Westfield on the next lap and Kellett was back ahead, the grass in Millar's radiator sending him to a smoky finish. Kellett was then denied the chance to attack again when a red flag for a heavy crash for Dan Morris ended the race early, leaving the new champion "frustrated".

Kellett was thwarted again in race two as Emson doubled up, before Millar took his maiden series win in its finale with a robust defence from Kellett. "I think this weekend it finally clicked," said Millar.

Further back, there was a close conclusion to the G55 Pro title battle, with Luke Reade sneaking class success by three points.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Final GT4 Supercup title went to Kellett

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

# Loake ends F4 year on a high

## BRITISH F4

No Alex Dunne (see News) meant there was a chance for others to shine in the British Formula 4 champion's absence and it was Joseph Loake who took that opportunity to end his season on a high.

After Oliver Gray's faint title hopes evaporated when he qualified on the front row, he was unable to topple JHR racer Loake in a processional first contest. The only change inside the top six after the opening lap came when Louis Sharp's Carlin machine came to a smoky halt.

It was a similar story for Loake in the finale as he again put in an impressive

display to end the year with the most victories aside from Dunne, although Sharp passing Gray for second late on denied Loake fourth in the standings.

The partially reversed-grid race was much closer, however. Front-row starter Eduardo Coseteng jumped polesitter Michael Shin off the line but Shin sprinted up to the rear of Coseteng in the closing stages. He was just 0.276 seconds behind at the flag, but was unable to deny more success for Hitech – and Coseteng's maiden win after two years – on the weekend when the team could finally celebrate Dunne's domination.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



JHR driver Loake grabbed two wins from pole at Brands

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## RACE RESULTS

### PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

**Race 1 (7 laps) 1 Kiern Jewiss;** 2 Gus Burton +0.348s; 3 Adam Smalley; 4 Charles Rainford; 5 Micah Stanley; 6 Jake Giddings.

**Fastest lap** Jewiss 1m43.699s (84.47mph).

**Pole** Jewiss. **Starters** 20.

**Race 2 (15 laps) 1 Rainford;** 2 Jewiss +2.159s; 3 Smalley; 4 Giddings; 5 Oliver White; 6 Will Martin. **FL** Jewiss 1m26.662s (101.08mph).

**P** Rainford. **S** 18.

**Points 1 Jewiss 141;** 2 Smalley 103; 3 Martin 97; 4 Burton 87; 5 Theo Edgerton 69; 6 Matthew Graham 62.

### MINI CHALLENGE

**Race 1 (10 laps) 1 Alex Denning;** 2 Jack Mitchell +0.897s; 3 Ronan Pearson; 4 Sam Weller; 5 Joe Tanner; 6 Sam Smith. **FL** Denning 1m35.175s (92.03mph). **P** Denning. **S** 26.

**Race 2 (12 laps) 1 Denning;** 2 Weller +8.424s; 3 Mitchell; 4 Smith; 5 Lewis Brown; 6 Pearson. **FL** Denning 1m34.937s (92.27mph). **P** Denning. **S** 26.

**Race 3 (8 laps) 1 Smith;** 2 Mitchell +0.267s; 3 Weller; 4 Max Coates; 5 Jack Davidson; 6 Denning. **FL** Smith 1m35.830s (91.41mph). **P** Pearson. **S** 26.

**Points 1 Weller 797;** 2 Denning 747; 3 Mitchell 728; 4 Pearson 704; 5 Jason Lockwood 694; 6 Davidson 543.

### GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

**Race 1 (6 laps) 1 Tom Emson;** 2 James Kellett +0.776s; 3 Reece Somerfield; 4 Henry Dawes; 5 Blake Angliss; 6 Wesley Pearce. **FL** Kellett 1m27.759s (99.81mph). **P** Emson. **S** 16.

**Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Emson;** 2 Kellett +0.287s; 3 Somerfield; 4 Aston Millar; 5 Dawes; 6 Darren Leung. **FL** Kellett 1m28.249s (99.26mph). **P** Emson. **S** 16.

**Race 3 (6 laps) 1 Millar;** 2 Kellett +0.237s; 3 Emson; 4 Leung; 5 Pearce; 6 James Taylor. **FL** Emson 1m29.496s (97.87mph). **P** Millar. **S** 16.

**Points 1 Kellett 610;** 2 Emson 531; 3 Millar 455; 4 Dawes 325; 5 Somerfield 220; 6 Josh Rattican 90.

### BRITISH FORMULA 4

**Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Joseph Loake;** 2 Oliver Gray +2.893s; 3 Daniel Guinchard; 4 Ugo Ugochukwu; 5 Edward Pearson; 6 Aiden Neate. **FL** Loake 1m24.409s (103.77mph). **P** Loake. **S** 19.

**Race 2 (12 laps) 1 Eduardo Coseteng;** 2 Michael Shin +0.276s; 3 Louis Sharp; 4 Georgi Dimitrov; 5 Ugochukwu; 6 Neate. **FL** Coseteng 1m25.017s (103.03mph). **P** Shin. **S** 19.

**Race 3 (11 laps) 1 Loake;** 2 Sharp +1.941s; 3 Gray; 4 Neate; 5 Pearson; 6 Ugochukwu. **FL** Loake 1m25.047s (103.00mph). **P** Loake. **S** 19.

**Points 1 Alex Dunne 412;** 2 Gray 343; 3 Ugochukwu 290; 4 Sharp 272; 5 Loake 271; 6 Neate 234.

### GINETTA JUNIOR

**Race 1 (5 laps) 1 Liam McNeilly;** 2 Josh Rowledge +1.487s; 3 Aqil Alibhai; 4 William Macintyre; 5 Freddie Slater; 6 Maurice Henry. **FL** McNeilly 1m47.884s (81.19mph). **P** McNeilly. **S** 23.

**Race 2 (11 laps) 1 McNeilly;** 2 Macintyre +4.746s; 3 Luke Watts; 4 Joe Warhurst; 5 Alibhai; 6 Slater. **FL** McNeilly 1m48.339s (80.85mph). **P** McNeilly. **S** 22.

**Race 3 (9 laps) 1 Macintyre;** 2 McNeilly +0.167s; 3 Kanato Le; 4 Alibhai; 5 Warhurst; 6 McKenzie Douglass. **FL** Warhurst 1m48.034s (81.08mph). **P** McNeilly. **S** 20.

**Points 1 Rowledge 652;** 2 Macintyre 611; 3 McNeilly 514; 4 Harri Reynolds 443; 5 Warhurst 427; 6 Alibhai 399.

TOCA SUPPORTS BRANDS HATCH 8-9 OCTOBER

# Rowledge champion ahead of final thrillers

## GINETTA JUNIOR

After producing 15 seasons of entertainment, there was still time for two more thrilling Ginetta Junior races as the category marked its final appearance on the British Touring Car support bill at Brands Hatch. But there was to be no late drama in the title battle as Josh Rowledge sealed the championship in the opener.

The R Racing driver made sure of the crown with second place in a first race that proved to be a letdown. The first attempt was red-flagged when Kanato Le and Finn Harrison tangled at Druids and there was then a lengthy safety car period on the restart with Shravan Shanmugavel off at the same corner. That left a single-lap sprint to the flag, which ended with Fox Motorsport's Liam McNeilly holding off Rowledge. "I'm speechless – it's a different feeling to anything else!" said the new champion.

While Rowledge then opted to sit out the rest of the weekend, there was a reminder of what BTCC spectators will be missing next year with two cracking contests to round out the season.

McNeilly continued his impressive end to the campaign in race two, last year's runner-up having finally returned to the winners' circle in the first race after a tricky campaign, cantering clear as the rest battled behind. On lap nine



of 11, Will Macintyre's pressure on Elite Motorsport team-mate Aqil Alibhai finally told as he dived up the inside of Druids.

The final two and a half laps then featured a frantic fight for third that eventually involved 10 cars running line astern. The pack was just headed by Luke Watts at the flag, despite having virtually no visibility after his bonnet came loose, to take his maiden outright podium on a weekend when his parents were away at a wedding.

The final Ginetta Junior BTCC act was one of the best races of the season as Macintyre and McNeilly tussled for the lead. Macintyre made a brilliant move up the inside of Druids on the first tour

to grab the advantage but McNeilly was relentless in his pursuit. The pair were inseparable throughout, McNeilly coming close to sneaking ahead at Westfield on the final lap before being blocked and there was slight contact on the run to the line but Macintyre held on.

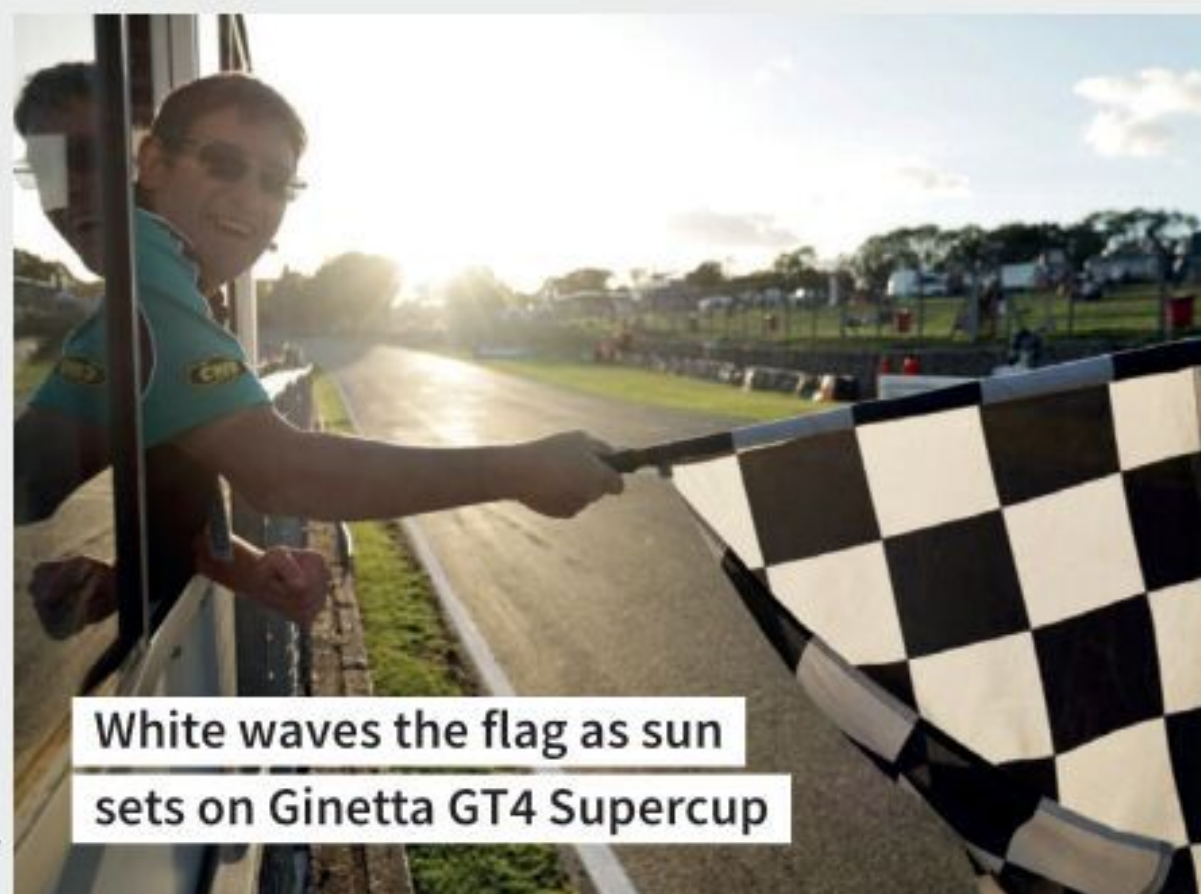
"I was thinking on the green-flag lap, nobody has overtaken Liam this weekend," said Macintyre. "A gap opened up and I went for it!"

It was similarly close for third, with Le just getting the nod from Alibhai this time as it proved to be a memorable BTCC farewell to the popular category.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

## END OF AN ERA AS GINETTA DEPARTS BTCC BILL

Brands Hatch marked the end of an era for British motorsport. Ginettas have been a permanent fixture at British Touring Car meetings since 2008, with only the Porsche Carrera Cup GB enjoying a longer stint on the TOCA bill, but the Kent weekend marked the Yorkshire machines' final hurrah on the UK's biggest motorsport stage, with Ginetta Junior joining the British GT package next season and the GT4 Supercup being scrapped.



Hundreds of drivers have begun their car racing careers in Ginetta Junior over the past 15 seasons and there have been numerous unforgettable races. And the 10-car fight for third in race two, plus Will Macintyre and Liam McNeilly's thrilling lead battle in the finale added a couple more. Macintyre had the honour of winning the last Ginetta Junior race on the BTCC bill and was full of praise for what racing at these events offers. "As a young driver, it's so good – you get to learn how to do interviews and how to act when you're around such a big crowd," he said.

Sadly, red flags and safety cars blighted the GT4 Supercup's final ever event, which also featured one of the most bizarre crashes in the category's history. Ian Duggan spun immediately off the line in the finale, spearing straight into helpless Fox Motorsport team-mate Nick Halstead and causing a red flag seconds after the start.

Up at the front, James Kellett became the series' last champion, admitting it was "strange" to be both the first and last GT4 Supercup

champion at the wheel of a G56. "It feels mega to win the title – it was my dream just to be in the championship never mind win it!" he said. "It's been an incredible opportunity and I've been breaking records left, right and centre. It's a shame it's not going to be around any more because it's Ginetta's flagship championship and something I've always wanted to race in."

Someone who has raced in more GT4 Supercup contests than anyone else is Colin White – the four-time class champion started 242 of the category's 289 races – and, although he was unable to be on the grid as he continues to recover from his hefty Thruxton crash, it was fitting that he waved the chequered flag at the end of the second race. It was also appropriate that Tom Ingram should claim his maiden BTCC crown on the same weekend, as he won the GT4 Supercup title back in 2013. A perfect reminder of the championship's, and Ginetta's, ongoing influence in the sport.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**



Alfa 156 of McMahon surged through from back of the grid

# McMahon uproots Plant in eventful Alfa finale at Oulton

**OULTON PARK**  
**750MC**  
**8 OCTOBER**

The Alfa Romeo championship provided some surprises in its final round as more 750 Motor Club categories came to a conclusion at Oulton Park last weekend.

Barry McMahon took the Alfa win in his 156 after it looked as if Paul Plant's Giulietta would run away with it. Plant had built up a sizeable lead after leapfrogging a visiting 4C driven by Mike Hilton and then shaking off the attentions of Tom Hill in his V6 class-winning GT. McMahon had started at the back after a bad qualifying on a damp track, but quickly caught up with the top five. After a couple of laps, he was behind Hill, then past him into second place. A few tours later, a spurt of speed allowed him to get level with Plant, then pass him at Knickerbrook.

Hilton spent the opening laps stuck in third gear and went backwards from pole,

but the problem cleared and he was able to threaten Hill's third place towards the end. The championship went to Twin Spark Cup driver Andrew Bourke's 156, although he was only third in class behind Giles Billingsley (156) and Jon Billingsley (147).

The second Alfa race was cancelled due to delays while Club Enduro driver Kevin Clarke was extricated from his crashed BMW M3. Invitees Bruno Costa and Paul Curran were the winners of the two-hour enduro in a VW Golf TCR, taking the lead after William Stacey's Lotus Elise lost oil due to driveshaft issues, having built up a huge advantage.

Clarke and Aldo Riti were classified as the winning registered pair, despite Clarke colliding heavily with the pitwall and then the tyre wall opposite, trying to pass a backmarker, with only a few minutes left.

The SEAT Leon of Carl Swift and Rob Baker failed to finish with a gearbox problem, but had banked enough points to narrowly take the overall title. Class C rivals Joel Oswick and Dan Ausano just missed out after suffering a late fuel issue that dropped them to third in class.

The Locost championship had already been wrapped up by Craig Land and he was in typically dominant form, but a furious chasing pack was after second in both races. Karl Ruijsenaars prevailed in the opener, but a carburettor problem in race two dropped him to eighth. David Martin was the best of the rest after dealing with Rob Apsey.

Dominance was also the name of the game in the MX-5 Cup. Ben Short tied up the championship with two more wins and a lap record. Ben Abbitt qualified second, but contact with Short sent him to the back of the opener. He fought back but



Cooke sealed another MR2 crown with two podiums

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### ALFA ROMEO

Barry McMahon (156)

### CLUB ENDURO

Bruno Costa/Paul Curran  
(Volkswagen Golf TCR)

### LOCOST

Races 1 & 2 Craig Land (below)

### MX-5 CUP

Races 1 & 2 Ben Short

### MR2 CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

Race 2 Aaron Cooke (Roadster)



For full results visit: [750mc.co.uk](http://750mc.co.uk)

managed to spin again and couldn't return to the leading group. Ben Hancy lost second to a determined Jordan Johnson late on, although he got his own back and snuck past Johnson on the last lap of race two.

Aaron Cooke was also only a whisker away from winning the MR2 title and a second place in the first race was enough to confirm it. Shaun Traynor got a better start than Cooke and won the race, despite a late attack by Cooke. Traynor had to repeat his strong start as the race was red-flagged during the first lap, when Maxine Nicholls and Jim Mew collided at Old Hall.

The second race went Cooke's way, with Traynor six seconds behind. Alastair Topley consolidated third in the championship in his Mk2 machine with two third places.

**RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER**

Pead (right) gives chase to Polley in early stages of Swinging Sixties Group 1 contest



## Polley puts Mini Marcos on top in Swinging Sixties

**SILVERSTONE  
CSCC  
8-9 OCTOBER**

Sam Polley defied a success penalty to finish victorious in a close-fought Swinging Sixties Group 1 contest on the Silverstone National circuit.

Struggling with understeer in his Mini Marcos, Polley qualified only seventh but soon joined the lead battle in the 40-minute race. It was briefly headed by Ian Staines's MG Midget, which lost time due to a Luffield spin, before polesitter Jack Smith led until relaying the MGA to dad Steve.

Richard Perry's one-minute success penalty dropped his Austin-Healey Sprite from contention, while the Smiths, Chris Watkinson (Mini) and Polley all served 30s so remained close and were joined by the BMWs of Tom Pead and Charles Tippet (in for daughter Claire Norman). Polley passed Smith Sr at Brooklands on three-quarter's distance with Pead following through, but a spin for Pead's 1600 Ti at Copse and fan-belt failure on the MGA eased Polley's

path to a 6.6s win over the Norman/Tippet 2002 Ti. Watkinson completed the podium, with Pead recovering to fourth.

An attritional Group 2 race, for larger, faster cars, was won by Jon Wolfe's TVR Tuscan V8. Wolfe spent the opening third of the race fending off Jamie Keevill's Lotus Elan S2 for second behind Nigel Reuben's TVR Griffith. Reuben, driving solo on this occasion, would have been hard pressed to overcome his 90s success penalty but that was rendered moot when he crabbed into the pits with a broken suspension pick-up midway through his second stint. Keevill's own 30s penalty handed Wolfe the initiative and, when Keevill retired on the penultimate lap, the TVR cantered to a 45s victory over the Dean Halsey/Scott Gillam Datsun 240Z.

Honours in the two 15-minute Special Saloons and Modsports races were split between Danny Morris and Andy Southcott. The opening tours of race one were led by Southcott's Vauxhall-powered MG Midget clone before a moment at Brooklands let Morris ahead. While both were clocking nearly 100mph laps, Southcott's

increasingly loose rear prevented him challenging Morris's Peugeot 309 complete with Cosworth turbo power.

Differential replaced, Southcott was set for a rematch, only for gearbox gremlins to sideline Morris. Southcott was thus untroubled, Clive Anderson dragging his wounded BMW E30 home 49s in arrears after an injector on its Rover V8 failed.

The V8-powered Morgan +8 of father-and-son duo Bill and Howard Lancashire thundered to Future Classics victory. Polesitter Stephen Scott-Dunwoodie's lock-up at Becketts on the opening tour let Lancashire Sr ahead, but a quick pitstop for his Ford Sierra RS500 vaulted Scott-Dunwoodie back in front.

It wouldn't last as, with no third gear, the RS500 became easy prey for Lancashire Jr. When its manifold also started to loosen, Scott-Dunwoodie called it a day. Returning from his heavy Anglesey accident in May, Stuart Daburn inherited second in his TVR Tuscan, his deficit – virtually a lap – marginally more than the 60s success penalty he had served.

Success for a similar Tuscan came via Alex Taylor in Modern Classics. Having been hounded by Piers Masarati's Porsche 964 Turbo in the opening stint, the pressure was eased by Masarati's 20s success penalty. Masarati and Daburn also copped one-minute penalties for speeding under Code 60 conditions. But, with only four cars on the lead lap, and Tom Mensley pinged for pitting his BMW M3 E36 Evo slightly before the window opened, they kept their podium places.

Nigel Mustill's Solution F Volvo S80, co-driven by Craig Dolby, won a truncated Slicks/Open Series race, which was restarted when a fire broke out on the Short family

Taylor beat Masarati to the win in Modern Classics aboard TVR



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICK WALKER

## WEEKEND WINNERS

## SWINGING SIXTIES

**Group 1** Sam Polley (Mini Marcos)

**Group 2** Jon Wolfe (TVR Tuscan V8)

## SPECIAL SALOONS AND MODSPORTS

**Race 1** Danny Morris (Peugeot 309 GTI Cosworth)

**Race 2** Andy Southcott (MG Midget)

## FUTURE CLASSICS

Bill Lancashire/Howard Lancashire (Morgan +8)

## MODERN CLASSICS

Alex Taylor (TVR Tuscan Challenge)

## OPEN/SLICKS SERIES

Nigel Mustill/Craig Dolby (Volvo S80, below)

## NEW MILLENNIUM

Dominic Malone (BMW M3 E90 WTCC)

## MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Tim Davies (Caterham Seven)

## TURBO TIN TOPS

Josh Brooks (Toyota Starlet GT)

## CLASSIC K

Giles Dawson (Lotus Elan 26R)

## TIN TOPS

Russell Hird (Honda Integra Type R)



For full results visit: [tsl-timing.com](http://tsl-timing.com)



**CARLIN'S NEW VENTURE** For his first foray into circuit racing after a career in Hot Rods, Lee Carlin chose a Ford Escort Mk2. The ex-John Edwards/Trevor Shaw car was a Class B Thundersaloons frontrunner in 1987-90 and is believed to have been previously raced by multiple champion Pete Stevens. Last raced by the unrelated Pete Edwards in 2011, the car now features a Vauxhall 'Red Top' and a six-speed sequential gearbox by Elite Transmissions, but engine woes delayed Carlin's debut.



**SEBRING TO SILVERSTONE** Robert Hollyman's 1968 Porsche 911 made its first race start since being imported from Arizona in Swinging Sixties Group 2, adding Silverstone to appearances at the likes of Daytona and Sebring. Under-rubbed at the rear and currently running steel panels, weight-saving is on the agenda for the two-litre car's winter developments by Hollyman, a winner in Future Classics this year in his 964. "It is weirdly similar to our 964," he said.



**A SPECIAL ALFA** Alfa Romeo specialist Ciprian Nistorica acquired his Giulia Spider Veloce last year. The 1.6-litre model from 1965 previously enjoyed success in the 1990s and 2000s at the Nurburgring, Spa and Monza and retains its FIA Appendix K specification. Nistorica's Alficina concern gave the car a full overhaul ahead of its debut last month, with further development planned. He said: "Everybody admires it because it's unique – nobody's seen one of these racing in the UK."

Mosler shortly after Morgan took over from younger brother Marcus.

The New Millennium race was also restarted after an accident involving the BMWs of Matthew Sanders (E46) and Simon Baker (1 Series Coupe) and the Jackson family's GT4 Aston Martin. It was won by Dominic Malone's ex-Andy Priaulx BMW M3 E90, despite a short-pitstop penalty.

In his first year of racing, Tim Davies scored a maiden win in Magnificent Sevens. Former Toyota MR2 racer Josh Brooks also took his first Turbo Tin Tops triumph on only the second appearance of his Japanese-import Toyota Starlet.

Giles Dawson's Lotus Elan 26R never looked like being beaten in Classic K, winning the one-hour race by more than a lap over Alex Thistlethwayte's Ford Mustang.

**MARK PAULSON**

# Cook serves up a double treat in GT Cup finale

**SNETTERTON**  
**MSVR**  
**8-9 OCTOBER**

The first of the weekend's four GT Cup races at Snetterton began in dramatic fashion courtesy of a fluid spillage, and that set the tone for an eventful finale.

Hugo Cook's Mercedes-AMG GT3 led from the start, but was one of the early casualties when he slid off onto the grass at Turn 3 on the second lap. Morgan Tillbrook (McLaren 720S GT3) became the new leader but he made contact with Mike Price at Agostini, which spun the Mercedes driver. The second-placed Mercedes of Ian Loggie had also gone off at Agostini, with others following, before three safety-car laps allowed a clear-up.

Tillbrook was on his own from the green flag, followed by the similar McLarens of Simon Orange and Iain Campbell until the flag. But a post-race penalty for his earlier contact dropped Tillbrook to fourth behind Orange, Campbell and the recovering Price.

Saturday's 50-minute endurance race soon became a duel between Cook and Tillbrook, with Orange passing Campbell for third on lap five.

Cook had led from the start and was last of the frontrunners to pit, rejoining with a 13-second lead over Marcus Clutton, in for Tillbrook, and Callum Macleod in Price's Mercedes. But three laps later, Cook was in the pits again, because he'd missed the original window. With Clutton left to take the win, Macleod reeled in Cook and sealed second with four laps to go. Orange and co-driver Michael O'Brien were fourth.

Cook was fastest off the start again in Sunday's sprint, but went straight on at the Wilson Hairpin. "I just couldn't stop it," he said. Tillbrook was left with a substantial lead, but Cook was still second and gradually regained his lost ground as they lapped traffic.

"I knew I was quicker around Coram



Both of Sunday's races went the way of the Mercedes driver

and just waited," said Cook, after snatching victory from Tillbrook into Murrys on the penultimate lap. Loggie had Orange closing in on third, but the newly crowned champion's McLaren slipped back late on.

Cook was then a lights-to-flag victor in the final race. After 11 laps, he was already 15s clear with Loggie initially second, until a massive lock-up into Oggies allowed Tillbrook and Orange ahead, before he headed pitwards to retire. Cook comfortably retained his lead after the stops but, after rejoining second, O'Brien did make some inroads, while Clutton and Macleod were next up in third and fourth.

Reece Jones won two of the three action-packed Pickup Truck races. Jones led a five-way battle at the front in race one, with Dale Gent inches behind. Gent got past on lap six of 10 into Riches and, for a while, they made a break, until Mark Willis caught them again.

Jones made the decisive move with a lap to go and had opened a 1.2s lead by the flag, with Gent still clear in second.

Matt Simpson recovered from a first-lap excursion to snatch third from Dean Tompkins as they exited Murrys for the final time, as Willis slipped to fifth.

Gent led for much of race two until Willis got to the front on lap six. But misfortune then struck the leaders and they both picked up front punctures, with Willis also breaking his gear lever. Simpson benefited and led from the penultimate lap until the flag, with Allen Cooper a close second from points leader George Turiccki and Jones.

Cooper and Willis both led race three until they hit problems and Jones was left in the clear. Turiccki managed to hold off the rest of the challengers for second until the last lap, when Tompkins, Gent and Tom Hutchins all battled their way past.

George Line's Dallara F308 secured another double Tiedeman Trophy victory. After Line had pulled away on the opening lap of race one, Robbie Watts's similar machine closed the gap considerably. But Line pulled clear again, with Watts under pressure from Samuel Harrison (Dallara F397). Watts led the restarted second race, but couldn't shake off Line, who managed to get ahead on lap five of seven to secure win number two. Harrison held a race-long third.

Jas Sapra led the Snetterton Saloons until the last tour, when his BMW E46 expired, meaning Karl Cattliff's E90 M3 took a comfortable win over Mark Havers's SEAT.

Henry Riley managed to break away from his Production GTI rivals in both races to secure the title, and there were double wins too for Johnathan Barrett's E46 in Racing Saloons and Edd Giddings in Z Cars.

**PETER SCHERER**



Riley took a brace of wins in Production GTI and with it the 2022 title



WEEKEND WINNERS

GT CUP

**Race 1** Simon Orange (McLaren 720S GT3)  
**Race 2** Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (McLaren 720S GT3)  
**Races 3 & 4** Hugo Cook (Mercedes-AMG GT3)

PICKUPS

**Races 1 & 3** Reece Jones (below)  
**Race 2** Matt Simpson

TIEDEMAN TROPHY

**Races 1 & 2** George Line (Dallara F308)

SNETTERTON SALOONS

Karl Cattliff (BMW E90 M3)

PRODUCTION GTis

**Races 1 & 2** Henry Riley

RACING SALOONS

**Races 1 & 2** Johnathan Barrett (BMW E46 M3)

Z CARS

**Races 1 & 2** Edd Giddings (BMW Z4)



For full results visit: [tsl-timing.com](https://tsl-timing.com)

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS FOR ORANGE

For the third successive season, Simon Orange has been crowned a GT Cup champion, taking this year’s overall title with Michael O’Brien in the Orange Racing with JMH McLaren 720S GT3.

After a few years of racing Mazda MX-5s, Orange decided to make the move into GT competition. “I made my debut in the championship with Team Hard in a Ginetta in 2020, sharing with Josh Jackson – I enjoyed the Mazdas but couldn’t keep up with the changes to stay competitive,” he explained.

Success followed immediately. As well as winning the GTA class in 2020, Orange and Jackson were overall GT Cup champions, as well as helping Team Hard to win the teams’ championship.

Orange continued with the Ginetta G55 in 2021 and also raced a GT4 McLaren 570S for the first time, which was where Orange Racing’s connection with JMH started. He shared both cars with Jackson again. “We won the teams’ title and both the GTA and GTH classes,” he added of a season in which they were third overall with the Ginetta.

“I had started racing for fun and I still do it for the same reason but, when we started in GTA, we didn’t do any testing and we would be competitive,” he said.

After getting used to the GT4 car and being competitive, another step up was decided upon for this season, and the McLaren GT3 arrived at the team.

“We decided we had to test this time as I needed to get used to driving the car before the season got under way,” he said. “We soon found I was a better qualifier than racer.”

Orange describes himself as one of the older senior drivers, and decided to accept the suggestion of sharing the car with a Pro racer. “I had only raced with



Orange has enjoyed success in GT Cup

Josh really, never with a Pro, but that’s how Michael [O’Brien] arrived with his McLaren connections,” he said.

Although Orange was surprised to be vying for podiums from the start, his aim was firstly to learn from O’Brien. They had their first win at Donington Park’s opening meeting and topped the podium at Brands Hatch and Snetterton, before taking two wins at Silverstone’s end-of-July event.

They were only off the podium five times all year and, after taking a win at Donington in September, they arrived at the Snetterton finale as championship leaders. With another win to add to their tally in the opening race of the weekend, they were crowned 2022 champions.

The GT Cup may have finished, but Orange won’t be waiting long before his next race. “It was important to us to win this year to help us decide the future,” he said. “So this weekend we will be guesting at Donington Park in the final round of the British GT Championship, before entering the championship next season.

“To prepare early into 2023 we are going to do the Asian Le Mans Series too, and will probably do most of the GT Cup again, with Michael sharing the car with me again.”

PETER SCHERER



# Black storms to another Legends title with race-two victory

**KNOCKHILL**  
**SMRC**  
**9 OCTOBER**

Stewart Black capped off a sensational season of Scottish Legends Cars racing by clinching his second successive title with a double podium in the final round of the year at Knockhill last weekend.

With a total of 600 points on offer from the three races, just 185 split Black and his nearest rival, three-time Legends champion Ben Mason, with Ryan McLeish making it a three-way scrap for the title at the Fife circuit.

McLeish did nearly everything he could by winning the first and third races, but Black's victory in the second heat was enough to be crowned one race early. "It's been a hard old slog this season," said a relieved Black post-race. "I've had so much fun racing Ryan and Ben; it's been really hard racing all year but always fair."

The opening heat was played out on a drying track after morning rain, with McLeish beating Black to victory while Mason was third. An off at Clark for Stuart Robertson caused a late safety car, with McLeish and Black both getting the better of early leader Mason, whose Chevy Sedan finished the race covered in oil after a bolt broke on his cam cover.

Black started second for heat two and held a commanding lead from start to finish as the first drops of rain began to hit the circuit. With the title decided, Black was then a somewhat leisurely eighth in a wet final, two places behind Mason, who recovered from an apparent misfire as McLeish romped to victory by nearly seven seconds from Ben McNeice.

Just like in the Legends, consistency reigns supreme in the quest for Scottish Mini Cooper Cup honours. One driver who knows this all too well is Michael Weddell, who made it back-to-back titles with a trio of podiums.



JIM MOIR



Corson secured the Scottish C1 spoils

JIM MOIR



Consistency helped Weddell to another Mini crown

JIM MOIR

Following a precautionary gearbox change after an oil leak in testing, Weddell planned a safety-first approach and extended his margin over Chad Little to 16 points with second to Neil Hose in the first encounter. Little closed the gap marginally by finishing runner-up to Hose in race two, but Weddell did enough with third and then second in the Cooper-only final race, won by Daniel Patterson.

Jamie Blake won the first two races overall and picked up the Cooper S championship after beating Andrew Lamont each time.

Esports graduate Sam Corson was

# Chaotic Pembrey Truck weekend with wins shared

**PEMBREY**  
**BARC**  
**8-9 OCTOBER**

Thrills, spills and a fair few red flags all featured as the British Automobile Racing Club put on its annual October meeting at Pembrey last weekend.

Headlining the racing in South Wales were five action-packed – and at times chaotic – contests from the British Truck Racing Championship, where the battle for supremacy in both Division 1 and Division 2 intensified.

Reigning six-time Division 1 champion Ryan Smith bagged pole position and backed it up with a superb victory in race one, albeit after a lengthy stoppage to recover a number of trucks following a first-corner incident.

That would prove to be a regular occurrence during a weekend on which Stuart Oliver, Simon Reid and John Newell eventually triumphed wore on. Newell, who hadn't won before, produced a standout

drive as he masterfully fended off the advances of Smith in the latter stages of race three, before doubling up in the finale with another narrow win over Steven Powell.

There was an equal amount of wheel-



Smith just avoids being caught up in startline shunt

STEVE JONES



Second consecutive title for the impressive Black

crowned Scottish C1 Cup champion after on-the-road race-one winner James Hitchen was disqualified for a technical infringement. Corson outscored his nearest rival Finlay Brunton in the opener, finishing two places ahead of the him in seventh, while Hitchen originally remained in the mix just 15 points adrift.

Post-race scrutineering then discovered irregularities with Hitchen's C1 and left Corson crowned before the finale, in which he finished second to 2021 champion Ross Dunn.

Liam McGill beat Steven Gray in

a winner-takes-all pair of races to secure the Fiesta ST Cup title. They have been the dominant forces all season, and McGill edged his fierce rival in both wet and dry encounters, despite a suspension failure in qualifying.

In the Scottish Classics, John Kinmond's Rover was denied a double victory after a front anti-roll bar failure forced him out of race two, leaving Kenneth Brown to take the win in his TVR Griffith, with the already crowned Charlie Cope (VW Golf) second.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

to-wheel entertainment in Division 2 to captivate the bumper crowd, with the spoils shared between the quintet of Jock Borthwick, John Powell, Adam Bint, Brad Smith and Luke Garrett.

Maximus Hall strengthened his title challenge in the Junior Saloon Car Championship with pole position and three commanding victories, each time over Harvey Dent. On what proved to be a weekend to remember for the leading rookie, Hall made significant inroads in the standings to set up a grandstand finish.

The MG Owners Club Championship signed off its season in style as Steve McDermid successfully retained his overall title. Lee Sullivan, driving a ZR 160, got the better of McDermid in race one, but only after a five-second penalty for exceeding track limits had been applied. It wasn't long before the reigning champion – who has, for the most part, been the class of the field in 2022 – was back on top, his ZR 170



Hall (left) was at the head of the Junior Saloons pack all event

claiming outright honours and defeating Sullivan in the remaining two bouts.

Wayne Rickett and Adam Jones proved to be the drivers to beat in the Hyundai Coupe Cup. A pass on Neale Hurren in the closing stages gave polesitter Jones the upper hand in the opener, before series veteran Rickett soon bounced back, clinching a brace of wins.

Rounding out the weekend's action were two races from the Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship, boasting an entry list that was packed with variety. Damian Longotano proved too much for the opposition as he claimed a double in his Westfield SE, beating Chris Everill's Ginetta G55 each time.

CHRIS ASHBY

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### KNOCKHILL

#### SCOTTISH LEGENDS

Races 1 & 3 Ryan McLeish (Ford Coupe)

Race 2 Stewart Black (Ford Coupe)

#### SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP

Races 1 & 2 Jamie Blake (Cooper R53)

Race 3 Daniel Patterson (Cooper)

#### SCOTTISH C1 CUP

Race 1 Calum Conway

Race 2 Ross Dunn

#### SCOTTISH FIESTA ST CUP

Races 1 & 2 Liam McGill

#### SCOTTISH CLASSIC SPORTS & SALOONS

Race 1 John Kinmond (Rover 3500)

Race 2 Kenneth Brown (TVR Griffith)

For full results visit: [smart-timing.co.uk](http://smart-timing.co.uk)

### PEMBREY

#### BRITISH TRUCK RACING

Race 1 Ryan Smith (MAN TGA)

Race 2 Stuart Oliver (Volvo VNL)

Races 3 & 5 John Newell (MAN TGS)

Race 4 Simon Reid (Iveco Stralis)

#### JUNIOR SALOON CARS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Maximus Hall

#### MG OWNERS CLUB

Race 1 Lee Sullivan (ZR 160)

Races 2 & 3 Steve McDermid (ZR 170)

#### HYUNDAI COUPE CUP

Race 1 Adam Jones

Races 2 & 3 Wayne Rickett

#### WELSH SPORTS & SALOON CARS

Races 1 & 2 Damian Longotano (Westfield SE)

For full results visit: [tsl-timing.com](http://tsl-timing.com)

STEVE JONES

# FINISHING STRAIGHT

## The right direction despite some off-piste moments



**VIDEO GAME**  
**DAKAR DESERT RALLY**  
(available on PC, PlayStation and Xbox)  
RRP £34.99

An official video game of the punishing Dakar rally raid could be an incredible experience, but until recently, not a single developer had successfully managed to do justice to the off-road adventure.

Following *Dakar 18* four years ago, its creator Bigmoon Entertainment was bought by Saber Interactive. Now with the investment and support structure needed, *Dakar Desert Rally* finally realises the dream – with some caveats. An immersive title that simulates the punishing Saudi Arabian environment, it features accurate representations of the cars, trucks, side-by-sides, quad bikes and motorcycles.

There are moments when the grandeur of your surroundings takes your breath away. Sand dunes bigger than an apartment block ahead, an abandoned fuselage to your left and a truck barrel-rolling to your right. Reminiscent of a *Mad Max: Fury Road* scene, there's something about machines aggressively racing across a barren landscape that looks so spectacular.

It mixes these chaotic surroundings with varied vehicles, closely fought racing, navigational challenges, team management

and unlockable historical content. There are three distinct game modes too, trying to make this platform simultaneously approachable and serious.

Despite in the intervening years between game releases the real-world event moving from South America to a singular nation, somehow the landscape is more detailed. The scope is vast too, with an area of over 20,000km<sup>2</sup> utilising a dynamic weather system.

The events you take part in are initially short and sharp, before they grow to challenges lasting over 400km and several individual stages.

In the entry-level sport mode, you race for position, with the waypoints signalled by giant yellow beacons. You earn experience points, move up levels, unlock more cars to buy and more events to race. Dakar Points (DP) are also accrued, used to repair your vehicle fleet and expand your roster.

After a few races, you'll likely test out the more advanced professional option. Here, you aren't flying off the start line with a pack of wildly erratic rivals, but instead, the primary goal is to navigate through a route. Listening to your navigator closely

and paying attention to the CAP target, which acts like a compass, is key.

At first, you may feel discombobulated, struggling to work out where to go next. The stages can feel interminable. However, if you stick with it, the core appeal is this format. There is a satisfaction to getting slightly lost, retracing your steps – thankfully the navigator provides CAP clues if you go off-piste – and then finding your way again.

It's a shame, then, that the hardcore simulation mode, which removes automatic progress saves and imposes speed limits, is tucked away until you reach level 25, well over 10 hours in.

With such variety comes potential pitfalls in terms of handling. The physics engine must simulate several unique vehicle types and, across the board, this writer found feedback to be a little numb. The





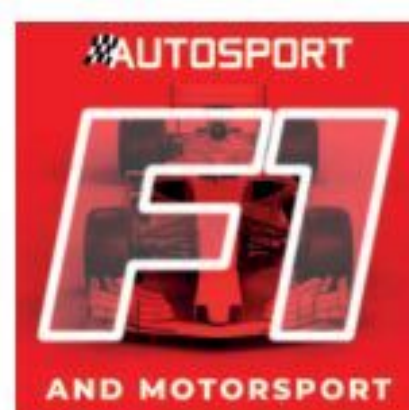
motorcycles lack precision, while SXSs can be lithe and agile. Cars sit somewhere in between, while trucks rightly lumber about. Steering wheel peripheral support is spotty at present, with improvements due soon.

Speaking of post-launch, however, we come to the biggest frustration with *Dakar Desert Rally*. Expected upon release, the ability to compete across the most recent three Dakar events in its real-world format simply isn't present. That's coming with the free 'Extended Map' downloadable content, expected later this month. Open world free roam of the environment and the ability to create and share roadbook routes are currently scheduled for some time before the end of the year.

We admire the incredible goals set by the team. With a long gestation period already passed, we can only assume it was better to cut out some elements than release something with potential bugs. But it still smarts, just a little. In our minds, this is still the best Dakar game ever, regardless, and if the features are delivered as promised, there's still time for *Dakar Desert Rally* to become one of the all-time greats.

**THOMAS HARRISON-LORD**

**For daily racing game news, visit [traxion.gg](https://traxion.gg)**



[autosport.com/podcast](https://autosport.com/podcast)



### Japanese Grand Prix review

Max Verstappen claimed victory in a wet Japanese Grand Prix – and with it secured his second drivers' title in bizarre circumstances. Martyn Lee is joined by Dutch F1 journalist Erwin Jaeggi and Autosport's Luke Smith and Alex Kalinauckas to review a wet afternoon at Suzuka, where once again confusion from the sport's decision-makers became an unnecessary talking point.

## WHAT'S ON

### INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

#### MotoGP

**Round 18/20**  
Phillip Island, Australia  
**16 October**  
**TV Live** BT Sport 2, Sun 0330  
**TV Highlights** ITV4, Mon 2000

#### European Le Mans Series

**Round 6/6**  
Portimao, Portugal  
**15-16 October**  
**🔊 Livestream** on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1630, Sun 1230

#### TCR Europe

**Round 7/7**  
Barcelona, Spain  
**15-16 October**  
**🔊 Livestream** on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1415, Sun 1315

#### International GT Open

**Round 7/7**  
Barcelona, Spain  
**15-16 October**

#### Formula Regional Euro

**Round 9/10**  
Barcelona, Spain

**15-16 October**

#### Euroformula Open

**Round 9/9**  
Barcelona, Spain  
**15-16 October**

#### NASCAR Cup

**Round 33/36**  
Las Vegas, USA  
**16 October**  
**TV Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 1900

#### NASCAR Xfinity

**Round 30/33**  
Las Vegas, USA  
**15 October**

### UK MOTORSPORT

#### Donington Park BRSCC

**15-16 October**  
British GT, GB3, GB4, Ginetta GT5 Challenge, Ginetta GT Academy, Porsche Sprint Challenge  
**🔊 Livestream** via britishgt.com

#### Oulton Park BARC

**15 October**  
British Superkarts, Caterham Graduates (Sigma 135, Sigma

150, Sigmax), CNC Heads Sports/Saloon, Kumho BMW

#### Silverstone HSCC

**15-16 October**  
70s Road Sports, Aurora Trophy, Classic Clubmans, Classic F3, Classic FF1600, Guards Trophy, Historic FF1600, Historic FF2000, Historic Formula Junior, Historic Road Sports, Historic Touring Cars

#### Silverstone BRSCC

**15-16 October**  
BMW Compact Cup, Caterham (Academy, Autumn Trophy, Roadsport), CityCar Cup, ClubSport Trophy, Mini Miglia, Mini Se7en, Track Attack

#### Snetterton BRSCC

**15-16 October**  
C1 Endurance, CMMC, Mazda Endurance, Mazda MX-5 (Championship, Clubman, Supercup)

#### Mallory Park 750MC

**16 October**  
750 Formula, Classic Stock Hatch, Formula Vee, Historic 750 Formula, Sport Specials

## FINISHING STRAIGHT

### FROM THE ARCHIVE

Juan Pablo Montoya's 'walrus-nosed' Williams-BMW FW26 accelerates onto the start/finish straight at Melbourne's Albert Park circuit during the 2004 Australian Grand Prix. The Colombian qualified third on the grid behind the Ferrari F2004s of Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello, but after being demoted a place off the line by a feisty Fernando Alonso (Renault R24), he overcooked his bid to regain the position, running wide at Turn 1 and falling to seventh place. Come the chequered flag, he was fifth. The FW26 didn't quite live up to the team's expectations and by round 13 of 18 (Hungary) it sported a more conventional nose. Montoya scored his sole victory of 2004 at the season finale in Brazil, his last race for Williams before switching to McLaren.



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MAIN: A1GP; INSET: JEP



**F**inancial problems meant the fleet of 'Powered by Ferrari' A1GP cars only saw service for seven race meetings before the self-styled 'World Cup of Motorsport' bit the dust. But despite the turbulent nature of A1GP's final 2008-09 season, in which four rounds were cancelled, the John Travis-penned cars were a hit with drivers. And none more so than that year's champion Adam Carroll.

He'd established himself as a race winner in A1GP by claiming the 2008 Mexico City feature race with the series' original mount: the venerable Lola-Zytek based on the 2002 Formula 3000 chassis and fitted with updated bodywork. But it was the new machine powered by the same direct-injection V8 engine from the Ferrari F430 GT2 that Carroll felt "allowed me to really be the best I could be". With it, he scored six poles and five victories (although that tally would have been six without anti-stall kicking in after his final pitstop in the Taupo feature race).

"That was a really nice car, really well-made," says Carroll of the 'Powered by Ferrari' racer, a vast step forward from

the heavy Lola that "gave you no feedback". "It was a great piece of kit – it had a lot of grip and a lot of downforce. You could feel the last half a tenth, everything.

The more grip and more power you give me, the faster I can go."

Team Ireland driver Carroll relished the car's responsiveness – "The only thing that ever really allowed me to get the best out of qualifying" – and felt its only flaw was the single compound of Michelin tyres that "didn't actually work that well" in hot conditions.

Back on home soil, he romped to pole and victory in both races in the Brands Hatch finale, securing the title in style.

"The pole positions were particularly satisfying for me," he says. "It was the first time I really felt in my career that I actually had the people and the machinery needed to perform at that level.

"I've always been a strong racer, but for me qualifying was something that I felt I hadn't been able to prove a point in. When we got it dialled in, it honestly was amazing."

**JAMES NEWBOLD**



DUNBAR/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

## What next for Ferrari?

HOW IT CAN BOUNCE BACK FROM ANOTHER F1 DEFEAT



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