



Ford back to F1 with Red Bull

AUTOSPORT

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9 FEBRUARY 2023

F1 2023

The **BIG** questions

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is your guide to this
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Tackling the big issues as F1 2023 gets under way

It doesn't seem that long ago that we were reviewing the 2022 Formula 1 season and rating the performances of the drivers and teams. And yet, here we are already in F1 2023 launch season, ignoring for the moment the fact that most teams have so far only really 'launched' new liveries (kudos to Alfa Romeo for actually showing us a fresh car!).

Amid all the usual showings of confidence and target-setting, we've once again teamed up with F1 racer-turned-pundit Karun Chandhok for our traditional Big Questions piece looking at the campaign ahead (page 18). Chandhok takes on topics up and down the grid, from Red Bull's likely challengers to how much work is needed at Williams, via the line-ups that could prove most explosive on and off track.

Beyond F1, Megan White talks to rising Ferrari star Dino Beganovic (p26), who should be one of the favourites in F3 this year, Charles Bradley compares the Porsche 963's promising but troubled debut at Daytona with that of one of its most famous forebears (p30), and Stefan Mackley hears from team boss Andrew Howard about the rise of Beechdean Motorsport in GT competition.

Adding to the pleasingly (we hope!) eclectic nature of this issue, Andrew van Leeuwen charts Holden's time in motorsport now that the famous name has passed into history (p38), and we highlight an important and dramatic forgotten season of grand prix racing (p44).

Stephen Lickorish also takes aim at one of the most controversial developments in UK motorsport in our National section (p57)...



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
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NEXT WEEK
16 FEBRUARY

F1 2023 grid takes shape
More Formula 1 launches,
plus World Rally and
Formula E action



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Ford back in F1 with team it sold to Red Bull

FORMULA 1

Ford will return to Formula 1 in 2026 after 21 years away via a partnership with Red Bull to develop engines. The Blue Oval got out of F1 when it sold the Jaguar team to Red Bull in 2004, and its return coincides with the debut of the next generation of power units.

Red Bull had been looking for a technical partner for its powertrains division since Honda made its F1 exit at the end of 2021, and was close to entering a partnership with Porsche last summer. But talks broke down due to concerns about the amount of ownership and control the German manufacturer would take in Red Bull Racing, and the door opened for a tie-up with Ford that was announced in New York last Friday.

The engines will be badged as 'Red Bull Ford' through the partnership, and will be supplied to both Red Bull Racing and its sister team, AlphaTauri, from 2026.

"It's a very different relationship to what was discussed with Porsche," said Red Bull F1 boss Christian Horner. "This was purely a commercial and technical deal. There's no exchange of any shares or participation within the business. It's a very straightforward agreement where we will have the ability to share and have access to R&D, particularly on the EV side, cell technology, software development and so on."

While Red Bull will benefit from the marketing might of Ford in the US, the marque is eager to capitalise on F1's current boom in the country, as well as the series' upcoming push towards greater electrification and use of fully sustainable fuels under the 2026 regulations. "It's a huge moment for the Ford family," said Ford CEO Jim Farley. "We are really excited to engage a whole new generation of customers with our electric vehicles, and about the sustainable direction of the sport."



Horner in New York with Ford boss Farley

FIA/GETTY IMAGES/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Ford motorsport chief Mark Rushbrook said a return could not have been considered without the future changes to the regulations. "If it was a carryover power unit without this opportunity, that would have been a step backwards for us," he explained.

Ford was not interested in returning to F1 purely by name, and insisted on working with Red Bull through the technical partnership, not only on the engine side but also in areas such as aerodynamics that can benefit its road cars. "We needed to have that," added Rushbrook. "We don't go racing just as a marketing exercise anywhere. And especially in Formula 1, as the stage that it is, the opportunity to really get that technical learning, it was important for us. Without it, we wouldn't have done it."

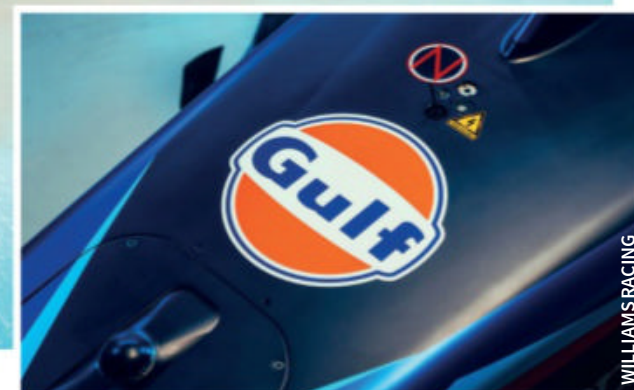
Ford's return comes as a further boost to F1, which is set to have at least six engine producers supplying the grid when the new rules come into force in 2026. Shortly after the announcement, the FIA released a list of the manufacturers that have registered for 2026. These include Red Bull Ford and Audi alongside the existing names on the grid: Honda, Ferrari, Mercedes and Alpine.

Honda's technical partnership with Red Bull is set to run until the start of the Ford deal in 2026, but the Japanese manufacturer is currently without a team should it opt to go ahead with a fully fledged engine return under the new rules.

LUKE SMITH



FIA/GETTY IMAGES/RED BULL CONTENT POOL



Williams aims to narrow gulf to opposition

FORMULA 1

Williams unveiled its livery for the 2023 season on Monday, and welcomed famed motorsport sponsor Gulf Oil as a new backer.

The launch took place using a model of the 2022 Williams, with its new challenger, the FW45, set to hit the track for the first time next Monday when it completes a shakedown at Silverstone. The team has

largely retained the blue-and-black design from last year, with Gulf branding featuring on the rear-wing endplate and nose.

Alex Albon appeared at the launch alongside new team-mate Logan Sargeant, who graduates from Formula 2. Incoming team principal James Vowles was not present, since he does not start in the role until 20 February.

Williams said this year's car would be an

evolution of the FW44, focusing its primary changes around the floor and sidepods as it looks to bounce back from finishing last in the constructors' championship.

"We've got a long road ahead," said Albon. "We're making inroads. It's a real team effort here to bring the car up the field. We need to be open and honest with where we are and see how it unfolds itself in Bahrain."

LUKE SMITH

Lawson's Bathurst run

FORMULA 1

Liam Lawson completed his long-anticipated Red Bull Formula 1 demo at Australia's famed Mount Panorama circuit last Saturday.

The Kiwi got behind the wheel of Sebastian Vettel's title-winning RB7 from 2011 as part of the Bathurst 12 Hours weekend, but did not get close to the unofficial lap record. While Jenson Button clocked a time of 1m48.8s in a McLaren in 2011, Lawson did not get beneath the two-minute barrier.

But the Red Bull F1 reserve was still buzzing. "Doing an official F1 session, free practice last year, is the biggest achievement," said Lawson. "But doing something like this in a car that I grew up watching is more special."

LUKE SMITH & ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN





ALFA ROMEO C43

The Alfa Romeo Formula 1 team has unveiled its striking new C43, the last Sauber-built car to carry the name of the Italian manufacturer before its deal ends.

The car features an eye-catching red-and-carbon-black livery designed by Alfa Romeo's main styling department, without the white that has been part of the established look since the company first joined forces with Sauber, initially just as a sponsor, in 2018. The new livery reflects the switch of title partner from Orlen to Stake.

The real car will run for the first time on a filming day at Barcelona tomorrow (Friday). Tuesday's launch was based on a show car, and the team released computer-generated images of the C43 itself.

Alfa Romeo describes the C43 as an evolution of its predecessor. But as well as being tailored for the tweaked floor rules, it

features substantial updates at the rear, with a new gearbox and revised rear suspension and cooling layout. The changes are designed to address weaknesses that were apparent last year.

"The rear end is certainly where we spent most effort, the most time to make up ground for us, in terms of topology of the rear and opening the door to further development," technical director Jan Monchaux told Autosport. "Especially on the bodywork side, which was not possible last year, because we had a quite extreme cooler arrangement. And we can't change coolers during the season."

"So we had to do significant effort on the rear end to accommodate different cooler arrangements, and therefore different bodywork, which for us was a step forward. So that is certainly where visually, apart

from the livery, the car will be most different to start with. And then further upgrades will follow at the front."

In 2022, Alfa Romeo built its own gearbox after using customer Ferrari units for many years, and Monchaux concedes that the team could have done a better job. "It was tricky, and we were a bit surprised," said Monchaux, "because we had a few issues during the season, which we solved. We had to redo a casing which was dictated by some aspects we had to tick on the list to allow us to develop the bodywork that we wanted."

"And that was maybe not so bad, to be able already a year after to redo the casing and things we realised during 2022 that maybe we should have done slightly differently, and to already adjust some typical weaknesses you will have when you do such a complex project."

The other key focus was reliability after the team suffered a series of problems in 2022, not only of its own making but also Ferrari-related issues. "We already had to some extent fixed it in the second part of the season," said Monchaux, "because we had no issue anymore. It was mainly related to the cooling system. We had four DNFs based on four different issues on the cooling systems. It's not like four times we repeated the same problem."

"We identified the root cause, and we are confident that this is behind us. And we also aim, because it's one of our biggest priorities, to return in terms of reliability to where Sauber was in the years before, when



ALFA ROMEO



ALFA ROMEO

New C43 will carry the hopes of Alfa Romeo in the hands of Bottas and Zhou

we were among the best. So lessons learned.

"It's potentially also a price we had to pay by being very aggressive on some decisions to save weight, not that we were too weak, but potentially when you run a new technology or a very aggressive technology, you simply need also to make sure all your operational procedures in the background are also at the level of that.

"So reliability is very big on our list, and we are also hoping and are generally quite confident that our friends from Maranello will also have done a big step. We had eight DNFs, and we also had four or five penalties because of PU elements."

The team has also focused on consistency across different types of tracks. "I feel like this car at least from the numbers in the simulator is a bit more of an all-rounder, versus just quick on the slow-speed tracks," said Valtteri Bottas. "One big limitation last year was high-speed, just pure high-speed load and balance. In theory, that should be way better. So let's see."

Bottas, who again partners Zhou Guanyu, acknowledged that the sole three-day test in Bahrain ahead of the first race presents a challenge. "Everybody would love to drive more," he said. "But at least it's the same for everybody. So for us, it's important to have much better winter testing than what we had last year."

ADAM COOPER



COATES/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Remember the new teams in 2010? Trulli (Lotus) leads di Grassi (Virgin) and Senna (HRT)

FIA launches process to expand the F1 line-up

FORMULA 1

The FIA has formally opened the process for new teams to join the Formula 1 grid in the next few years. Following president Mohammed Ben Sulayem's statement earlier this year that he wanted the governing body to evaluate the idea, documents have now been published for interested parties to express their interest.

In a statement issued last week, the FIA said that it would evaluate the potential of new teams based on "rigorous financial and technical analysis" as well as "sustainability and positive societal impact criteria".

The earliest a new team would be able to join the grid would be 2025, with prospective entrants needing to

pay a non-refundable \$20,000 admin fee when expressing interest. The deadline for applications to be submitted to the FIA is 30 April.

It represents another step forward in the process to expand the grid, which has attracted interest from multiple parties including a joint American venture between Andretti Global and General Motors.

The statement said that any decision on a new team would be made by 30 June, but noted that the final call is not solely down to the governing body. "For the avoidance of doubt, no new applicant has an automatic right of entry to the championship and the maximum number of teams competing in the championship up to and including the 2025 season is capped at 12," it said.

"Existing F1 teams will be given priority over new applicants. In the event that no applicant is considered suitable by the FIA and/or by the F1 Commercial Rights Holder, no new F1 team(s) will be selected."

While Andretti's ambitions have excited the FIA, they have not yet completely won over potential rivals on the grid, or F1 owner Liberty Media. Current entrants and FOM are eager to better understand the benefits that a new F1 team will bring, given the existing operations would risk seeing their share of the commercial rights income diluted by having new teams enter.



Michael Andretti is hoping his team will get on the grid

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Kubica, Deletraz back at WRT as Kvyat joins Prema



WEC

Robert Kubica and Louis Deletraz have swapped back to the WRT team for their 2023 World Endurance Championship campaign. The duo, who won the 2021 European Le Mans Series with the Belgian squad (above), have moved over from Prema to share an ORECA-Gibson 07 with Angolan Rui Andrade.

Mirko Bortolotti is going the other way in a reshuffle of the P2 pack in the WEC for the new season. The Lamborghini factory driver, who made his P2 debut with WRT at last year's Le Mans 24 Hours, will contest the full season with Prema as he gears up for the manufacturer's entry into the Hypercar class with a new LMDh in 2024 to be run under the banner of the Italian team's sister Iron Lynx operation.

The 33-year-old is joining a two-car line-up alongside ex-Formula 1 driver Daniil Kvyat (inset, right), who will make a belated P2 entry after his WEC programme for last season with G-Drive Racing was scratched in the wake of that team's withdrawal as a result of international sanctions on Russian entrants. They will share an ORECA-Gibson 07 with the already-announced Doriane Pin.

Ex-FIA Formula 3 driver Filip Ugran has been named in the second car alongside Juan Manuel Correa. Andrea Caldarelli, who like Bortolotti will race the Lambo LMDh, will come in for Correa at the Sebring series opener when the American-Ecuadorian is on duty for Van Amersfoort Racing at the clashing Saudi Formula 2 round. The third driver will be Bent Viscaal, who contested the ELMS with Algarve Pro Racing last year.

The Signatech-run Alpine squad has



confirmed its full line-up for its two-car LMP2 WEC assault in 2023 while it awaits the arrival of its new LMDh programme for next year. Charles Milesi stays with Signatech after racing its Richard Mille Racing entry last year, while two-time WEC P2 title winner Julien Canal completes the roster in one car alongside team regular Matthieu Vaxiviere. Ex-F2 racer Olli Caldwell, who made a WEC one-off with ARC Bratislava in Bahrain last year, and three-time Daytona 24 Hours winner Memo Rojas join Andre Negrão in the other car.

GARY WATKINS

Lexus Brits line up in all-star European LMP2 field

ELMS

Lexus GT team-mates Ben Barnicoat and Jack Hawksworth will go head to head in LMP2 Pro-Am in the European Le Mans Series this year. The two Britons (right), who race together for the Vasser Sullivan team in the IMSA SportsCar Championship's GT Daytona Pro class, will respectively compete for the AF Corse and Algarve Pro teams.

Barnicoat, who contested the ELMS in 2019 with

Carlin, will share an ORECA-Gibson 07 with Francois Perrodo and Matthieu Vaxiviere. Reigning World Endurance Championship Pro-Am title winner Perrodo is switching over to the European series after the P2 sub-class that mandates a bronze driver was axed at world level.

Hawksworth, who made a handful of starts in IMSA's Prototype Challenge class in 2014-15, will share at Algarve Pro with Tristan Vautier and Fred Poordad.

Le Mans 24 Hours winner Neel Jani will undertake his first programme since his departure from Porsche with the Duqueine team in the regular P2 class. The Swiss will share with Rene Binder and Nico Pino.

Peugeot WEC driver Paul di Resta and Oliver Jarvis continue their relationships with United Autosports in the ELMS. Di Resta and Jarvis, who is racing for the team in the WEC, will join up with Phil Hanson.

GARY WATKINS





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Rast to battle for BMW in DTM...

DTM

Three-time DTM title winner Rene Rast will partner reigning champion Sheldon van der Linde at the Schubert Motorsport BMW team this season.

Rast, who parted company with Audi after his long-term employer canned its mooted LMDh project, is expected to be a part of BMW's return to the World Endurance Championship in 2024 with WRT and the M Hybrid V8. In the meantime, the 36-year-old will continue in the DTM, replacing IMSA-bound Philipp Eng in Schubert's line-up.

Van der Linde took the M4 GT3 to the title in its maiden season in 2022, and Rast is on board for all but one round – the Zandvoort event, which clashes with his

McLaren Formula E programme. He will be replaced in the Dutch dunes by fellow Audi refugee Dries Vanthoor.

BMW Motorsport boss Andreas Roos said: "We have confidence in Rene's class and believe that he will still be one of the main players in the championship."

BMW also announced that its two-time DTM champion Marco Wittmann will be the first driver for long-time Porsche customer Project 1, the WEC regular that is entering the GT3 fold with the Munich marque after running its GT4 machines in the defunct DTM Trophy. Wittmann, a race winner with Walkenhorst last year, will be partnered by a second driver "selected in close consultation between the team, BMW M Motorsport and the ADAC".

JAMES NEWBOLD

...as Turkington stays in BTCC



BTCC

Four-time British Touring Car champion Colin Turkington will stay with BMW team West Surrey Racing to bid for his record-breaking fifth title in 2023, the team has confirmed.

As expected, the Northern Irishman will line up alongside Jake Hill, Stephen Jelley and Adam Morgan in an expanded four-car squad of BMW 330e M Sport machinery. The team is planning to begin pre-season testing in early March.

"While it gets tougher every year as the level of competition improves and the rules are continually evolving to level the playing field, the way we go about things at WSR has consistently put us at or near the front over the past decade," said team boss Dick Bennetts. "Having a driver like Colin in our corner, with his never-say-die attitude, his analytical approach, searing speed and loyalty has been one of the cornerstones of that."

IN THE HEADLINES

COURT SIDES WITH DE VRIES

An Amsterdam court has ruled in favour of AlphaTauri F1 recruit Nyck de Vries after a claim launched against him by property magnate Jeroen Schothorst regarding a €250,000 loan in 2018. The sticking point on repayment was whether de Vries had an F1 race seat by 2022. Schothorst said he did because of his outing in the Italian GP, but the judge sided with de Vries, saying "he was not contracted as a race driver".

VANDOORNE AT PEUGEOT

DS Formula E driver Stoffel Vandoorne has been named as sister marque Peugeot's reserve for its WEC campaign. The reigning FE champion also fulfils the test and reserve role for the Aston Martin Formula 1 team.

ERICSSON TOPS INDYCARS

IndyCar teams took part last week in a two-day test at the Californian Thermal Club circuit, a track that proved much more interesting than its name suggests. Colton Herta topped the first day of running with Andretti Autosport, before Chip Ganassi Racing's Marcus Ericsson moved to the top on day two with the best overall time of the test. Andretti newboy Kyle Kirkwood impressed by leading the way on the final afternoon.

TOP REGIONAL TEAMS FILLED

Two top teams in the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine are full for 2023, after ART Grand Prix completed its line-up last week. Current FRegional Oceania points leader Charlie Wurz, son of Alexander, joins Frenchman Marcus Amand in stepping up from Formula 4, and they will run with second-year FRECA racer Laurens van Hoepen. Over at Prema Racing, it's the Italian squad's dominant double F4 champion Andrea Kimi Antonelli alongside fellow F4 graduate Rafael Camara, plus Lorenzo Fluxa. All are currently racing in FRegional Middle East in Prema-run cars, with Antonelli leading the standings.

BARNICOAT'S U-TURN

British sportscar ace Ben Barnicoat will not contest the Asian Le Mans Series with Nikita Mazepin after all, citing "a clash with my other contractual racing and testing commitments". His place with 99 Racing alongside Mazepin and Felix Porteiro has been filled by Neel Jani.

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NASCAR Martin Truex Jr took victory in last Sunday's Clash at the Coliseum season curtain-raiser in Los Angeles. The 2017 Cup champion got his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota around leader Ryan Preece with 24 of 150 laps of the quarter-mile oval remaining, thanks to a nudge from behind. Truex (leading in pic) held on through two late-race cautions to defeat the Richard Childress Racing Chevrolets of Austin Dillon and Kyle Busch. Dillon knocked Bubba Wallace into the wall with six laps remaining to trigger the last caution, under which Wallace hit back at Dillon in retaliation. The NASCAR circus now heads to Daytona for the 500. **Photo by Kinrade/NKP/Motorsport Images**

Ex-Audi chief to lead Jota effort

WEC

Former Audi motorsport boss Dieter Gass is joining the Jota team ahead of its move into the Hypercar class of the World Endurance Championship with a new Porsche 963. The German will lead the British operation's assault on the top category of the 2023 WEC as team principal of Hertz Team Jota.

Gass joins the reigning LMP2 champion team from Audi, where he led its motorsport activities from 2017 before he was moved into an undisclosed role after being replaced in November 2020 by Julius Seebach. Jota's solo Porsche LMDh prototype will be driven by Antonio Felix da Costa, Will Stevens and Yifei Ye.

Jota directors Sam Hignett and David Clark said in a joint statement: "Dieter brings a wealth of experience and knowledge that we believe will take Hertz Team Jota forward over the coming years. He has lived and breathed competitive motorsport at the highest level and will help build on our



foundations to bring our historical success to the top class of endurance racing."

Gass rejoined Audi in 2011, working alongside long-time Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich on its LMP1 sportscar and DTM programmes.

The Jota 963 is expected to join the WEC at Spa at the end of April, before which its Hypercar drivers will race an ORECA LMP2 in the colours of new sponsor Hertz.

GARY WATKINS

BRIT BARNARD GETS FIA F3 SEAT WITH JENZER

FORMULA 3

Promising British talent Taylor Barnard has been placed with Jenzer Motorsport for a big step up to the FIA Formula 3 Championship this season.

The 18-year-old finished runner-up in German Formula 4 last season with PHM Racing, and also lies second in the Formula Regional Middle East Championship with the Berlin squad (below). But despite PHM moving into FIA Formula 2 and F3 itself by buying the entries of Charouz Racing, it has placed Barnard and his 2022 team-mate Nikita Bedrin with Swiss set-up Jenzer for the campaign.

Both Barnard and Russian Bedrin took part in the post-season F3 test at Jerez with Jenzer last September, with the Norfolk driver topping the last of the six half-day sessions.

"We got to know Taylor as a very bright driver who doesn't need long to feel good on a new track," said team boss Andreas Jenzer. "This ability will be a huge asset for him given the limited track time in FIA F3 racing events. Taylor immediately shows strong pace and a quick adaptation, although of course it is clear that there is a learning curve for him to do too."

The Jenzer line-up is completed by Mexican Alex Garcia, who moves up from the Euroformula Open series.

The news of Jenzer's trio leaves just six of the 30 F3 seats unassigned for 2023 – all three at PHM by Charouz, plus one each at Rodin Carlin, Hitech Grand Prix and Campos Racing.





Jean-Pierre Jabouille 1942-2023

OBITUARY

Jean-Pierre Jabouille secured his place in motorsport history at Dijon in 1979 when he became the first driver to win a grand prix in a turbocharged Formula 1 car. Yet his stint at Renault was just one chapter in a long and varied motorsport career that included the design of the chassis in which he took the title at the end of a hard-fought campaign in the 1976 European Formula 2 Championship.

Jabouille, who has died aged 80 after a long illness, was an engineer by trade rather than training: he'd briefly studied modern art at the Sorbonne. His intuitive mechanical skills made him the

perfect choice to lead Renault's entry into F1 with its turbocharged 1.5-litre V6 engine, which joined the grid midway through 1977.

Gerard Larrousse, who headed up the Renault Sport operation, recalled Jabouille as a "persuasive if not always diplomatic character" whose feel for a racing car was all-important in the eventual success of the sometimes faltering Renault F1 project. "He was able to guide our engineers in the right direction and get the best out of the car," said Larrousse. "He had a certainty that our crazy project would be a success, and after two seasons of development that would have discouraged many, Jean-Pierre won his bet."

The key players at the Renault Sport team established at the end





SCHLEGELMILCH

of 1976 for the French manufacturer's F1 entry with the merger of its Alpine and Gordini sporting arms were already working together in F2 in the mid-1970s. Jabouille and, initially, Larrousse drove for Equipe Elf Switzerland, while Jean Sage was team manager. Larrousse was chosen as sporting director of the new F1 team and Jabouille its first driver, with Sage taking the TM role.

As Larrousse explained, the path to success was by no means smooth. The first Renault F1 race car, the RS01, was dubbed the "yellow teapot" by the doubtful Cosworth brigade for its propensity to expel steam and smoke. The car missed its projected debut at the French GP at Dijon, turned up for the first time at the British GP at Silverstone, and wouldn't make the finish of a race until Monaco the following season, through which Renault Sport again ran just a single car for Jabouille. Eventually, he claimed Renault's first F1 points late in the 1978 season at Watkins Glen.

It would take until the following summer for Jabouille's and Renault's perseverance to pay off on home ground at Dijon. While Jabouille took victory, Rene Arnoux came home third in the second RS10 after his famed duel over the closing laps with Ferrari driver Gilles Villeneuve.

The Renault project had already shown what turbocharged technology might go on to achieve in F1. Jabouille had notched up a first pole at altitude at Kyalami in South Africa. He followed it up by

topping qualifying at Dijon, and he and Arnoux would claim four more poles before the season's end, even if race finishes were scarce.

There would be only one more victory for Jabouille over the course of an F1 career encompassing 49 starts. His Renault RE20 triumphed at the Österreichring in 1980, taking a narrow victory over Alan Jones's Williams from second on the grid. Serious leg injuries sustained in the Canadian GP at Montreal at the end of the year effectively brought his F1 career to an end.

He had already signed for Liger after being released by Renault, but missed the opening two races as he continued his recovery and then failed to qualify in two of the next five. He called time on F1, at least as a driver, after the Spanish GP and segued into an engineering role with a team built around his friend and brother-in-law Jacques Laffite.

Jabouille was a late starter in a sport in which he would play an active role into his sixties. He initially competed in hillclimbs aboard his Alpine road car before entering the Renault 8 Gordini one-make tin-top series that gave Jean-Pierre Jarier among others a start in racing. After a move into Formula 3 aboard a self-prepared Brabham and then a Matra, he was picked up by Alpine and made the first of 14 Le Mans 24 Hours starts, racing an A220 prototype in 1968. It was the patronage of the state-owned Elf oil company, however, that set Jabouille on course for F1.

He raced for the works Tecno team with its backing in 1971 and then for British entrant John Coombs in 1972 with a March and then an Alpine chassis in 1973. He took his first victory in F2 with the French constructor's spaceframe A367 design at Hockenheim in 1974 and then reworked the car into a contender known as the Elf 2J for the

following year together with Jean-Claude Guenard, an ex-F3 racer who would die alongside Didier Pironi in a powerboat racing accident off the Isle of Wight in 1987. He and Larrousse would each win once in 1975 with BMW power.

The following year F2 allowed pure-bred racing engines and, with the two-litre Renault V6 on which the F1 powerplant would be based, he won three times and took a further three podiums to take the title by a single point from Arnoux.

Elf had given Jabouille his F1 race debut when he drove a third Tyrrell in its colours at Paul Ricard in 1975. That followed a pair of non-qualifications aboard one of Frank Williams's

Iso-Marlboros and then a Surtees the previous year.

Jabouille continued to race touring cars after leaving Ligier, and in 1989 ended a long absence from Le Mans with a one-off for Team Sauber Mercedes. He then joined the Peugeot 905 Group C project for 1990 and notched up a pair of third-place finishes at Le Mans in 1992 and 1993 with a car he helped develop. He was over 50 by the time of what was his fourth Le Mans podium in the second of those years, but it was far from the end of his motorsport career.

He went on to found JB Racing with Michel Bouresche in 1995, and won the International Sports Racing Cup and then its successor, the SportsRacing World Cup, in 1998 and 1999, each time with Emmanuel Collard and Vincenzo Sospiri driving a Ferrari 333SP. He won a French GT round as late as 2005 sharing a Chrysler Viper GTS-R with Alain Prost, and led the Team AutoGT team that developed the Morgan Aero 8 for the GT3 category in 2007-08.

GARY WATKINS



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Is Albon ready for his next step?

The Williams driver has to raise his game and take on a greater leadership role.

It's up to the Anglo-Thai to prove that nice guys can thrive in Formula 1

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

I hope not, they come out of the cost cap!" Dave Robson, Williams's head of vehicle dynamics, was relieved to hear that Alex Albon has no plans to be "throwing laptops around" as part of his work with the Formula 1 team in 2023.

That is set to be one of the storylines to follow in the coming campaign: can Albon galvanise a squad that lost its previous upward momentum with a tricky start to the new ground-effects era? His hiring at Williams for 2022 was a wonderful reprieve following his Red Bull demotion – and it was one Albon grabbed brilliantly and decisively to earn a long-term contract with the Grove-based team, which revealed its 2023 livery on an FW44 on Monday.

The Red Bull drop for 2021 focused and spurred Albon on as he watched from the sidelines. The pressure to get a new Williams deal from 2023 onwards amped up the burden last year, familiar to Albon from his similar circumstances alongside Max Verstappen in 2020. But second time around he delivered. And yet that drop still represents something of a problem.

F1 drivers themselves talk of a 'third year step'. Where, settled and familiar in the championship, the best kick on to reach new heights. Of his generational peers, Lando Norris and George Russell recently did it at McLaren and Williams respectively. Verstappen and Charles Leclerc didn't even need three years. Albon's third F1 season followed his Red Bull demotion and contained his efforts to get up to

"Albon is already demonstrating the qualities Williams needs, focused on what really matters"

speed with a new team, alongside the challenges of the latest ground-effects cars. A small difference to many of his fellows, but a resource drain nevertheless. This, in turn, alters an assessment of Albon's year three progress, although he feels "like I'm at my peak" now.

A key part of the story for Albon is entwined with the explanation that to really thrive in F1, a driver must be more forthright, direct – play the game a bit more selfishly. After all, the championship's history is stuffed with ruthless operators succeeding. That perception stems from his Red Bull/Toro Rosso rehiring ahead of 2019 and his F1 bow. From people such as the sadly departed Jean-Paul Driot who, once he'd got past the anger stemming from Albon being plucked from his Nissan e.dams squad in late 2018, felt his former F2 driver would need to operate more cannily in the politically charged Red Bull world to survive it, let alone prosper.

Many felt that not doing so contributed to Albon's ejection from Red Bull. But that tale has carried on with his Williams resurgence too, particularly after comments made by former team technical director Francois-Xavier Demaison late last year. The thought was that Albon is "too nice" to become world champion, because he's not demanding that Williams be better and get its package to secure glittering results. But Robson, who worked with world champions Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button at McLaren before joining Williams, feels Albon actually "gets the balance about right".

As the established driver alongside a rookie team-mate, Albon needs to step up regardless of the circumstances of his story. Logan Sargeant, 22, has been hired in part to be closer to Albon than Nicholas Latifi and in turn force him to raise his game further, but will be learning a big new world. Albon's taken promising early steps, such as calling Russell for a chat about working with soon-to-be-arriving Williams team principal James Vowles, drawing on the resources of their friendship. Plus, Albon gathered his support team (including his trainer and manager) over the winter to define 'leading' as a quality he wants to instil in the coming campaign as part of his ongoing drive to be better anyway.

Albon isn't expecting Williams to "come out of the box and straight away be very competitive". The team has focused on fixing the slow-speed front locking issue that impacted the FW44's handling, which never had a consistent balance. This in turn fed into an inconsistent feel for getting the best out of the fickle tyres in both qualifying and race trim. But Albon is wise to underplay expectations. And here he's already demonstrating the qualities Williams needs – an honest and calm leader, focused on what really matters behind the scenes.

But one centre-stage issue demonstrated Albon's nature best at Williams's 2023 livery launch. He spoke eloquently and coolly on the clampdown the FIA has imposed on driver expression this year via a revision to its International Sporting Code. His comment that "we were very much for 'We Race As One' and all these kind of situations, and it seems like the FIA are trying to go away from that" is quietly very damning for the governing body. Along with his now fully blond style, this perhaps best represents who Albon is – a gentle character, but an engaging one too. The problem is that, even in the current era, the most successful drivers and team managers combine the carrot-and-stick approach.

This then seems to be how things are set for Albon in 2023. That he can rely on the security provided by his long-term contract to avoid his previous F1 career pitfalls, while also building on the progress he made back at the top level last year, which was instilled by the pain and opportunity of his Red Bull demotion. If the delayed 'third year' step comes, as many expect it will, he'll do it in his own inimitable style. 🍀

“Max has now added experience and the confidence that world championship success brings”





The big questions of 2023

Every year we ask ex-Formula 1 driver and latter-day Sky analyst Karun Chandhok to consider what's most intriguing about the upcoming season. So here goes for 2023...

KARUN CHANDHOK

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport
IMAGES



Can anyone stop Max Verstappen and Red Bull?

It's going to be very hard to look beyond Max Verstappen and Red Bull as the favourites heading into 2023. As a driver, I thought that Max raised his game in 2022 to a new level where there really was a calmness and a methodical approach we hadn't seen before. From when I saw him race in F3, it was abundantly clear that this guy is one of the most gifted drivers on the planet, but he's now added experience and the confidence that the world title brings.

The 2022 Max knew that he didn't need to win the race on the opening lap. He knew that if he didn't get pole, it didn't really matter, as long as he got the car in the right window to maximise his race performance. These are all things that I feel Lewis Hamilton uncovered and unlocked around 2017 when he just moved to another level, and Max has done the same.

Bizarrely, Red Bull and Max have somehow managed to make themselves more unpopular with the fans, especially in the UK, over the past two years despite an amazing run of success on track. I don't know if they really care about that, but what they will care about is the reduced windtunnel time that the cost cap breach has brought them. The fizzy drinks giant sold over 11 billion cans last year, so a \$7million fine is a mere correction on a monthly P&L, but the availability of 17% less tunnel time than Mercedes will be a concern for ongoing development in the second half of the year and into 2024 — the base concept and architecture of the RB19 will have been done well before this became an issue.

Success breeds success in F1. Having a dominant car last year allowed them to switch focus to 2023 early on and they're starting from a higher performance threshold

anyway. The technical superteam of Adrian Newey, Rob Marshall, Pierre Wache and Paul Monaghan remains firmly in place, as hungry as ever, and will be hard to beat.

Will Fred Vasseur be able to solve Ferrari's problems?

Let's get some perspective on Ferrari's 2022 season. In 2020, fresh off the back of the fuel-flow saga, the team finished a dreadful sixth, 1.43% off the fastest car on average in qualifying. This improved to third in 2021 but still 0.73% off in qualifying. In 2022, Ferrari had the fastest car on average over one lap, 0.04% ahead of Red Bull, although admittedly it suffered with higher tyre wear in the races.

In terms of pure performance gains, to achieve what Ferrari did in the past two years is actually very impressive. The design team on the chassis side as well as the power-unit team should be complimented on the work done to produce a car concept that looked completely different to anyone else's (apart from their technical partner Haas!) and worked very effectively from the start of the new regulations. Reliability was a weakness on the power unit side but, as the old adage goes, it's easier to make a quick car reliable, rather than a slow and reliable one to be quick!

The strategy team and drivers both made a variety of errors in 2022, and the development curve also tailed off after the summer break relative to their rivals, all of which left the Italian giant looking over its shoulders at Mercedes rather >>



than forward at Red Bull at the end of the season.

I think Mattia Binotto tried very hard to create a no-blame culture at the team, which is great, but you have to dovetail that with leadership that pushes through the changes required when weaknesses are evident. I do wonder if there could have been a place for Mattia to still lead the technical team alongside Fred Vasseur, in the same way as Ross Brawn and Jean Todt worked so closely together to drag Ferrari out of the doldrums.

Vasseur is a smart operator with a very good racing brain, but he is going to be new to Maranello. Ferrari is a unique team, based outside the motorsport valley of the UK, and having someone like Binotto with historical knowledge of the deep-rooted culture within the team would have been useful if they could work together.

Being the team boss of Ferrari is the most high-pressured job in F1. I've known Fred for a long time, since his GP2 days, and he's a pretty unflappable character, which is exactly what is needed. He's a tough taskmaster too, all of which points towards him being the new Todt – and that decision turned out pretty well for Ferrari, although it did take six years before it won a constructors' title under his leadership. I'm not sure that the tifosi would be prepared to wait that long.

The relationship between Fred and the board and ultimate owners of Ferrari is going to be vital. Luca di Montezemolo proved to be a vital buffer between Todt and owners through the 1990s whereas that level of protection no longer seems to exist and this will be an added challenge for Vasseur.

Lewis Hamilton versus George Russell: who will lead Mercedes' challenge?

Mercedes once again heads into the season with, in my opinion, the best driver line-up on the grid. It has two race winners on its books, and the inner harmony that it lacked during the Nico Rosberg/Lewis Hamilton era. Will that peace last if the car is a title challenger? That's the question that makes this the head-to-head battle I'm most excited to see this year.

George Russell was one of the stars of last season. He started the year stronger than Lewis, but what impressed me more was the final part of the season. From Barcelona onwards, Hamilton raised his game and, on the surface, in the qualifying sessions from Spa onwards he beat George 7-2. But their average gap in the dry sessions was only 0.057s.

It would have been so easy for a driver in their first season in a top team, against statistically the greatest qualifier of all time, to let their head drop. George did very well to dig deep

and drag himself out of a hole to outqualify Lewis in two out of the final three races, including the crucial one in Brazil that set him up for victory.

But make no mistake, Lewis is going to be hungry for that eighth title. The races he drove last year in Canada, Holland and Austin in particular were sublime. They were a reminder that when it comes to consistently brilliant race performances, Lewis, Max Verstappen and Fernando Alonso are truly the ones in the A+ league.

It may sound contradictory to say this but, from a neutral's perspective, I really hope that Mercedes produces a car that's a match for the Red Bull. We were denied an epic Ayrton Senna-versus-Michael Schumacher title rivalry in 1994, and I've often pointed to 2021 being a recreation of that. Verstappen versus Hamilton in the next few years, before inevitably the Brit calls time on his career, is something that we all want to see. Throw a hungry and supremely confident Russell into the mix and it will be box office gold.

Will McLaren improve enough to keep hold of Lando Norris?

I've lost track of the number of times when McLaren engineers told me last year that they expect to be fifth in 2023, because their new windtunnel won't come into use before the 2024 car at the earliest. They seem to have privately accepted that they're in a bit of a holding pattern for this year.

Lando Norris has been one of the standout drivers in the past three years, with some great performances while making no real errors. But seeing his friends – and drivers who he must see as equals – George Russell and Carlos Sainz land deals with top teams and join F1's winners' club would inevitably sting a little.

The popular Brit often talks about his irritation at people questioning his long-term commitment to McLaren at a time when it's not a title-contending team. I must admit, I was one of those irritating people who was wondering about it, because I think it could limit his movement if a seat opens up at Red Bull or Mercedes. It's a brilliant bit of negotiation on McLaren's behalf by Zak Brown to take him off the market.

But the reality is that I'm sure Lando doesn't want to play second fiddle to Max Verstappen at Red Bull, and Ferrari has a solid driver pairing locked in so, unless Lewis Hamilton leaves Mercedes, being at McLaren is his best option for now. If and when Lewis does go, McLaren will have to fight hard to keep Lando because he must be at the top of the Mercedes shopping list. The bids to buy Lando out of his deal will come flying from Brackley to Woking quicker than the golf ball leaving his club! >>





Mercedes boasts F1's
strongest driver pairing
in Hamilton and Russell



“Will the inner harmony
at Mercedes last if the
car is a title challenger?”



Seeing how Alonso's character fits in to the Strolls' set-up at Aston Martin will be riveting

SUTTON

“There are very few drivers in the history of F1 with the racing brain that Alonso has”



SUTTON

Could anyone from the midfield battle the big three?

In 2022, as a season average, McLaren and Alpine ended the year 1.27% and 1.37% respectively off the pacesetter Ferrari in qualifying. In F1 terms, that's a sizeable margin and meant that they generally ended up on the fourth row of the grid.

But Ferrari managed to gain 0.7% between seasons for two years in a row, and leapfrogged from the midfield battle in 2020 to the front in 2022. This shows that progress is possible with the right brainpower and resources. Alpine had a poor run of reliability last year but the car itself seemed fast. Its development through the season seemed particularly good and, towards the end, the blue cars were consistently outpacing McLaren's Lando Norris.

The midfield team to watch in my opinion is Aston Martin. The squad really seemed out of position last season in comparison to where I expected it to be. It started the year with one concept and controversially managed to pivot to a 'Red Bull concept' quite early on in the season, which is no small task.

Lawrence Stroll and Martin Whitmarsh have been on an aggressive recruitment drive for the past two years and the fruits of that expansion should be evident this year. They seemed to make some decent steps forward towards the end of last season in terms of pace, so could be a real threat to leapfrog ahead of Alpine and McLaren.

Is the Fernando Alonso and Aston Martin partnership a match made in heaven or hell?

The dynamic between Fernando Alonso and the Strolls is going to be intriguing. On the one hand, the Spaniard has very clear and simple objectives. He craves on-track success more than anything else, and loves being in a competitive battle all day, every day. Give him the tools and support, and he will deliver at every apex of every lap.

There are very few drivers in the history of Formula 1 with the racing brain that Fernando has. I often try to listen to his radio when sitting at our race control desk in the Sky F1 commentary box, because his awareness of how the race will unfold is just incredible. He not only thinks about his strategy, but he's also telling the team about what strategy he thinks

the five cars around him will do!

On the flipside, he's clearly a very complex character who enjoys being in control of situations. Last year's contractual battle with Alpine was a perfect example of how he just completely took control of the midfield driver market, made the moves that worked for him, and completely blindsided everyone as they were switching off for their summer break. Fernando will push a team hard because he seeks performance and perfection. As a team, I think Aston Martin is a dark horse to lead the midfield battle. If it doesn't deliver, then expect some fireworks.

Will Pierre Gasly and Esteban Ocon be good for Alpine?

The people who had the worst summer break last year were Laurent Rossi and Alpine's legal department. They publicly stated that retaining Fernando Alonso was their priority, and when they couldn't get him they wanted Oscar Piastri, but they've ended up with their third choice: Pierre Gasly. The whole contractual saga was a PR nightmare that doesn't really befit a team representing the group that is the third largest car maker on the planet. Mind you, the group has dealt with the Carlos Ghosn saga, so I suppose a bit of F1 contract battling is relatively minor.

Going to Alpine is a good deal for Gasly. He was getting stagnant at AlphaTauri and the change should kickstart some fresh motivation into him. He and Esteban Ocon seem to be hitting it off fine for now, but it will be interesting to see if they can put their past personal troubles behind them when we get on track, as their historical dislike for each other was made pretty public last year.

The noises coming from Enstone are that they've had their best winter for a long time in terms of planning and car build hitting the deadlines. The power unit last year was a completely new concept, a challenge that shouldn't be underestimated, and it delivered very strong performance albeit with weaknesses in reliability. Alpine should be the favourite of the midfield teams, but will it be able to finally drag itself into at least the occasional battle for the top three? As a major manufacturer team, that must be the target. >>



Which of the rookies will shine brightest?

There hasn't been a rookie with as much expectation as Oscar Piastri carries on his shoulders since Lewis Hamilton. The young Aussie has effectively ended the career of one of the most popular drivers in recent F1 history, had two big teams fighting over his services with bosses from other top squads wading into the debate – and he's not completed a single lap in a grand prix.

From everything the engineers who have worked with Oscar in the junior formulas tell me, he is absolutely the real deal. The test team at Alpine was hugely impressed with him too, but none of that matters now. What matters is that he's able to hold his own against Lando Norris. This is going to be a tall order and, I have to admit, I do admire what Oscar has done by taking the brave move of walking into a team Lando knows very well, and a car that clearly is philosophically unique to get on top of. Daniel Ricciardo went from an incredible run of form at Renault to struggling to adapt to the McLaren, but that hasn't scared off his younger compatriot.

It seems odd to classify Nyck de Vries as a rookie because it feels like he's been around for so long. Nyck is a very fast driver and has long deserved his shot in F1, so I'm pleased that it's worked out for him with AlphaTauri. Yuki Tsunoda will have to raise his game since he is now the experienced one in the team and, with the impressive Ayumu Iwasa waiting in the wings in F2, beating Nyck is a must. For de Vries, the pressure is off and he can allow his talent to deliver to its full potential.

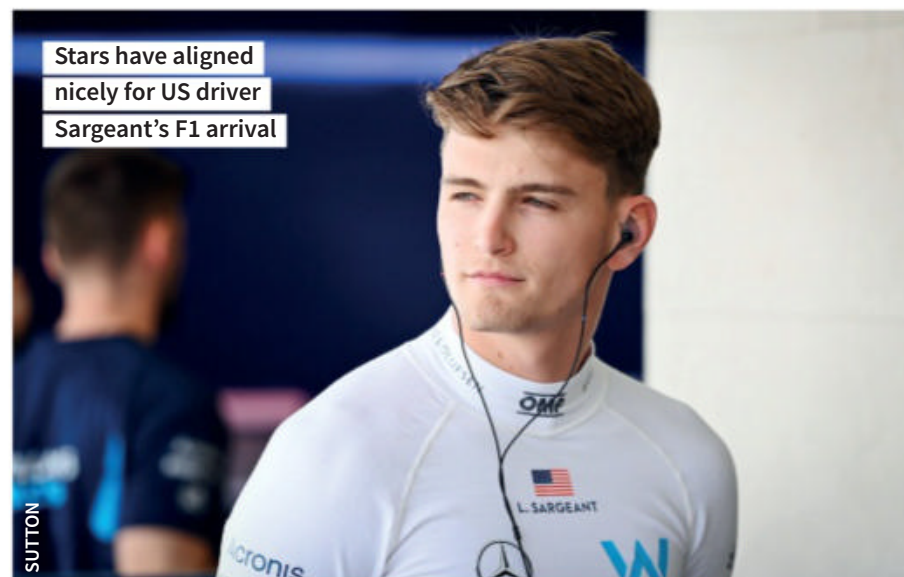
Logan Sargeant is a good example of how and why timing is critical to getting your break in F1. As the top American driver in European junior formula racing, with two American-owned teams and three US races lined up for 2023, he couldn't have timed it better. Sargeant had a solid season in F2, but I do wonder whether Williams would have benefited from an experienced driver line-up like Haas has.

There's a lot of restructuring going on, while Daniel Ricciardo wasn't interested, people such as Mick Schumacher and Stoffel Vandoorne would probably have been solid short-term solutions as the team stabilises. It's a great chance for Sargeant to learn the ropes in F1 away from the limelight, and Alex Albon will be a good benchmark for him.

Can James Vowles turn Williams around?

F1 teams are like big tankers. It's hard to turn things around quickly, especially at a team that seems to have taken a step backwards on track over the past year and also changed several key people.

I know Williams's new team principal James Vowles, who has arrived from Mercedes, reasonably well and he's a very smart guy. He's also an extremely hard worker with a strong emphasis on a methodical and structured work ethic. From a technical perspective he will certainly be able to identify areas of weakness



compared to the mighty Brackley operation he's been a part of for 20 years. He's also seen the tough times during the BAR and Honda years, which will be a valuable attribute to getting the owners at Dorilton to appreciate what they need to do to turn things around.

The challenge for James is that Williams is a team where the workforce's motivation has taken a massive beating in recent years. As I write this, there still isn't a technical director. Changing that person is a big enough ask – changing that role twice in five years is quite destabilising for the whole team.

The key I think is how many senior technical people James can poach from other top teams, and how quickly. He's obviously done a great job in getting released from Mercedes without any long period of gardening leave, something quite extraordinary in modern F1, where anywhere between six to 18 months has become the norm.

Yes, F1 is a technologically led sport, but Dorilton to its credit has invested heavily in upgrading the factory. What the team now needs is the right brainpower to maximise the tools, because ultimately creating a successful F1 car is about using the creativity of the designers' and aerodynamicists' brains with the underlying principles of physics and mathematics.

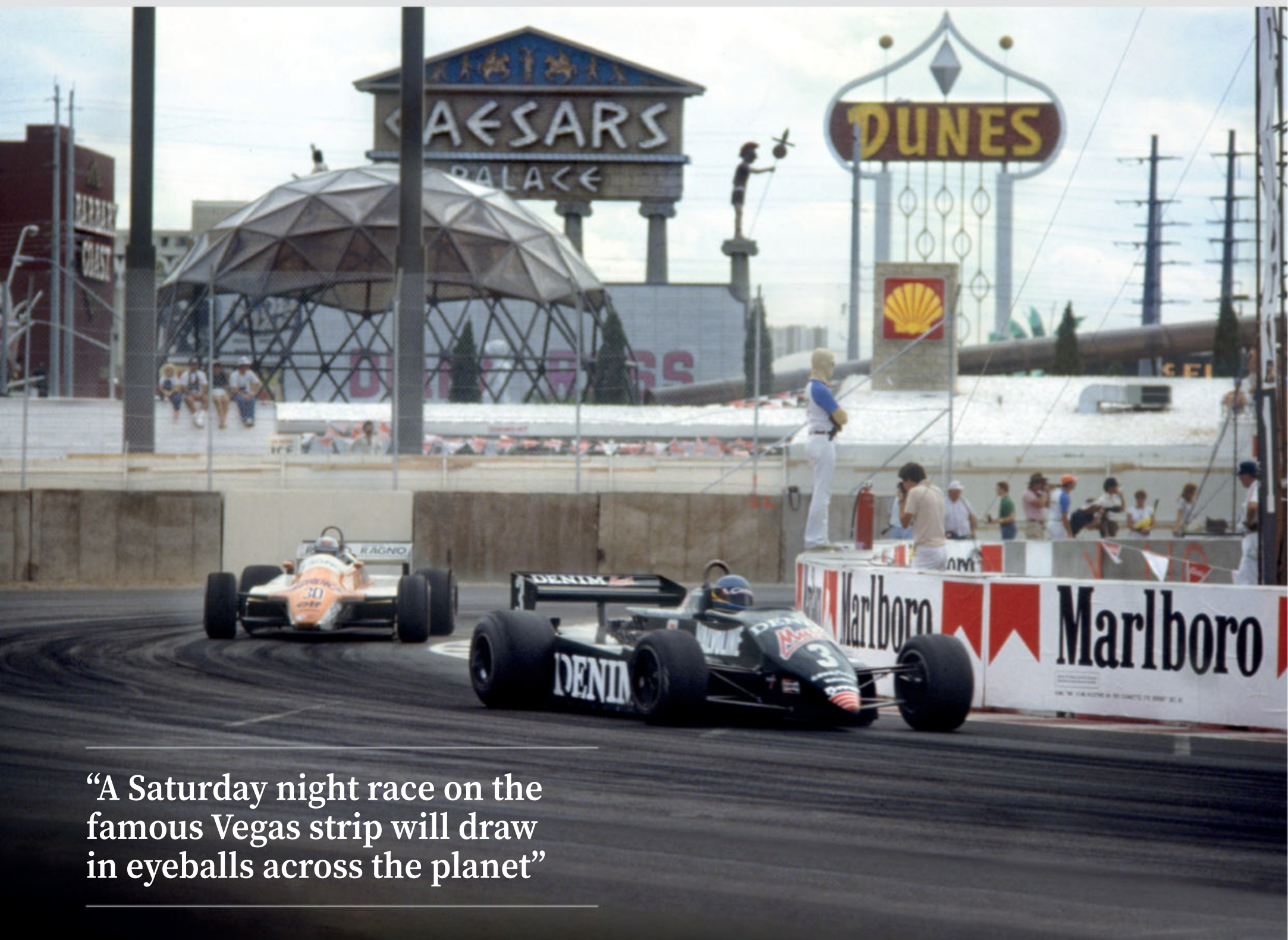
What's good and what's not about the 2023 calendar?

In my 'Big Questions' piece last year, I said I believed 20 races to be a good number, and 12 months later I'm even more sure of that. The burnout rate for people working in the paddock is rising, with 24 weeks of the year spent on the road (including testing). On the one hand, you have the old-school paddock lifers who argue that 'back in their day' you spent 35 weeks per year travelling for testing and races, so people should stop whining. All that does is prevent others who want to spend more time at home with their families from speaking up. And you've got a whole load of people who are under pressure from their families because of the amount of time they're on the road and therefore end up begrudgingly doing the whole season.

The budget cap means that it's harder for the teams to rotate staff around, and I really do wonder whether teams and the sport in general need to consider the mental health of their staff a bit more. By creating some provision within the cap to allow teams an extra allowance, specifically to replace those who have done at least 20 races, you could just ease some of the pressure.

The big story this year is, of course, the new race in Las Vegas. The level of excitement is off the chart already, and the prospect of a Saturday night race on the famous Vegas strip is something that will draw in eyeballs across the planet. Miami and Austin are both hugely successful events for F1, and it does seem that the series has finally cracked the world's largest consumer market.

F1's return to Qatar is something I'm less excited about because I don't think the circuit is really suited for grand prix car racing. The fast, flowing track is great for MotoGP and probably good fun to drive around, but it's far from ideal when it comes to creating good overtaking and racing. 🏁



“A Saturday night race on the famous Vegas strip will draw in eyeballs across the planet”

F1 returns to Las Vegas;
Qatar track not a great fit
for F1, reckons Chandhok





Preparation
for 2023 F3 season
started with Jerez
test last September



DINO BEGANOVIC

THE NEW FERRARI DINO

He's a protege of the Prancing Horse, he's the reigning Formula Regional European champion, and now he's stepping up to F3 with one of the top teams.

Time to meet Dino Beganovic

MEGAN WHITE

As the reigning Formula Regional European champion, Ferrari Driver Academy prospect Dino Beganovic has a lot of pressure on his shoulders as he graduates this year to the FIA Formula 3 Championship. The Swedish youngster is riding high after claiming his first title in car racing last October, and is one of the series' most exciting young prospects heading into this season.

Beganovic, who claimed four wins and four pole positions in Formula Regional by Alpine last year, has driven for junior single-seater powerhouse Prema since 2020. He continues his journey into F3 with the Italian squad and has some illustrious names to emulate: from the current F1 grid, Esteban Ocon and Oscar Piastri have won F3 titles with the team over the past decade; Charles Leclerc, Pierre Gasly and Piastri have claimed F2 crowns.

While his win tally wasn't sensational in FRegional in 2022, it was his run of finishing the first eight of the 20 races in the top two that was remarkable, especially bearing in mind the grid size in the mid-thirties. In the early weeks of this year, he's kept sharp by contesting the first two FRegional Middle East Championship rounds, claiming a win apiece in Dubai and Kuwait. So although

the step to F3 is daunting for any young driver, Beganovic says he feels good.

"After coming away with a really strong season in FRECA, winning the championship, I could not feel better," he declares. "I feel prepared. We have done FRMEC to prepare and get back to the racing environment, and it feels really good. First test is coming up in Bahrain in mid-February, and it's all set. Our targets are set to what to expect and what to try to get out of the test before the first race."

Had he remained in the Middle East, Beganovic would have had a very strong chance of the FRMEC title, and he welcomed being back in a racing environment. Better, however, to prepare for F3, especially with the final two FRMEC rounds sandwiching the three-day F3 test in Bahrain. He admits that the full campaign would have been "way too much".

Beganovic is wary of putting too much pressure on himself, a lesson he learned the hard way in 2021. He had a hugely successful 2020, from a promising scouting camp resulting in his adoption by Ferrari to his maiden single-seater campaign in Italian F4, where he finished third in the standings. He moved up to FRECA >>



“I SHOWED MYSELF WHAT I CAN DO, BUT ALSO OTHERS. I THINK IT MAYBE GOT IN THE HEAD OF OTHERS AS WELL”

the following year, but finished down in 13th in his rookie season, while team-mate and Mercedes F1 protege Paul Aron was third.

“I think I had two really good team-mates [Aron and David Vidales], they were strong, they were second season in the category,” he says. “So I think I put maybe a bit too high expectations on myself in the beginning. In the end, though, mid-season, I focused more on myself to improve and then everything started to go better as well. I would say that I just put too much pressure on myself in the beginning, and I wanted to be at the top too much. I had some stupid crashes here and there when I could have taken points or rookie wins. But yeah, I just wanted more than that.”

Despite his struggles, Beganovic was able to bounce back the following year, imposing himself over runner-up Gabriele Mini (who had won the 2020 Italian F4 title) and Aron (third again). He attributes this to his pre-season preparation being key to reversing his 2021 struggles, and starting the season with a win put him in the best possible position.

“I think I showed myself what I can do, but also others,” he explains. “I think it maybe got in the head of others as well, that I’m really strong, that I’m a championship contender, and that I didn’t really want to move from that position. As we saw, consistency is super-important to win a championship. Last year in F3 [where several drivers were in title contention until the final round], you can take a lot of things out of it. In the end, I think nobody can say that they had a clean season, a good season, because there was much left on the table with maybe crashes or missed opportunities, especially in the top six positions.

“But last year in FRECA if you lose a race, it’s really difficult to gain it back, and that was what made the difference. No stupid risks. I didn’t have any DNFs either.”

It’s with those lessons behind him that Beganovic heads into his rookie F3 campaign, with Aron once again his team-mate alongside returning F3 driver Zak O’Sullivan, who switches over from Carlin for his second campaign in the series. All three began their work together in the post-season test at Jerez last September.

“From his [Aron’s] side and my side, we have been pushing each other quite a lot,” points out Beganovic. “We are very competitive, but also we have been helping the team, because the team was not on top in 2021. In 2022, we won the drivers’ championship and the teams’ championship. That’s because of the work we put in over the winter break, and the car we developed during the season in 2021. We will keep pushing each other, so I think we’re a help and maybe a pain in the ass for both of us. But it’s in a good way.”

The support of Ferrari has proved valuable to Beganovic, with



fellow Academy members and 2022 F3 drivers Ollie Bearman and Arthur Leclerc on hand to provide further advice as he enters his maiden campaign. He lives in Maranello, and says the “opportunity to go to the factory every day, to train in Ferrari and to have meetings with Ferrari engineers, it’s a huge advantage, which I’m very happy about”.

Further support comes in the form of Swedish touring car legend Rickard Rydell. The 1998 BTCC champion serves not only as Beganovic’s manager, but as his mentor and coach, with the youngster saying he is “one of the keys behind my career”. They joined forces at the end of 2018, and it was Rydell who helped Beganovic progress from karting to single-seaters.

Born in southern Sweden to Bosnian immigrants, Beganovic now finds himself on the F1 support package, with millions of eyes on him for the first time – including the “huge support” he receives from followers in his home country. “My expectations are to always be in the front fighting for the top positions, to be competitive,” he reckons. “Prema have done an amazing job all the years and the plan is to keep on going with the goal to win the championship.”



Rosin lauds Beganovic's
"master" performance
last year at Monaco



WHAT DOES THE BOSS SAY?

Prema boss Rene Rosin has overseen Dino Beganovic's entire career in car racing, and he's been impressed with what he's seen.

First off, in 2020, his third place in Italian Formula 4 came as fellow rookie and Prema team-mate Gabriele Mini won the crown. "He was fighting constantly for the win and podium in the final rounds," recalls Rosin. "Honestly, his progression was pretty good. Then he moved with us in Regional. The first year, he did some good stuff at the beginning, then I must say maybe we were not on top of the game ourselves. We were struggling a bit, not really as we want it.

"And after that, he stuck with us and we really put our feet down trying to understand where to improve, how to improve for 2022. And last year,

he did an amazing job in Regional. So after that, it was logical to step up with us in Formula 3."

Rosin praises Beganovic's consistency

and determination, with his six-race, 129-point charge at the start of the season proving crucial to the teams' title. "Monaco I think it was a master lap

and a master race," he proclaims. "Overall, he did a very good season, very consistent. Even after the DSQ [from second place] he got in Paul Ricard, other drivers would have been affected on their mind. Instead, he continued working, continued pushing in the right direction, and then he secured the championship."

Despite being coy about his expectations for Beganovic in 2023 and saying the team will "watch race-by-race, doing our job in the best way as possible", it is clear Rosin has high hopes for the Swedish youngster.

Rookie fought hard
for third in 2020
Italian F4 points



ACI SPORT ITALIA



PORSCHE/JUERGEN TAP

PORSCHE 963 DEBUT

A LITTLE BIT OF PORSCHE HISTORY REPEATING

Porsche's 963 didn't fare as well as hoped on its debut in the Daytona 24 Hours last month, but neither did its spiritual predecessor the 962 – and look how that turned out...

CHARLES BRADLEY

Porsche has made no bones about its new 963 prototype being the heir to its ultra-successful 962 of the 1980s and 1990s, with its plans involving a factory team and customer cars on both sides of the Atlantic. So far, it's proving to be a tribute act in more ways than one.

To remind you, the 962 itself was a successor to the 956, designed to fit IMSA's GTP demands with a longer wheelbase, extended by 12cm at the front so the driver's feet were behind the front axle. A steel roll cage, instead of aluminium, and a single-turbo engine, rather than the pair that the 956 boasted, were also required.

The 962 made its debut in the Daytona 24 Hours in 1984, with Mario and Michael Andretti driving a factory-fielded car. It qualified on pole position in Mario's hands – by two seconds thanks to qualifying tyres and blanking off its underside air intake! – and led the 83-car field initially, until retiring after 127 laps with gearbox failure. It turned out that mounting the turbo atop the gearbox “cooked” the synchronisers, according to Mario. “The turbo created so much heat, and they underestimated that,” says Andretti Sr. “So that was a shame, because I think Mike and I could have probably walked that race.”

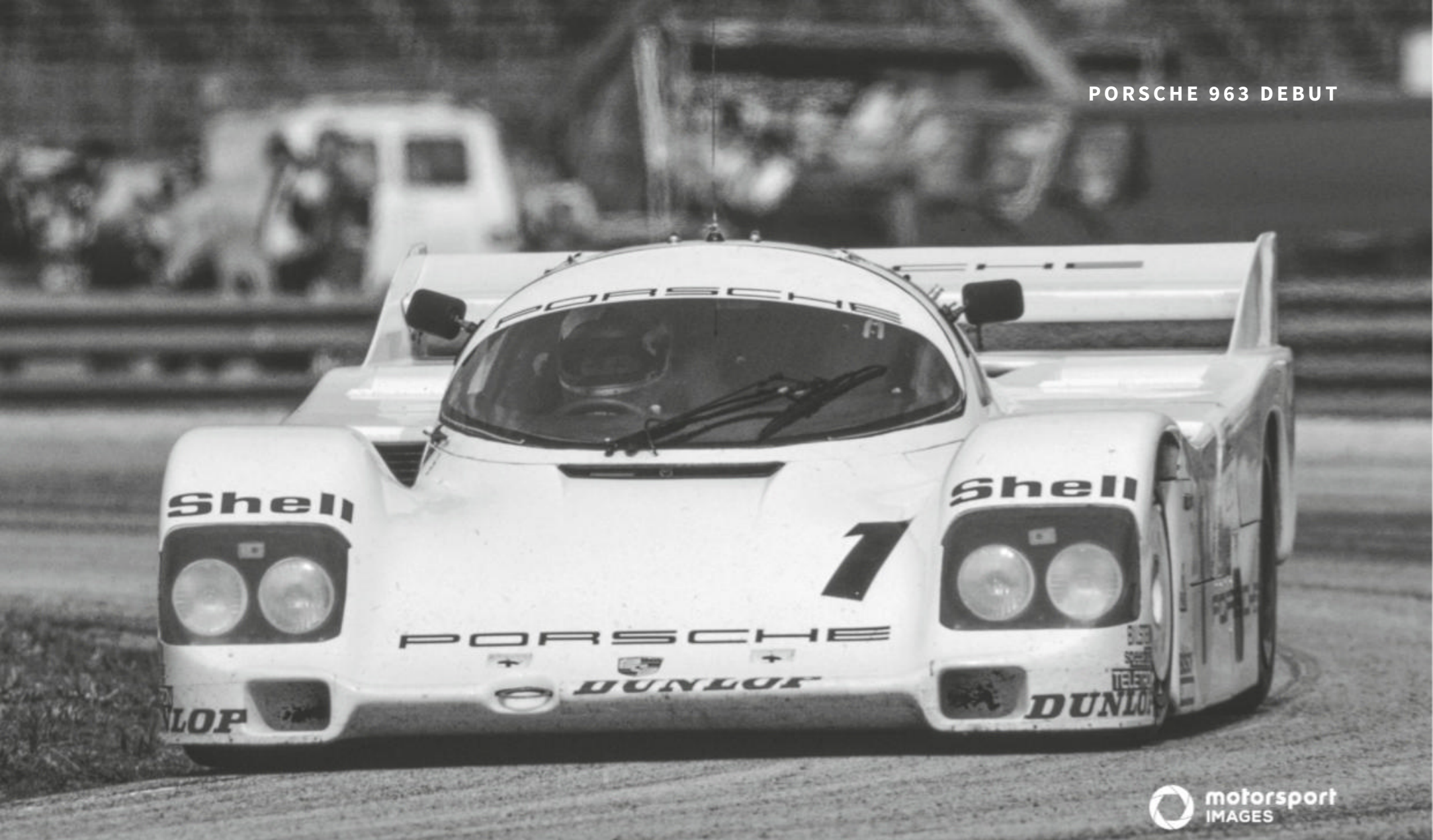
Fast forward to 2023. The 963 made its debut in the Daytona 24 Hours, with two entries fielded by the factory Porsche Penske

Motorsport team. The #7 car just missed pole position by 0.083s (but set a faster theoretical lap in qualifying), while the #6 sister car was leading at the 16th-hour mark until Nick Tandy spun off at The Kink after a clash with a slower competitor, which cost three laps for repairs.

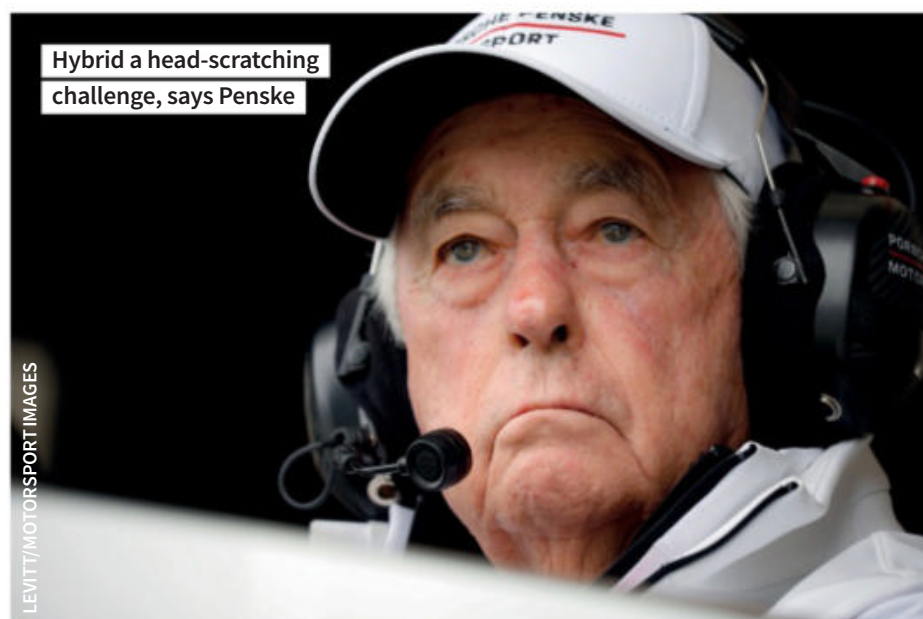
Tandy then charged back into contention, including a storming stint where he passed all the GTP cars ahead of him – including the race-winning Meyer Shank Racing Acura in IndyCar star Simon Pagenaud's hands – to get within one lap of the leader. But it was taken out of the race by, you've guessed it, a gearbox failure. At least the cause wasn't heat from the turbo this time, since they are mounted well away, tidily nestled between the vee of the 4.6-litre V8 engine.

Between them, the Porsches led for 41 laps, but the sense of disappointment is palpable as project director Urs Kuratle speaks soon after flagfall. “People are checking data right now, everybody is obviously tired and we don't know the root cause of it yet,” he sighs.

After the race, when Autosport does some digging in the paddock, a source reveals that the problem with the gearbox in question was that its “insides can see the sunshine”. Kuratle adds: “It was a hard decision to make to retire the car, it's always difficult to stop in the garage and you don't see the



motorsport
IMAGES



“I smashed into what I thought were polystyrene boards, but they’re weighed down by massive sandbags”

finish line of a special 24-hour race. But it’s important to save parts, to save mileage on parts, and not put the car at another technical risk because it wouldn’t be safe. There could be a crash or something like this, and we would lose more parts.”

That decision highlights how critical the supply chain for this new breed of LMDh machinery is. The requirement to run the common electrical hybrid system has created hurdles throughout the pre-season testing programme, and legendary team chief Roger Penske points out that we shouldn’t underestimate this extra strain. “This high-voltage hybrid has been a challenge for us from the standpoint to understand it,” he says. “I think we have more engineers looking at computers than we do people working on the car right now. It certainly looks like it in our pit.”

Porsche wasn’t aided in its parts situation when Tandy crashed in qualifying and then spun off in the race, inflicting damage to the car, which was leading at the time with eight hours remaining.

“I went to the inside [of an LMP3 car] at The Kink, fully alongside like we do every three laps with them, and I don’t know if he thought he could turn in but there was no room, and because these cars are so wide I had to go up on the inside kerb, and I was already shallow turning in, and we were at the end of a triple stint,” says the 2015 Le Mans winner. “The thing snapped, so I bailed out onto the grass, thinking I’ll just rejoin at the next corner. Then I smashed into what I thought were polystyrene boards, but they’re weighed down by massive sandbags, so it ripped the thing to pieces! It should have been an innocuous trip across the grass. But that caused us an issue.”

Kuratle adds: “The nose was damaged, and there were a lot of smaller carbon bits and pieces around which were damaged, like the antenna and things on the car. The [three-lap] stop might have looked slow, but as a matter of fact the guys did a good job. They changed a lot of parts doing this stop.”

It wasn’t all doom and gloom for Porsche – the #7 did see the chequered flag, 34 laps down on the winner in 14th position overall and seventh in class. It lost the majority of this when the team opted to replace the car’s energy store system, made more time-consuming due to the number of bolts required to anchor the high-voltage system on safety grounds. “We know that was the root cause,” asserts Kuratle. “We changed the battery on this one, and the issue we had was not there anymore.” >>

PORSCHE 963 DEBUT



Tandy put in a storming stint following his spin

PORSCHE/JUERGEN TAP



CHARLES BRADLEY

This car suffered a second trip behind the wall, for a much faster repair to a broken water pipe. “There was a water leak from the engine, from the combustion engine,” adds Kuratle. “It was the first [time the pipe had failed] as well. We had many firsts with issues we never faced before, so there’s a lot to do after this race.”

While it has many aspects to investigate from a reliability standpoint, Porsche will also be mildly concerned about the pace gap to the dominant Acuras that scored a 1-2 finish. While both the MSR and Wayne Taylor Racing-run cars encountered gearbox issues, which meant their oil reserves needed refilling, when it came down to raw performance stints — such as at the start and towards the finish — the ARX-06 was simply untouchable.

Tandy was very honest about the pace deficit to the MSR Acura after the race: “It comfortably had eight tenths to the Porsche and the Caddys, and it probably had three or four tenths on the Taylor car. It was all acceleration and straightline speed, it was just a bullet in a straight line. You can’t build a car with less drag and more power and different torque curves, they’re all regulated. So, fair play, they must’ve done well to get the thing set up for Daytona.”

But potential does appear to be there in the 963 and, when reminded of his sparkling comeback drive on Sunday morning, Tandy says: “We don’t know why we had that pace all of a sudden. It’s not like they slowed down, we picked up pace from the previous

“It’s not about selling as many cars as we can. I’d rather sell fewer cars, and make sure they’re run properly”

stint that I ran. All we did was change tyres. Maybe we just got the tyre into a nice temperature window, it just started to work for us.”

Acura’s pace could open a Balance of Performance debate a little earlier than IMSA would have liked, with all GTP cars currently on a baseline performance level. PPM boss Jonathan Diuguid explained, ahead of the Daytona race, that he’d like it to stay that way.

“Honestly, the LMDh formula does a pretty good job of making the box relatively small in general,” points out Diuguid. “When I’ve seen some communications from other manufacturers about worrying less and less about BoP I think that’s truthful and genuine, because the power and weight are similar, and aerodynamic regulation box is quite tight. With these cars right now, we’re all just looking towards the racing.

“The drag and aero performance window is relatively small, [Porsche’s] approach was more about adjustability to be able



PORSCHÉ/JUERGEN TAP



PORSCHÉ/JUERGEN TAP



DOLE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

to use our single aerodynamic device [the rear flap assembly on the 963] to get the largest aero balance range that we could to be able react to these different tracks that require different things.”

Next month the Porsche 963 programme elevates to a different level, as the second round of IMSA at Sebring is paired with the FIA World Endurance Championship opener – where Porsche goes in to bat against Le Mans Hypercar opposition from fellow debutants Ferrari, along with Peugeot and Toyota. That opens an altogether different BoP conversation...

“There’s been open communication between the two groups, IMSA and ACO/FIA; I think there is going to be a different schedule between the two [BoPs], and that’s driven off the race calendar too,” says Diuguid. “I think IMSA’s approach will be pretty consistent with what they’ve done in the past, but the WEC approach will be slightly different because at the onset they’re going to have a different challenge to balance LMH versus LMDh cars.”

The two series use different windtunnels to come to BoP decisions: IMSA uses Windshear in Concord, USA; WEC uses Sauber’s in Hinwil, Switzerland. Diuguid reveals that “there will be some slight aerodynamic differences based on the windtunnels”, and so the 963 in WEC will run a slightly different aero spec to the IMSA car.

It smacks of the IMSA 962 and its European version, the 962C – and still to come are the customer cars. They are delayed by the parts supply-chain issues and should appear at the end of April. It feels similar to 1984 again, when Bruce Leven’s team became the first customer to get a 962 later that year but graciously loaned it to Al Holbert for the Riverside and Laguna Seca rounds. Its legacy was born, and Holbert’s victory with Derek Bell at Mid-Ohio kickstarted a tremendous streak of success over the following three years.

Would Porsche want vast numbers of customer cars on that scale again? Head of Motorsport Thomas Lauderbach urges caution: “It could well be, but I’m not sure we necessarily want that! We need to give support, it’s part of our philosophy.

“We’re all long enough in the business to know that the manufacturer support we see now won’t last forever. Therefore, customers stabilise a series for the long term. For us, it’s not a business case about selling as many cars as we can, and we won’t then leave them alone so they’re at the back of the grid.

“If we sell a car, we will give support so that a professional team with professional drivers will be somewhere near the front of the pack. I’d rather sell fewer cars, and make sure they’re run properly.”

The 962 sparked a golden era for Porsche in sportscar racing. And with the 963, it could be a little bit of history repeating. 🏆



BEECHDEAN MOTORSPORT

BEECHDEAN'S RISE TO THE TOP

From numerous GT successes to supporting the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award, Andrew Howard's squad has become a stalwart of British racing

STEFAN MACKLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

“I remember sitting there watching these GTs thundering around Spa and it was just hypnotic, and I think that's the first time motor racing, and especially GT racing, just hooked me.”

For Andrew Howard, becoming mesmerised by endurance racing at the famous Belgian circuit in 2003 proved to be a pivotal moment for several reasons. Not least because it came just a year after a “horrendous crash” at Eau Rouge in a Mini Miglia that resulted in him being taken to hospital with concussion.

The pull of GT racing for Howard would have far-reaching ramifications in the following years for his Beechdean Motorsport squad – named after the successful ice cream company he co-founded with his wife Susie in 1989.

After nearly two decades the outfit has become a stalwart of GT racing in the UK and across the globe, winning numerous titles and boasting an impressive driver roster over the years – including 1992 Formula 1 champion Nigel Mansell, who raced a factory supported Ginetta-Zytek GZ09S LMP1 run by the team in the 2010 Le Mans 24 Hours.

Howard's time in the cockpit as an Am driver has yielded two overall British GT3 titles and a European Le Mans Series crown. It's not a bad CV for someone who, by their own admission, had little interest in motorsport. “I was a bike boy,” he says. “I rode bikes from the age of 15 and if I'm honest the only reason I really got into motorsport was my then pregnant wife decided me hurtling around on bikes wasn't necessarily the safest thing. So, I did the sensible thing, sold the bike and bought a race car!”

His first foray was with the Mini Miglia Championship in 1999 via sponsoring fellow driver Ian Gunn, before his hefty shunt at Spa and subsequent awakening to GT racing switched his focus. This came with the purchase of a Ferrari 360 Modena in 2006, and while Howard intended to run the car from the pitwall he soon found himself in the driver's seat again.

“The Ferrari was where I moved from team owner to driver,” he says. “The big crash at Spa really did knock my confidence, so it was easier for me to get someone else to drive. The issue I had in those days is you'd have the driver say ‘I'll turn up’, and then they wouldn't turn up! >>



Howard/Adam
Aston Martin
Vantage GT3 leads
the pack at Oulton
Park in 2015



2015's double scoop: GT3 crown for
Howard and Adam, GT4 honours
for Chadwick and Gunn



Lessons learned by Howard running a race team have fed back into his dairy ice cream business

JAMIE MCPHILIMEY/BEECHDEAN GROUP



Mansell drove Ginetta-Zytek at Le Mans in 2010

SUTTON

“BRITISH GT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHAMPIONSHIP THAT I’VE ABSOLUTELY LOVED DOING”

“I’ll always remember being at Brands Hatch for British GT with my Ferrari and no drivers, so in the end I did the whole thing and I just suddenly thought, ‘You know, I can do this.’”

The peak with the Modena was second in the GTC standings in 2007 alongside Aaron Scott after five class wins, but a switch of car soon beckoned. If a lack of drivers had been the catalyst to get back in the car, then the subsequent purchase of an Aston Martin DBRS9 for 2009 convinced Howard that there was a career for him behind the wheel.

“The DBRS9 was the turning point because it was a car you could either drive or you couldn’t, and there were a lot of people out there at the time that didn’t get on with it, especially in the wet,” recalls Howard. “Our first win was at Rockingham in the wet [in 2011 alongside Jonny Adam], we had no windscreen wiper from a quarter of the way through my stint!”

A partnership with Mark Lemmer’s Barwell Motorsport concern allowed Howard to focus on driving, first sharing the DBRS9 with Jamie Smythe in 2009, and Aston Martin factory driver Darren Turner and Leo Machitski the following year. But the arrival of future four-time British GT3 champion Adam for 2011 proved to be the spark that set Howard and Beechdean on the road to success.

“He wasn’t just doing it as a hobby, he was doing it to be successful and I think that’s where we forged a really good relationship,” recalls Adam. “He was my pupil in a way and always listened to try and improve. I learned a lot in the early days racing with Andrew from the coaching side, I definitely learned the stuff that I use now with customers.”

When a deal to race a Nissan never materialised, Howard struck up a partnership with Prodrive to run the then-new Aston Martin Vantage GT3 – an association with the British marque that remains to this day.

While 2012 was a development year with the car, which yielded just one win at the Nurburgring and eighth in the standings, the 2013 season came together for the team. Despite again only taking one victory – this time at Brands Hatch – consistency meant Howard finished as overall champion, but a points deduction for Adam

following a collision at Snetterton meant he missed out on the title. “As far as I’m concerned, we both won it,” says Howard.

A promising start to the 2014 campaign, with a win at Snetterton and three further podiums, was undone by a torrid Spa round that meant Howard “drove like an absolute idiot for the rest of the season and managed to come out with minus points in the last three races”.

If the second half of 2014 had been a low point – minus the overall GT4 title for Ross Wylie and Jake Giddings – 2015 brought the pinnacle of success for the team in the eyes of Howard. He and Adam secured the overall GT3 title despite being the underdogs heading into the Donington Park finale, and their success was made even sweeter as it followed in the wake of Ross Gunn and Jamie Chadwick securing another overall GT4 crown for Beechdean.

Howard says: “I’m lucky enough to have finished Le Mans twice and we won the ELMS, and I would still say 2015 as a team is the best feeling in terms of overall winning everything we could in a championship. And it was done professionally, the team did so well.”

With a second GT3 title under his and the team’s belt, the ELMS beckoned, with a win at the opening Silverstone round and Estoril finale handing Howard, Turner and Alex MacDowall the GTE title in 2016.



Howard’s first British GT win, Rockingham 2011

JEP



SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

A key element of the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award is the finalists' ability to adapt to the different cars, which for the 2022 edition included a MotorSport Vision Formula 2 machine, Ligier JSP320 LMP3 and Aston Martin Vantage GT3 – the last of which was supplied by Beechdean.

With less downforce than the other two cars and a predominantly single-seater background for the finalists, the inclusion of the GT is always a critical component of the two-day assessment at Silverstone.

Last year was the first time Beechdean became involved with the process – with Aston Martin having become lead partner for the initiative in 2019 – and for team owner Andrew Howard it was an opportunity not to miss.

“Garage 59 [who previously ran the GT cars at the test] obviously now run McLarens and



they wanted Astons,” says Howard. “And we were lucky enough that people considered us the go-to team. For me, it’s another great way of supporting youth. Obviously Jamie [Chadwick] came through our ranks but it was lovely for the other three as well, that we could go along and be part of that.”

Eventual winner Luke Browning, along

with fellow finalists Ollie Bearman, Louis Foster and Chadwick, each got three sessions in the car, the first two of which were on used rubber while the final outing was with new slicks. Their performances were measured not only against each other, but that of benchmark driver Jonny Adam.

Both the Scot and Howard are keen to give back to the next generation, having forged their own success stories in motorsport.

“I think as we all get a little bit older, as we’ve had success and enjoyed our sport, we should put a little bit back,” adds Howard. “For me, it was absolutely brilliant [to be involved]. And there’s a lot of pride for our team to be involved in what really is just a little piece of history, not just for that driver but in motor racing. You look at the people that have come out of that [award], it’s pretty spectacular.”

In subsequent years the team has branched further afield, with outings across the globe, notably just missing out on a class podium at Le Mans in 2017, while last year the team ran two cars in GT World Challenge Europe. But British GT has always remained a focal point, Jordan Albert and Jack Bartholomew being overall GT4 race winners in 2016 and Kelvin Fletcher and Martin Plowman taking the Pro-Am GT4 title in 2019.

“British GT has always been a championship that I’ve absolutely loved doing, it makes most sense in terms of us as a business and for me I love the circuits,” says Howard. “I love the competition of it being the premier Pro-Am championship in Europe.”

Howard has tried to give back to the sport in recent years, not least through his association with the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award (see above), as well as being Motorsport UK’s representative on the FIA’s driver committee – a role that has allowed him to offer a voice for Am drivers.

“I think the FIA is in a big transition phase at the moment and I think you’ve got two options,” says Howard. “You either stand on the outside and lob rocks in or you stand on the inside and try and help.”

It’s not just in motorsport where Howard continues to have an influence, having become sporting consultant for Wycombe Wanderers Football Club where he was once chairman, while

the ice cream business continues to prosper.

“Don’t underestimate the importance of teams, not just when you’re kicking a ball or when you’re driving a car, but also when you’re making ice cream,” says Howard, hinting at the reason for his success on and off the track. “All of the work that I’ve been able to do with teams and learn, all of that goes back into the ice cream as well.”

Things have come full circle for 2023, with Howard partnering Gunn Jr again for a full assault on the British GT3 title having raced with him to Silverstone 24 Hours success in 2015 and at Le Mans in 2017. It’s apt, given that Howard began his journey in motorsport by supporting Gunn Sr, but the 59-year-old has no plans to slow down anytime soon. He hopes to race Aston Martin’s evolution of the Vantage in 2024 and, when he does decide to hang up his helmet, he intends to still compete with Beechdean from the pitwall.

“My ambition then is I want to win Spa outright as a Pro team, and I would love to go and do more Pro work,” he says.

Regardless of his plans, Howard and Beechdean have already left their mark on British motorsport and the wider GT racing world, all of which could have been very different but for one afternoon at Spa. “I suppose, like all of us, we either turn our dreams into reality or we keep dreaming,” concludes Howard. “Some of us are lucky enough to get part of the way there.”



The Peter Brock legend and Holden history are intertwined, no more so than at Mount Panorama

HOLDEN BACK THE YEARS

The moments that made Holden racing history

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

Holden's involvement in top-level professional motor racing is officially over. In a quirk of timing, the marque's presence on track outlasted its existence in the showrooms by two years. It was back in early 2020 when General Motors announced that its famous Australian manufacturer would cease to exist at the end of that year. While it was a shock given Holden's longevity, it wasn't given the sales numbers. Local manufacturing had been dead since 2017, and people had abandoned rear-wheel-drive, four-door sedans for SUVs. The Commodore had become a rebadged version of the German-made Opel Insignia.

The flow-on effect was that the days of the Ford-versus-Holden rivalry in Australia's top-level Supercars series were suddenly numbered. While people had stopped buying Holdens, they hadn't stopped supporting them at race tracks around the country. Fortunately, ongoing delays with the new Gen3 rules meant that the Commodore would continue racing in Supercars until the end of the 2022 season, even though Holden itself had been consigned to history.

With the fleet of Holdens now having contested their last Supercars race, let's take a look back at some of the make's moments that made touring car history.



Dashing hero Brock an Aussie icon

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Colin Bond (below) shared 1969 Bathurst-winning HT Monaro with Tony Roberts

GMA AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND



1972 Bathurst breakthrough for Brock in Torana

GMA AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND



GMA AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

FIRST SUCCESS AT BATHURST AND IN THE ATCC

As soon as the early Holdens started rolling off the production line in the late 1940s, people started tuning and racing them. The famous Humpy Holdens and their easily tuneable straight-six 'grey' motors were a popular choice for Appendix J racing and were a consistent figure in the early days of the Australian Touring Car Championship from 1960 onwards.

By the late 1960s the foundation of the Holden-Ford battle was set with new advertising rules allowing for the formation of the shadow factory Holden Dealer Team and works Ford team. The V8-powered HK Monaro GTS was unveiled in time for what had become an important 500-mile race at Bathurst to take on Ford's XT GT. But the factory efforts on both sides were trumped in 1968 by privateer Monaro driver Bruce McPhee who, along with Barry Mulholland (who only completed a single lap), scored Holden's first major Mount Panorama triumph.

Two years later the HT version of the Monaro delivered Holden's first Australian Touring Car Championship crown, Ford's six-year winning streak broken by Norm Beechey thanks to wins at the Easter Bathurst meeting, Sandown and Lakeside.

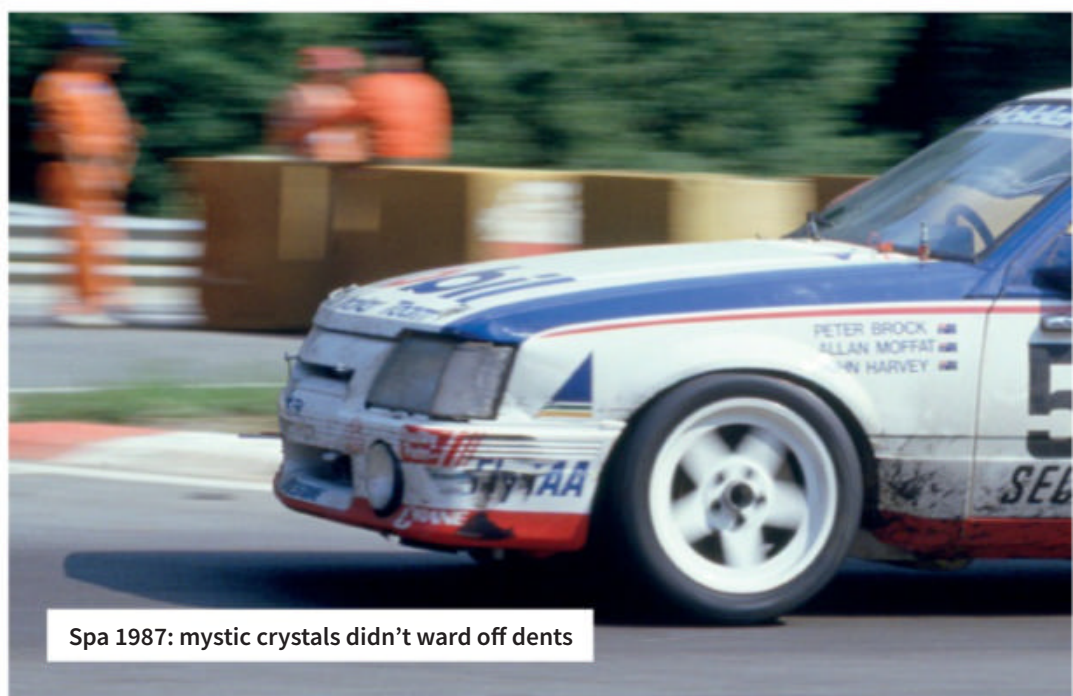
BROCK'S BATHURST BREAKTHROUGH

The Holden Dealer Team was established in the late 1960s as a way of Holden going factory racing, without technically running a works team. While Ford was fielding full works cars in Aussie touring car racing, Holden didn't have that luxury. GM wanted to abide strictly to the anti-motorsport agreement brokered by the Automobile Manufacturers Association in 1957 and forbade any of its marques from running a factory racing programme. HDT was the answer, a works team disguised as a dealers-owned operation. Harry Firth, who had been leading the Ford works team, was poached to run the HDT.

In 1969 HDT won the Hardie-Ferodo 500 at Bathurst for the first time with the HT Monaro, with Colin Bond and Tony Roberts driving. Firth then shifted the team's focus to the six-cylinder LC Torana GTR XU-1. The car struggled to match Ford's big V8s in what had become a hotly contested annual 500 miles around Mount Panorama, Allan Moffat racking up Bathurst wins for the Blue Oval in 1970 and 1971. Then, in 1972, the weather gods intervened. Wet conditions stripped the Falcon GTHO Phase III of its power advantage and turned the nimble Torana into a hugely competitive package. It was the last time a driver was able to contest the Bathurst race solo and the last time it was contested over 500 miles. And it was the first win for a young driver named Peter Brock. »


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PERFORMANCE**



BATHURST 1979: UNSTOPPABLE BROCK

Peter Brock quickly became Holden's star and something of an Aussie sporting icon. Off the track Brock was a marketing dream, handsome and charismatic. On it he was a fierce competitor with seemingly limitless talent. By the middle of 1974 he was equipped with the V8-powered LH Torana SL/R 5000, which helped him seal his first ATCC crown. He also had the Hardie-Ferodo 1000 shot to pieces until an engine failure took him and Brian Sampson out of the race. Then, at the end of 1974, he parted ways with the HDT in circumstances that were unclear. The public reason for the split was that Brock wanted to free himself from the dependence of the factory-backed team. There were also rumours that Brock's personal life had played its part.

It wasn't until 1978, when John Sheppard replaced Firth, that Brock was welcomed back to the HDT fold. By then he was a two-time Bathurst winner thanks to a privateer victory in a Torana SL/R 5000 with Sampson in 1975. A third triumph followed in the new Torana A9X in 1978 alongside Jim Richards, while Brock won a second ATCC the same year.

At the 1979 Hardie-Ferodo 1000, the Brock/Holden combination was at its devastating best. Brock and Richards delivered a second win on the bounce in truly devastating style. They won by an eye-watering six laps, with Brock putting the icing on the cake by lowering the lap record on the very last of the 163 laps. That was the final year of the Torana before it was replaced by a homologated racing version of Holden's new four-door sedan called the Commodore.

“Brock was adamant that the Energy Polariser realigned the car's molecules and made it handle better”



Perkins and Brock on the Bathurst podium in 1982



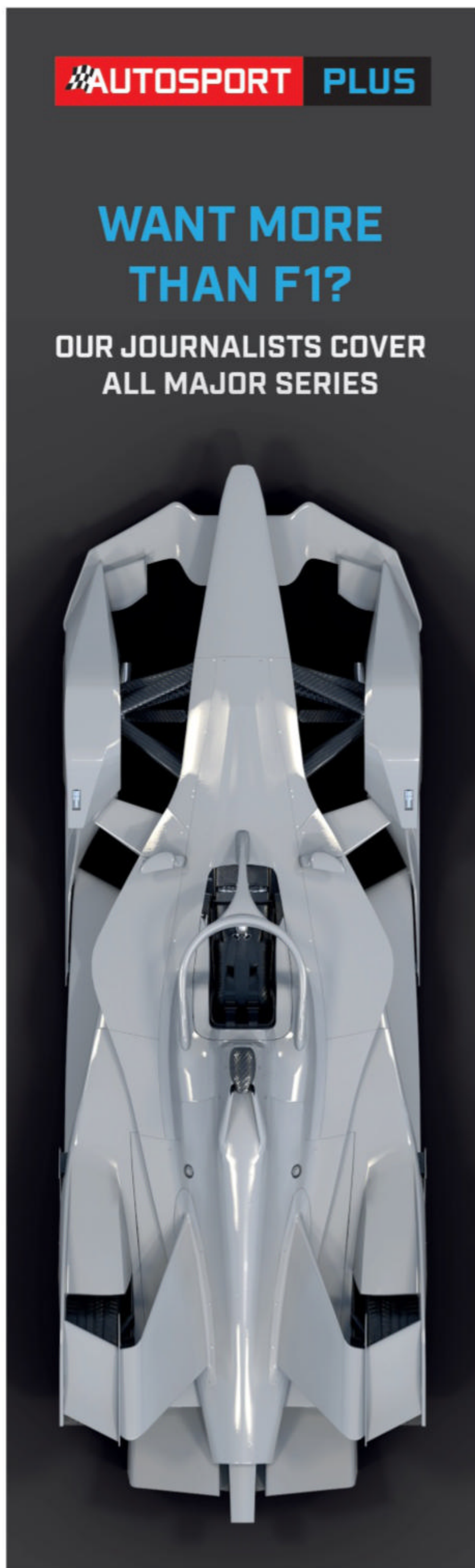
THE LAST OF THE BIG BANGERS

The Commodore enjoyed a successful start to its racing career, despite some serious changes in the background at the HDT. With Ford's local programme already closed down, Holden decided to follow suit and de-fund the HDT. The team was sold off and Sheppard jumped ship, with Brock staying on to spearhead HDT Special Vehicles, which could modify and homologate Commodore touring cars. In 1980 Brock won both the ATCC and the Hardie-Ferodo 1000 (for a third straight time with Richards). More Bathurst success followed two years later when Brock combined with Larry Perkins to win with the Commodore VH SS. Brock was successful at Bathurst once again the following year – at the expense of his brother. Phil Brock was booted from the #25 entry he was meant to share with John Harvey early in the race when the car Peter Brock and Perkins had started lunched its motor.

The 1984 Bathurst race was billed as the Last of the Big Bangers, because it was the final time at Mount Panorama for the Group C Aussie touring cars before the international Group A regulations were introduced. The HDT was dominant with the iconic VK Commodore, Brock and Perkins cruising to victory in an HDT 1-2 ahead of Harvey and David Parsons. To make the victory even sweeter, Brock slowed up on the final lap to ensure Parsons was right behind him as they crawled across the finish line. It was the perfect revenge to Ford's famous photo finish at the Mountain in 1977.

THE POLARISER

In early 1987 Holden was embroiled in one of the most bizarre stories in Australian motoring history. Brock and his partner Bev had struck up a friendship with a chiropractor named Eric Dowker – aka Dr Feelgood. Dowker specialised in mystic crystal energies and convinced Brock of the magic, detoxifying power of crystals. Together Brock and Dowker developed the Energy Polariser, a small box filled with magnets and crystals. Brock was adamant »



HOLDEN HIGHLIGHTS



Wonderkid Lowndes makes his debut (above); celebrating 1999 ATCC title (below)



First Holden Bathurst win for Skaife in 2001 (above); early 2000s domination (below)

that when attached to a car it realigned the molecules and made it handle better. It was simply stuck to the car, not connected by wiring in any way. There was nothing in the way of scientific evidence to support Brock's and Dowker's claims and, understandably, the vast majority of onlookers were sceptical. Still, the device found its way into HDT race and road cars. That didn't go down well with Holden, which in early February 1987 announced that it would stop issuing warranties to HDT road cars that were fitted with a Polariser.

The final straw for Holden was Brock defiantly launching the new Polariser-equipped HDT Director road car to media later that month, forcing the marque to sever ties with its superstar driver for a second time. It wasn't until 1994 that he was, once again, welcomed back into the Holden fold.

THE ARRIVAL OF HRT

Following the Polariser rift and subsequent split with Brock and HDT, GM Holden needed a new outlet for its performance racing cars. And they found it in Holden Special Vehicles, run by Tom Walkinshaw Racing. Initially the racing programme was handed over to Larry Perkins, until Walkinshaw decided to bring it in-house. And so the Holden Racing Team was born.

For the 1990 season, British touring car star Win Percy

relocated from the UK to Melbourne where he would be in charge of establishing, running and driving for HRT. The issue, however, was that the Group A era hadn't been overly kind to the Holden Commodore, and this new factory-backed venture wasn't a silver bullet in terms of matching the Ford Sierras and Nissan Skylines and so on. But the team did pull off one of the biggest upsets in Bathurst 1000 history when Percy and co-driver Allan Grice outlasted the turbo Fords and Nissans to win the Great Race for HRT for the first time.

Holden and HRT still had to struggle through another two seasons of the Group A regulations with the Commodore, but better times were coming. The demise of Group A was welcome news for Holden since it was replaced by the Group 3A rules that were focused on rear-wheel-drive, V8-powered sedans. A new era of the Ford-versus-Holden battle began, and HRT would become a dominant force.

LOWNDES COMES AND GOES

In 1994, HRT signed a promising young 20-year-old named Craig Lowndes as Brad Jones's co-driver for the Sandown 500 and the Bathurst 1000 – and it was at Mount Panorama where 'The Kid' made a name for himself. In the closing stages of the race he found himself parked under the rear of the race-leading Dick Johnson

“Murphy’s effort drew an ovation from rival teams as he returned to the pits on his cool-down lap”

Racing Falcon driven by John Bowe, the master of defensive driving. But even Bowe didn’t see Lowndes coming when he swept around the outside at Griffins Bend to grab the lead. Bowe would find a way back through and win the race, but the legend of Lowndes was born.

In 1996 Lowndes was promoted to a full-time HRT seat, winning the ATCC, the Sandown 500 and at Bathurst in his first full season. There was a brief, and ultimately unsuccessful, interlude in European Formula 3000 in 1997, before Lowndes returned to Australia and HRT and won two more ATCC titles in 1998 and 1999. Lowndes was Brock-like in both his speed and his popularity. He quickly became Holden’s pin-up boy. Until, suddenly, he wasn’t. After a tough 2000 season he made a sensational defection to Ford for 2001, which, at the time, was one of the biggest sporting stories in Australia.

SKAIFE’S DOMINANCE

Mark Skaife was a different kind of Holden hero to the likes of Brock and Lowndes, winning over the Holden fans by being a ruthless competitor. In the early 2000s he enjoyed an immense period of dominance with HRT, scoring three of his five ATCC titles on the bounce in 2000, 2001 and 2002 and winning the Bathurst 1000 in 2001 and 2002.

From 2003 onwards Skaife wasn’t just the lead driver at HRT; he was the owner as well. When TWR collapsed in 2002, Holden stepped in and rescued its factory team. But the rules didn’t allow a manufacturer to actually own a team. So Skaife stumped up more than \$3million to relieve Holden of its ownership. He then owned and ran the team until 2008, his final year as a full-time driver, when he sold it back to Walkinshaw. Skaife’s performance as a driver clearly suffered during his stint as HRT owner, though, with a Bathurst win in 2005 the stand-out result. He would later admit that it was too much to try to run the team and drive at his absolute best.

THE LAP OF THE GODS

There have been faster laps since, but Greg Murphy’s Shootout effort at Mount Panorama in 2003 is still arguably the greatest Bathurst lap of all time. The rapid Kiwi, one of the best drivers of his era and an important figure for Holden as the marque’s face in New Zealand, stunned the V8 Supercars paddock when he clocked a 2m06.859s in the single-lap dash for pole at Bathurst. For context, Bowe had, on the previous lap, just lowered the unofficial record himself... to a 2m07.955s. Murphy’s effort drew an ovation from rival teams as he returned to the pits on his cool-down lap. It wasn’t until 2010 that the Lap of the Gods was finally eclipsed.

TRIPLE EIGHT JOINS HOLDEN

As the 2000s wore on, Triple Eight became a Supercars powerhouse. Team founder Roland Dane made all the right moves as he turned his squad into a winner, signing Lowndes and then adding the underrated Jamie Whincup to the line-up in 2006. Initially the team’s success came representing Ford, until Dane, smarting after losing all factory support at the end of 2008, decided to change camps ahead of the 2010 season in a move that brought Lowndes back into the Holden fold.

The team made a dream debut with its Vodafone-backed VE Commodores in Abu Dhabi, finishing 1-2 – Whincup ahead of Lowndes – in the opening race of the season. Whincup won Supercars titles for Holden in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 before Shane van Gisbergen added another in 2016. There had been Bathurst wins in 2010, 2012 and 2015. At the same time, HRT’s form had been steadily declining, opening the door for Dane to



Fired-up Murphy post-Lap of the Gods



2011 title for Triple Eight



Tribute livery for Walkinshaw send-off

sell the idea to Holden that Triple Eight shouldn’t just have factory backing, it should be the factory team. At the end of 2016, Holden pulled the primary factory status away from the Walkinshaw squad and handed it to Triple Eight.

The Red Bull Holden Racing Team, as it became known, would continue until the demise of Holden itself. The last official race for the Holden Racing Team moniker was the Bathurst 1000 in 2020, where van Gisbergen and Garth Tander delivered an emotional win.

WALKINSHAW’S INCREDIBLE SEND-OFF

It wasn’t until two years after the final ‘factory’ Holden race that the make actually departed the top flight of Supercars. Midway through the 2022 season, Walkinshaw Andretti United, the old HRT, announced that for 2023 it would defect to Ford instead of sticking with GM and moving to the Camaro. So to celebrate both the final fling for Holden, and the team’s history with GM, WAU rolled out Commodores wearing a stunning tribute livery, based on the first ever HRT car in 1990, for the season finale in Adelaide.

If that wasn’t enough, the team then pulled off an incredible 1-2 in Saturday’s opening race, Chaz Mostert leading home Nick Percat in an emotion-charged finish. Broc Feeney then rounded out the Holden era by taking a maiden win in Sunday’s second race for Triple Eight. Not quite as emotional, but fitting all the same. 🏆

Dominant
Fiats of Bordino
(#4), Giaccone (#9)
and Salamano (#14)
failed to finish
French GP



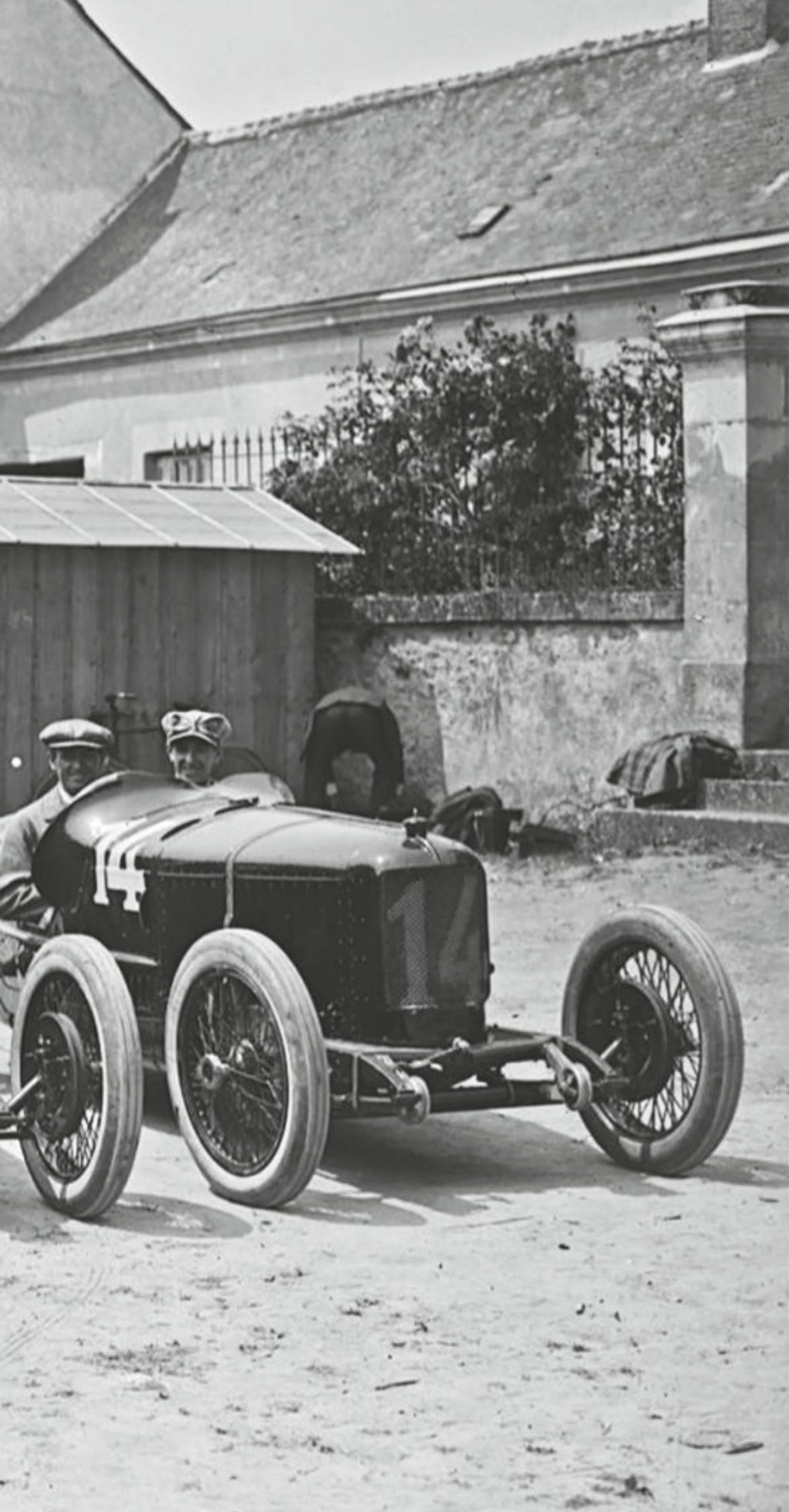
1923 RETROSPECTIVE

Grand prix racing's forgotten year of change

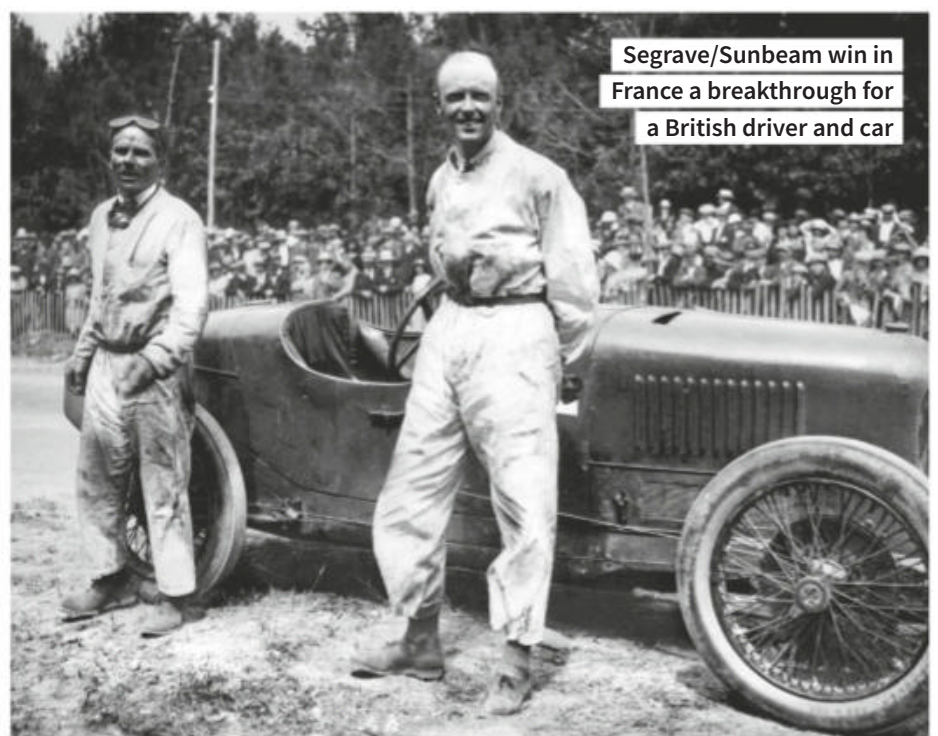
A century ago GP racing was a long way off becoming a fully fledged world championship, but it was a landmark for technical innovation

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY: GPL



Supercharged 805
reinforced Fiat's place
at the top of the tree



Segrave/Sunbeam win in
France a breakthrough for
a British driver and car

“The Fiat had a significant power advantage of 20-30bhp over the unblown opposition”

Grand prix history is often written as though it began in 1950, with the inauguration of the Formula 1 world championship that is now very much the pinnacle of motorsport. That certainly keeps things neat, but GP competition started as far back as 1906, and the season that took place a century ago is a forgotten milestone.

The 1923 campaign featured the arrival of a new technology that would revolutionise racing for decades, the appearance of a mid-engined design, and flirtations with other innovations, the potentials of which would not be realised for many years. And there was some controversy over a team copying the car of a rival...

It might be hard to imagine now, but Fiat was the king of GP racing 100 years ago. A new two-litre limit had been introduced for 1922 and Fiat's 804-404 had been the car to beat. Low and neat, the straight-six machine not only set the template for what GP cars should look like for the next few years, but it won the blue-riband French GP and the Italian GP.

For 1923, several teams followed Fiat's lead, only for the Italian firm to move the goalposts again by introducing the supercharged 805-405. Originally developed to help aero engines breathe better in thin air at altitude, supercharging uses a mechanical link to the engine to power a pump that compresses air. Forcing more air into the engine allows more fuel to be burned, producing more power.

With this innovation, the eight-cylinder Fiat produced nearly 130bhp, giving it a significant power advantage of around 20-30bhp over the unblown opposition. Although there were a number of GP and Formula Libre races in 1923, the important ones as far as Fiat was concerned were the French and Italian GPs, with three 805s entered in each.

Fiat ace Pietro Bordino, who could perhaps be likened to a Max Verstappen-style charger, stormed into the lead of July's French GP at Tours from the rolling start. The other two 805s, driven by Enrico Giaccone and Carlo Salamano, quickly moved into third and fourth, with only Lee Guinness breaking up the red domination in his Sunbeam, superbly chasing after Bordino.

Bordino's "masterly handling of his wonderful fleet-footed car", according to *The Motor*, allowed him to set fastest lap and stretch his lead at the head of the 17-car field before trouble struck. The track surface left something to be desired, and it is thought that grit and debris was ingested by the supercharger, leading to engine failure.

Guinness took the lead, but clutch issues slowed him, and the remaining Fiats moved into first and second. Then Giaccone also hit engine trouble, leaving Salamano ahead chased by three Sunbeams. In the closing stages, Salamano's Fiat ground to a halt. Initially it was thought that his 805 had run out of fuel, but later similar engine issues to the sister machines were implicated. The new >>

Other motorsport moments of 1923

The Le Mans 24 Hours was held for the first time. ‘Sportscar racing’ wasn’t yet a distinct category, but the French event would help form this new branch. Although there was no official victor at that stage, the Chenard et Walcker of Rene Leonard/Andre Lagache covered the furthest distance, and a remarkable 30 of the 33 starters were classified as finishers.

Spain’s first ‘permanent’ race track, Sitges near Barcelona, was built and hosted the Spanish GP. Albert Divo won on the oval-like circuit driving a Sunbeam, but the track was not deemed a success and quickly fell into disuse.

Enzo Ferrari, yet to found his legendary marque, won the Formula Libre race at Ravenna in June driving an Alfa Romeo RLTF. Ugo Sivocci had won April’s Targa Florio in a similar car, but he would be killed in practice for the Italian GP.

Enrico Giaccone was another Italian to lose his life during the season. The 33-year-old was killed at Monza in a testing accident while a passenger with Pietro Bordino when the squad’s drivers were taking it in turns to be riding mechanic. Bordino survived, but perished in a crash when a dog ran onto the road and was hit by his Bugatti at Alessandria in 1928.

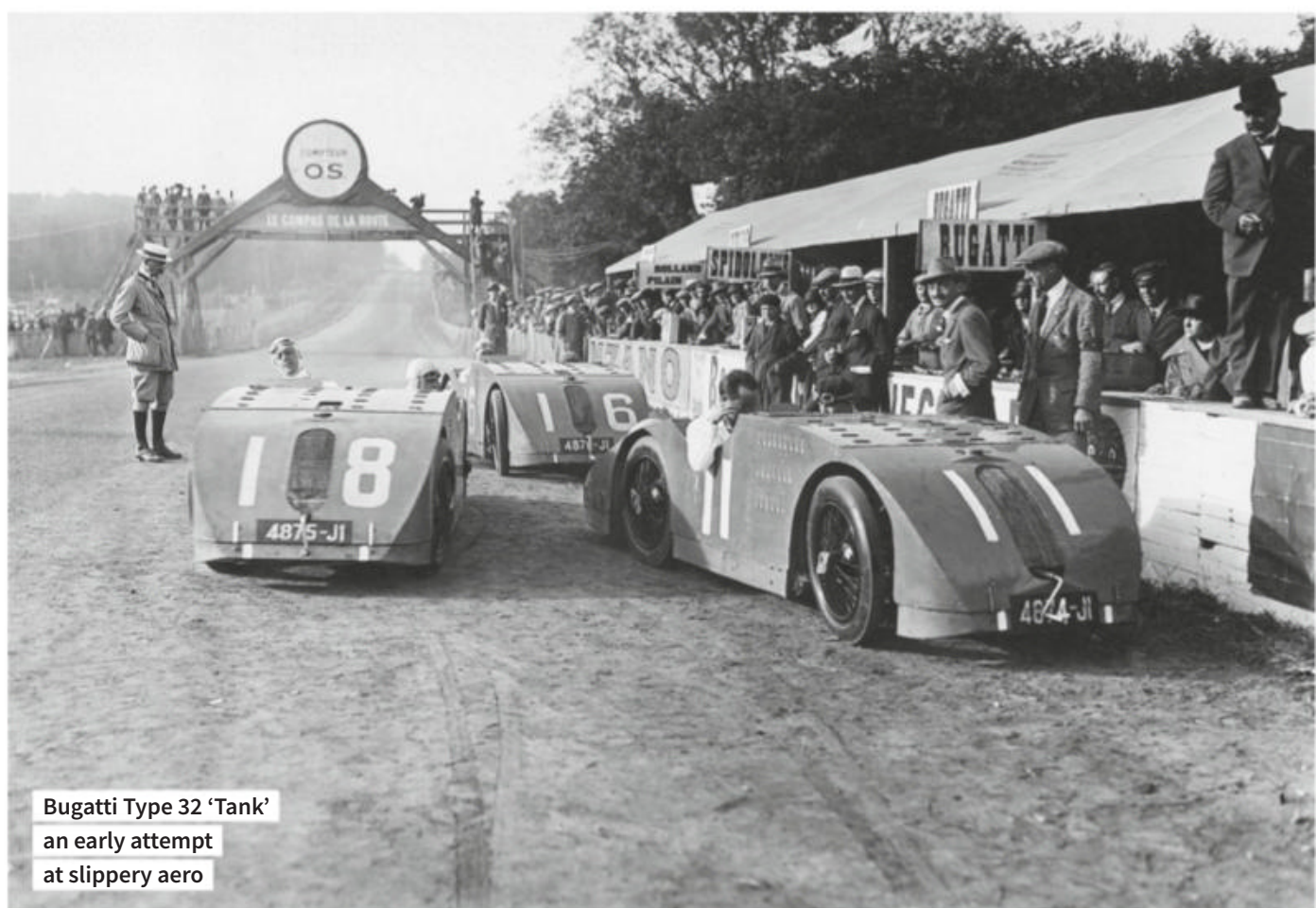
Future racing legend Tazio Nuvolari led the race at the Garda circuit in Italy with a Chiribiri before retiring. The November contest was won by Guido Meregalli in a Diatto.



Murphy’s Miller (#5)
and the Benz of Minoia
finished 3-4 in Italy



Fiat ace Bordino
a charger in the
style of Verstappen



Bugatti Type 32 ‘Tank’
an early attempt
at slippery aero

cars had dominated the biggest European event of the year – *The Motor* described Bordino's Fiat as “easily the fastest car in the race” and it had topped the speed trap figures at 123mph – but came away empty handed.

That left the race in the hands of Sunbeam, Henry Segrave leading Albert Divo in a 1-2 after the Frenchman was delayed by a recalcitrant fuel-filler cap. Segrave's victory was the first for both a British driver and a British car in a proper GP, although it also underlined the impact of the Fiat 805. The 1923 Sunbeam was regarded by many as a green copy of the successful 1922 Fiat and, like that car, used an unblown six-cylinder engine and compact body. Only the Sunbeams were lighter than the 1923 Fiats, which weighed in at around 700kg. It was not as fast as Fiat's latest creation but had been more reliable at Tours...

An interesting note is that Segrave's Michelin tyres did not require changing over the 500-mile, near-seven-hour contest.

Following modifications to its supercharged engines, Fiat returned to the fray for September's Italian GP, which was also the first race to carry the 'European GP' title. Unlike the French GP, which was an 'invitation' race and effectively excluded German teams (memories of the First World War were still fresh), the Italian GP was open. Sunbeam skipped the event, although would unlikely have had an answer to the rapid 805s in the 14-strong field.

As in France, Bordino led at Monza, setting a stunning early pace, even lapping all the non-Fiats. He did this despite competing with a broken arm from a previous accident, which eventually forced him to retire after the tread came off a rear tyre and he had to wrestle the car. He had even relied on his riding mechanic to change gear! But the other two Fiats did finish the race, Salamano overtaking veteran Felice Nazzaro (whose engine was overheating) in the closing stages for a 1-2 at an average speed of 91mph. “All efforts to catch the Fiats were fruitless,” reported *Autocar*.

Third and the only other car to finish on the lead lap was the exquisite Miller 122 of Jimmy Murphy, the Josef Newgarden of his era. The 122 had dominated the Indianapolis 500 – also run to two-litre regulations – and is sometimes cited as the first single-seater racing car, though riding mechanics would not be banished from GP racing until 1925, so the Monza versions were two-seaters. Murphy, winner of the 1921 French GP for Duesenberg and the 1922 Indy 500, had battled Nazzaro (then 41 years old, the same as Fernando Alonso now) despite having been lapped. The 28-year-old comfortably topped the unsupercharged runners. From an American point of view, the Miller was *the* car of 1923 and was the first in a long line of superb and very successful Indycars.

Another milestone of 1923, though it did not appear very

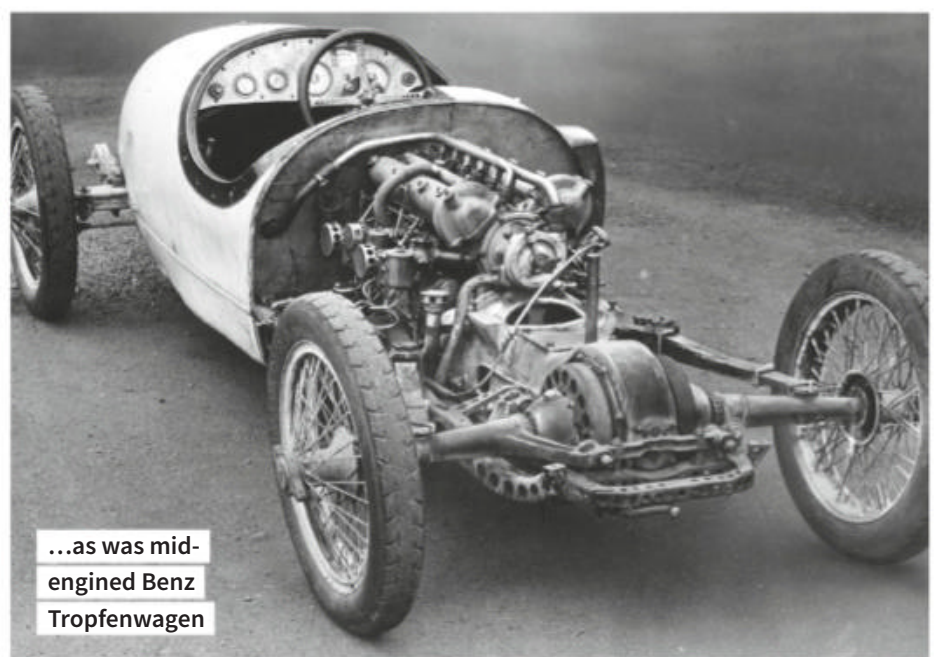
“Bordino led at Monza setting a stunning early pace, lapping all the non-Fiats. He did this despite competing with a broken arm”

promising at the time, was the arrival of Alfa Romeo in grand prix racing. Three P1s were entered for the Italian GP, but Ugo Sivocci's fatal crash in practice led to the team's withdrawal. Although the P1 would never race, Vittorio Jano was attracted from Fiat during 1923 and Alfa's new chief engineer produced the P2 for 1924. It would become the benchmark in GP racing and Jano a design legend.

While the Fiat, Miller and Sunbeam's 'green Fiat' were the successful cars of 1923, there was plenty of technical innovation and variety elsewhere. Designers and engineers were still a long way from finding the ideal layout for a racing car, and the era of optimisation was more than a generation ahead. The Bugatti Type 32 'Tank' had an unusual aerodynamic body in an early attempt at streamlining, while the unusual Voisin Laboratoire



Semi-monocoque
Voisin Laboratoire
way ahead of its time...



...as was mid-
engined Benz
Tropfenwagen

had a semi-monocoque chassis, four decades before Colin Chapman would make the concept stick with the Lotus 25.

Sadly, the Voisin was underpowered and failed to make an impact despite good handling, one finishing a distant fifth in the French GP. The Bugatti's shape was more aeroplane wing-like than ideal and was tricky to drive, though Ernest Friderich did last the Tours race to take a fortunate third. Nevertheless, *The Motor* reckoned “there is distinctly something to be gained by the adoption of this peculiar-looking coachwork” in its French GP report.

But the car that gave the biggest hint of the future was the Benz Tropfenwagen. As well as providing another attempt at slipstreaming, it was mid-engined and had all-independent suspension, both groundbreaking for the time.

The Benz could not appear at the French GP, but three did make it to Monza. They performed admirably, Ferdinando Minoia finishing fourth, but the car's power disadvantage – it was reckoned to produce just 70-75% of the Fiat's output – was too great an obstacle to overcome.

Aside from some minor successes, the Tropfenwagen didn't fulfil its potential and the concept wasn't developed, but it is likely that the car made a big impression on Ferdinand Porsche, father of the famous mid-engined Auto Unions of the 1930s.

GP racing's full-time switch to having the engine behind the driver was still more than three decades away, however. The biggest immediate change brought about by 1923 was supercharging and most of the major players, aside from Bugatti and Delage, had 'blown' engines the following season.

The 1924 French GP would feature the arrival of two of the great GP cars: the Alfa Romeo P2 and Bugatti Type 35. That's rightly regarded as a key moment in motorsport history but wouldn't have been possible without the 1923 season – and the fine Fiat 805 – that shouldn't be overlooked. 🏁



GRUPPEC PHOTOGRAPHY

Gounon on top as GruppeM's computer says no

BATHURST 12 HOUR
MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS)
5 FEBRUARY
INTERCONTINENTAL GT CHALLENGE
ROUND 1/5

Jules Gounon became the first three-time Bathurst 12 Hour winner in dramatic fashion at Mount Panorama.

For the second year running the win went to the SunEnergy1 Racing Mercedes driven by Gounon, Luca Stolz and car owner Kenny Habul. This time, however, there was no Pro-Am asterisk given Pro line-ups were welcomed back to the race, and the car ran as an outright Pro entry despite Habul's amateur status.

On sheer pace, the fastest car across the weekend was the GruppeM Mercedes of Maro Engel, Raffaele Marciello and Mikael Grenier. Engel in particular was in sparkling form, the German twice lowering the unofficial lap record for GT3 cars at Mount Panorama on Saturday. First there was his

2m01.0536s to take provisional pole, which he followed up with a 2m00.8819s in the Shootout. It was as incredible as it was unnecessary, given his second fastest lap was also good enough for pole. And it undoubtedly contributed to SRO's decision to slap the AMGs with an additional 10kg of ballast for Sunday's race.

Not that the overnight BoP change put a real dent in the advantage enjoyed by the lead Mercedes entries. AMGs effectively led the entirety of the race, with Triple Eight running out front early before the GruppeM car wrangled control of the race as the day wore on. The SunEnergy1 entry was constantly in contention but, with Habul having cleared his laps early, Gounon and Stolz didn't have the strategic freedom of the GruppeM entry.

The turning point came inside the last two hours when race officials informed GruppeM that its car had stopped transmitting the data required by the rules. The issue was a faulty onboard modem,

a part supplied by the event itself. There were tense negotiations in the garage before the law was laid down and an unhappy team was told it would need to replace the modem during its final scheduled stop.

The delay brought the SunEnergy1 car roaring into contention, the crew opting to forego new rubber at the final stop to get track position. That meant Engel had a tyre advantage as he tried to get back through to the lead in the final stint, but came up against a ruthless defence from Gounon.

With around 45 minutes to go the battle reached boiling point when Engel went for an ambitious move at The Chase that tipped Gounon into a spin. Both cars continued, Engel leading Gounon before the German was slapped with a drivethrough penalty.

Even then the race wasn't over, the Mercedes clash bringing Matt Campbell and the Manthey EMA Porsche he shared with Mathieu Jaminet and Thomas Preining into the game. Engel was able to recover from his penalty and climb onto the back of the Gounon/Campbell battle as well to make it a thrilling finish. In the end Gounon held his nerve, with just 1.4s separating the top three cars as they crossed the line.

The win was a third straight for Gounon, who was also victorious for Bentley in 2020, the last Bathurst 12 Hour before the pandemic took hold. Am honours went to the Melbourne Performance Centre Audi of Chaz Mostert, Fraser Ross and Liam Talbot, while the Silver class winner was the International Motorsport Audi of Daniel Gaunt, Dylan O'Keeffe and Andrew Fawcett.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

motorsport.tv
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GRUPPEC PHOTOGRAPHY

Left to right: Gounon, Habul and Stolz make for a cheery trio

Van Hoepen beats Foster to NZGP win

FORMULA REGIONAL OCEANIA
HAMPTON DOWNS (NZL)
4-5 FEBRUARY
ROUND 4/5

Louis Foster arrived in New Zealand a couple of weeks ago just in time for round three – and the Brit won first time out. Laurens van Hoepen did the same for round four last week, and ended up scooping the big one: the coveted New Zealand Grand Prix.

The Dutchman moved straight from karts into Formula Regional European in 2022 and scored points a few times. His deal in FR Oceania is for the final two rounds only with M2 Competition, and he moved straight into the battle at the front.



Van Hoepen took a double pole, but lost the advantage in the first race to Kaleb Ngatoa, the local returning from Australian racing to the series with Giles Motorsport for an NZGP one-off. Ngatoa won from van Hoepen and Callum Hedge, whose title rival Charlie Wurz was eighth.

Foster's Giles car lined up alongside van Hoepen on the front row for the weekend finale, the NZGP. Foster sprinted ahead at the start, but the 17-year-old demoted him into Turn 2 and kept the Brit at bay all the way through to win by just under a second.

M2 driver Hedge claimed another third place after surviving a fraught battle with Ngatoa, who then lost fourth spot going into the late stages to veteran Chris van der Drift, also enjoying a one-off.

Wurz was seventh in this race, but a victory in the reversed-grid counter keeps the M2-run Austrian just ahead of Hedge in the points. He beat Jacob Abel and van Hoepen, while ECU failure put Hedge out.

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WEEKEND WINNERS

BATHURST 12 HOUR
MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS)
Jules Gounon/Luca Stolz/Kenny Habul
SunEnergy1 Racing (Mercedes-AMG GT3)

FORMULA REGIONAL OCEANIA
HAMPTON DOWNS (NZL)
Race 1 Kaleb Ngatoa
Giles Motorsport
Race 2 Charlie Wurz
M2 Competition
Race 3 Laurens van Hoepen
M2 Competition

FORMULA REGIONAL MIDDLE EAST
KUWAIT MOTOR TOWN (KWT)
Races 1 & 2 Andrea Kimi Antonelli (below)
Mumbai Falcons Racing
Race 3 Taylor Barnard
PHM Racing



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Barnard breaks Antonelli's run

FORMULA REGIONAL MIDDLE EAST
KUWAIT MOTOR TOWN (KWT)
31 JANUARY-1 FEBRUARY
ROUND 3/5

Mercedes F1 protege Andrea Kimi Antonelli broke his duck to take his first two Formula Regional race wins and extend his series lead during the midweek event in Kuwait Motor Town, but he had to fight for both. Then his chance to make it a hat-trick was undone by an inspired Taylor Barnard.

The MP Motorsport-run Hyderabad Blackbirds team appeared to have pace to spare in qualifying, and took a 1-2-3 wipeout of the grid for race one. But only Mari Boya emerged from the first lap unscathed, and he led the Prema-run Mumbai Falcons car of Antonelli for a few laps. The Italian had just got through when there was a safety car. After the restart, Boya fought back and Antonelli had to repel the Spaniard, before Rafael Camara (the Ferrari prospect also in a Mumbai Falcons car) got past Boya to claim second position.

An absolutely superb reversed-grid race appeared to be going the way of Barnard, once he had deposed early leaders Kirill Smal and Josh Dufek. The Briton had stormed his PHM Racing car from 11th to fourth in race one, so started this one seventh. But a breakage on the front wing slowed him. Soon Smal was back in front, before Antonelli bolted through from 10th on the grid for victory. Smal set what must be a world record for track-limits violations,



the consequent penalty promoting Rafael Villagomez to second and Lorenzo Fluxa to third.

Barnard, who had retired from race two, held an early fifth in the finale, before gradually working his way through into second. By this time Antonelli had opened up a massive lead, but he'd also earned a five-second penalty for passing front-row MP duo Boya and Sami Meguetounif off-track on the opening lap. With Antonelli's tyres fast fading in this rare safety-car-free race, Barnard – who enjoyed great long-run pace – went for the on-the-road win anyway and made it past easily. A splendid all-Mumbai Falcons battle for third was won by Camara from Fluxa, and they were promoted to second and third once Antonelli's penalty was applied.

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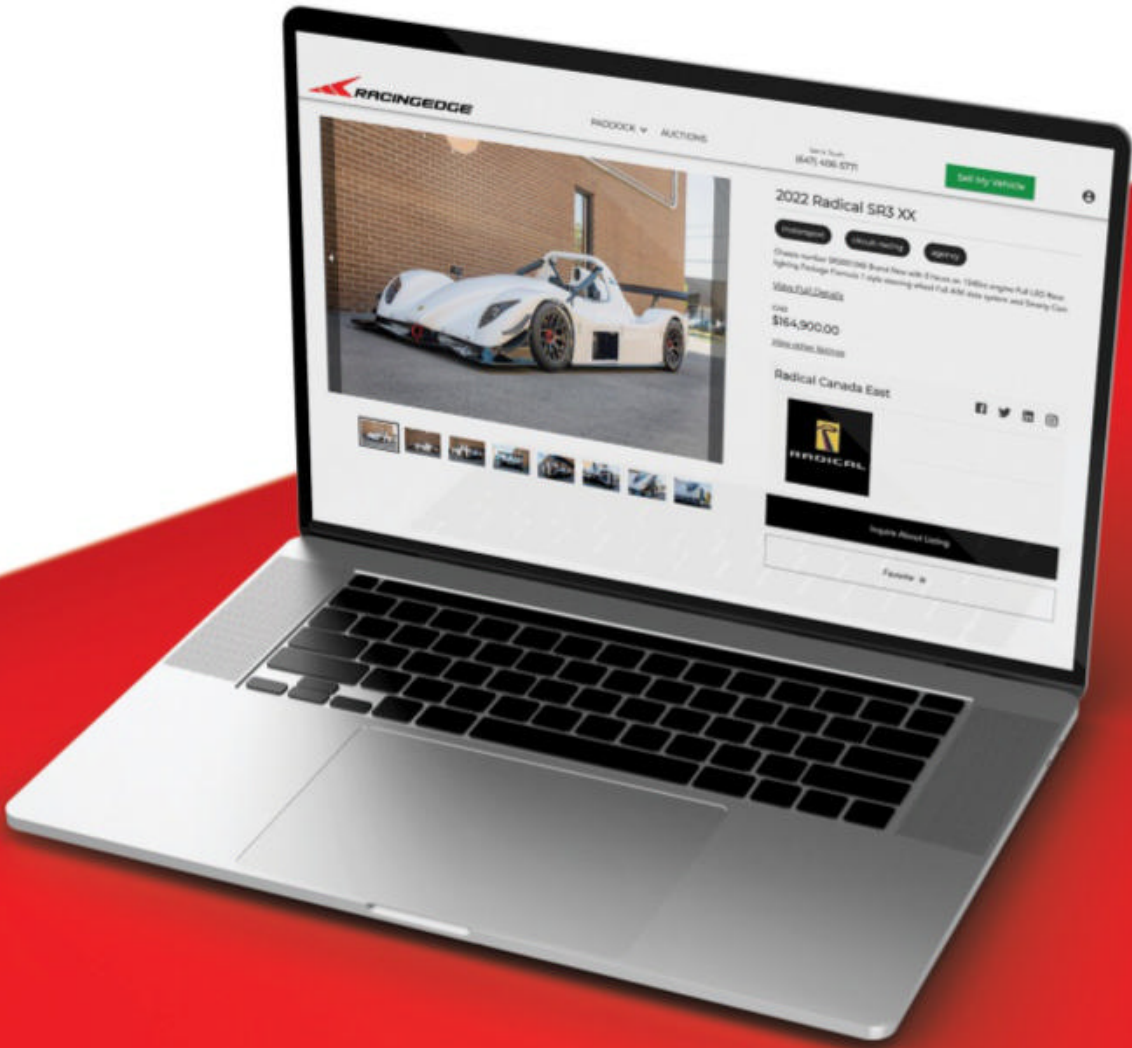


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HEAD OF SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Alpine F1 Team

Alpine F1 Team have a new leadership position within our Information Technology group as a Head of Software Engineering. This position brings together all the IT software development teams within Alpine's F1 team into a single Software Centre of Excellence.



The Role

- The purpose of the role is to collaboratively define the tools, methods, and software development best practices to be used within the company and to drive quality and commonality between all software engineering groups within the company. You will ensure members both within and outside the group can quickly and easily contribute to an application or program's codebase, which can in turn be quickly and efficiently reviewed by any team member. You will provide leadership for the Software Engineering group and act as the authority on high-level and complex decisions within the function in alignment with the Enterprise Architecture principles and best practices.
- This critical position will allow the successful candidate to make a tangible impact on the team's success.

The Person

We are looking for a natural people leader who is highly collaborative and has a track record of running and leading an effective software development group. You will have a record of directly running multiple small software development teams while hitting aggressive timelines to a high standard and quality.

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TOOL STORES TECHNICIAN

Cosworth

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The Role:

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- Monitor tool & consumable usage to maintain optimum stock levels for production.
- Liaise with purchasing & tooling suppliers to reduce tooling costs and obtain alternative options.
- Working with production engineering, & design, offer performance solutions to tooling issues.
- Organise replacement and regrind of Tooling & monitor cost savings.
- Support shop floor personnel with problem solving.
- Promote a culture of process improvement across the team.
- Raise Purchase requisitions using SAP for Tools & Consumables
- Maintain tooling cost & spend records against budgets.
- To assemble Tools for Shop Floor Machine Tools as per job pack.
- Measure Tool Assemblies accurately & update any changes required.
- Ensure company procedures and policy are always adhered to.
- Ensure conformance to Cosworth's Quality Management System.
- Strive for Process excellence in all areas.
- Embed 5S working practices.
- Consider the health and safety, environmental and energy impact of all activities.
- Support the Company's compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, following policy and best practice.

Candidate Profile:

- In depth knowledge of machine tooling, backends & cutting technology.
- To be able to make judgements on tool wear & appropriate regrind levels.

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PAINT PREP TEAM MEMBER

McLaren Automotive

Purpose of Role

The role will work as part of a small, multi-functional team split across a 2-shift operation on a 1-week rotation, reporting to a Paint Team Leader.

Principal Accountabilities

- Understand and follow detailed work instructions relating to the painting of vehicles
- Ensure that all station operations on each vehicle are completed to the required quality standard
- Ensure that all operations are completed to the required timescale
- Work as part of a team on the definition and solution of problems that may be affecting the quality, cost or productivity of the vehicles being produced
- Participate in continuous improvement activities as requested
- Understand and adhere to the McLaren Values and help grow the Automotive Brand.
- Preparing vehicles/ panels for paintwork.
- Masking vehicles in preparation for paintwork.
- Carrying out minor damage repairs
- Maintaining and cleaning equipment
- Clean and check cars prior to primer process for visible defects.
- Ensuring that you always follow safety procedures
- Adhere to all requirements for hazardous or non-hazardous waste disposal

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Experience of working within an automotive environment would be an advantage.
- Prior experience of working as part of a team is desirable
- Prior experience of working to timescales would be advantageous
- Ability to follow processes set in place

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SOCIAL MEDIA EXECUTIVE

McLaren Electric Racing

The challenge

As part McLaren Racing's Digital & Social Media Team, you will lead the day-to-day activity across all social media channels pertaining to both the NEOM McLaren Formula E and NEOM McLaren Extreme E teams, with the objective of growing and engaging with a diverse global audience. Reporting into the Social Media Manager, and working alongside our Formula 1, IndyCar and esports social media teams, you will be responsible for devising innovative and creative social media content plans for McLaren's electric vehicle racing series, publishing across a range of platforms, and shooting social-first video at events.

Your day-to-day

- Working closely with the Social Media Manager to develop innovative and creative social media content plans.
- Publishing content for social channels across all platforms including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube TikTok and Weibo.
- Hands-on content creation at events using DSLR equipment, and editing social-first video on Adobe Premiere Pro.
- Day-to-day management of social media communities, adhering to the overarching communications strategy and objectives, maintaining McLaren's tone of voice across all content.
- Driving continued growth in McLaren's social media fanbase and engagement rate.
- Working closely with McLaren's colleagues to drive continued growth for the McLaren Plus loyalty programme through social media activations across all platforms.
- Liaising with McLaren's Partnership Management team to devise and execute partner campaigns across McLaren's social media channels.

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Mercedes F1 Team

The Role

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- Propose, agree and review internal team vs external agency strategy on an on-going / periodic basis
- Set, monitor CPA and LTV by customer segment to deliver 'profitable' retention activity for Mercedes AMG Petronas Formula One and establish KPIs for yourself/your team to work against
- Work closely with Trading team and the broader Product team to agree call to action / tactics and trading plan that optimises your retention activity
- Work closely with the Media (Acquisition) team to align on activity as well as with Commercial / Finance Analyst/s to unlock, customer, marketing and business insight
- Monitor retention / loyalty / VIP / community activity of other organisations to spot trends and innovation
- Provide expertise on current e-commerce industry best practice, with CRM focus
- Keep up to date with e-commerce & retention best practice of tomorrow through training, research etc

Campaign Management

- Own the e-commerce campaign / trading calendar/s
- Chair meetings with Product, Brand, Marketing & Trading to populate the campaign calendar
- Where possible, devise campaigns with the aim of hitting objectives
- Work with the Communications & Content team to output e-commerce assets

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JOBS



Pit and Paddock Coordinator
Miami Grand Prix

Summary

The Pit and Paddock Coordinator will be responsible for the organization and coordination of in-bound freight for Formula 1, Formula 1 teams, suppliers, support racing categories and other relevant entities at the Formula 1 Crypto.com Miami Grand Prix, as well as preparing and coordinating areas within the Formula 1 and Support Series Paddock.

Responsibilities:

- Work with the Pit and Paddock Manager to develop a detailed Sporting Freight and Logistics plan / schedule, including delivery, bump-in, bump-out, transport and storage
- Liaise with teams and other stakeholders regarding freight and logistics requirements, under the direction of the Pit and Paddock Manager
- Work closely with South Florida Motorsports (SFM) Operations to identify and coordinate locations for freight storage during the event
- Work with relevant agencies and organizations to ensure seamless movement of freight including customs, ground handling agents, traffic management and security
- Plan and execute equipment storage plan of SFM Sporting assets, including Pit and Paddock and Race Operations Equipment and vehicles
- As primary point of contact, coordinate preparation of facilities and support to stakeholders and clients including Support Racing Series, Pirelli, Hot Lap providers, fuel/nitrogen Paddock and other service providers
- Support the Teams Services functions in the lead-up to and during the event to ensure expectations of Formula 1 Teams, Formula 1, the FIA and other stakeholders and clients are exceeded

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JOBS



HUMAN RESOURCES BUSINESS PARTNER
Red Bull Racing

Job Description

We're looking for an experienced Human Resources Business Partner to join our high performing Human Resources team. Our team operate across Formula One and Commercial projects, providing an amazing opportunity to work with a highly knowledgeable and eclectic stakeholder base.

As a Human Resources Business Partner with us, you will provide generalist operational support to various departments within the group, working proactively with stakeholders to identify HR requirements and deliver timely, pragmatic solutions. This role will be focused on enabling business strategy by delivering great people approaches coupled with operational activities. The successful Human Resources Business Partner will be joining the team during an exciting period of change as we grow and focus the department to ensure we are meeting the evolving and complex needs of the organisation. Being guided and led from the top of the team in this evolution, you will have a chance to help shape the delivery of key people related performance targets as we strive set the benchmark in Formula One.

To be successful in the Human Resources Business Partner role, we require:

- Experience in a similar fast paced generalist role
- Strong communication and stakeholder management skills
- Excellent attention to detail
- Solid understanding of current UK employment legislation
- An ability to think outside the box and make commercially led decisions
- Strong project management skills
- Experience of working in a demanding and evolving organisation.

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RACING

**FINANCE BUSINESS PARTNER –
MARKETING, HR AND HERITAGE**
Williams Racing

The Position

We are looking for a commercially minded Finance Business Partner to support our Marketing, HR and Heritage functions. This role will be responsible for supporting the commercial objectives of the organisation and will work closely with their functional Directors to provide analysis, insight and support for decision making.

As a Finance Business Partner, you will:

- Support, influence and challenge business unit managers as a trusted collaborator
- Identify financial opportunities and risks by integrating into the areas of responsibility and having a good understanding of the strategic objectives, people and processes in these areas
- Support managers with budget compliance and hold regular finance reviews with department managers analysing adherence to budgets
- Collaborate with stakeholders in the preparation and review of budgets, rolling forecasts and business cases including capex investment appraisals and post investment reviews
- Maximise the value of spend and return on investment
- Proactively engage with stakeholders to drive improvements and support stakeholder initiatives
- Support new business and customer proposals as required
- Support Procurement with supplier selection and contract negotiations
- Provide training and support to stakeholders to enhance their financial acumen and understanding

Report:

- Provide meaningful financial reporting specifications for areas of responsibility and support with stakeholder understanding of these reports

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Track-limits overhaul proposed

MOTORSPORT UK

Motorsport UK has revealed controversial plans to overhaul the regulations surrounding track-limits infringements for this season, making rules tougher and introducing additional penalties.

The governing body has launched a consultation surrounding proposals originally put forward by its race committee – changes that include redefining what constitutes an abuse of track limits.

Under the existing rules, drivers are judged to have left the track if “any wheel of the car goes completely beyond either the outer edge of any kerb or the white line where there is no kerb”. But the new plans would make this stricter and rather than being a whole wheel, “any part of tyre” going beyond the line or kerb’s edge would be considered a breach.

A new suite of punishments for track-limits infringements has also been proposed. Currently, drivers escape without a penalty for the first offence, are given a

warning flag for a second abuse and receive a five-second penalty for a third breach. Under the new plan, drivers would receive a one-second penalty for the first offence, an additional 2s for the second and an extra 5s for the third. A fourth infringement would lead to a drivethrough penalty and the fifth a black flag – these punishments were previously for the fifth and sixth offences respectively.

Other changes include a clause banning drivers from protesting other competitors who they feel abused track limits and were not penalised, while offences in qualifying will now result in 5s being added to the lap time rather than the deletion of that time.

An additional clause is also suggested for track-limits offences during endurance races. It is proposed that in races featuring a driver change, the breaches are reset when a new driver gets in the car. Then for contests lasting longer than an hour, the breaches will be reset after each hour.

A line saying “where possible it is recommended that drivers be advised

of penalties during the race” is also in the revised regulations but no detail is given on how this would be carried out.

Explaining the changes, Motorsport UK said in a statement: “The concern that has built over several seasons is that drivers have progressively extended their use of the track such that issues of safety and damage have become unacceptable. This review [into driving standards] resulted in the proposed regulatory changes, which is under consultation, and comes in two forms.

“Firstly, the definition of the limit. With the current wording, it can prove difficult to judge a breach and therefore reverting to ‘any part of the tyre’ provides clarity for the judges to decide. It is also an easier rule for drivers to understand and implement.

“Secondly, the penalties have been reviewed. The objective is to make the penalties easier to understand and to have an immediate impact, and designed to make any move to breach unrewarding. The revision of the in-race penalties removes the challenge for race officials of putting out the warning flag and also for fairness of competition as it will no longer allow for a driver to gain an advantage by breaching track limits twice without penalty.

“Education is key and, should these proposals proceed to approval, clear guidance will be provided to both drivers and officials.”

The consultation into the suggested rule changes lasts until 20 February. Competitors are invited to email raceconsultation@motorsportuk.org with their views.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

P63 OPINION



Harper to make British GT bow with Century

BRITISH GT

BMW factory driver Dan Harper will join Century Motorsport for a maiden assault on the British GT Championship this year alongside race winner Darren Leung.

Harper, the 2019 Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion when he was the marque's GB Junior driver, joins the British GT grid after spending the past few years racing in the Nurburgring Nordschleife-based NLS and GT World Challenge Europe with BMW.

The 22-year-old competed with Century and Leung in a BMW M4 GT3 in the Gulf 12 Hours at the end of last year, and is relishing the challenge of racing as part of a Pro-Am pairing full-time.

"This will be the first time in British GT for myself and I'm really looking forward to it," said Harper. "For me it will be the first chance to get back on the UK tracks since Carrera Cup in 2019, so I'm very excited."

"It's new for me to work with an Am driver rather than a Pro, and with my lack of experience it's still a big step. But the team



have put a lot of trust in me, and I'm glad and thankful for giving me the chance."

Leung remains with the team after winning on his British GT debut at the Donington Park finale last season with Alexander Sims in a Century-run M4.

Harper is confident that Leung, who previously raced in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup, will find more consistency and speed during the course of the season.

"He's so motivated to learn and go quicker, the amount of depth and effort he's

putting in is impressive for an Am," said Harper. "Darren has really good speed straight out of the box so with more testing and more help he'll only get better. We hope to be contending for the championship."

Elsewhere in British GT, Paddock Motorsport will continue with a McLaren 720S GT3 with team co-founder Martin Plowman joined by Mark Smith, who made his series debut at the Donington finale in 2022.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Loake makes the step up to GB3 with JHR



GB3

British Formula 4 race winner Joseph Loake will move into the GB3 Championship this season, remaining with JHR Developments.

The 17-year-old, who was the Fiesta Junior champion in 2020, has

spent the past two years in British F4, in which time he took seven wins and finished a best of fifth in last season's standings.

"I'm looking forward to the start of the season – it should be good coming off the back of a strong end to the F4 season," said Loake. "Last year we started on

the back foot and only came good in the second half of the season, which was a positive way to end and hopefully we'll be fighting for the championship."

He joins Matthew Rees at JHR, the 2021 British F4 champion staying for a second season in GB3.

ANGELO R. DRIVE

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IN THE HEADLINES

With 11 out of 19 race wins,
King dominated Cooper
class to secure 2022 title



Mini Challenge Trophy King graduates to top JCW class

MINI JCW

Mini Challenge Trophy champion Nelson King will step up to the top-tier JCW category this season, remaining with the Graves Motorsport squad.

King won 11 of the 19 races in the packed Cooper class in 2022 and only finished off the podium three times all season in a dominant display during his second year in the series.

"I am delighted to retain my place in the Graves Motorsport line-up and look

forward to my third season with the team," said King. "Coming from a highly successful Cooper campaign last year, I'm looking forward to adapting to the Mini JCW, and with a great team behind me we can achieve some strong results."

Team manager David Graves added: "We are delighted to be continuing to work with Nelson into the 2023 season. He really matured in 2022 and wasn't just quick and consistent but measured too. He has already begun testing in the JCW car and early signs are encouraging."

COMBE OFFERS SUPPORT

The Castle Combe Racing Trust has put money towards a humanitarian convoy that has been sent to Ukraine to help in the war against Russia. A £500 donation was made to help cover the cost of a Mitsubishi 4x4, which was one of eight vehicles sent as part of the convoy at the end of January, and which will be used for military and medical use.

COST-SAVING MEASURES

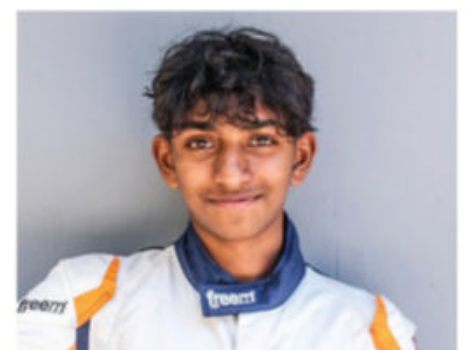
The CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Championship will celebrate its 40th season this year and has decided to lower its entry fees to £400 per meeting in a bid to reduce costs. It has also introduced a new guest initiative where new drivers will benefit from a further reduction in entry fees for their first event. Another cost-saving measure is to run the season over six meetings rather than seven, but there is still due to be 14 races.

DOUGLASS STAYS IN PLACE

Ginetta Junior driver McKenzie Douglass will continue with the frontrunning Elite Motorsport team for a second season this year. He took a best result of sixth during his rookie campaign in 2022 and is now targeting a title bid. "With a Ginetta Junior season under my belt I believe this is achievable," he said. "I also know that there is a lot more to come from my side."

FORTEC'S NEW F4 DRIVER

Mika Abrahams is the latest driver confirmed for British Formula 4 this season. The South African, a race winner in the Danish F4 series last year, will drive for Fortec Motorsports but does not turn 15 until the end of May, and will therefore miss the opening three events of the season. Fortec team manager Oliver Dutton said: "After an impressive debut last season in the Danish Championship, winning on his first race weekend, it's apparent Mika [below] is a quick learner."



FF Corse to support Ferrari scheme

FERRARI CHALLENGE

A new Ferrari track initiative, which is to be run in conjunction with the Ferrari Challenge UK, will be launched this year with support from FF Corse.

The 'Passione Challenge Edition' has been created as a way of allowing people considering racing in the Ferrari Challenge to sample what it has to offer while gaining track experience.

Drivers will compete in 488

Challenge cars against the clock rather than each other on the same weekends as the Ferrari Challenge, while FF Corse will offer trackside support.

This includes running the cars, as well as driver coaching and mentoring. They will also help drivers acquire their race licence if needed. The total track time during the season will exceed 22 hours, with outings planned at four venues in 2023.

FF Corse CEO Anthony Cheshire said: "We were

delighted to be involved in designing this new on-track offering, and invited by Ferrari North Europe to offer our support to Ferrari clients, owners and the dealer network.

"This fantastic new programme is the perfect platform for those wishing to graduate into the Ferrari Challenge UK series or, for those more experienced drivers, showing what they are capable of against the clock without the commitment of racing."

Ian 'Diz' Smith 1948-2023

OBITUARY

Nobody has done more for Formula Ford at club level, and for longer, than Ian 'Diz' Smith, who died on 31 January, aged 74. Treated for oesophageal cancer in recent months, he soldiered on stoically.

The proud Scouser, for whom Aintree and Oulton Park became his 'constituency' homes – although he was almost as fond of Mondello Park, Kirkistown and Anglesey – had a lifelong passion for cars and found his true calling in helping others race them.

In his teens, Smith was hooked by the irresistible lure of engines on the breeze from nearby Aintree Circuit Club's legendary Tuesday evening test sessions. Soon he was invited to wield a blue flag and was named marshal of the year in 1969.

Like stalwarts of small organisations do, Smith fulfilled many roles within the ACC. As competition secretary, he organised the Liverpool circuit's final international race, for Formula 3, in April 1975, won by Gunnar Nilsson in his works March.

But Formula Ford, the phenomenon born in 1967, was his abiding love and coloured his life for 40-plus years. Smith met Richard Peacock in the late 1960s and was quickly immersed in his eponymous racing school and wider sporting adventures.

"I had a workshop at Aintree in the early 1980s and took on a Crossle



agency," Peacock recalled. "We'd get a consignment of spares every Monday and Ian would schedule his work [as a civil servant in the Department of Employment] to finish at lunchtime, then head over.

"He was in charge of making sure all the parts were sent out to customers, so from 'Dispatch Manager' Ian became known as Dispatch, shortened to 'Diz', the nickname which stuck for life."

As coordinator for the British Racing & Sports Car Club's North West centre's FF1600 championship, Smith developed the Oulton-based competition into one of the UK's hotbeds of driving talent. To counter

rising costs, he and Peacock launched Formula E – for outboard-suspended chassis (all classic Crossles fitted the bill!) – for 1985 with the much-missed official Colin 'Moose' Benn.

Smith, who took early retirement from his career job, did not make money from racing, nor did he want to. Sadly, Formula E was not trademarked and sold to the electric start-up.

In an action-packed life, Diz's riches came from the legions of friends he made. To Ian's partner of 38 years, Diana Howard, his son Steve and the FF1600 fraternity he served brilliantly, Autosport extends sincere condolences.

MARCUS PYE

Carbon calculator to help with clubs' sustainability

MOTORSPORT UK

Motorsport UK is set to launch a new carbon calculator tool that will enable clubs to help improve their sustainability.

The governing body is working to make the sport more sustainable and its head of sustainability Jessica Runicles has spent recent years gathering data to work out the areas of priority.

"We spent the whole of last year getting as much data as we

can, crunching those numbers so we can fully understand where the impact is, what are the areas we really want to focus on," she said at the Autosport International business forum last month. "So in spring, we will launch something called a carbon calculator for clubs.

"This is a freely available tool that clubs will be able to use to measure the footprint of any event they run. And that shares the information, so they can look at those facts and go, 'OK,



if we move to this generator or if we had a renewable energy source, actually it would save this amount of electricity' and they can take that journey."

Motorsport UK is also looking into sustainable fuels. "We've been aware that they're so much more expensive than

the standard fuel," said Runicles. "Actually, the prices are coming down, so we're looking at how can we make that more realistic for people to put in their race cars and what are the best ones to use. There's a lot of research we're doing this year."

JAMES NEWBOLD

Club Enduro star Oswick wins John Miles Award

750MC

Club Enduro class winner Joel Oswick has been named as the latest recipient of the 750 Motor Club's John Miles Young Driver Award.

The full-time mechanic helped develop the German Autowerks BMW E36 328i he shared with Dan Ausano into a competitive machine, the pair claiming the Class C title and only narrowly missing out on overall honours.

The judging panel considered Oswick's technical prowess alongside his racecraft to select him as the winner of a £1000 prize along with £1000 credit against 750MC entry fees.

The award is named after former Formula 1 racer and long-time 750MC supporter Miles and is designed to help up-and-coming drivers.



Oswick narrowly missed overall title

Entries are now open for the 2023 award and drivers who are aged 30 or under on 1 March 2023 are eligible for consideration. They must also compete in a minimum of five 750MC events this season and have no more than three years of prior racing experience.

IN THE HEADLINES

MGCC'S NEW GUEST SERIES

The Classic Sports Car Club's Magnificent Sevens series will appear at an MG Car Club meeting for the first time this year. The category for Caterham-style machines will feature at the Oulton Park MGCC fixture on 13 May. "Those marques fit well together – it's a good new collaboration for the club," said MGCC race competitions secretary Mark Baulch.

HSCC REDUCES ENTRY FEES

The Historic Sports Car Club is offering drivers discounted entry fees at its first three events of this year. The opening Snetterton, Cadwell Park and Silverstone meetings will all feature lower fees in a bid to boost grid numbers at a time of rising costs for racers. "I really hope that it will be a success and that we will be able to extend the discount across our full racing season," said HSCC CEO Andy Dee-Crowne.

RALLYING BACK TO CROFT

The Winter Stages Rally at Croft will run again in 2024, following rallying's return to the Yorkshire circuit for the first time in three years last November. A near-capacity entry was attracted for Croft's return to the rally calendar and plans were afoot to organise another November event this year, but these were shelved amid a clashing date with the popular Roger Albert Clark Rally.

BARBADOS TO YORKSHIRE

Turks and Caicos-based rally driver Paul Horton usually confines his rallying to Barbados but, after making his UK debut at the recent Brands Hatch Stages (below), he is due out on the East Riding Stages at the end of the month. Multiple British Rally champion Matt Edwards will be sitting alongside in their Citroen C3 Rally2 and Horton has some familiarity with the Yorkshire area, as his mother lives in Scarborough.



PETER SCHERER

Famous Airikkala name back to UK competition in circuit racing

FIESTA JUNIOR

Flame Airikkala, the granddaughter of the late Finnish rally legend Pentti Airikkala, will make her car racing debut in 2023 in Fiesta Junior.



Granddaughter of 1979 British Rally champion Pentti Airikkala to make racing debut

The 15-year-old from Egham will join 20Ten Racing after a season of racing Club 100 karts. Racing is very much in her blood – her 1989 Lombard RAC Rally-winning and 1979 British champion grandfather aside, Flame's grandmother Kirsti (Pentti's former wife) was an accomplished rally driver in Finland. Her mother Jo-Ann Airikkala (nee Breckon) also competed in the TOCA-supporting Ford Fiesta category in the 1990s.

Flame said: "I'm conscious I have a motorsport family heritage and some people might be watching, but that doesn't faze me. I just want to do my best. Getting into the top five would be my aim – I'm focused and determined. Fiestas will help with my racecraft, but of course I'd also like a go in a rally car – it's in the genes."

20Ten team boss Simon Hunt enthused: "The first thing we noticed with Flame is that she left-foot brakes! She is really determined and has already shown lots of promise."

Meanwhile, 20Ten has confirmed that Spencer Stevenson will spearhead its defence of the Fiesta ST240 Championship title, which it won for the first time in 2022 with Jenson Brickley. Stevenson was a podium finisher for 20Ten in Fiestas last season, when he also took a win in the Clio Sport Championship.

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Deeply flawed plans

The proposed overhaul of track-limits regulations in the UK is not only unworkable but also risks alienating competitors at a delicate time

STEPHEN LICKORISH

It's stirred up a lot of emotion," says one club chief of Motorsport UK's proposal to toughen the regulations surrounding track limits. And that is an enormous understatement. The plans (outlined on page 57) to not only tighten the rules of what is permitted but also introduce penalties for the very first offence and ban drivers from protesting others over missed track-limits abuses have proven highly controversial. Quite understandably, there have been furious reactions from everyone from organising clubs to clerks of the course and, of course, racers.

But, before examining the completely unenforceable proposals, let us take a step back. These changes are part of a wider review of driving standards from the governing body and it is good to see Motorsport UK taking a proactive approach in this important area. "Motorsport UK are trying to improve the fairness and enjoyment of the sport – there's no easy answer," says British Racing & Sports Car Club chairman Peter Daly, a member of the race committee that put forward the plans.

The idea to reset track-limits abuse tallies after an hour or a driver change in endurance races is also logical – after all, why should the same sliding scale apply over a much longer timeframe? And, most importantly, it has got people thinking about track limits and what is acceptable. Yet, for all those good intentions, proactivity is pointless if the proposals generated are poor – and these rule changes are very

“Who would want to attend an event where dozens of penalties are given after the race?”

poorly thought through. Let us consider the rest of the world. Track-limits penalties were already more draconian in the UK than other European countries – under these plans, the gulf widens still. If you are an international driver, why would you bother coming to the UK to compete under regulations that are completely unrepresentative to what you will face elsewhere?

That is one problem, but another of greater significance is the lack of a warning or 'first strike' before any penalty is applied. "The logic behind the one-second penalty was because too many drivers were keeping their powder dry and then doing track limits at the end of a race," says Daly. Such examples of drivers abusing the system may be frustrating, but equally it does not seem fair to dish out penalties to drivers who make an honest mistake, lock up, run wide (losing time, not gaining it) and exceed track limits. The rules permit running off

the track with a "justifiable reason", but a camera or pressure pad will not necessarily reveal the circumstances behind a breach and you are reliant on a judge of fact's interpretation. In other words, there is no guarantee dodging a spinning car or being squeezed over white lines by a rival would grant an exemption.

If you look at the current regulations, the salient complaint is they are applied inconsistently in an individual race or by different clubs, promoters and officials. These proposals do nothing to address such inconsistencies – in fact, they make the problem 10 times worse. If you are giving penalties for the first offence, then the mechanism for observing those offences has surely got to be virtually foolproof. The current system is anything but.

Can an observer – sometimes a long way from the corner – be expected to correctly identify every car that veers two inches over the white lines or outer edge of the kerb? Of course not. You would need at least three judges on every corner to stand a slim chance of the system being fairly implemented when a packed field of 40 cars is passing by – and if such an impossibly large recruitment of judges could be conducted, that in turn would create myriad headaches about how their reports are fed back into race control. In other words, it would be impossible to police with any accuracy – and, as discussed, technology provides a blunt and far from perfect answer.

"We're fully in favour of track limits – drivers should be staying within the limits – but we're concerned by the extra workload and pressure it's going to put on volunteers," says Classic Sports Car Club director David Smitheram. "The existing track-limits rules are perfectly suitable, and they allow for genuine mistakes while finding the limit of the grip, it just needs more enforcement."

And that leads to Autosport's overarching message. In a period of high inflation and competitors questioning whether they can justify the expense of racing, it seems counterproductive to introduce rule changes that risk alienating these people at a crucial moment. Some might argue it is bad luck if the driver you are battling gets away with an abuse of the rules, but luck with officials should not come into it when people are paying thousands of pounds to compete. The circuits are among those pushing hardest for change, but have they considered the impact on spectators? Who would want to attend an event where dozens of penalties are given after the race and the final result bears zero resemblance to what they've witnessed? It happens often enough now, but would become far worse with these rules.

It is important to remember that these are just proposed changes, for now. Until 20 February, competitors can contact Motorsport UK at raceconsultation@motorsportuk.org to give their views. If, like Autosport, you have serious concerns about the plans, we would encourage you to send an email, in polite terms, explaining the flaws. After all, our sport faces enough challenges without needless self-destruction. ❄

NATIONAL FOCUS

The rapid rise of R Racing

In just a few years the Ginetta Junior team has grown from a single car to taking multiple titles and plans to climb further up the ranks

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES



Launching a new team can be a daunting process. After all, it can take years for a fledgling operation to grow and for success to be achieved. But that was not the case for frontrunning Ginetta Junior squad R Racing. The Norfolk team went from a tiny single-car outfit to a slick five-car operation in less than a year. Two drivers' titles, a pair of teams' championships, two Winter Series crowns, and a rookie championship win later and R Racing has now rapidly established itself as a successful Ginetta Junior frontrunner.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, team founders Jamie Ross and Nathan Read describe their squad's journey so far as a "whirlwind". But the pair had tackled a lot in their careers even before R Racing was formed. Having initially carried out his work experience at the JHR Developments squad, Ross became part of the team's Ginetta Junior operation before moving across to single-seaters when it entered British Formula 4. He was number one mechanic for Billy Monger's car on that fateful day at Donington Park in 2017 when the teenager suffered his devastating crash. A return to Ginettas followed and Ross then joined Tom Gamble in making the move to Elite Motorsport for the final few events and helped guide him to the title. It was at Elite that Ross met Read, a successful karter who was unable to progress up the motorsport ladder as a driver and was

now working on the sister car of future Porsche star Harry King.

"Over the summer, we decided to move to Mallorca and run a karting school together," says Ross, who was making regular trips back to the UK to help Adam Smalley to Ginetta success with Elite. "But we came back here in the winter of 2018 and started working with Josh Rattican and his dad just helping with test days. We started helping someone else and they said you should probably start your own team." It was not something the pair had seriously considered beforehand, with Read intending to head back to Spain for more karting adventures. But that quickly changed. "We thought we better grow up and decided to start a race team!" says Ross.

It was a very humble beginning with the pair initially just running Rattican in a partnership with Porsche squad In2Racing. However, things progressed very quickly from there with 2019 title contender Zak O'Sullivan opting to join R Racing mid-year. "He joined at Snetterton and we won at the first ever weekend we had with Zak and that put us on the map as a team," continues Ross, the maiden triumph coming at the team's 'home' circuit in front of friends and family adding to the joy. "To go from engineers and mechanics to run a team, it was nice to do that [win] with Zak. It took off from there with people contacting us and it's been a whirlwind."

Although O'Sullivan ultimately missed out on the title, he >>



The grey R Racing G40s are now a familiar sight at the front of Ginetta Junior fields



Team began with just a single car for Rattican in 2019



O'Sullivan claimed R Racing's maiden win on his first weekend with the squad

How R Racing has rocketed up the ranks

The key stats from the team's impressive journey so far

2022

Ginetta Junior drivers

Luca Hopkinson; Josh Rowledge; Luke Watts; Sonny Smith (8 events); Ian Aguilera (5 events); Akshay Bohra (5 events); Freddie Slater (3 events)

Team wins 11

Best-placed driver 1st (Rowledge)

Teams' position 2nd



British GT drivers

Jamie Day; Josh Miller

Team wins 2

Drivers' standings 3rd

Teams' position 3rd

2021

Ginetta Junior drivers

Ian Aguilera; Aston Millar; Josh Miller; Freddie Tomlinson; Callum Voisin; Tom Edgar (4 events); Luke Watts (3 events)

Team wins 16

Best-placed driver 1st (Millar)

Teams' position 1st

2020

Ginetta Junior drivers

Aston Millar; Joel Pearson; Freddie Tomlinson; Bailey Voisin; Josh Rattican (6 events)

Team wins 9

Best-placed driver 3rd (Voisin)

Teams' position 1st

2019

Ginetta Junior drivers

Josh Rattican; Zak O'Sullivan (5 events); Aston Millar (3 events); Joel Pearson (3 events)

Team wins 3

Best-placed driver 2nd (O'Sullivan)

Teams' position 4th



outscored champion James Hedley across the five events after he moved to the R Racing fold and still took rookie honours. Aston Millar also joined later in the year and suddenly for 2020 the team had a five-car line-up. "Zak was the key to unlocking it," says Ross. "We got a call from [Ginetta chairman] Lawrence Tomlinson asking if we could run Freddie [Tomlinson's son], which was flattering."

Also joining were fellow sophomores Bailey Voisin and Joel Pearson, while Millar completed the line-up alongside Rattican. The quintet of cars turned up at the March media day resplendent in their grey and turquoise liveries – which Ross and Read said it took some convincing for the drivers, their parents and backers to adopt – each with different coloured flicks on the front. There was an encouraging performance in the media day testing and a strong season seemed in store. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

"We had just bought a truck and that wasn't an easy time for a new business," explains Ross. "I think everyone struggled, the whole world was halted, but it felt like it halted our momentum. We turned up to media day a week before lockdown and we were 1-2-3-4 [in the times] and looking forward to the season, so it was a hard pill to swallow."

Fortunately for Ross and Read, they were able to pick up where they left off when the delayed 2020 season finally began in August. Voisin was involved in a hard-fought title battle but just missed out on glory, before R Racing then guided Millar and Josh Rowledge to successive Ginetta Junior championships. The team had not only weathered the COVID-19 storm, but had grown stronger – not that Ross ever anticipated such rapid expansion.

"We didn't expect it to grow as quickly as it did – but we relished it," says Ross. "Just structuring a team around that number of cars was hard, it was like we were thrown in at the deep end and finding staff and transport was probably the hardest bit."

Read adds: "Me and Jamie don't come from money and I think that makes it hard when you have teams with a bottomless pit. It's not just the pace of the cars but the image and branding and how we come across as a race team that's important."

Reaching that point has not been easy, the pair having faced plenty of practical challenges along the way. "It's been a rollercoaster ride," admits Read. "We're both under 30 and it's not just the racing side to learn but how to run a business. There's a lot to learn like how to invoice, not just the logistics. It's been quite a crash course. In racing, we always believed in ourselves but, when it comes to running a business, we didn't know if we could do it."

The success the pair have enjoyed over the past few years emphatically proves that they could. And they have created an atmosphere within the team that drivers enjoy being a part of.



All lined up ready for the 2020 season at media day, then COVID-19 hit

“They’re a great bunch of lads – they’re incredibly passionate about what they’re doing and they put their heart into it,” says Josh Miller, who first raced for the team in 2021. “We have a laugh along the way but, deep down, they’re very serious. When it comes to the car, they spend hours after many people have gone home working on it, trying to find things to optimise the car. Just looking at Ginetta Junior, in the past few years, they’ve been pretty much unstoppable – they know how to put a team together.”

After enjoying so much success in Ginetta Junior, thoughts soon turned to the next challenge. Given the amount of time they invest in developing the teenagers inside and outside of the car, R Racing wanted to be able to retain those drivers and offer them the next step, too. “It helps that me and Jamie are that little bit younger so we can connect with them and understand,” says Read. “We take them under our wing and we get to really know those customers.”

During 2021, Read and Ross therefore looked at different directions the team could progress in. A return to Ross’s “soft spot” for single-seaters was considered, before agreeing the GT route was the better bet. “There’s a lot of people out there doing single-seaters,” says Read. “But GTs is also an achievable goal for young drivers to make a career. If you can do well in GT4 and GT3, all of a sudden, you’re doing the 24 Hours of Le Mans.”

“We were in at the deep end and finding staff and transport was probably the hardest bit”

Therefore the team opted to invest in an Aston Martin Vantage GT4 and decided to enter British GT for 2022. Miller made the step from junior to senior racing with the squad and was paired with UAE F4 graduate Jamie Day – the 16-year-olds becoming the youngest driver line-up in the category’s history. Given the team was still in its relative infancy, tackling endurance racing for the first time and up against some very well-established GT operations, expectations were fairly modest. But, in typical R Racing manner, the team was right on the pace from the start and in contention for the GT4 title. It made history with Miller and Day becoming the series’ youngest victorious pair at Snetterton and they also triumphed at Spa – a venue neither driver had raced at previously – before missing out by 12.5 points in the final reckoning.

“We definitely exceeded expectations,” says Miller. “You want to go into it and do your best and have race wins and podiums but we didn’t think we would be fighting for the title. It’s disappointing to not come away with the win but you’ve got to look in perspective and at what we’ve achieved and how we’ve progressed.”

Miller found making the jump to GTs in the familiar surroundings of R Racing to be extremely beneficial and says it helped with the learning process. “It’s made that step easier and given me confidence stepping into a new series,” he says. “I would love to stay with them for a very long time. I get on with them really well and it’s great to grow with the team – they started as a small team and I started as a new driver and we’ve grown together.”

Speaking of the future, it is clear the team’s founders have ambitions to climb further up the ladder. “People want to go and do Le Mans and I think that’s going to become a lot more accessible with the GT3 rules,” says Ross. “That would be the goal. There would be nothing more satisfying for us to put a kid in a car for the first time at 13 years old and then win Le Mans a few years later.”

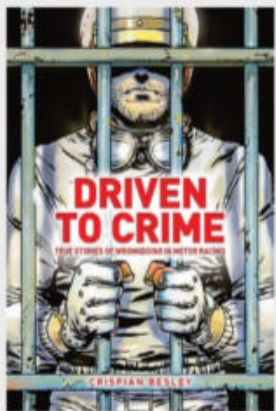
Given the meteoric rise of R Racing over the past few years, those lofty aspirations could certainly be reached. In the meantime, expect to see the grey cars at the front of more Ginetta Junior fields. Winter Series champion Freddie Slater alongside second-year racers Luke Watts and Luca Hopkinson look like they will be tough to beat and could just continue the team’s impressive record of claiming a title in every season of its existence so far. 🏆



Team expanded into British GT last year, running GT4 Aston

FINISHING STRAIGHT

When crime doesn't pay



BOOK REVIEW
DRIVEN TO CRIME
Crispian Besley
RRP £40

Throughout the history of motorsport there has been no shortage of 'characters' who have brought their own charm and unique qualities to the sport, and generally made it a better place for one reason or another.

The flipside of that is there are also those who have committed crimes and wreaked destruction in one form or another. It's happened more often than you'd think, and a collection of 90 of these stories are the subject of *Driven to Crime* by first-time author Crispian Besley.

It's something of a niche subject, but certainly of interest to motorsport fans and a wider audience who find the concept of crime and how the lawbreakers were caught intriguing.

The full gamut of motorsport is covered here, from Formula 1 to the grassroots level. Wrongdoers include the whole spectrum of people that you will find in any motorsport paddock, including drivers, team owners, designers, mechanics and sponsors.

A total of 66 chapters are covered across

nearly 470 pages, which breaks it down into manageable bitesize chunks if you don't fancy blasting through it in one sitting, with each chapter self-contained.

In each one there's a breakdown of the subject's racing exploits, some of which are far shorter than others, before setting out the criminal case against them and subsequent punishment, which invariably is almost always through court proceedings.

A lot of chapters focus on fraud and money laundering, which given that the top of the sport is a multi-billion-pound industry is not really surprising. But the joy of the book is that a multitude of crimes are covered, from murder and drug trafficking, to being convicted after driving a public car into the middle of a race!

Some stories are more famous than

others, the kidnapping of Juan Manuel Fangio ahead of the 1958 Cuban Grand Prix by some of Fidel Castro's revolutionaries, and the 'Spygate' saga that rocked F1 in 2007 get plenty of focus even if they've been well-documented before.

But it's the lesser-known stories that are perhaps the most interesting, and sometimes the most thought-provoking, such as the circumstances surrounding Ruth Ellis, who was convicted of killing her racing driver husband David Blakely and became the last woman to be hanged in the UK. Or how Giovanna Amati, F1's last female driver, was kidnapped at the age of 18, long before she embarked on a motorsport career.

But there are also more lighthearted moments, at least for the reader, such as the antics of a conman who impersonated



Giovanna Amati was kidnapping victim as a teenager

COLOMBO

Spygate scandal involving Ferrari documents is explored in the book

SUTTON



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Fangio seized by revolutionaries in Cuba in 1958

SCHLEGELMILCH

a well-known 1980s grand prix driver before being eventually captured by Interpol.

While more focus is given to crimes committed in the UK or by British citizens, it's not short of stories of criminals from further afield, including drug-smuggling IMSA champion Randy Lanier and stripper Angela Harkness, who conned NASCAR.

Other than the odd grammatical error here and there, it's difficult to find fault with the book, which is clearly a well-researched labour of love from Besley. And, while aimed primarily at a motorsport audience, there's certainly scope for it to be picked up and enjoyed by those with no interest in racing.

It's sure to make a fine addition to any motorsport enthusiast's collection, though, and serves as a timely reminder that no one is above the law.

STEFAN MACKLEY



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



Ranking the worst Formula 1 cars to win a grand prix

Cars that rarely looked like contenders for victory have occasionally slipped through the net to become winners of world championship Formula 1 races. But which was the worst of the bunch? Host Martyn Lee is joined by Autosport chief editor Kevin Turner and technical editor Jake Boxall-Legge to rank the top 10 in the latest podcast.

WHAT'S ON

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Rally Sweden
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BT Sport 3, Sun 1100
TV Highlights
BT Sport 2, Fri 2300,
Sat 2330, Sun 2300,
Red Bull TV, Fri 2100,
Sat 2100, Sun 2100,
ITV4, Tue 2000

Formula E
Round 3/11
Hyderabad, India
11 February
TV Live Channel 4, Sat 0900,
Eurosport 2, Sat 0900

Formula Regional
Middle East
Round 4/5
Dubai, UAE
11-12 February
TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Sat 0935,
Sun 0550, Sun 0935

Toyota Formula
Regional Oceania
Round 5/5

Taupo, New Zealand
10-12 February
TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Fri 2200,
Sat 0000, Sat 2100,
Sat 2300, Sun 0100

F4 UAE
Round 4/5
Dubai, UAE
11-12 February
TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Sat 0820,
Sun 0435, Sun 0820

Asian Le Mans
Round 1/2
Dubai, UAE
11-12 February



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TOP FIVE

Hill leads Eddie Irvine
and Apicella on way
to second at Brands



WINLESS F3000 DRIVERS

SUTTON

The late Michel Ferte's racing career peaked with second at Le Mans in 1991, but he also came close many times to wins in Formula 1's feeder series of 1985-2004. Here we rank F3000's nearly-men

JAMES NEWBOLD



MARK BLUNDELL

5 Three times a runner-up in as many seasons of F3000, Blundell starred in just his third race. The Briton stormed his year-old Lola into the lead at a wet Spa in 1987, passing Roberto Moreno, before finishing second to Michel Trolle. A factory Lola driver in 1988, Blundell was the only one in the same postcode as Johnny Herbert at Jerez, and was narrowly denied at Zolder by 0.22s as Olivier Grouillard's aggressive defence held up.



SUTTON

MAX WILSON

4 The likeable Brazilian enjoyed a strong 1997 rookie year. He was Ricardo Zonta's closest pursuer at Hockenheim, and hounded Jason Watt to the flag at Spa. Despite a dodgy gearbox, Wilson was second at Pau in 1998, and twice took pole after trading Edenbridge for Petrobras in 1999. But he was knocked off while leading at Imola by Nick Heidfeld, and a fluffed shift at Hockenheim was exploited by Bruno Junqueira.



SUTTON

MICHEL FERTE

3 The younger Ferte brother took pole and led F3000's inaugural race at Silverstone in 1985 until Mike Thackwell's Bridgestone-shod Ralt usurped him in the wet. The ORECA March man was denied by an overheating rev limiter when set to pounce on Emanuele Pirro at Vallelunga, but was at fault for crashing while leading at Spa. He came closest to winning at Mugello in 1986, just 0.4s shy of Pierluigi Martini.



DAMON HILL

2 The future world champion led races on five occasions in 1990, but had just one second place to show for it. Hill's Middlebridge Lola led at Silverstone until electrical gremlins struck, while consecutive poles at Monza, Enna and Hockenheim went begging due to a misfire, battery issues and a crash respectively. Another potential win was lost at Brands Hatch due to a slow stop, allowing Allan McNish to capitalise.



SUTTON

MARCO APICELLA

1 The 1994 Japanese F3000 champion did everything but win a race in his five-year International career. Seven times a runner-up, he came from the pits to second at Pau in 1989, after an engine seizure threw him off at Vallelunga. He lost out at Pau in 1990 to a crash while leading Eric van de Poele, who also took advantage of Apicella's holed radiator in Birmingham. He even defied the woeful 1991 Lola to manage a brace of seconds.



SUTTON



FROM THE ARCHIVE

The two remaining Jaguar XJR-12s take a brief stop in a heaving pitlane during the closing stages of the 1990 Le Mans 24 Hours for a splash of fuel and a quick once-over with a wet

chamois before what looked to be an uneventful run to first and third. Then, with 15 minutes to go, the Brun Motorsport Porsche 962C driven by Jesus Pareja (and shared with Oscar Larrauri and Walter Brun) expired,

sealing a 1-2 for John Nielsen, Price Cobb and Martin Brundle (who'd been swapped into the leading #3 Jag from the long-retired #1, replacing Eliseo Salazar), and Jan Lammers, Andy Wallace and Franz Konrad in car #2.



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March 782

For all his 69 Formula 1 starts – and 31 laps led – Bruno Giacomelli is probably best remembered for his exploits over the course of the 1978 European Formula 2 Championship with March. And his domination thereof. He looks back on that year as the highpoint of his career, and certainly the most satisfying season.

“That car is very much in my heart all these years later,” says Giacomelli of the BMW-engined 782 he drove for the works March team. “It was one of the best cars I ever drove, and I own two of them today, though not my championship-winning chassis.

“After I’d won the championship in 1978, I told a TV interviewer in Italy that I was actually unlucky that year. The guy didn’t understand what I was saying because I won eight races. Then I told him that I could maybe have won all 12 rounds of the championship.”

It’s not a fanciful thought on Giacomelli’s part: he was on pole position for the four races he didn’t win.

“I guess I was at my peak, I had a great car and good engines from Paul Rosche at the BMW factory, so I went into every weekend believing I could win,” he says.



“I know that we always got the most out of the car. I was engineered by Robin Herd [one of the founders of March] and we had a fantastic relationship.”

Giacomelli’s love of the 782 goes beyond the success he enjoyed aboard the car and the joy of driving it. His role in what is regarded as the all-time classic F2 car gives him great satisfaction nearly half a century on.

“I’ve been told that many drivers were really enthusiastic about the 782, and that makes me very proud because I did all the development with Robin,” he adds. “I helped develop the 772P the previous year, which was a kind of prototype for the 782, and then drove the new car the first time it was on its wheels.

“I look back on 1978 as the best year of my career. My only regret is that I didn’t get to work with Robin in Formula 1.”

GARY WATKINS



IN NEXT WEEK’S ISSUE

More F1 launches



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