



CRAIG BREEN 1990-2023



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20 APRIL 2023

F1 2023's BIG SURPRISE

How Aston Martin is taking on F1's best

Can Alonso's team
now find a way to
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'Fernando gives
an extra level
of motivation'

MIKE KRACK

PLUS

Toyota beats Ferrari
in WEC Portugal

Franchitti stars
at Goodwood



PREVIEW

BTCC IS GO!

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Racing



Jake Hill

Bring it on!



The story behind Aston's rise – and a tragedy for rallying

Now that we're three grands prix into a Formula 1 season that has been dominated so far by Red Bull, the rise of Aston Martin is providing a focal point of interest. Fernando Alonso has starred to take a hat-trick of podiums – even if sometimes they're belated – while Lance Stroll has raced well despite carrying an injury. It's been a remarkable turnaround since the green team's travails only 12 months ago, and it's a story into which Alex Kalinauckas delves in our cover feature, starting on p16. Team chief Mike Krack is particularly interesting and, who knows, perhaps Aston could even challenge Red Bull.

Elsewhere, the 2023 season is well and truly chiming in. Gary Watkins was at the Portimao 6 Hours to see Toyota leave Ferrari and the other Hypercar contenders trailing (p34), David Malsher-Lopez was on hand at Long Beach to watch Kyle Kirkwood come of age (p42), and our historic sage Marcus Pye brings the latest Goodwood feast of nostalgia from the Members' Meeting on p46.

The BTCC kicks off this weekend, and this is previewed fully from p24. Also on is Rally Croatia, but this will be a sad affair after the testing crash that claimed the life of Craig Breen. It's a tragedy that has hit the rally world particularly hard, since the Irishman was an immensely popular competitor. In many ways he was one of us: a massive fan of the sport, but he just happened to also be able to drive incredibly well. Tom Howard pays tribute on p4.



MS

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NEXT WEEK
27 APRIL

Ferrari on the slide
Putting the microscope on
Maranello and the latest
chapter in its F1
struggles



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Glenn Dunbar/McKlein/Motorsport Images

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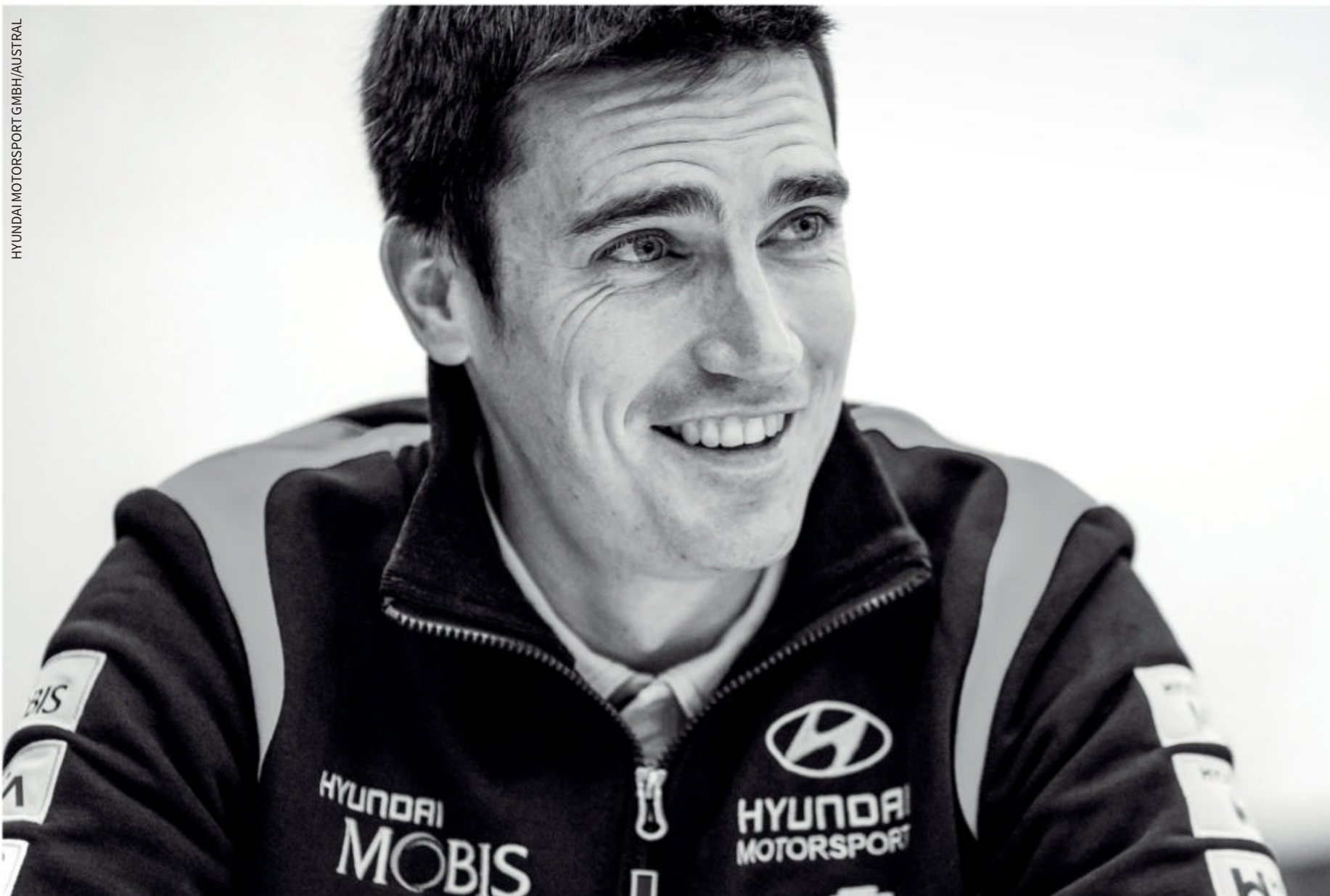
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Craig Breen 1990-2023

OBITUARY

Craig Breen will be remembered as one of rallying's most-loved characters and arguably among the best drivers to never win a World Rally Championship event. The Irishman succumbed to injuries sustained when his factory Hyundai i20 N went off an asphalt road during testing last Thursday in Croatia, ahead of this weekend's WRC round in the country. He was 33. Co-driver James Fulton

was unharmed in the crash.

The accident has left the motorsport fraternity stunned. Breen was one of the true characters, a relatable figure in an age where PR-trained drivers have become wooden. Few have worn their heart on their sleeve to the extent that he did. He broke down in tears of joy when he secured podiums, and equally he cried when things went wrong. It was a trait that made him a fan favourite. Alongside his driving skill, he was a king of the

stage end interview. You never knew what would come out of his mouth, apart from his catchphrase "flat to the square right". Nine WRC podiums, including six second-place finishes, proved that while he was a loveable character with an infectious smile, he had the skills to call himself an elite WRC driver.

The Waterford-born Breen was destined to be a rally driver, influenced by his Irish national rally champion father Ray. But it was in karting where he took his first step on the motorsport ladder, winning the 2006 Irish Formula A title before going on to compete in Europe. Ultimately, a call came to focus on rallying full-time from 2009, and so began a journey, not a straightforward one, that would take him to the top.

Breen quickly began to grab headlines, winning the International Ford Fiesta Sporting Trophy during a first full season in rallying. Among the prizes was a year-long apprenticeship with M-Sport Ford, which only helped grow a love affair with the Blue Oval instigated by his hero, Irish rally great Frank Meagher.

A season in the British Rally





Starring at Goodwood,
fourth in Cortina

J BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



There was tragedy and
triumph in breakout 2012

McKLEIN

Championship beckoned in 2010, combined with a campaign in the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship. A victory at the Ulster Rally and a 12th overall competing against the WRC elite in an S2000-class car at Rally GB turned heads. He claimed the inaugural WRC Academy Cup in 2011 before winning the S-WRC title for S2000 cars, driving a Ford Fiesta, in 2012. But that triumphant season was marred by tragedy, with the death of his long-time co-driver Gareth Roberts during the Targa Florio round of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge.

The S-WRC title attracted attention from Peugeot, which signed Breen for its European Rally Championship programme in 2013, partnering co-driver Paul Nagle. Breen was twice third in the championship before finishing runner-up in 2015.

The childhood dream was completed in 2016 when Breen joined the WRC's top flight, driving for the semi-works Citroen team on a part-time basis. A run to a highly emotional third at Rally Finland – his maiden WRC podium – helped secure a seat for the next season. A second in Sweden followed in 2018 before he lost his drive at the end of the year.

Hyundai snapped up Breen on a part-time basis from 2019-21 for the best streak of his WRC career, finishing on the podium in five of nine events. That led to his holy grail: a maiden full WRC season with M-Sport for 2022, reuniting with Ford.

But something didn't click, and a series of crashes marred a campaign that yielded two podiums (third in Monte Carlo and second in Sardinia) and resulted in a departure from the team, one season into a two-year contract. While Breen's heart-on-sleeve approach was ever-present, the infectious smile and witty interviews were rarely seen in 2022.

Many drivers would have tried to put a brave face on things and keep the emotions bottled up, but that wasn't Breen's style. He told it how it was and

let everyone know how he was feeling – a brave thing to do in a world where everything is scrutinised intensely.

While the stint at M-Sport didn't work out as expected, he was much loved by the team and its founder Malcolm Wilson. "He was an incredibly talented driver, but moreover he had an infectious enthusiasm for every element of rallying with an unrivalled encyclopaedic knowledge of the sport," said Wilson. "It was his glowing passion for the sport that helped to ignite the interest of fans around the world."

Hyundai threw Breen a lifeline for this year and he returned to the third-driver role. He hoped that this would turn into a full-time drive for 2024, and he produced arguably the best drive of his WRC career on his return to the top flight at Rally Sweden in February. Breen challenged for a maiden victory before falling short to M-Sport's Ott Tanak. The smile and wit returned as Breen declared himself the 'Mayor of Brattby' after winning the stage that took him into the rally lead.

Breen's final WRC stage-end interview at the conclusion of Rally Sweden brought everything into sharp focus and won't be forgotten. "It has been such a horrible, horrible black place where I was last year," he said. "Don't let anyone ever put you down, because only you know your true

potential. The people close to me know it and finally we managed to get it back out again." Poignant words that will perhaps be his legacy.

It was back home in Ireland where Breen would indulge his love of rally nostalgia, piloting a Metro 6R4, Subaru Legacy or Ford Sierra RS Cosworth in countless events. This love of all things retro extended to taking on stars such as Le Mans legend Tom Kristensen and NASCAR king Jimmie Johnson in a Lotus Cortina at the Goodwood Revival last year. "I think I was born in the wrong era," he smiled. "I really enjoy doing the modern stuff, but to really get my juices flowing I honestly prefer doing the historic stuff and jumping into an old car and experiencing all the smells and sounds and stories behind them."

He was equally enthused to inspire the next generation, offering financial support to drivers in the Irish Junior 1000 category within the Sligo Pallets Forest Rally Championship.

Such generosity and passion summed up Breen. He was a rally fan but also a hugely talented driver who landed what was, in his eyes, the ultimate prize: competing in the WRC. Autosport extends its condolences to his family and friends.

TOM HOWARD



Celebrating maiden WRC
podium, Finland 2016

McKLEIN



Toyota wants rules rethink after 'harsh' sensor order

WEC

Toyota is calling for procedural changes in the World Endurance Championship after one of its cars lost the chance of a result in last weekend's Portimao 6 Hours when an official series sensor failed. The team is claiming that it is unfair that a car is delayed for a failure outside of the squad's control.

The #7 Toyota GR010 HYBRID shared by Kamui Kobayashi, Mike Conway and Jose Maria Lopez was forced to make an 11-minute pitstop early in the second hour in Portugal after the FIA-mandated torque sensor in the left-rear driveshaft stopped working. The Japanese manufacturer revealed that it had been denied permission to continue running using the defaults in place that would have allowed power delivery – which is central to the Hypercar category – to still be monitored, and was told it had to change the driveshaft.

"We have to find better solutions to not force cars to park and repair for the failure of a sensor that is nothing to do with the team," said Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon. "It was a harsh decision I would say to ask us to repair it, because it would have been possible to continue running. There are other ways to monitor [power delivery] but they have been denied; there are default

sensors that are able to be correlated."

Vasselon argued that the issue was "very serious" because even with what he described as a "remarkable" pitstop, in which the entire left-rear corner was changed in only 11 minutes, it meant "the race was dead" for #7.

The Peugeot 9X8 that finished fifth in the hands of Loic Duval, Nico Muller and Gustavo Menezes also suffered a failure of one of its torque sensors in the closing stages of the race. It continued running, but at reduced power and therefore pace to stay within the prescribed torque curve laid down in the Balance of Performance.

Neither the FIA nor the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, which jointly run the WEC, have so far commented, but it is understood that the decision to decline Toyota permission to go into a default mode hinged on the amount of data that had been accrued when the failure occurred. It appears the sensor may have stopped working as early as the formation lap, and that the guidelines in place demand that there must be two stints of data gathered before a move into default mode is allowed.

Vasselon, who stated that these were the first failures of the sensors since their introduction in 2021, insisted that it was still possible to put new procedures in place ahead of the Le Mans 24 Hours, the centrepiece round of the WEC on 10-11 June.

GARY WATKINS

Billionaire Lo eyes F1 entry

FORMULA 1

Hong Kong billionaire Calvin Lo, whose fortune is largely attributed to an eponymous life insurance broker company, is weighing up backing one of the teams bidding for a Formula 1 entry beginning in 2026.

Lo already has an unspecified involvement in Williams (below) following its 2020 sale to investment firm Dorilton Capital. But he now seems keen to join forces with one of the nascent entries. The most credible contenders are the Andretti bid formed in collaboration with Cadillac, plus the Hitech GP candidacy, but Lo has ruled out uniting with either. This suggests his most likely route is with the Panthera Team Asia project, co-founded by sportscar driver Michel Orts and former SMP Racing managing director Benjamin Durand.

Lo told Reuters: "The financial part, believe it or not, to me is actually not the biggest problem. It's actually gathering all the expertise, the mechanics, the whole team into one unit. There are a few opportunities coming up, and we are talking quite seriously with a few teams. I'm just waiting, looking at the reports, looking at the numbers, making sure everything looks fine for the long term."

Lo said one team he was talking to had already applied for an entry and another was "still going on behind the scenes doing their thing". The deadline for formal applications is 30 April, the Sunday of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix, although the FIA says the cut-off "may move slightly for administrative purposes".

Lo added that F1 has been "focusing too much on the US". He said: "I'm fortunate enough to be able to know many [Asian investors] and they've sounded out and expressed interest in getting involved. So, a consortium, pool resources together."

ADAM COOPER





Kvyat (right) and Bortolotti are already team-mates at Prema

Kvyat joins Lamborghini roster

HYPERCAR

Daniil Kvyat has joined Lamborghini for the Italian manufacturer's LMDh attack on the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship next year. The ex-Toro Rosso and Red Bull Formula 1 driver is the fourth signing for what has now been confirmed will be a six-strong squad at the Iron Lynx factory team.

Kvyat has been brought into the Lamborghini fold after joining Iron Lynx sister team Prema for his maiden season of sportscar racing in the LMP2 class of the WEC this year. The 28-year-old revealed that the Lamborghini deal was always part of the discussions with Prema, which will mastermind the running of the Iron Lynx prototypes across the WEC and IMSA.

"It was a bit of a chain, it was all connected," he said. "Lamborghini was looking for fast and experienced drivers for their project and we met each other at the right time. The timing was perfect."

Kvyat revealed that a move into the top category of sportscar racing was a target when he signed with Russian P2 entrant G-Drive Racing for an assault on last year's WEC, a programme that failed to come to

fruition after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He admitted that there were talks with other manufacturers at this stage. "When you approach LMP2 the next goal is to go to the top category, which is Hypercar, LMDh in this case," he said. "That has been the the goal since the beginning."

Kvyat has joined Mirko Bortolotti, Andrea Caldarelli and Romain Grosjean on the Lambo LMDh squad, and will be part of the test and development programme with the car developed in conjunction with Ligier starting in the summer. Who will race in the WEC and who will race in IMSA has yet to be decided, according to Lamborghini Squadra Corse boss Giorgio Sanna, who revealed an intent for the LMDh that will race in the IMSA enduros next year to join the WEC car at the Le Mans 24 Hours: "At the moment we are looking to have dedicated drivers for the WEC and IMSA."

It appears that Lamborghini is close to filling the remaining two berths. Sanna said that he had drivers "in mind" for them.

Lamborghini has repeated that it remains unclear whether the LMDh can be ready in time to make its debut at the Daytona 24 Hours IMSA series-opener next January.

GARY WATKINS

DRUGOVICH AND BROWNING FOR BERLIN TEST

FORMULA E

Aston Martin and McLaren Formula 1 reserve Felipe Drugovich will sample Formula E machinery for the first time in next week's Berlin rookie test.

The reigning F2 champion (below), who was on the verge of making his grand prix debut in Bahrain before Lance Stroll's return from injury, will test with Maserati MSG alongside FIA F3 rookie Hugh Barter.

Also confirmed for the test is 2022 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year winner Luke Browning, who will drive for McLaren along with World Endurance Championship driver Charlie Eastwood.

Browning's fellow F3 racer Jonny Edgar, meanwhile, joins Jack Aitken at Envision Racing.

Mahindra will run three drivers, including reserve Jehan Daruvala, sim and development driver Jordan King and ex-F1 driver Roberto Merhi.

Others to test are Robert Shwartzman and Will Stevens for DS Penske, Victor Martins and Luca Ghiotto for Nissan, Adrien Tambay and Tim Tramnitz for Abt, Daniil Kvyat and tin-top star Mikel Azcona for NIO 333, and reigning DTM king Sheldon van der Linde and Simon Evans with Jaguar.

STEFAN MACKLEY



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Huff named for Audi World Tour attack

TCR WORLD TOUR

British touring car star Rob Huff has been named as one half of a formidable line-up by the Comtoy Racing Audi squad to tackle the inaugural TCR World Tour.

The 43-year-old Huff, who won the World Touring Car crown in 2012, is slated to join Belgian works Audi driver Frederic Vervisch at the wheel of Comtoy-run RS3 LMS machinery in the World Tour, which kicks off at the Algarve circuit in Portugal next week. For its opening European phase the World Tour piggybacks rounds of TCR Europe, for which Comtoy has assembled a four-car team including WTCC race winner Tom Coronel.

“It’s a mega team,” said Huff, who was a race winner with the Zengo Cupra squad

in last year’s final season of the World Touring Car Cup. “I’ve been working with them and Audi for a while. It’s good for me, providing it all goes ahead. There’s still so little information about this World Tour, there are still a lot of unknowns.

“Obviously I want to be a part of it, and to be in an Audi with Comtoy is the perfect partnership, especially teamed with Fred. There’s lots to prepare, but ultimately it’s nice to hopefully be back at the front and fighting with the other top teams and drivers.

“The World Tour itself is going to be an amazing thing, something totally new as it joins national championships around the world. In the WTCR you knew who you were racing against over years and years, and how they race.



Now we’re going to be racing against some guys once or twice a year. That will throw in another massive piece of the puzzle.

“There are some great circuits on the tour. I’ve raced at Bathurst before so I can’t wait to go back there and obviously Macau is a favourite of mine.”

Also on the grid in an Audi in Portugal will be Lewis Brown, who after scoring a

race win in the TCR UK opener at Snetterton is switching to TCR Europe for the rest of the season with Volcano Motorsport. Brown will partner Isaac Smith, who is confirmed only for the first round of the series.

“Volcano are a race-winning proven team, so I’ll be in good hands for my first season in Europe,” said Brown.

MARCUS SIMMONS & DAMIEN SMITH



BTCC

Reigning champion Tom Ingram and the dismal UK spring were the ‘winners’ from last week’s British Touring Car Championship curtain-raising launch-day test at the Brands Hatch Indy circuit.

Rain washed out a significant proportion of running, meaning most representative

times were set in a window of opportunity late in the morning. Just before lunch, a one-off effort from Ingram and his Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N pipped three-time champion Ash Sutton’s Motorbase Performance-run Ford Focus. Sutton was more consistent though, with his fastest six laps quicker than Ingram’s second best.

The Fords looked strong across the board,

with Motorbase newcomer Dan Rowbottom and Dan Cammish sandwiching the Speedworks Toyota of Rory Butcher. A red flag scuppered Jake Hill when he got onto new tyres in the morning, but his time during a very brief period of dryish track in the afternoon got him into the top six in his West Surrey Racing BMW.

One Motorsport started work with its newly delivered ex-Dynamics Hondas, which were only completed at 4am the previous day.

MARCUS SIMMONS

[➔ P24 FULL BTCC PREVIEW](#)

TOP 10 TIMES		
POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Tom Ingram (Hyundai)	47.928s
2	Ash Sutton (Ford)	47.976s
3	Dan Rowbottom (Ford)	48.074s
4	Rory Butcher (Toyota)	48.253s
5	Dan Cammish (Ford)	48.259s
6	Jake Hill (BMW)	48.560s
7	Colin Turkington (BMW)	48.576s
8	Josh Cook (Honda)	48.766s
9	Adam Morgan (BMW)	48.809s
10	George Gamble (Toyota)	48.984s



Interlagos, Austin set for return

WEC

Interlagos and Austin are looking increasingly likely to rejoin the World Endurance Championship calendar next year. The venues, which last hosted rounds in 2014 and 2020 respectively, appear set to be on the expanded 2024 calendar when it is announced at the Le Mans 24 Hours in June.

The WEC is scheduled to return to its traditional eight races next year following its post-COVID reduction in rounds. Sources have indicated that the Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace at Interlagos (above) is on course to take the place of this year's Algarve fixture, while Austin's Circuit of The Americas would replace Sebring as the all-important US round.

There has been no confirmation from the WEC on these revived races for now. Series boss Frederic Lequien would only say at last weekend's Portimao 6 Hours that the WEC is "currently negotiating and discussing with some countries and different tracks all over the world".

Lequien suggested that the series has been inundated with proposals to host races: "If I said yes to everybody we would have 12 to 14 rounds." He insisted there is no intention for the WEC to expand beyond eight or nine races, although he has previously stated that 10 would be the maximum.

Lequien confirmed that Silverstone, a fixture on the WEC calendar from its rebirth in 2012 until 2019, is one of the circuits with which there have been talks. It is understood to have put forward a May date, although its chances of returning to the calendar next year appear slim for the moment.

Lequien did reveal, however, that the Qatar round announced as the 2024 series opener will be in early March. That would preclude the WEC returning to Sebring in the middle of the month for the double-header with the 12-hour IMSA SportsCar Championship round that took place in 2019, 2022 and this year.

GARY WATKINS

TWO CARS PER MAKE FOR NEW LMGT3 CLASS

WEC

Manufacturers competing in the new LMGT3 category in the World Endurance Championship next year look set to be restricted to two cars each, with car makers competing in the Hypercar class given priority when it comes to the selection process.

That's the plan that has been outlined to teams and now confirmed by WEC boss Frederic Lequien. He explained that he couldn't confirm it because the strategy still needs to be further discussed by the FIA Endurance Commission, then signed off by the World Motor Sport Council.

That would mean Ferrari, Porsche, BMW and Lamborghini getting assured slots along with Chevrolet, via sister General Motors marque Cadillac, and Toyota, which will eventually replace the Lexus RC F with a car dubbed 'GR GT3 Concept'. Next in the pecking order would be, according to Lequien, other manufacturers already involved in the outgoing GTE Am class, effectively meaning Aston Martin (below). "We like diversity also," he said. "The perfect situation would be to have enough places to also welcome some brands which are not in Hypercar."

The entries, Lequien explained, would be granted to the manufacturer, which would then choose its team or teams.

GARY WATKINS



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IN THE HEADLINES

HYUNDAI DOWN TO TWO

Hyundai will contest this weekend's Rally Croatia with a slimmed-down two-car line-up for Thierry Neuville and Esapekka Lappi following the loss of Craig Breen in a testing crash last week. "We will do this in memory of Craig, to honour him, his passion for rallying and his competitive spirit," said Hyundai chief Cyril Abiteboul. "We will enter two cars and withdraw the third entry as a mark of respect." The World Rally Championship and FIA have retired Breen's #42 from use.

GOTZ/GLICKENHAUS FADING

The chances of 2021 DTM champion Maximilian Gotz joining the Glickenhaus Hypercar team for its two-car Le Mans 24 Hours assault are receding. Team boss Jim Glickenhaus has said that a programme for the German covering Le Mans and, by way of preparation, next month's Spa World Endurance round is now "looking unlikely".

ELMS CALENDAR JIGGLE

The European Le Mans Series will climax with a double-header round at the Algarve circuit. An additional four-hour race has been added the day before the 22 October curtain-closer following the cancellation of the Imola round scheduled for 7 May because of building work.

MINI FASTEST IN SPAIN

Series rookie Gabriele Mini topped last week's two-day FIA Formula 3 in-season test at Barcelona. The Hitech-run Sicilian edged out Jenzer Motorsport's British racer Taylor Barnard by 0.063 seconds when the lion's share of quick times was set on the second morning. Gregoire Saucy (ART) and Paul Aron (Prema) were next up. Testing was due to continue with another two days at Imola this week.

MERCEDES TOPS DTM TEST

DTM teams hit the track at the Red Bull Ring over the weekend for a two-day official test. Maro Engel headed Sheldon van der Linde by 0.021s in Landgraf Mercedes and Schubert BMW respectively, after both missed the opening day to contest the NLS round at the Nurburgring. Rene Rast topped the opening day after his transfer to BMW from Audi. BMW team Project 1 ran Esteban Muth and Dev Gore as it seeks a team-mate for double champion Marco Wittmann.



Loeb returns to rallycross – in an electric Lancia Delta

WORLD RALLYCROSS

Rally legend Sebastien Loeb is to contest his first full World Rallycross Championship season in five years at the wheel of an electric Lancia Delta. The nine-time World Rally champion will join Guerlain Chicherit to form the new Special One Racing team, which plans to field two Delta Evo-e cars in 2023.

The car has been designed and developed by Chicherit's own GCK Motorsport team, which first revealed plans in 2021 to revive the Lancia Delta that became one of the most revered cars of the World Rally Championship during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Evo-e, powered by two 250kW motors, made its debut at the Nurburgring last year.

"I'm from a generation that was brought up seeing wins by Lancia Deltas in rally racing, so I naturally have a weakness for this car," said Loeb (right, with Chicherit). "But when Guerlain spoke to me the first time about tackling a rallycross, I thought he was mad! Then I tried the car in December 2022 and I was immediately won over by its dynamic qualities. I have great faith in this project and I can't wait to champion it on tracks around the world."

The news means a return to WRX for Loeb, who contested full seasons in the championship from 2016-18 at the wheel

of a factory-backed Peugeot 208 WRX. In that period the Frenchman twice finished fourth in the championship and scored two wins, in Latvia (2016) and Belgium (2018).

Loeb's participation in WRX will come in parallel to his rallying and rally raid commitments. The 49-year-old is competing in the World Rally Raid Championship for the Prodrive-run Bahrain Raid Xtreme squad, but is yet to secure a part-time drive in this year's WRC.

The championship kicks off at Montalegre in Portugal on the first weekend of June, while Loeb will compete on UK soil at the Lydden Hill round on 22-23 July.

TOM HOWARD





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We look forward to a fun-filled 12th
season together.**



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Scrutiny drives change

While the relentless focus on the governing body's decisions highlights what it's got right, it also shows where it currently falls short

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

I am not trying to find excuses at all," Ferrari team principal Fred Vasseur said after the recent Australian Grand Prix. "But if you ask me if the penalty is too light, I say yes." Inevitable and surely just the start of blows against Red Bull's punishment for breaching the 2021 Formula 1 cost cap. But while such predictable stories keep the media glare getting any hotter on Ferrari and other underachieving squads, it has a knock-on effect for the other big player in the cost-cap saga. That is, as the financial rules regulator, the FIA.

And it's a similar story for the governing body – it remains negatively in the headlines and subject to ongoing criticism from F1's fanbase, particularly its more partisan elements. Because, really, there hasn't been a moment this year where the FIA hasn't been under scrutiny in some way.

The reaction to all these various sagas was as predictable as Red Bull's rivals criticising its cost-cap penalty; that the FIA is the 'no fun police' over certain decisions, 'incompetent' over others. This rather reflects the age we live in, where distrust in authorities rages through society, having been inflamed by nefarious politicians or following abuse of power by those who wield it. And in an F1-specific way, for many the FIA has not and may never be forgiven for the Abu Dhabi 2021 officiating shambles.

There are two important elements to reflect upon in this regard during this surprise F1 spring break. The first is that the FIA is doing

“Holding those in power to account is vital, but the FIA could surely help itself”

plenty right, for which it appears to get a disproportionate amount of vitriolic criticism in response. Under this bracket falls the move to increase driver safety regarding wearing jewellery and correct underwear kit, kicked off in Melbourne last year and still rumbling on. The move to stop team members climbing pitwall debris fences does remove an "iconic" F1 image, says Red Bull's Christian Horner, but it's a small price to pay considering the possibility of a person plunging onto the track with cars approaching at speed. This was a real fear from within the FIA regarding the strength of the angled top edges of pitwall fences installed to deflect debris, following so many Red Bull and Aston staff celebrating upon them in Jeddah.

The teams, ultimately, agree with this development, but that acceptance is shrouded in many quarters by frustration regarding F1's rules overall. This is the second element to reflect on

now, and covers both the FIA's problems with image and regulation rulings. The latter was summed up best by the Fernando Alonso Jeddah pitstop penalty saga, and the unwritten understanding on when jacks touching a car is considered service "working", which has since been tightened. Such situations feed also into an FIA image issue, since in this case Alonso's initial second penalty came late enough to mean that the podium scenes F1 fans had just watched were undermined.

That delay was followed by Carlos Sainz being slapped with a penalty – now upheld – for punting Alonso around at the controversial Melbourne restart without being able to argue his case. This gives rise to complaints regarding the consistency of such judgements' procedures, but in that case the testimony wasn't deemed relevant by the event's stewards, who had already established that Sainz was "wholly to blame for the collision".

It never seems to stop for the FIA in the current climate. Holding those in power to account is of course vital, but it could also surely help itself in so many of these matters. For example, the confusion over the restart order for what followed that third standing start in Australia. Many, including a raging Alonso from his Aston cockpit, recalled how the FIA had established the restart order for the 2022 British GP during its early stoppage. Like at Silverstone, in Melbourne the FIA used the last point at which it could reasonably establish the order and built it around that. But there was a long period of confusion where the team managers put forward their positions for consideration (off-air, of course) and the decision was communicated to other officials and the teams. Perhaps to help in future, the FIA could establish an annual off-season competition commission event, where rule changes or complex decision processes such as these are explained fully and scrutinised publicly, taking inspiration from other sporting machinations.

Sometimes more time is needed for the right outcome to be reached. Sometimes more evidence on a matter comes to light and so the correct conclusion is established eventually via appeals and review requests. And if the FIA was to build on the progress of opening up that it has made in recent seasons, then that would ease additional concerns about its justice processes. These have been in the headlines too thanks to Felipe Massa's new concerns over the Singapore crash scandal of 2008.

Motorsport fans love more insight – and that would surely come if additional FIA explanations were offered, alongside the ongoing need to re-establish regular media briefings from race direction officials. It would surely help that trust problem too, because reasonable people understand that this is an incredibly complex motorsport endeavour, where the relatively simple outcomes witnessed in other sports that feed our instant gratification culture can't always be replicated. 🏁



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The next big thing?

A teenage Italian rising star with the long-term backing of an F1 giant appears to have the makings of a generational talent

MARCUS SIMMONS

The leafy glades of Imola's public park play host this weekend to the opening round of the 2023 Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine, and the two races — one on Saturday, one on Sunday — will properly capture the attention of single-seater aficionados and talent spotters. Every now and then a young driver comes along surrounded by a massive buzz: think Max Verstappen in the 2014 Formula 3 European Championship; Mika Hakkinen in British F3 in 1990; or a certain Ayrton Senna da Silva in the early 1980s. And now we have one again.

Like Verstappen, Andrea Kimi Antonelli is 16 years old as he embarks upon his maiden pan-European championship in cars. Unlike Verstappen, who did not become a Red Bull Junior until the middle of his F3 season, the Italian has the patronage of a top Formula 1 team in the form of Mercedes. And, also unlike Verstappen, he already has one full season in cars under his belt; one in which he won no fewer than 26 races.

Antonelli makes the graduation, for which he remains with Prema Racing, as the reigning Italian Formula 4 champion, the final German F4 title winner, and also the F4 Motorsport Games gold medallist. What's more, again under the guidance of Prema, he's already become a champion in 2023 after a hotly contested FRegional Middle East Championship.

The *Bolognese* moved under the wing of the Mercedes F1 team at the age of 12. The squad's junior driver chief — its Helmut Marko if you like — is Frenchman Gwenaél Lagrue, who has been in Prema's orbit since he managed Guillaume Moreau in the old F3 Euro Series. He went on to be a prime mover at the Gravity Sport Management/Lotus F1 Junior stable, where he guided Esteban Ocon from karting to the European F3 crown with Prema in 2014. After he joined Mercedes in 2015, Lagrue was key to Ocon arriving in F1, signed up George Russell, provided considerable help to Alex Albon, and has also placed more of the Three-Pointed Star's juniors at Prema, including Frederik Vesti (now in FIA F2) and Paul Aron (FIA F3).

Ask Prema boss Rene Rosin about the arrival of Antonelli at his squad in the summer of 2021, and he acknowledges: "With Gwen we've always got a good relationship. When he was asking me about Kimi, of course it became everything easy, because he's one of the most promising junior drivers, and we always want to work with young drivers, even more if he's Italian."

Antonelli grew up surrounded by the sport, and Rosin — for whom the same is true — says that "in Italy, you say that he's somebody who has grown up on the bread of motorsport". His father Marco raced a BMW M3 in the early years of Super Touring in Italy three decades ago, and still competes occasionally in sportscars. He is the chief of Antonelli/AKM Motorsport, which has enjoyed plenty of success over the years in sportscar racing and also operates an F4

team. No wonder Kimi, as he is known, is nuts about the sport, to the extent that, during his F4 season last year, he suddenly arrived at the Le Mans 24 Hours, where Prema was competing for the first time.

"He's humble, he's very easy to work with, he loves what he's doing," laughs Rosin. "On a free weekend, a 15-year-old kid travelled on their own to Le Mans to see the 24 Hours — to do that you have to be really fanatical about motorsport, and last year he has done that!"

Unfortunately, a collision in qualifying for the Motorsport Games

"On a free weekend, a 15-year-old kid travelled on their own to Le Mans to see the 24 Hours"

at Paul Ricard last October left him with a fractured wrist. Yet he still competed, and won both races. But for his graduation to FRegional, according to Rosin, "basically he lost all the winter preparation. He did just two days in Mugello and two days in Barcelona, but in Barcelona it was very step by step into the Formula Regional because we didn't know how well he would be with the fracture on his arm." Then he went to the Middle East, and won the Regional title. "There he was very, very good, as a rookie, doing what he has done against much more experienced drivers," adds Rosin.

With such a remarkable F4 record, why not go straight to F3? "It can be an opportunity as Ollie Bearman has done, but Kimi is still 16," says Rosin. "He will not be ready for F1 in two years, so better to do everything step by step, doing the proper stuff, doing the proper ladder, having the chance of testing because, once you arrive in F3 and F2, you cannot test anymore. Use the FRECA to do a good amount of mileage, to learn two quali per event, two races per event, and prepare yourself for the future. You arrive in F3, you do well, you go to F2 and you are good, and then you don't have the age to go to F1 or you don't have the experience to go to F1. Just do what is needed to grow up mentally, physically."

Like Verstappen with Ocon, Hakkinen with Mika Salo, and Senna with Martin Brundle, the attention on Antonelli could refract upon another. Alongside him at Prema are Ferrari junior Rafael Camara and FRegional veteran Lorenzo Fluxa. Elsewhere are promising drivers such as Kas Haverkort, Dilano van't Hoff and Tim Tramnitz. Can they trip up Antonelli? "The kid is good, the kid is unbelievable, the kid has a big heart, which is something very important," enthuses Rosin. "We need to look day by day doing the best as much as we can, and only with that we can see what the future will bring. Nothing is written, he just has to ask himself to write his future." ❁

ASTON MARTIN'S ASCENT

HOW ASTON MARTIN BROKE INTO F1's LEAD PACK

*Three podiums in the first three races of the 2023 season
demonstrates the extraordinary progress the squad has made*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

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or most people fortunate enough to attend the 2022 and 2023 editions of the Australian Grand Prix, the two events appeared very similar. Dominant winners in the forms of Charles Leclerc and Max Verstappen, their glory secured in front of packed grandstands and a party atmosphere banishing the hideous pandemic memories in Melbourne.

Although Leclerc and his Ferrari squad had little to celebrate this time around, their negative 12-month turnaround was nothing compared to the positive progress secured by Aston Martin in the opposite direction. Earlier this month, behind Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton, Fernando Alonso secured a hat-trick of third-place finishes, with Lance Stroll eventually classified fourth in the other AMR23.

Even in Friday practice, Autosport had been keeping an eye on the green machines thrashing around Albert Park. They had been there or thereabouts with Red Bull, if not occasionally leading it, in the on-track sessions from the first two rounds of 2023. “Can you believe it?” Autosport’s Supercars correspondent Andrew van Leeuwen asked as we wandered down to climb a photographer’s tower overlooking the opening corners. “This time last year those blokes couldn’t even keep it on the road, remember?”

The Australian races are important reference points in the Aston Martin story. Wind back to the post-Melbourne jetlag adjustment in 2022, and many in the paddock were rather wincing in Aston’s direction. Sebastian Vettel, only just returned from missing the first two races of F1’s new groundeffect era after contracting COVID-19, had crashed in front of the vantage point Autosport had found inside the rapid Turns 9-10 complex in FP3. Just two hours later, Lance Stroll tagged Nicholas Latifi’s Williams and smashed his AMR22 across the track so much that the resulting red flag delay meant the repairs on Vettel’s car could be completed in time for a Q1 shot the German had been at risk of missing. In the race, Vettel crashed hard again, spearing his car into the brutally close Albert Park walls exiting the deceptively tricky Turn 4 left.

“It was very difficult 12 months ago here,” recalls Aston team principal Mike Krack, “because we were the only team who had not scored any points, with a car that was difficult to drive – very slow. And with drivers that were starting to lose confidence in the team, in the car.”

“From that point, we said, ‘OK, there’s only one way to get out of this, by sticking together and working hard.’ And this is what we went on with. I think we managed quite well to get ourselves out with AMR22 last year, over the course of the season.”

Twelve months on, Aston is second in the 2023 F1 constructor points and in the podiums league table, sitting with Ferrari as the closest challenger to Red Bull’s RB19 on pure pace. Critically, the



AMR23 is much gentler on its tyres than the Ferrari, allowing Alonso and Stroll to make considerable progress in races, while Leclerc and Carlos Sainz must heavily manage their rubber.

Mercedes resides in that mix too and was able to exploit things slightly getting away from Alonso and Aston in qualifying last time out in Australia. Both the AMR23 and Mercedes W14 have drag problems – especially compared to Red Bull – but in one key area the former is demonstrating class-leading form.

This is braking, where Alonso is typically later on the pedal than even Verstappen and Sergio Perez, based on GPS traces logged from the opening three rounds. Add to that the AMR23’s slow-corner speed and tight-turn prowess, and it’s clear why other squads mired in the midfield are looking to Aston’s year-on-year gains as inspiration rather than just the typical ‘Piranha Club’ sniping. And it’s been done with a team owner not minded to accept mediocrity.

But to tell the Aston story fully, we must again rewind to early 2022. Vettel’s absence – replaced by Aston/Racing Point



Statement of intent:
Alonso seized the lead
at start of Saudi GP

“It was very difficult 12 months ago. We were the only team who had not scored any points”

supersub-turned-2023-Haas racer Nico Hulkenberg — and the hefty Australia repair bill may have stood out most from the team’s disappointing start to the new era. But these were subplots to the central, underwhelming thrust.

Like so many other teams, Aston had been hoping to scale F1’s pecking order and leap into victory contention via the delayed rules reset finally coming to life. It had been funded by Lawrence Stroll’s Yew Tree Investments consortium for nearly four years and, at the end of the Force India/Racing Point era, the Canadian fashion mogul’s extra resources were considered a major boost for a design team so long considered F1’s best ‘pound-for-pound’.

But the initial AMR22, with its high-waisted, heavily undercut sidepods, was a dud. It porpoised badly and, like the Mercedes W13, was conceived with impressive theoretical downforce levels in mind. But because the bouncing meant its ride height had to be raised so far, what the wind tunnel suggested couldn’t be hit in reality.

Aston did get on the 2022 scoreboard immediately following its Melbourne misery, but running ninth was not in Stroll Sr’s masterplan. What happened next, really, finally kicked that off.

After the Aston marque had been brought back into F1 for the first time since 1960, the team had achieved an impressive feat in securing a series of lucrative sponsorship deals based on the premium brand strength of the luxury-road-car company Stroll had also acquired. It beat off intense interest from massive entities from across global sport to secure title sponsorship from IT services company Cognizant for 2021, which was then

essentially matched in positioning with Saudi Arabian state oil company Aramco last year.

This all helped Aston move up to operating at the limit of F1’s new cost cap requirements, rather than downsizing as Red Bull, Mercedes and Ferrari had to do. The extra funding also enabled Aston to invest in a complete rebuild of its Silverstone factory, constructed back in 1990 under the team’s founded guise as Jordan and considered small by modern F1 standards.

But with massive infrastructure change that’s still not quite complete, the impact of Aston’s new financial muscle was still felt elsewhere early in 2022, and much more visibly. This was the results of the team’s sweeping hiring spree the year before, when former technical director Andy Green went out and looked to bolster Aston’s design team with people and expertise that had made Red Bull and Mercedes the leading squads by the end of F1’s previous >>



ultra-high-downforce rules era. This expansion was headlined by the signing of ex-Red Bull aero chief Dan Fallows – for 16 years a key lieutenant for Adrian Newey – as technical director. Also coming on board were Eric Blandin, formerly Mercedes' aero leader, as Aston's deputy technical director, ex-Alfa Romeo design chief Luca Furbatto as engineering director, and another former Red Bull aerodynamicist, Andrew Alessi, as head of technical operations.

Krack was installed as team principal once Otmar Szafnauer had left to join Alpine at the end of the 2021 campaign, apparently unhappy with how his responsibilities as team boss would look once the newly established Aston Martin Performance Technologies division was created to sit above Aston's F1 operation. This has been helmed by former McLaren team boss and company CEO Martin Whitmarsh as AMPT Group CEO since late 2021.

Once F1 rocked up at the 2022 Spanish GP six weeks on from Aston's Melbourne shocker, the potential of this new group was revealed. The AMR22 was transformed, now running a Red Bull-style floor and sidepod design that so closely resembled the tweaked versions by then fitted to the RB18 that Aston's car was dubbed a 'green Red Bull'.

“At the end of the year, finishing seventh, that did not reflect 100% where the car was at the time”

The FIA investigated whether the team had breached its restrictions on reverse-engineering other designs, which followed a court case with Red Bull over when Fallows would be allowed to join before 2023. But Aston was cleared – its official explanation for the major design convergence was that it had embarked on twin development plans late in 2021, and made a commitment to pick the path that appeared best based on the early results in 2022.

Initially, progress up the pecking order was slow, with Stroll having a harder time than Vettel in adapting to the new package's



performance requirements. But after the summer break Aston began to make serious progress, climbing to nearly deprive Alfa of sixth in the constructors' standings, with porpoising addressed and an existing traction strength combining with better results in the downforce-dependent high-speed stuff.

The AMR22 was also feeling the benefit of running Mercedes-produced engines, gearboxes and suspension systems – albeit with individual aerodynamic surfaces on the last listed parts tested in Mercedes' renowned Brackley wind tunnel.

“At the end of the year, with finishing seventh, I think that did not reflect 100% where the car was at the time,” says Krack, who had seen his squad get close to leading the midfield in Baku and Singapore, and trouble the frontrunners at Austin. “I think we were better than that at the end of last year.”

On the outside, it appears that Aston refined and evolved the AMR22's final concept into the one the AMR23 is using so successfully now, the influence of its 2021 hiring programme finally fully coming to bear after the various periods of gardening leave had been completed. But team insiders speak of the car being 90-95% all-new – a remarkably high figure given the lack of major rule changes and parts carryover considerations under a cost cap.

But dig a little deeper and the AMR23 features several significant developments that have aided its success so far this season. There are the deep excavations in the downwash sidepods, which have been dubbed 'slidepods' and boost airflow to the critical diffuser and underfloor aero surfaces. Then there's Aston's new front-brake arrangement, which has so visibly aided driver confidence compared to this time last year, plus small but intricate front and rear-wing upgrades.

In the case of the front wing, this builds on the work initially made by Mercedes, which paddock sources suggest has contributed to making car-following – and therefore racing – fractionally harder, while remaining perfectly legal per the rules wording. This all follows Aston's commitment to be “not technically arrogant”, in the words of Fallows at the launch of the AMR23, and builds upon the team's previous philosophy of aggressively developing innovations created at other squads. This was so famously seen in Racing Point's 2020 RP20 'pink Mercedes' that forced the FIA to tighten the rules mentioned above. >>



DID VETTEL LEAVE TOO SOON?

Formula 1 moves on fast. A world champion can be at the top of their game one race, then, perhaps through a massive mistake or the fallout from a winter car change, things are suddenly very different. Eventually, the stopping point comes for all. Living legends step off the carousel, only their achievements remaining in memories. And these too fade.

Kimi Raikkonen, not Fernando Alonso, now Sebastian Vettel. Except the former Aston Martin driver and four-time world champion with Red Bull has been in the headlines rather a lot since his farewell in Abu Dhabi at the end of 2022 (left). This mainly centred on the possibility of Aston calling Vettel up as a one-off replacement for the injured

Lance Stroll at the start of the season. The team admitted it considered asking Vettel, given his experience of recent Aston packages, but ultimately decided to respect his decision to fully leave F1 and decreed that reserve driver Felipe Drugovich would step up to replace Stroll if required, which he was not.

Now there's talk in the paddock about exactly what Vettel stepped away from given Alonso's three successive podiums at the start of the 2023 campaign as the German's replacement – a higher total than Aston managed in the two years when Vettel was its champion.

“Well, if [he's] retired too early or too late, that is something you have to ask him!” Mike Krack



Dream start to the season
for Alonso in Bahrain...



...followed by more
of the same in Saudi

jokes when asked if he thought his former charge – for whom he was chief race engineer at BMW Sauber for Vettel's 2007 United States Grand Prix F1 debut – had ended his F1 story at just the wrong time with Aston finally coming good.

"I think [Sebastian] has his merits in where the car is today, because we had many meetings last year where he gave us a hint – 'do this or do that' or 'do not do this with the new car'. So, I think he has his merits in here.

"And then we have to respect the decision that he took. He reflected for a long time before he made that decision and, when he made it, we had to move on and he has to move on. And if it's a shame for him, yes or no, this you should ask him."



ASTON MARTIN'S ASCENT

The combination of all the work on the AMR22/23s resulted in a near-two-second year-on-year gain relative to the front of the grid from Melbourne 2022. “We continued on the [2022 car] baseline over the winter, trying to really make some further steps, which I think we managed,” says Krack.

As it turned out, Aston’s signing splurge wasn’t quite over – another very important member of its current staff only fully joined on 1 January 2023. That was the day when Alonso officially made his switch from Alpine, having turned out in an unbranded AMR22 at the Abu Dhabi test that concluded the 2022 campaign.

There, Aston figures were quick to note the efficient, direct manner of Alonso’s feedback on car performance, with the Spaniard himself left feeling “100+ %” happy after his first taste of green F1 action – he’d been “90% happy” with his decision to join Aston once Vettel’s retirement was announced last summer.

Alonso’s enduring energy has impressed his new team, while his impact alone is credited for improving its results alongside the

“He brought a lot of positiveness. This lead by example gives an extra level of motivation”

refined AMR23 design. New Williams team principal James Vowles notes that “they have an extraordinary driver who’s in the car”. Plus, Alonso’s communication skills have apparently been as effective in engaging a workforce now reaching the 1000-person mark as they are in creating media headlines. After sealing his Jeddah podium behind the dominant Red Bulls, Aston’s mechanics were captured loudly singing Alonso’s name, something Krack says was “a confirmation, basically, of where he’s standing in the team. He brought a lot of positiveness when he arrived. He is leading by example at all times. He’s there very early, he’s working really hard and it is this lead by example that everybody just sees and grabs on and gives an extra level of motivation.”

Krack himself also represents a key part in Aston’s current success. He’s a former karter who raced alongside future F1 stars Jarno Trulli and Giancarlo Fisichella in the 1980s before embarking on a much more successful engineering career that led him to a lengthy F1 stint with Sauber through its BMW days, before going on to work on the ultra-successful Porsche 919 LMP1 programme and BMW’s Formula E squad.

With Whitmarsh aiding day-to-day company responsibilities from above in AMPT, Krack – much like how his former Sauber

colleague Andreas Seidl did so recently for McLaren – can quietly and effectively lead Aston’s F1 race squad. His data analysis and race engineering experience are helpful boosts in making key decisions on car development, while Krack is also a thorough communicator in the modern team principal role as public figurehead – even seen eyeing rival squads’ designs during the pre-practice pitlane car presentations that are now a feature of each F1 weekend. Overall, Krack leads a team where staff are encouraged to work with a freedom and intensity deployed so well in recent years at Mercedes and Red Bull.

“It’s surprising,” he replies when asked to compare what it’s like leading a midfield squad to one that’s finally made the leap to join the ‘Class A’ elite. “The approach is not that much different but you are obviously much more exposed. I think if we make mistakes on pitstops, on strategy, it is maybe spotted more than it would potentially have been before. But other than that, the job itself is not very different. Now it’s easier to speak about three podiums than what we spoke about 12 months ago here in Australia – that was very difficult!”

Now comes the much harder part for Krack and co: maintaining Aston’s position among the frontrunners and even closing the chasm to Red Bull up ahead. Krack has been open in acknowledging that

Mercedes and Ferrari can be considered to have underperformed, design-wise, in 2023 compared to the steps those teams were expected to make following their 2022 disappointments.

Yet at the same time, Aston should be credited for being the first team to recommit to what is clearly the best design avenue of F1’s new groundeffect rules era, once it had been established by Red Bull. Williams took a similar approach several months further into 2022, while Alpine first deployed the downwash ‘slidepods’ Aston has seemingly refined for 2023. Now, Mercedes is abandoning the W13/W14 concept and is soon expected to more resemble Red Bull’s challenger, as Aston once did, while Ferrari is thought to be waiting until 2024 before making such a drastic change – if it ever does.

Aston reaped the rewards of making its concept change so early and so decisively,



Former karter Krack a key contributor to Aston’s burgeoning success



Alonso stands by during (another) Australian GP red-flag stoppage

DUNBAR



GALLOWAY

allied to an effective and successful 2022 upgrade plan. But can it repeat all that with a car package closer to a performance 'ceiling' in 2023? "We have managed last year to develop the car substantially," says Krack. "We started from a higher baseline this year, so it will not be as easy as it was last year. But we have to make progress if we want to stay where we are because if we do nothing we will go backwards. I am quite confident that we can bring performance upgrades to the car but because it is all related, we will only in time [know] if it is efficient or not."

For another two months, Aston will benefit from having 37% more wind-tunnel operating time than Red Bull – and 25% and 20% over Ferrari and Mercedes respectively – based on F1's sliding scale of restrictions on such work, plus associated CFD design tools. This resets halfway through each year and, should Aston still be running second to Red Bull by that stage in 2023, it's aero development allowances would reduce to 75% of what it has now, while Mercedes and Ferrari would gain 5% and 10% over it respectively. Red Bull will still be 5% down once its cost-cap penalty ends in October.

Whatever the change ends up being, it will force Aston to be even more efficient as it chases further gains, while Alonso wants his new team to learn to become a consistently winning operation, like those he's now racing against.

"For us, it's all happy days at the moment," he says when asked how he sees the 2023 'Class A' battle playing out, which Aston seems set to remain part of now it has proven that its Bahrain form can be replicated at differing, front-limited, tracks. We never expected to be on the podium, maybe even throughout the season, and in three races we have three. So, everything that comes now is a plus.

"We need to learn and we need to grow as a team. Also maybe now off-track because we are racing against Red Bull, Mercedes, Ferrari – teams that are used to this kind of pace of development. And maybe we are just in a learning process. So, we take this 2023 in a very humble manner and let's see how it's going."

But what of Aston's most important figure? How has the new level of his team gone down with Lawrence Stroll following its Melbourne 2022 low ebb, and what does that tell F1 about Aston's future?

"It's quite easy – Lawrence's mission statement is pretty clear," concludes Krack. "He has not been having any delay in telling us when are we going to win the next one. Obviously he's happy that we have made a step but this is not enough for his ambitions. The good thing with Lawrence is you know where you stand. He wants more and we will have to deliver more." ❦



MAUGER

STROLL'S FIGHTBACK FROM INJURY

"I was pretty heartbroken in Turn 3 with a couple of laps to go. I picked up a front-right lock defending from Carlos and thought I threw away the podium. It would have been hard to sleep with tonight..."

Formula 1 drivers and their priorities, right? That's Lance Stroll looking back at the events of the controversial third standing start at the 2023 Australian Grand Prix, where he went off battling Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and slid into the gravel and muddy escape road at the end of the Melbourne track's second straight. He got his position back and an eventual fourth-place result thanks to the various FIA decisions surrounding the final restart order and Sainz's penalty for nerfing into Fernando Alonso in the other Aston Martin. And so, Stroll's thoughts were fixed on those tumultuous moments as he faced the media afterwards and not, rather impressively, on his still-broken wrists.

Australia was the original race Stroll's surgeon – regular MotoGP rider repairer Xavier Mir – had told him would be a realistic point to finally start his 2023 campaign after his cycling crash in Spain on the eve of pre-season testing.

"I'M STILL IMPROVING, UNDERSTANDING THE LIMITS OF THIS CAR"

There he was replaced by Felipe Drugovich as Stroll commenced rehabilitation following surgery on his right wrist – his left one had sustained hairline fractures and was left to heal by itself – while also being hampered by a broken right big toe.

Remarkably, Stroll got into the cockpit of his race-ready AMR23 for the Bahrain season opener just a week later. There, he finished sixth after a battling drive where he was fortunate that his first-lap clash with Alonso wasn't worse for Aston – the final third was a painful struggle, even if Stroll didn't have to take his hands off the steering wheel as he'd had to in practice. His lap-one pass on Sainz at the next round in Jeddah demonstrated both Stroll's determination in the face of his injuries and the high-level potential of Aston's new challenger.

"I'm still improving, just understanding the limits of this car," says Stroll. "And I'm still also getting confidence back in my wrist. It was just over a month ago I crashed and I'm still kind of hurting. That's in the back of my mind. But it's not an excuse, I'm still figuring some stuff out with the car and trying to find some speed in myself in the car. But it's awesome."

SEASON
PREVIEW



BTCC PREVIEW

SPEEDWORKS AND BUTCHER STAKE THEIR CLAIM

There's new investment at the team, and their Toyotas have brand spanking new engines. Time to, ahem, become a 'meaty' contender for the BTCC title

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  **motorsport
IMAGES**



“D on’t make it sound like I’m bigging myself up,” pleads Rory Butcher at the end of a cosy chat with Autosport on the eve of the 2023 British Touring Car Championship kicking off this weekend at Donington Park. He’s probably going to hate that we’ve quoted his throwaway line, but the point is that, if there was a BTCC points table for drivers bigging themselves up, then Butcher would comfortably occupy 27th place out of 27. The Scot is a chap who’s as modest as they (usually don’t) come, but just happens to love driving racing cars — and he’s very, very good at it.

This is a crucial year for the 36-year-old and the Speedworks Motorsport-run Toyota team, one to move from their traditional spot on the fringes of title contention into the thick of it. After his nomadic early BTCC years from 2017–20, Butcher is entering his third season with the Cheshire squad and its Corolla GR Sport. Speedworks itself has expanded from two cars to three, adding the promising George Gamble to the incumbent duo of Butcher and Ricky Collard. For the first time, the team has ditched the TOCA customer engine in favour of a bespoke Toyota powerplant produced by BMW and Honda supplier Neil Brown Engineering.

“WE ARE BETTER PREPARED WITH THE STARS ALIGNING FOR US TO BE ABLE TO HAVE A GOOD CRACK AT IT”

And all this has been made possible by the investment of long-time Speedworks supporter John Gilbert, who over the winter became what team boss Christian Dick describes as “a sizeable shareholder” in the company formerly owned outright by Dick and his wife Amy.

“You know how competitive this championship is, so you don’t ever walk into it confident that you’re going to get it done, but what I can say is that we are better prepared with what feels like the stars aligning for us to be able to have a good crack at it,” enthuses Dick. “Rory’s in a great position, Ricky had some bad luck last year but his outright pace was mega and he learned a lot about front-wheel drive, so he should be in a great position to capitalise on that, and of course George is new to us, new to front-wheel drive, but I’ve got high hopes for him and think he’s going to spring a few surprises. This is probably our best chance yet of getting it done. It feels very fresh, almost like there’s a renewed energy and vigour.”

Dick is at pains to point out that all three of his drivers have »

SEASON PREVIEW



equal status and opportunity within the team, but the focus from outside is unquestionably on Butcher. The man himself gives a self-deprecating laugh about his regular hold upon fifth spot in the final standings – three times in four years, with three different cars and teams – but there’s a sense that this could be building to something much better. The ‘blip’ year (seventh in points) was 2021, his first with Speedworks in a Toyota that had very much been developed around the unique, hustling driving technique of the departing Tom Ingram.

“When you look back at my career, the first four seasons, I did a half-year with Motorbase, two years with AmD Tuning, and then I returned to Motorbase,” he recounts. “It was with four different cars [two models of Ford Focus at Motorbase; the MG6 and Honda Civic Type R FK2 at AmD], and I was chopping and changing between different people and this different machinery. And then to move to Speedworks it was kind of a difficult transition, because I was so familiar with Motorbase. The team were great, and Christian and Amy were fantastic – it was probably just getting my head around the car. Tom’s now become a champion, he’s a top driver, but he has a very distinct driving style, and I think getting my head around that and developing the car around me took a little bit of time.

“But by the end of 2021, pole position came at Silverstone, we got our first wins, and we ended the season really high. And I think if we didn’t have some of the engine troubles that we had in the first half of 2022, it might have looked a lot different because the consistency was still there. We were still bagging top-sixes, we just didn’t have the pace to go for the wins and the podiums. But the last nine races of 2022 we were the top scorer, and finished on the podium five times.”

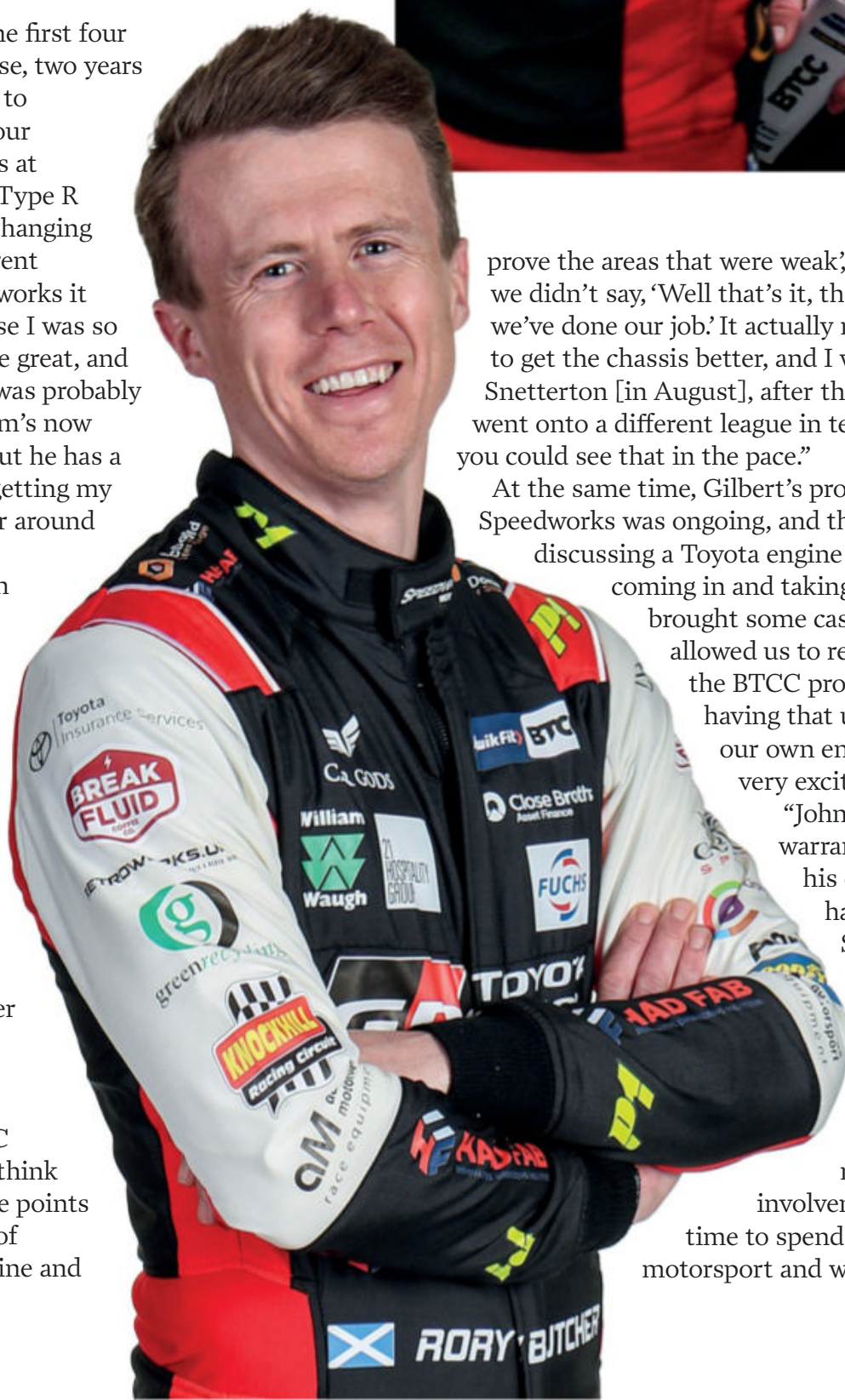
The ‘engine troubles’ to which Butcher refers are the switch of supply of the TOCA powerplant from Swindon to M-Sport, whose product left its frontrunning users underwhelmed (BTC Racing publicly, Speedworks subtly). “I think the team had a really good mentality,” he points out, “where it was, ‘We’re putting a lot of pressure on M-Sport to develop an engine and



prove the areas that were weak’, but at the same time we didn’t say, ‘Well that’s it, they’re going to get better, we’ve done our job.’ It actually made us work even harder to get the chassis better, and I would say that from Snetterton [in August], after the tyre test, the car just went onto a different league in terms of the chassis, and you could see that in the pace.”

At the same time, Gilbert’s process to buy into Speedworks was ongoing, and the emboldened team was discussing a Toyota engine supply with NBE. “John coming in and taking the shares has obviously brought some cash into the business that’s allowed us to reinvest – that’s expanding the BTCC programme and finally having that up-front investment to do our own engine programme, which is very exciting,” explains Dick.

“John ran a very successful car warranty insurance business of his own for a long time, and has been involved with Speedworks for probably over 10 years. And then in recent years he sold his business and retired from that, and really things developed from there in terms of our relationship and his involvement. He’d got more time to spend with his passion of motorsport and would come and visit





Butcher talks, Christian Dick listens. "I'm a mega fan," says the team boss

the workshop regularly. Amy and I got to a point with the business where we could either shrink it back down to a more manageable size and try and do less, which seemed criminal when we looked at the opportunities that we'd got in front of us, or we needed more resource and more advice of how to take advantage of those opportunities and to grow the business.

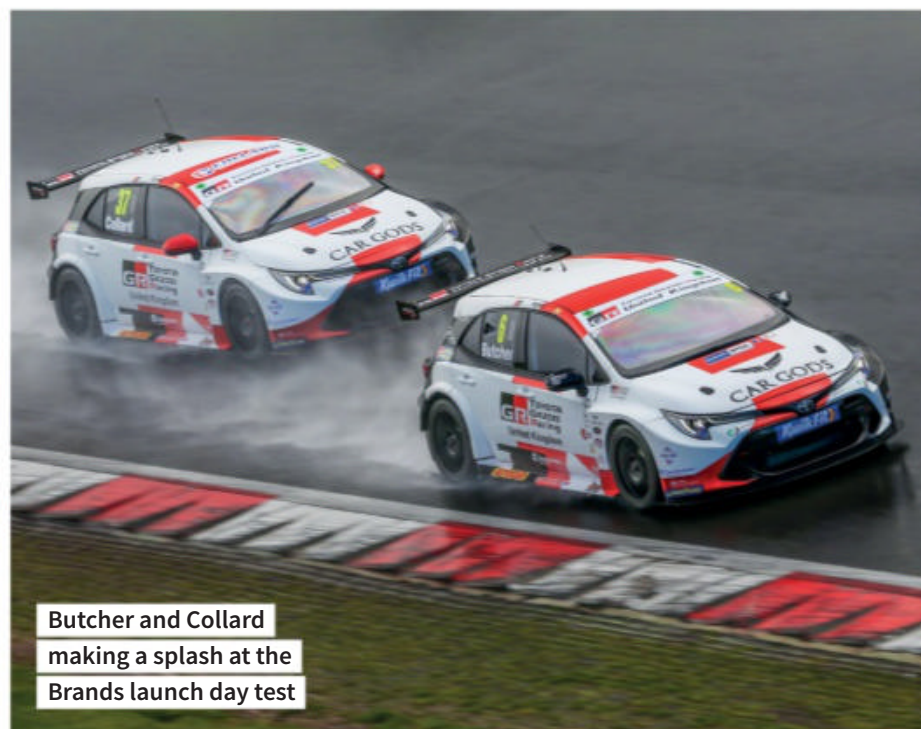
"With John's input, that's meant that we're able to take on more staff [now 16 full-time, 60 on race weekends], our management team has grown, and that's taken a lot of responsibilities from both Amy and me, allowing us to focus more on the areas that we do, whether that be future projects and looking at different avenues for the business to explore, right the way through to sponsorship opportunities that we can try and grow. Not necessarily new business and new revenues coming in, but growing the ones that we've already got. So there's lots of areas that it's a real positive for."

The Toyota engine – which comes from the Supra model – first hit the track last month with a two-day shakedown and early testing at Anglesey. What does Butcher make of it? "At the end of the day, these regulations are extremely tight, so there's not a huge advantage to be found in the engine, but what I think we've got with the new Toyota is it's kind of almost like a finished article. It's good in every area and straight out of the box it's there. It's not that we needed something that was going to find us half a second – we were already winning races and on the front row. We just needed something that was going to give us the ability to be there at the first round and I feel confident that we will."

The other positive for Speedworks this year is continuity on the engineering side. Upon Ingram's departure over the winter of 2020-21, he took Spencer Aldridge with him to the Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai squad. The Dicks recruited veteran tin-top technician Paul Ridgway for 2021, when he worked with Butcher. For 2022, Butcher's former Motorbase engineer Rich Benton

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

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Butcher and Collard making a splash at the Brands launch day test

“BEING ABLE TO RACE AT HOME IS PRETTY SPECIAL AND I JUST LOVE GOING BACK TO KNOCKHILL”

became available and they were reunited, with Ridgway moving into overall responsibility on the technical side and looking after Collard. Butcher and Benton remain together for 2023.

The key, as ever in motorsport, is for those guys to develop a car to suit their drivers. As with Ingram, Butcher has a very particular style – it's just that they're polar opposites. While Ingram is spectacular to watch and likes a very darty car, Butcher has a smooth, classical approach that betrays his pre-BTCC career as a very promising GT driver who came close to a class title in the 2016 European Le Mans Series. You almost want to drag him out of these cumbersome front-wheel-drive devices and plonk him in a nice, sophisticated GT3 racer. But the guy just loves being in the BTCC.

"The opportunity came up in 2017 because of my link to Motorbase in British GT," recalls Butcher. "David Bartrum [Motorbase boss] needed someone to replace Luke Davenport, who was unfortunately injured, and so he put me in the car for the last four rounds. And to be honest it was really refreshing coming back to the UK with sprint races, standing starts, having a gear-shifter again, and the cars are so raw compared to a GT car, which is so refined. I'd love to go and race in GTs again, but I think touring cars just kind of captured me, especially being able to race at Knockhill. Being able to race at home is pretty special and I just love going back there every year. Certainly for the near future I'll be in touring cars, until I can win a championship."

The Knockhill link, of course, is almost umbilical since Butcher's father Derek owns the track and his sister, ex-racer Jillian (who is married to Gordon Shedden), runs it. The temptation is to assume that a racing life was ingrained in young Rory from infancy, but that's not the case: "I did a little bit of motorbike racing when I was 12, 13 years old [yikes!], but I didn't drive a race car until I was 18 [he made his debut in a humble Ford Fiesta XR2]. Back then it was a different sport. It's not like now where kids are in a formula car for 100 days before they do their first race. Literally it was club racing and at the time it was just a hobby – it was only a couple of years later when I'd had a bit of success and got a bit of sponsorship, my eyes were opened to, 'Right, we can maybe make a career out of it.' I didn't actually believe I could race at a national level, but just one thing led to another and before you knew it..."

From success in Formula Ford 1600, Butcher took the Carrera Cup path into GTs, and perhaps this is the root of that smooth driving style. "I think I'm quite smooth, but I try and take little bits..." he mulls. "For example, I'm happy to take a bit of »

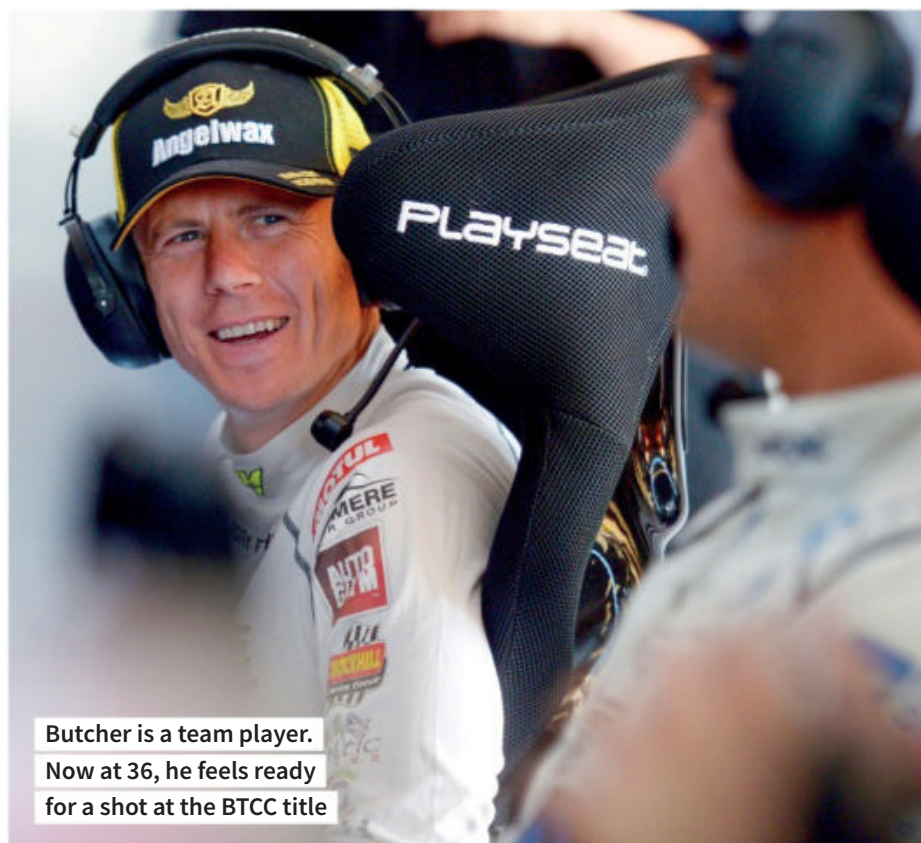


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Butcher is a team player.
Now at 36, he feels ready
for a shot at the BTCC title

“I’m a mega fan. I think he’s one of the most underrated drivers on the grid. You’ll struggle to find anyone who works harder and is more dedicated to their craft. When we sit down and analyse weekend to weekend or even season to season, any area that you put to Rory that you say needs improving, he will find that improvement. Absolutely guaranteed – he’ll find a way of doing it, he’ll work really hard to make sure that he delivers, and consistently delivers on it. He’s the biggest team player that I’ve ever worked with. All drivers have egos and if they tell you they haven’t then they’re lying, but he manages to park that ego, and if someone in the team has gone quicker on that lap or in that sector then he’ll absorb that information and try and make sure that it doesn’t happen again. But he’s also very open to sharing his data and talking other drivers through where he’s found that. The amount of effort he puts in to being the best he can be, he’s more than capable of getting the job done.”

“YOU’LL STRUGGLE TO FIND ANYONE WHO WORKS HARDER AND IS MORE DEDICATED TO THEIR CRAFT”

technique from Ricky who’s come from a single-seater background and done GTs as well. I would take a bit of technique off Ingram as well if it’s going to make me quicker. So I just try and adapt as much as I can around the circuit and piece together a bit of a jigsaw puzzle. I’ve been lucky enough to drive a lot of different cars; I’ve not come up through the front-wheel-drive route. I’ve done some single-seaters, I’ve done GT cars. I’ve driven cars with aero, so there are a few different things you can bring out of your toolbox.”

Make the same point to Dick, and he bubbles: “You have hit the nail on the head. I was out corner-watching at a test we did at Brands recently, and I’m sat watching the times from the outside of Surtees, watching him go round, and it looks effortless. The car’s not moving around and yet he’s flashing up really quick times. Some people really have to wrestle and hustle the car around, and whether that comes from the car set-up that they prefer or just their driving style... He’s incredibly smooth.

Long-term, who knows? Thanks partly to Gilbert’s investment also shoring up Speedworks’ GT programme, the team and Butcher have their eye on the Toyota GT3 project that, it is anticipated, will be on track in 2025. “We desperately want to be part of that when it comes along,” asserts Dick. “I’d love to be around then to get an opportunity,” grins Butcher. “I think I might end up in the [GT4] Supra at some point this year for an endurance race, but we’ll see what happens.”

But for now, all eyes are on the BTCC. “I probably felt like I could fight for a championship three years ago [in the Motorbase Ford] but I just wasn’t ready, and you learn from your mistakes,” considers Butcher. “I feel like last year was great, because we pieced together 29 points-scores in a row, and consistency really is a key in this series. We just need to have a stronger first half of the year, and I think we’ll have a really good shot of fighting for it.”

And then we’ll all be bigging him up. 🍀

A GAMBLE THAT COULD PAY OFF

George Gamble impressed a lot of people in his rookie BTCC season with the Ciceley Motorsport BMW squad last year. After a couple of seasons out of the sport, the 26-year-old ex-Carrera Cup GB ace from Nottingham scored a podium on his debut weekend on home ground at Donington, and claimed his maiden race victory during the summer in the reversed-grid race at Knockhill.

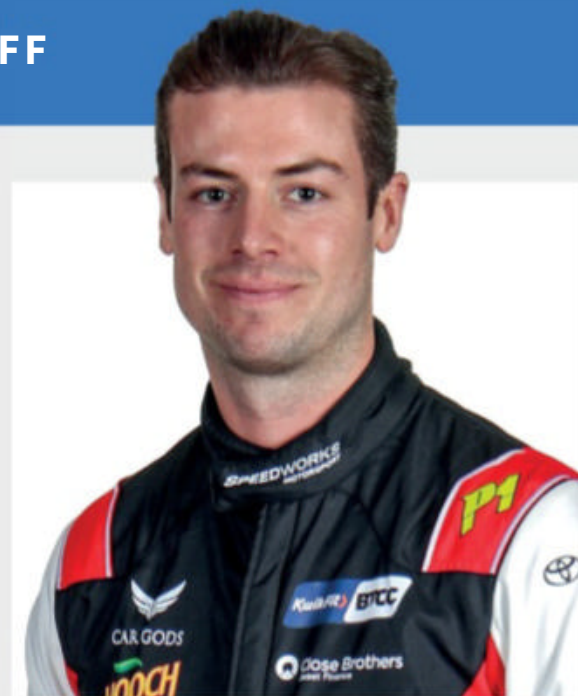
But with Ciceley canning its BTCC programme, and the team’s Adam Morgan claiming the only available rear-wheel-drive seat at official BMW squad West Surrey Racing, that left Gamble looking at a change of direction: a competitive front-wheel-drive car, which he has (hopefully) found with the Speedworks Toyota line-up.

“We had a great situation last year, and I still get on really well with Adam and Russell Morgan [Adam’s father is the Ciceley boss], but unfortunately they decided they wanted to step back from all the pressures of running a team,” recounts Gamble. “So it did leave my options a bit

more narrowed onto front-wheel drive. It is a different style obviously, so I think it might be a bit of a slow start for that last couple of tenths to Rory [Butcher] maybe, but after a couple of rounds I’m really confident that we’ll get the feel for it and be able to put in some really good results. It’s like anything, isn’t it? It just takes a bit of track time, and we’ve been a bit limited with the weather and one thing and another.”

What is significant is that, even with front-wheel drive the only option and his younger brother Tom being a factory McLaren driver in GT3, Gamble has chosen to stick with the BTCC. “I put such groundwork into it last year and we were kind of all geared up for it to roll over,” he says. “All the sponsors had such a great time, I loved it, all the press and everything just works for the British Touring Cars and I didn’t want to come out of that.

“Touring cars I don’t think is a one-year gig; it takes anyone two or three years before they really



have a good result. Obviously I’ve had a team switch in the middle of that, but I think there’s still no reason why we can’t have a really strong year. It’s not a championship you can just walk in and expect to have results from. I’m quite respectful of that and just looking to build on last year.”



BTCC PREVIEW

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE BTCC

*There are few changes at the front of the grid from the 2022 line-up,
but there's still plenty to anticipate for the coming season*

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP motorsport
IMAGES



TWEAKS TO THE HYBRID RULES

It's fair to say that not everyone in the British Touring Car Championship was ecstatic about the new hybrid system that arrived for 2022; some teams were still having problems with its reliability at the end of the season. But what cannot be denied is that restriction on hybrid usage for the series' most successful drivers was a far more satisfactory method of performance-balancing than the success-ballast system it replaced.

That's been tweaked for 2023 in the wake of a season where racing was more processional. The minimum speed for hybrid deployment has been cut from 120km/h to 115, but this goes up to 135km/h in increments for the top seven in the championship for qualifying and race one of each event, and for the top seven in races one and two for races two and three respectively. Hybrid usage in races has been cut, with no one allowed the

boost for more than 50% of laps, while the qualifying rules have been fettled too.

Reigning champion Tom Ingram sits on a BTCC working group that recommends changes to the rules: "Last year it worked well if you were inside the top five. If you were battling with Jake [Hill], Ash [Sutton] and Colin [Turkington], it affected us, but after that pack it didn't really do too much to the grid, because where one would use it the other would at the same time and you'd cancel each other out. So the idea is to try and create a bigger disparity between having it and not having it.

"It's right to try and improve the racing. Although it was great last year, the racing wasn't quite as good as we've seen it back in the days of weight, so we're trying to almost simulate that weight penalty without just bolting in a church roof to the passenger seat. It's a different way of looking at it."



Champ Ingram enjoys his role on the working group

Ingram is buoyant entering his title-defence season with the Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N he raced to glory in 2022. "It was a tough decision at the end of the year to go, 'What do we do? Do we look to try and make what we've got even better? Or do we cut our losses and go, we've probably got another year with it?'" he says. "In the end we decided to try and keep going, keep finding bits and pieces that we can make better, because you can't stand still in this championship. We went big, we've done a lot of development over the winter, and so far in testing it feels good."



Another BTCC season, another big grid packed full of quality and a variety of car makers



Turkington will be chasing a record fifth BTCC crown once again with WSR

RETURN OF THE OPTION TYRES

One of the mysteries of the BTCC's pre-season launch day at Brands Hatch last week was who'd lost the set of false teeth that were lying on the ground next to the West Surrey Racing trucks. Another mystery yet to be resolved is whether WSR's BMWs will be able to get enough 'bite' into their tyres this year.

Option tyres, you see, are back for 2023, after they were shelved last season while teams got to grips with the extra weight of the hybrid kit. At seven of the 10 rounds, there will be two compounds of Goodyear to race upon; at Snetterton and Croft, all three must be used; at the high-speed and abrasive Thruxton, it's hard rubber only.

The hard compound of Goodyear is set for its busiest season since 2019, and the BMW 330e M Sport – as the only rear-wheel-drive machine left in the BTCC – takes longer to switch on even the softer rubber. "The focus has more been working with the option tyres," says WSR's four-time champion Colin Turkington of pre-season testing. "We haven't run on the hard tyre, with the exception of Thruxton, for quite a few years, and we'll be using it quite a bit. That's something definitely where we could have improved looking back at 2019 – the hard tyre was a bit of a limitation.

"It's very dependent on ambient and track conditions on the day, but we always try and

address our weaknesses. We know we're good on the soft tyre, but we're all going to be on different strategies this year – I could be on the hard tyre against somebody on the soft, so it's important to not lose too much ground in those circumstances."

Turkington, of course, was beaten into third place in 2022 by new team-mate Jake Hill, who remains on board at WSR for this season. The Kentishman is raring to go after cracking on in the second half of last season following the mid-season Snetterton test. "We mainly just found some stuff in the car that made me drive better," he says. "I was pretty to grips with the car immediately I would say, but we finally just found a few things that we hadn't had time to test, and I felt really comfortable after that. It just made me feel more at home. Now, six months on from the end of the season, we're here and I understand it even more."

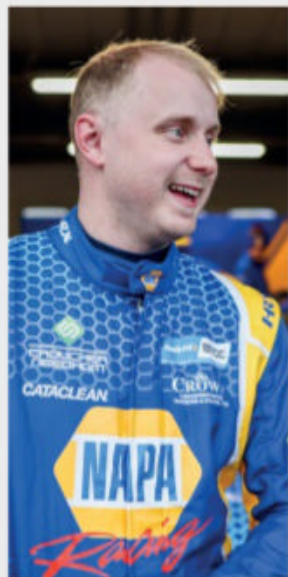


Hill in his new colours. BMW is the only rear-driven car now

STAND BY FOR THE ULTIMATE FORD FOCUS...

Motorbase Performance chief Pete Osborne was hoping his NAPA-liveried team could develop a new rear-wheel-drive contender for 2023, but it wasn't to be. Instead, the Kent squad has stuck with the Ford Focus ST. Three-time champion Ash Sutton (right) and his sidekick engineer Antonio Carrozza arrived quite late in the winter of 2021-22, and the attentions of Carrozza and incumbent engineering chief James Mundy (who looks after Dan Cammish) were absorbed by the implementation of hybrid. Sutton worked miracles to take the title runner-up spot, and now the combo have had a whole off-season to work on the Focus.

"We've just been able to attack it a bit more," reveals Sutton. "We knew straight away [early in 2022] there were bits we wanted to change, but fundamentally in the middle of the season it's not possible. We were so late to the party there wasn't enough time, and there was so much more going on with hybrid. So a year under our belt, we're in a different place now. We've got a better car, we're in a much better starting place. If you look at where we started last year and where we ended it, it was two completely different cars. Having that winter has allowed Tony [Carrozza] to work some magic along with the rest of Motorbase – we've got some good



Motorbase wags made further mod to car of newly wed Cammish

guys there and everyone's knuckled down.

"Hopefully we can hit the ground running at every track rather than being a bit hit-and-miss. It was a combination of things. First time for me getting back in a front-wheel-drive car, first time for Tony to ever work with a front-wheel-drive car. Every time we turned up to a meeting we didn't know what to expect, whereas you've got somebody like Tom [Ingram] – nine years he's had of that learning process. It's no different to if we'd rocked up in a rear-wheel-drive car – we would know where we want to be from the get-go."

The return of option tyres is reckoned by BTCC cognoscenti – 1992 champion and latter-day ITV pundit Tim Harvey – to play into the hands of the quick-thinking Sutton and Carrozza. "Yeah," agrees Sutton. "They throw a lot of spanners into your path and it's whoever picks out the right ones. For us, we've always been quite crafty when it comes down to that. The bigger deltas in hybrid are definitely different, and there's a new track layout [Donington GP] involved. I think there's a lot of good variables thrown in to spice things up."



HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT THE ENGLISHMAN, THE SCOTSMAN AND THE IRISHMAN?

Of the BTCC rookies on the grid this season, there are three who will be closely watched, and all arguably have a shot at the Jack Sears Trophy sub-division for drivers who are yet to finish on an overall podium in the series.

Young Scot Ronan Pearson has taken what you'd regard as the standard step up from the Mini Challenge to drive an Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai; Englishman Mikey Doble is also moving up, from more unusual arenas as the reigning champion in both the Ginetta GT5 Challenge and BMW Compact Cup. But Irishman Andrew Watson has the culture shock of stepping back from GTE – in which he's twice been a starter at the Le Mans 24 Hours – and GT3 machinery to line up alongside Doble in the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra team.

"It's been really fun," says 28-year-old Watson (above). "I haven't done an extensive pre-season test programme by any means, but we had a good day at Brands Hatch a couple of weeks ago. I really enjoyed it. The cars, when you get the heat in the tyres and it grips up, they're really fun to drive. I really like the sequential shifting as well – back away from the paddleshift."

"The racing is the really exciting bit of touring cars. We have a lot of learning to do with the car, I have to learn the hybrid system, practise standing starts, which I haven't done in about eight years! But already you can see the buzz and excitement around the paddock – we're gearing up nicely."

Alongside Watson and Doble is the seasoned Aron Taylor-Smith. A good benchmark? "Yeah massively," agrees Watson. "I have a lot of experience on paper, but in a front-wheel-drive tin-top I have none, so I'm treating it like my rookie year in any sort of top-level machine. Aron I must say has been brilliant. He's driven a lot of cars and he knows what works and what doesn't work, and he's obviously won races before. Without him I'd be really conscious of where we are and where we're going. I'm really enjoying it, but I haven't got the whole package unlocked yet."

BTCC ENTRY LIST

NO	RIDER	TEAM	CAR
1	Tom Ingram	Excelr8 Motorsport	Hyundai i30 N
3	Tom Chilton	Excelr8 Motorsport	Hyundai i30 N
14	Ronan Pearson	Excelr8 Motorsport	Hyundai i30 N
22	Nick Halstead	Excelr8 Motorsport	Hyundai i30 N
4	Colin Turkington	West Surrey Racing	BMW 330e M Sport
12	Stephen Jelley	West Surrey Racing	BMW 330e M Sport
24	Jake Hill	West Surrey Racing	BMW 330e M Sport
33	Adam Morgan	West Surrey Racing	BMW 330e M Sport
6	Rory Butcher	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Corolla GR Sport
37	Ricky Collard	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Corolla GR Sport
42	George Gamble	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Corolla GR Sport
11	Andrew Watson	Power Maxed Racing	Vauxhall Astra
40	Aron Taylor-Smith	Power Maxed Racing	Vauxhall Astra
88	Mikey Doble	Power Maxed Racing	Vauxhall Astra
16	Aiden Moffat	One Motorsport	Honda Civic Type R
66	Josh Cook	One Motorsport	Honda Civic Type R
70	Will Powell	One Motorsport	Honda Civic Type R
17	Dexter Patterson	Team Hard	Cupra Leon
19	Bobby Thompson	Team Hard	Cupra Leon
28	Nicolas Hamilton	Team Hard	Cupra Leon
96	Jack Butel	Team Hard	Cupra Leon
99	Jade Edwards	Team Hard	Cupra Leon
123	Dan Lloyd	Team Hard	Cupra Leon
27	Dan Cammish	Motorbase Performance	Ford Focus ST
32	Dan Rowbottom	Motorbase Performance	Ford Focus ST
77	Sam Osborne	Motorbase Performance	Ford Focus ST
116	Ash Sutton	Motorbase Performance	Ford Focus ST

BTCC CALENDAR

VENUE	DATE
23 April	Donington Park National
7 May	Brands Hatch Indy
21 May	Snetterton
4 June	Thruxton
18 June	Oulton Park
30 July	Croft
13 August	Knockhill
27 August	Donington Park GP
24 September	Silverstone
8 October	Brands Hatch GP



RACE CENTRE



WEC ALGARVE

Toyota soars in a league of one

Only a sensor failure not of its own making thwarted the Japanese manufacturer from taking another dominant 1-2

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



motorsport
IMAGES

There was muted celebration, talk of steps taken and progress made, even gaps closed. But for all the other Hypercar class manufacturers there was still the dawning realisation last weekend that Toyota remains out of sight in the World Endurance Championship. The Japanese manufacturer again dominated on the Algarve on Sunday, even if the winning GR010 HYBRID finished a single lap clear rather than the two laps by which the marque triumphed at Sebring last month, and it failed to get one of its two cars to the finish cleanly.

Sebastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa took victory in the Portimao 6 Hours with ease. The only real hiccup for the reigning WEC champions was Buemi's slow start – "I was too conservative," he said – that left his Le Mans Hypercar behind

the best of the Ferraris in third for three laps. When he finally got ahead of the Italian car started by Nicklas Nielsen on lap four, Buemi was nearly five seconds down on team-mate Mike Conway.

That gap went up to as much as seven seconds, but Buemi was able to close down that advantage and move into the lead before the first round of pitstops. The Swiss was then edging away when problems struck the second of the two Toyotas, which in light of the marque's supremacy turned the second round of the 2023 WEC into a one-car race. The torque sensor mandated by rulemakers the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest on the left-rear driveshaft of the #7 Toyota failed, forcing the car into the pits for a protracted stop. Eleven minutes were lost while the entire corner was changed, restricting Briton Conway and team-mates Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez to a ninth-place finish.



Winning crew proved untouchable once sister car was out of running



Buemi chases down Conway after being too “conservative” at start

“There was the dawning realisation last weekend that Toyota remains out of sight”

Everything pointed to the race at the Autodromo Internacional do Algarve being another close one between the two Toyotas. On their fastest 50 laps, there was only 0.005s between them. But the winning car was the faster of the two at the time when the race was effectively decided when Conway had to pit for a new corner – the fastest way to replace the driveshaft – after 50 laps. “When we started I had a bit of understeer, but I played with the anti-roll bars and the car became much quicker,” said Buemi. “I was able to close down Mike and was pulling a gap when he had to pit with their problem. I felt like the car was really coming to me.”

The only other problem for the crew of the winning Toyota was the hand injury Buemi picked up driving for Envision Racing in the recent Sao Paulo Formula E round. His right wrist remained heavily strapped throughout the weekend, and he admitted the proliferation

of tight corners on the Portuguese circuit’s 2.89-mile length was an issue. Buemi, who said he had “some good painkillers”, admitted he was driving one-handed at times.

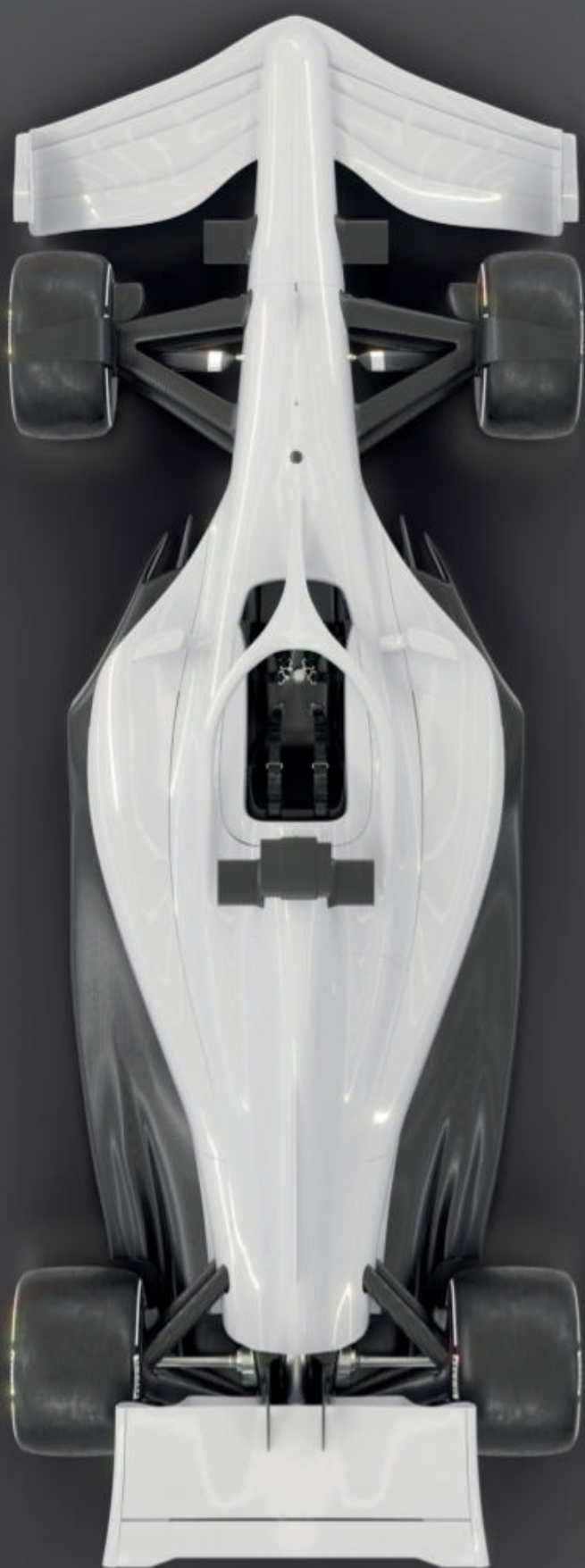
There was inevitably disappointment at Toyota given that Conway and co left Portugal with only two points to add to the 38 they garnered for winning the Sebring 1000 Miles in March. There was also disappointment that an FIA component had failed – a first, it seems – and that Toyota had been denied permission to push on in default mode (see *Pit & Paddock*).

Ferrari was again best of the rest, Antonio Fuoco, Miguel Molina and Nielsen taking second place aboard their 499P LMH. They went a lap down in the penultimate hour, and briefly got back on the lead lap after a safety car with an hour to go before a more representative margin was restored.

There were no heroics in qualifying this time from the Italian manufacturer: Fuoco had been on pole at Sebring, but Nielsen languished the better part of a second and a half behind polewinner Hartley here. The gap on Saturday was not quite what it seemed, however. Hartley and Kobayashi qualified on the softer of the two Michelin tyres available, whereas Ferrari went for a medium compound. The tyre choices of the WEC’s current top two makes »



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Two races, two podiums
bodes well for new Ferrari,
despite lag to Toyota pace

might also be key in explaining a bigger gap in race pace, too. Two Ferraris exclusively raced on the mediums, whereas the Toyotas each ran more than one set of the softs. Making judgements wasn't easy given that there was a revised Balance of Performance in place, although it was one devised to give all the cars the same potential as at Sebring.

A second-place finish to go with the third from the US race was "a natural step forward", reckoned Giuliano Salvi, Ferrari's sportscar race and testing manager. Ferrari definitely improved in terms of stint length – it was pretty much matching Toyota – and made some progress in terms of tyre degradation, the big issue it faced at Sebring. But Salvi admitted that Ferrari and its AF Corse team might have overreacted and gone too conservative. "We tried not to have any kind of cliff or give-up of the tyres," he explained. "We tried the opposite approach [to Sebring] to have flat degradation. In hindsight maybe we went far the other way, but every time we put the car on the ground we learn something."

Ferrari had got both its 499Ps through the eight hours at Sebring without technical problems, but at Portimao its second entry shared by James Calado, Alessandro Pier Guidi and Antonio Giovinazzi was delayed by a brake-by-wire issue. That meant the drivers had to rely more on the conventional hydraulic brakes and less on the retardation provided by the front-axle hybrid system. It was plain to see in the pitstops – plumes of smoke and clouds of carbon dust streamed from the front brakes – as well as on the stopwatch. That Pier Guidi managed to bring the ailing car home sixth, admittedly three laps down on the winning Toyota, was a testament to his



Ganassi-run Cadillac was
unlucky to end up fourth,
just as it did at Sebring



“The safety car came at a bad time for us. It was a good fight between us, Ferrari and Porsche”

technical skills and perhaps bravery. “The car was really finished,” reckoned Salvi.

The delays for one Toyota and one Ferrari meant there was the prize of a podium on offer for one of the other manufacturers in Hypercar. Laurens Vanthoor, Kevin Estre and Andre Lotterer grabbed the final piece of silverware on a good weekend for Porsche Penske Motorsport: the previous day, the 963 LMDh had taken its maiden victory in the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

Like the Long Beach win, third in Portugal owed something to good fortune. The Ganassi-run Cadillac V-Series.R LMDh shared by Richard Westbrook, Earl Bamber and Alex Lynn, which touched wheels on European asphalt for the first time in free practice, wasn’t far behind, though it was classified a lap adrift. It was also the faster car on the day.

The Caddy crew’s bid for the podium result it narrowly missed out on at Sebring was undone by events after one hour, and with one hour to go. Westbrook had locked up entering the pits as he made his first stop when the Peugeot ahead of him appeared to be dawdling up to the pit speed-limit line. He wasn’t given new tyres, meaning that Westbrook had to carry a flat-spotted front-right. He managed to get far enough into the second hour to do away with the need for a splash at the end. That should have jumped the car ahead of the Porsche, all things being equal.

The late safety car changed the complexion of the final stages, although Lotterer did end up needing to make a splash after his 963 failed to take on a full dump of fuel as a result of a sensor issue when it stopped straight after the yellow-flag period. The delay wasn’t enough to bring the Caddy within striking range, however. “We got unlucky with the safety car because we would have avoided the splash,” said Lynn. “It came at a bad time for us. It was a good fight between us, the second Ferrari and the Porsche, but I think we had done enough by going off sequence early.”

Porsche felt that it made “a big step” after its abject run to fifth and sixth positions at Sebring, according to 963 programme manager Urs Kuratle. “The ship is taking speed now,” he said. “We’re more than happy with third place.” The second Porsche was neither as competitive as the third-place car, after Dane Cameron >>

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haemorrhaged time on the soft tyre, nor as reliable. The car co-driven by Michael Christensen and Frederic Makowiecki lost nearly an hour with a change of power-steering pump and its power unit on the way to last place overall.

Portimao didn't produce Peugeot's best result in terms of points scored with fifth place for Loic Duval, Nico Muller and Gustavo Menezes; the 9X8 LMH scored a trio of fourths last year in a much smaller field. But it did for the first time get one of its cars to the finish without major technical issues. In fact, the only problem to afflict the car was the same sensor glitch that hit Toyota. Because

“This time we raced, not for first place – not yet – but we were racing for position”

the problem came late in the race, the car was able to continue in a default mode that meant it running with less power to stay within the torque curve laid down in the BoP.

There was a reliability glitch for the sister car, however, and worryingly it was a new one. A hydraulic leak discovered just before the green flag forced a change of power steering and, because the car shared by Paul di Resta, Jean-Eric Vergne and Mikkel Jensen had to join the race from the pits, it started a lap down as per the regulations. That was its deficit to the sister car six hours later when it crossed the line in seventh.


“It was an important step,” said Peugeot Sport technical director Olivier Janssonie. “We put a lot of effort in the past days to secure some reliability and that worked. We are moving forward and having two cars finish is a relief. This time we raced, not for first



Porsche took a distant podium with its 963 through some luck

place – not yet – but we were racing for position.”

The battle of the LMH garagistes was won by Glickenhaus. Its Pipo-engined 007 ran reliably and quicker than the Vanwall-Gibson Vandervell 680, although it wasn't remotely on the pace of the factory cars. The Vanwall went out late in the penultimate hour when a front brake disc exploded on Jacques Villeneuve and pitched him lightly into the Turn 10 barriers.

Glickenhaus and Vanwall clearly have a lot of work to do to get the most out of their machinery, but the same goes for Ferrari, Cadillac, Porsche and Peugeot as they try to get on terms with the runaway Toyotas. Each of the four factories made steps in Portugal, but there remains a chasm in front of them. 

 **P41 FULL RESULTS**

CORVETTE WITHSTANDS FERRARI ATTACK

An exercise in inch-perfect defending from Nicky Catsburg secured back-to-back GTE Am wins for Corvette Racing, after Ferrari's Alessio Rovera came up just short in a thrilling pursuit.

A 30kg weight handicap for Catsburg, Ben Keating and Nico Varrone aboard their C8.R helped Rovera to reduce a 9.2-second gap following their final pitstops with 31 laps to go to virtually nothing with seven minutes remaining. But despite Rovera's best efforts to prise open the door, and his AF Corse Ferrari

488 GTE Evo briefly nosing ahead on the outside of the Turn 5 hairpin, Catsburg kept his grip on a lead that Varrone had established during his double stint. The advantage at the flag over Rovera, Lilou Wadoux and Luis Perez Compagnon was a scant 0.26s.

“Big hats-off to Alessio for being a clean racer,” remarked Catsburg. “He was way faster than we were today. Some of the traffic made it extra interesting in the last few laps. I really struggled to do the pace that he was doing,

but somehow we managed.”

“He was really good in blocking,” said Rovera, who admitted that the need to score points after Perez-Compagnon's lap-four Sebring roll, which required a new chassis for Portimao, had made him more reserved. “I was so close to the win, a bit disappointed.”

Sharing that sentiment was the Iron Dames crew, despite Sarah Bovy, Rahel Frey and Michelle Gatting scoring a first podium since their switch from Ferrari to Porsche. Bovy twice overtook poleman Keating, who backed off in his second stint as track limits breaches tallied up, and Frey held the lead at half-distance from Varrone and Wadoux, who impressed in her first Ferrari race. But a Turn 1 spin for Frey after Varrone had jumped ahead in the pits dropped Gatting into the clutches of Rovera, who pounced at the final turn. “We have shown that we are there, but we haven't finished the job yet,” said Gatting.

The AF Ferrari in which Diego Alessi led early on faded to fifth when Davide Rigon's sister car passed Ulysse de Pauw in the closing laps.

JAMES NEWBOLD



Winning Corvette leads Iron Dames Porsche, which took a first podium

JARVIS OVERCOMES SOUND OF SILENCE TO WIN

United Autosports finished 1-2 in LMP2, but that barely tells the story of a race that with less than two hours to go had eight cars split by just over 20 seconds. Oliver Jarvis, Josh Pierson and Giedo van der Garde beat the sister ORECA-Gibson 07 of Phil Hanson, Freddie Lubin and Ben Hanley to make up for their car's freak Sebring retirement as Jarvis used all his experience to defy radio problems in his closing double stint.

Van der Garde was due to see out the final three stints after an impressive opening double had established the car in the lead from fifth on the grid, but he was brought back in after only one. "We had no communication, they thought it was my helmet," explained the Dutchman, who also had to serve a five-second penalty due to a fault in the system that stops the car starting during refuelling. With little warning, Jarvis jumped back aboard but quickly discovered the problem was "on the car side".

That meant some old-fashioned pitboard communication was necessary as Jarvis emerged in second place for the closing double stint, with the Prema ORECA of Daniil Kvyat firmly in his sights. "I don't think we've done that for a long time," reflected United boss Richard Dean. "But he picked it up, he understood what the numbers meant and that's the experience."

The safety car's arrival proved crucial in swinging the race towards United – Jarvis had taken fresh tyres at his surprise stop, while Prema planned to complete its own change later. "We basically got screwed over by the safety car," reflected Kvyat's co-driver Mirko



Oliver Jarvis (right) looks delighted to pool his experience once again

Bortolotti, who snared the team's first WEC pole by 0.001s. "It put us in a position where we couldn't take the tyre change anymore because they were there."

As Kvyat attempted to re-establish his gap, Jarvis was working out the "aggressive" fuel numbers from his pitboard. Kvyat made his final stop with 20 laps to go, but Jarvis stayed out for an extra tour, then took the lead upon rejoining. "That's the first time I've finished the race without a radio," Jarvis related. "Every lap you stay out is a risk, so I knew my neck was on the line, but I wanted the win."

Jarvis's closest challenger in the final reckoning was Hanson, who twice had to be pushed back after being impeded in the pits. Hanson came up 0.68s shy, disgruntled by

being "hampered by battles with cars that probably weren't actually for position".

Kvyat, who had earlier been held for five seconds for causing the Vector Sport ORECA to spin, faded to fourth behind WRT's leading ORECA of Louis Deletraz, Robert Kubica and Rui Andrade. Its sister car ran behind Deletraz prior to the final stops, when Robin Frijns was held for five seconds after passing InterEuropol's ORECA off the road at Turn 4. Its second penalty, after team-mate Sean Gelael blended in front of Lubin at the first pitstop, dropped the early leaders to seventh.

"We always thought it was going to be a slugging match at the end," concluded Dean, "and we got on top of it."

JAMES NEWBOLD

Two United ORECA's led a closely bunched LMP2 field in Portugal



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RESULTS **ROUND 2/7, ALGARVE (PRT), 16 APRIL (222 LAPS – 641.855 MILES)**

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Brendon Hartley (NZL) Ryo Hirakawa (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	6h01m26.343s
2	Nicklas Nielsen (DNK) Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Miguel Molina (ESP)	Ferrari AF Corse	Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	-1 lap
3	Laurens Vanthoor (BEL) Kevin Estre (FRA) Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche Penske Motorsport	Porsche 963	Hypercar	-1 lap
4	Richard Westbrook (GBR) Earl Bamber (NZL) Alex Lynn (GBR)	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi)	Cadillac V-Series.R	Hypercar	-2 laps
5	Nico Muller (CHE) Loïc Duval (FRA) Gustavo Menezes (USA)	Peugeot TotalEnergies	Peugeot 9X8	Hypercar	-2 laps
6	James Calado (GBR) Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Ferrari AF Corse	Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	-3 laps
7	Paul di Resta (GBR) Mikkel Jensen (DNK) Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	Peugeot TotalEnergies	Peugeot 9X8	Hypercar	-3 laps
8	Olivier Pla (FRA) Romain Dumas (FRA) Ryan Briscoe (AUS)	Glickenhause Racing	Glickenhause-Pipo 007 LMH	Hypercar	-5 laps
9	Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	-7 laps
10	Giedo van der Garde (NLD) Josh Pierson (USA) Oliver Jarvis (GBR)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
11	Ben Hanley (GBR) Freddie Lubin (GBR) Phil Hanson (GBR)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
12	Rui Andrade (PRT) Robert Kubica (POL) Louis Deletraz (CHE)	Team WRT	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
13	Doriane Pin (FRA) Mirko Bortolotti (ITA) Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	Prema Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
14	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT) David Beckmann (DEU) Yifei Ye (CHN)	Jota	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
15	Juan Manuel Correa (USA) Filip Ugran (ROU) Bent Viscaal (NLD)	Prema Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
16	Sean Gelael (IDN) Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT) Robin Frijns (NLD)	Team WRT	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
17	David Heinemeier Hansson (DNK) Pietro Fittipaldi (BRA) Oliver Rasmussen (DNK)	Jota	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
18	Julien Canal (FRA) Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA) Charles Milesi (FRA)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-7 laps
19	Jakub Smiechowski (POL) Fabio Scherer (CHE) Albert Costa (ESP)	Inter Europol Competition	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-8 laps
20	Memo Rojas (MEX) Andre Negrao (BRA) Olli Caldwell (GBR)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-9 laps
21	Ben Keating (USA) Nico Varrone (ARG) Nicky Catsburg (NLD)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R	GTE Am	-16 laps
22	Luis Perez Compagnon (ARG) Lilou Wadoux (FRA) Alessio Rovera (ITA)	Richard Mille AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-16 laps
23	Sarah Bovy (BEL) Michelle Gatting (DNK) Rahel Frey (CHE)	Iron Dames (Iron Lynx)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-16 laps
24	Thomas Flohr (CHE) Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Davide Rigon (ITA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-16 laps
25	Diego Alessi (ITA) Simon Mann (USA) Ulysse De Pauw (BEL)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-16 laps
26	Miguel Ramos (PRT) Guilherme Oliveira (PRT) Matteo Cairolì (ITA)	Project 1-AO	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-17 laps
27	Christian Ried (DEU) Mikkel Overgaard Pedersen (DNK) Julien Andlauer (FRA)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-17 laps
28	Michael Dinan (USA) Ahmad Al Harthy (OMN) Charlie Eastwood (GBR)	ORT by TF	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-17 laps
29	Ryan Hardwick (USA) Zacharie Robichon (CAN) Harry Tincknell (GBR)	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-18 laps
30	Takeshi Kimura (JPN) Scott Huffaker (USA) Daniel Serra (BRA)	Kessel Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-18 laps
31	Michael Wainwright (GBR) Riccardo Pera (ITA) Ben Barker (GBR)	GR Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-18 laps
32	Claudio Schiavoni (ITA) Matteo Cressoni (ITA) Alessio Picariello (BEL)	Iron Lynx	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-19 laps
33	Paul Dalla Lana (CAN) Axcil Jefferies (ZWE) Nicki Thiim (DNK)	Northwest AMR (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-20 laps
34	Ryan Cullen (IRL) Matthias Kaiser (LIE) Gabriel Aubry (FRA)	Vector Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-29 laps
35	Dane Cameron (USA) Michael Christensen (DNK) Frederic Makowiecki (FRA)	Porsche Penske Motorsport	Porsche 963	Hypercar	-33 laps
R	Tom Dillmann (FRA) Esteban Guerrieri (ARG) Jacques Villeneuve (CAN)	Floyd Vanwall Racing Team	Vanwall-Gibson Vandervell 680	Hypercar	174 laps-brakes/accident
R	Satoshi Hoshino (JPN) Casper Stevenson (GBR) Tomonobu Fujii (JPN)	D'Station Racing (TF)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	42 laps-engine

In each car, first-named driver started race. **Winners' average speed** 106.549mph. **Fastest lap** Conway 1m32.135s, 112.969mph.

LMP2 Jarvis 1m35.246s, 109.279mph.
GTE Am Rovera 1m40.249s, 103.826mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Hartley 1m30.171s; **2** Kobayashi 1m30.444s; **3** Nielsen 1m31.596s; **4** Calado 1m31.923s; **5** Este 1m32.404s; **6** Muller 1m32.517s; **7** Makowiecki 1m32.560s; **8** Westbrook 1m32.582s; **9** di Resta 1m32.703s; **10** Dumas 1m33.343s; **11** Dillmann 1m33.836s; **12** Bortolotti 1m34.303s; **13** Aubry 1m34.304s; **14** Hanson 1m34.451s; **15** Ye 1m34.493s; **16** Costa 1m34.586s; **17** Jarvis 1m34.590s;

18 Frijns 1m34.618s; **19** Viscaal 1m34.770s; **20** Deletraz 1m34.776s; **21** Negrao 1m34.996s; **22** Vaxiviere 1m35.238s; **23** Rasmussen 1m35.361s; **24** Keating 1m41.362s; **25** Bovy 1m41.579s; **26** Alessi 1m41.628s; **27** Flohr 1m41.899s; **28** Al Harthy 1m41.904s; **29** Perez Compagnon 1m41.934s; **30** Kimura 1m42.014s; **31** Ramos 1m42.024s; **32** Ried 1m42.105s; **33** Hardwick 1m42.198s; **34** Hoshino 1m43.035s; **35** Dalla Lana 1m43.207s; **36** Wainwright 1m43.273s; **37** Schiavoni 1m43.528s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

Hypercar drivers

1 Hartley/Hirakawa/Buemi **53**; **2** Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen **42**; **3** Lopez/Kobayashi/Conway **40**; **4** Lynn/Bamber/Westbrook **30**; **5** Lotterer/Estre/Vanthoor **27**; **6** Pier Guidi/Giovinazzi/Calado **17**.

Hypercar manufacturers

1 Toyota **64**; **2** Ferrari **42**; **3** Porsche **30**; **4** Cadillac **30**; **5** Peugeot **13**; **6** Vanwall **6**.

LMP2 drivers

1 Lubin/Hanson **56**; **2** Kvyat/Pin/Bortolotti **40**; **3** Filipe Albuquerque **38**; **4** Deletraz/Kubica/Andrade **33**; **5** Jarvis/

Pierson **26**; **6** van der Garde **25**.

GTE Am drivers

1 Keating/Catsburg/Varrone **64**; **2** Ried/Andlauer/Pedersen **33**; **3** Mann/De Pauw **28**; **4** Rigon/Castellacci/Flohr **27**; **5** Serra/Huffaker/Kimura **24**; **6** Gatting/Frey/Bovy **22**.

NEXT REPORT
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Captain Kirkwood stars on trek to victory

His junior formula record always suggested that he would boldly go in IndyCar, and at Long Beach the Andretti Autosport newcomer proved he's the real McCoy

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Kyle Kirkwood, IndyCar's latest winner, is an honest young man. That sometimes means he sounds cocky because he knows how good he is, but he has the stats to back that up. In the three stages – USF2000, Indy Pro 2000 and Indy Lights – of the Road To Indy, as it was known, he won all three titles and amassed 31 wins in 50 races. It seemed that the world was at his feet.

But Michael Andretti, whose team ran him to the Lights title, had no room in his IndyCar squad to accommodate Kirkwood for 2022, and so he found himself at AJ Foyt Racing, rowing along a car that was well off the pace. Frequently he pushed too hard and endured way too many incidents. “That’s completely fair to say,” he responded pre-season. “At the end of the day, when you’re 20th and you feel stuck, naturally you’re not going to just give up, you’re going to push to the absolute limits. In a sense that’s what we did. We overachieved some places and we underachieved by trying to overachieve at some other places!”

What was more disturbing to those who have long been convinced that Kirkwood is the Next Big Thing, an Indy Lights graduate of equal potential to Pato O’Ward and Colton Herta, was that he had incidents in the opening rounds of this season, now equipped with an Andretti Autosport machine as replacement to Arrow McLaren-bound Alexander Rossi. He didn’t have a fresh set of alternate Firestone tyres left for the Fast Six shootout in St Petersburg, so no one was expecting him to threaten team-mates Romain Grosjean and Herta to get on the front row, so why did he push so hard and have a sizeable crash? Come the race, it wasn’t his fault that he got launched over the collided cars of Rinus VeeKay and Jack Harvey, but again, here was the #27 involved in a spectacular accident. Then at Texas Motor Speedway, there was the controversial pitlane collision with Rossi that pitched him into the wall. He *really* needed a clean weekend at Long Beach.

And that’s pretty much what Kirkwood gave himself. He took pole and led 53 of the 85 laps, with scarcely an anxious moment

Kirkwood leads Grosjean on the way to his first IndyCar race victory





across the three days. This is the Kirkwood we saw in the junior series, as convincing now as he was then. And now he's forever inscribed as the winner of the 48th Grand Prix of Long Beach.

It helped that throughout practice, Andretti Autosport proved that its street course form at St Petersburg had been no fluke. The cars weren't quite as dominant at Long Beach – Chip Ganassi Racing and Team Penske were closer, and O'Ward's in-cockpit heroics might have even given him pole position, had he not made a tactical error in an admittedly messy qualifying session. But still, there were many drivers out there who would have given up a digit or two to learn what made Kirkwood, Herta and Grosjean so quick.

In the end, Kirkwood would be the sole Andretti representative on the front row, taking pole by just 0.0375 seconds ahead of Marcus Ericsson who, as in St Pete, outpaced Ganassi team-mates Alex Palou and Scott Dixon, while Grosjean was third. O'Ward was down in sixth, but ahead of Herta (another person to blunder in unusual circumstances in Q2), while the Penske cars of Josef

“The move was late and risky, but it was fair, and the pair made wheel-to-wheel contact”

Newgarden, Scott McLaughlin and Will Power languished in eighth, ninth and 13th respectively.

At the drop of the green flag, 2022 Long Beach winner Newgarden seemed most determined to rectify that. Kirkwood, Ericsson and Grosjean took the first three spots, but O'Ward – the highest starter to run the harder primary tyres for this stint – wrong-footed Dixon and Palou to jump both, but all three of them were passed by primary-tyred Newgarden, who assumed fourth.

The field was bunched by a caution for Helio Castroneves spinning into the wall just before the fountain turn and, when action resumed, Kirkwood maintained his advantage out front. O'Ward, by contrast, couldn't get his primaries up to temperature, lost positions to alternate-tyred Palou and Dixon and dropped to seventh. As those softer green-sidewalled Firestones lost their edge, however, things started to change. Newgarden smoothly outbraked Grosjean for third at Turn 1, and a revived O'Ward thought he saw a chance to retake Dixon down the inside at the Turn 8 90-degree right-hander. The move was late and risky – Dixon had already turned in – but it was fair, and the pair made wheel-to-wheel contact. Inevitably it was the car on the outside that came off worse, and Ganassi's six-time champion speared into the tyre wall. Dixon would get going again but later retired with non-existent oil pressure. It would be the first time in 23 races that the Kiwi hadn't finished every single lap of a race – an astonishing fact.

This second yellow was about 10 laps earlier than the ideal pitstop window, but no one was going to not take advantage of stopping while the field was meandering around at 60mph. No one except Juncos Hollinger Racing, that is, which left its rookie Agustin Canapino out on track, and thus the Argentinian touring car legend led a couple of laps of an IndyCar race.

At the restart, his joy was short-lived. Despite having the repaired but lapped Meyer Shank Racing car of Castroneves as a buffer, Canapino found himself held up by team-mate Callum Ilott, who had tagged a wall and punctured a tyre in the early stages of the race, and now, after his first scheduled stop, had been sent into Canapino's path, trying to stay on the lead lap. That stifled the rookie's plans to try to hold off the pack, and allowed Castroneves to draw alongside the JHR car on the run to the left-handed Turn 6 and pass him around the outside. Canapino tagged the inside wall and bounced wide, so Kirkwood, who had attempted to follow Castroneves's route, suddenly had to check his momentum. Newgarden, whose Penske #2 crew had jumped him ahead of Ericsson, was now on alternates as opposed to the primaries now being run by his main opposition, and he guessed correctly by »



hugging the inside line and went past not only the struggling Canapino and Castroneves but also Kirkwood, as they dived down the hill into Turn 8.

O'Ward had made the same move from primaries to alternates for the second stint and, having gone past Grosjean into Turn 6, now attempted to pass Ericsson and Kirkwood into Turn 8! When he suddenly realised that this was overambitious – he simply wasn't far enough alongside the erstwhile leader – the Arrow McLaren ace tried backing out of it, but tagged Kirkwood's right-rear. Fortunately, it didn't damage the Andretti car, but the McLaren machine pirouetted gently rear-first into the tyres. Not only did O'Ward tumble down the order, but he also badly held up the Ganassi cars of Ericsson and more particularly Palou. O'Ward later admitted it was a "stupid" error.

Newgarden led the second stint ahead of Kirkwood and Grosjean, with team-mate McLaughlin, who had ducked through the chaos to move up to fourth, ahead of Herta, the impressively recovering Ericsson, Rossi and Power. But while Newgarden was to remain ahead of the field, even as his tyres went off and his chasers' primaries held strong, McLaughlin couldn't do likewise. Once his alternates faded, so too did he, falling down the order.

Newgarden had a different problem; suspicions that he was short-filled in the first stop in order to gain track position were apparently confirmed when he made his last stop with 33 laps to go. He and Penske president Tim Cindric, his strategist, were going to have to hope that there were more yellows to ease their fuel crisis. Andretti Autosport, while needing to respond to the two-time champion's stop in order not to get caught out by an inopportune yellow, could easily make the overcut. And as leader, Kirkwood would get priority, so it was Grosjean who went only a lap longer than Newgarden and delivered a great in-lap to emerge ahead of the Penske driver, while Kirkwood was allowed a further lap, in which he too excelled, to exit the pitlane comfortably ahead of both.

Ericsson, who stopped on the same lap as Kirkwood, was now the man to watch. With 26 laps to go, he dived up the inside of Newgarden at Turn 1 and gradually closed in on the two Andretti cars up ahead, until they were running in convoy just 1.5 seconds apart. Kirkwood was wary of his team-mate, since Grosjean had barely used his push-to-pass boost and had plenty to spare but, in a way, Newgarden had helped decide the outcome of the race, by forcing everyone to pit early for the second round of stops, and turning this into a fuel mileage contest. Grosjean would have been delighted to use the extra boost to challenge Kirkwood, but he simply didn't have enough spare fuel to hit the button. Only a



caution would have freed him up, and it never came.

So Kirkwood won his 20th IndyCar race, one second ahead of Grosjean, and two seconds ahead of Ericsson, who now takes the points lead from O'Ward. Herta was a fairly subdued fourth, while Palou performed an Ericsson-style recovery drive to claim fifth.

Sixth should have been Rossi, but he suffered a suspension failure with one lap to go, sending him down an escape road and handing the place to Power. The Australian veteran was the highest-finishing Penske driver, since Newgarden's tactics really did backfire so that he fell to ninth at the chequered flag, just behind Ganassi rookie Marcus Armstrong, and just ahead of team-mate McLaughlin.

Michael Andretti described Kirkwood as "the real deal" after his pole-winning lap and saw that further confirmed on Sunday. As for Kirkwood himself, he admitted to relief mixed in with the elation. He has silenced his doubters and proved that what we all saw from him in junior formulas is very much transferable to the big cars. Now it's time for Andretti Autosport to prove that its street course pace is transferable to ovals and road courses: next up is a two-day test at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, then the fourth round at Barber Motorsports Park. 🏆



DEFIANT O'WARD KICKS HIMSELF FOR ERROR



DOLE

Pato O'Ward insisted that his lap 20 collision with Scott Dixon did not require an apology, but admitted his second Turn 8 incident, with Kyle Kirkwood, was the kind of mistake he shouldn't be making.

Describing his clash with the Ganassi driver, O'Ward said: "I was on the inside, he decided to stay on the outside, and I'm pretty much alongside him. I've been racing Scott for a few years. If he feels like it's my fault then I'm sorry he feels that way. I don't agree. I'm not going to apologise for that. We're racing. If you're on the outside you're more vulnerable to those things happening."

For his part, Dixon said: "[The move] seemed extremely late. I wouldn't have chosen to do that. If that's how the series wants us to race, then I guess it's all gloves off from this point."

O'Ward was sorry for Arrow McLaren for his spin at Turn 8, describing it as "completely my fault. I let my team down, and the amazing crowd that came out today. By the time I remembered to stop the car, it was already too late. I didn't want to take out Kirkwood, so I slammed on the brakes and spun. I'm disappointed with myself to be making those stupid moves. Not up to the level that I expect from myself."

O'Ward, who finished second in both the opening races of the IndyCar season, eventually finished 17th and on the lead lap, but has now dropped down to second in the championship, 15 points behind Marcus Ericsson.



Newgarden fuel gamble didn't pay off this time

BAKER

RESULTS ROUND 3/16, LONG BEACH (USA), 16 APRIL (85 LAPS – 167.280 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Kyle Kirkwood (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	1h43m17.3748s
2	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+0.9907s
3	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+2.0588s
4	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+7.6371s
5	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+8.7770s
6	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+30.3224s
7	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+30.9744s
8	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+31.9119s
9	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+33.7842s
10	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+42.8320s
11	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+45.4351s
12	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+46.2809s
13	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+47.2828s
14	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+47.7781s
15	Simon Pagenaud (FRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+49.4864s
16	Devlin DeFrancesco (CAN)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+59.9343s
17	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
18	Sting Ray Robb (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
19	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
20	David Malukas (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
21	Helio Castroneves (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
22	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	83 laps-suspension
23	Conor Daly (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
24	Benjamin Pedersen (DNK)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
25	Agustin Canapino (ARG)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	52 laps-accident damage
26	Rinus van Kalmthout (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	48 laps-fuel pressure
27	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	37 laps-oil pressure

Winner's average speed 97.171mph. **Fastest lap** Palou 1m07.9469s, 104.270mph.

Q3 1 Kirkwood 1m06.2878s; **2 Ericsson** 1m06.3253s; **3 Grosjean** 1m06.5347s; **4 Palou** 1m06.5549s; **5 Dixon** 1m06.5730s; **6 O'Ward** 1m06.6039s.

Q2 Grosjean 1m06.3246s; **O'Ward** 1m06.3993s; **Kirkwood** 1m06.4568s; **Ericsson** 1m06.4760s; **Palou** 1m06.5651s; **Dixon** 1m06.5787s; **7 Herta** 1m06.6431s; **8 Newgarden** 1m06.6452s; **9 McLaughlin** 1m06.7251s; **10 Rosenqvist** 1m06.7317s; **11 Rossi** 1m07.1049s; **12 Armstrong** 1m09.7839s.

Q1 – GROUP 1 Kirkwood 1m06.5593s; **Ericsson** 1m06.6600s; **Herta** 1m06.8246s; **Rosenqvist** 1m07.0130s; **Rossi** 1m07.0328s; **Newgarden** 1m07.2614s; **13 Power** 1m07.2681s; **15 Harvey** 1m07.3150s; **17 Lundgaard** 1m07.3957s; **19 van Kalmthout** 1m07.8796s;

21 Robb 1m07.9105s; **23 Pedersen** 1m08.2970s; **25 Malukas** no time.

Q1 – GROUP 2 Palou 1m06.3995s; **Dixon** 1m06.5305s; **O'Ward** 1m06.5906s; **Armstrong** 1m06.6488s; **Grosjean** 1m06.6780s; **McLaughlin** 1m06.6833s; **14 Pagenaud** 1m06.8010s; **16 Castroneves** 1m06.9385s; **18 Ferrucci** 1m06.9517s; **20 DeFrancesco** 1m07.0294s; **22 Ilott** 1m07.0490s; **24 Rahal** 1m07.0909s; **26 Canapino** 1m07.5956s; **27 Daly** 1m07.6986s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ericsson 110; **2 O'Ward** 95; **3 Palou** 91; **4 Newgarden** 89; **5 Kirkwood** 74; **6 Dixon** 72; **7 Grosjean** 71; **8 Herta** 69; **9 Power** 68; **10 McLaughlin** 68.

Gurney Trophy
race kicks off.
Shaun Lynn started
from pole, Dario
Franchitti finished
the job



GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING

Racers club together as sun shines on Goodwood

Just in time, the weather turned in the Sussex circuit's favour as 75th anniversary celebrations got off to a blessed — and spectacular — start

MARCUS PYE

PHOTOGRAPHY JEFF BLOXHAM



The wettest March since 1981, and little sign of abatement over the subsequent fortnight, left its own legacy as the Duke of Richmond and Gordon welcomed Goodwood Road Racing Club subscribers and guests to celebrate the landmark 80th Members Meeting and the Motor Circuit's 75th anniversary. Motorhomes being towed in to the competitors' campsite by tractors on Friday was a novelty, and four-

wheel-drivers lugging vehicles out of the quagmires within car parks presented further logistical nightmares.

Yet once inside there was an almost miraculous turnaround. The trackside daffodils may have been beaten up by gales, but the atmosphere changed with high-revving Cosworth V12 engines as superstar racecar architect Gordon Murray's brand new T.33 Spider roadster and its stablemates opened the action on both days. Two



sensational turbocharged BMW-engined Brabham BT52 F1 cars, which the South African designed, starred later when, almost 40 years after he won the 1983 season-closing GP at Kyalami, Riccardo Patrese experienced Goodwood for the first time from the cockpit!

First used for racing on 18 September 1948, when Australian pilot Tony Gaze's suggestion was espoused by the current duke's grandfather (racer and aviator Freddie March), the former RAF Westhampnett closed in July 1966. Reopened in 1998, its early-season Members Meetings are more 'Revival Light' than the BARC's 71 basic grass-roots affairs of yesteryear, but the ninth of the new era was made more agreeable by warm spring sunshine, which obligingly made life more comfortable for the sell-out audience.

With its tricky double-apex Woodcote corner demanding heavy braking at the end of the Lavant Straight, and chicane funnelling fields at the end of each undulating 2.4-mile lap, Goodwood could almost have been configured to guarantee great racing, rather than as a grey airfield perimeter track. Five of last weekend's 11 car races on one of Britain's fastest circuits were decided by under a second. Fantastic fare for onlookers and a global fanbase watching the live stream.

The real heroes were not household name drivers but serial madmen Mark Walker and Julian Majzub, who cast their fate to the wind in disputing the lead of the SF Edge Trophy showcase for Edwardian racers and aero-engined specials redolent of Brooklands, back after a year's sabbatical. In a field containing Duncan Pittaway's gargantuan FIAT 'The Beast of Turin' and Chris Mann's Alfa Romeo RLTF in its centenary year, the contrast between the machines they mastered could not have been more striking.

“Walker made his only gearchange leaving the start and used prodigious torque”

Walker, elbows out on his terrifyingly spartan 25-litre V8-engined Darracq land speed record car, and poleman Majzub's sleek Sunbeam — fourth in the 1916 Indianapolis 500 — powered by a 4.9-litre engine designed by Frenchman Louis Coatalen, were well-matched. Once Walker had made his only gearchange, leaving the start, and used prodigious torque to regain lost positions, they were reunited. Having pulled 98.9mph on the Lavant chute, Majzub's better two-wheel brakes gave him the advantage into Woodcote, but Walker thundered past on the blasts to the line, besting at 91.8mph in Sunday's tighter photo finish. “I couldn't go any quicker,” said Mark.

Ben Collings (Blitzen Benz) led away on both days, but slipped to thirds ahead of James Collins's Hudson Super Six when the German car's wooden wheels began to patter and its brakes became “a bit grumpy”. Collings glowed with pride as 17-year-old son Archie — winner of the Revival's Settrington Cup Austin J40 pedal car race at 10 — graduated to the family's 1903 Benz, finishing 12th on Sunday.

From the wacky to the sublime, four-time IndyCar champion and triple Indy 500 winner Dario Franchitti, on the cusp of 50, aced Saturday's Gurney Cup sports-prototype opener in Shaun Lynn's Ford GT40 'TES1E', which he'd qualified on pole. Lynn kept Miles >>

Huff took final
Gordon Spice
Trophy honours in
one of the weekend
highlights



“The Lotus 30 generates so much lift it would give Airbus a run for its money”

Griffiths (GT40) and Franchitti’s fellow Scot Andrew Kirkaldy (in Sandy Watson’s agile Chevron B8) in sight before Franchitti took over, a 10-second short-stop penalty negated by the drive-through Stuart Hall served because too many people had worked on the Chevron.

Griffiths relayed Gordon Shedden, who blew their chance of glory by spinning and tail-ending the Woodcote barrier, having lunged onto the wet grass in his angst to lap Simon Hadfield (in Joaquin Folch’s GT40, Paco Godia’s and Brian Muir’s 1968 Barcelona 6 Hours winner) inside Simon Walker-Hansell’s recalcitrant Crossle-Oldsmobile, while hounding down the leaders. The stout GT40 continued, but Hall staved off Shedden and Rob Huff, charging in Richard Meins’s GT40, to keep second with the snarling Fords monsterring the Chevron.

Richard Bradley qualified Katsu Kubota’s rebuilt ex-Peter Sadler JCB Lotus 30 third. “It generates so much lift it would give Airbus a run for

its money,” said Bradley, who was lapping quickest when a massive spin at Woodcote caught his attention. Undaunted, Bradley recovered to seventh behind the second Lynn/Franchitti GT40 — the ex-Leo Voyazides car of Shaun’s younger son Max and Dario’s brother Marino.

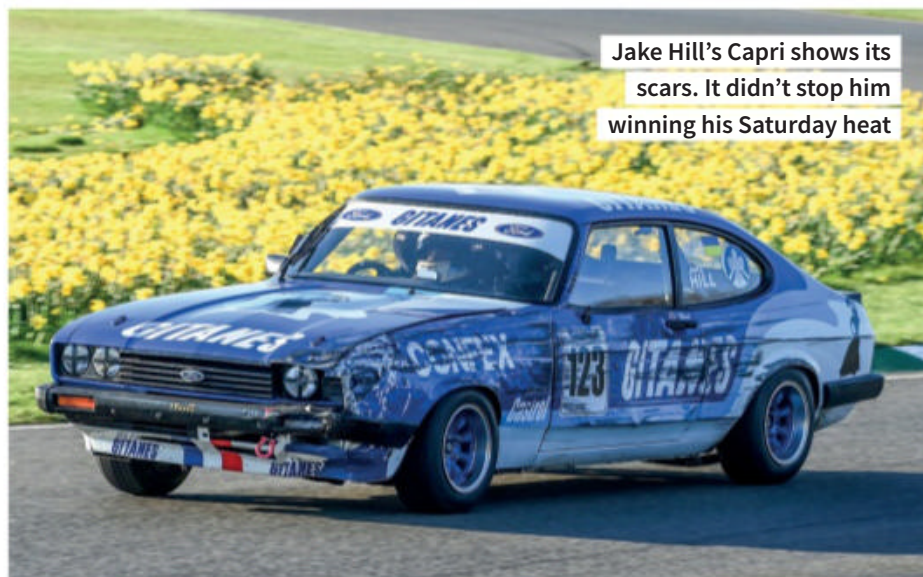
Twenty-nine Lotus Cortinas commemorating Colin Chapman’s Type 28 racer’s 60th birthday, reigning F1 champion Jim Clark’s 1964 British Saloon Car crown and his Easter Monday 1965 Goodwood victory, sent mixed shivers down enthusiasts’ necks. The cars have evolved in recent years. They no longer tricycle through corners or bob/dance on changing direction and, with 30% more power than the 150bhp twin-cams Clark had at his right foot, it was surprising that his period lap record of 1m33.2s, set in April 1966, was bettered only by the top 19 in practice. BTCC racer Josh Cook’s 1m30.818s in Mike Gardiner’s car claimed pole.

With ambitious Pro-Am (and Pro-Pro) teams, some anticipated carnage, but a close-fought and well-mannered Sunday race was appreciated. New to Goodwood, Irishman David Dickenson chased Alex Brundle — who started from P5 [courtesy of Goodwood debutant Julian Thomas] like a rocket — and Bentley’s 2003 Le Mans winner Guy Smith from the off.

Dickenson drove brilliantly, keeping triple WTCC champion Andy Priaulx and fellow touring car king Steve Soper behind before 2013 BTCC champ Andy Jordan took over his green-and-gold machine. Jordan clawed back six seconds to Thomas as Cook jostled back ahead of Matt Neal’s partner Gordon Shedden and Ben Clucas, in Smith’s car.

Jordan demoted Thomas at his second attempt, for he hooked first gear instead of third at Lavant, slewing sideways with locked rear wheels, having found second absent. Jordan outbraked Thomas into Woodcote for an emotional victory, which Dickenson dedicated to their friend Craig Breen, whose death in a WRC testing accident on Thursday rocked rallying. Thomas was overjoyed with second, ahead of Shedden and Clucas after a misfire blunted Cook’s rise.

Renamed the Gordon Spice Trophy to honour the Ford Capri star’s memory, the Group 1 saloon fest typically produced drama aplenty. Determined to beat the V8s for a Capri victory in Ric Wood’s sonorous version, BTCC race winner Jake Hill sat on the bank at St Marys and cried having hit oil and whacked the belted tyre wall sideways with pole



Jake Hill’s Capri shows its scars. It didn’t stop him winning his Saturday heat



Lotus Cortinas congregated en masse for Jim Clark Trophy

in the bag for Saturday's 'big banger' heat. Second qualifier Michael Whitaker (Rover SDI) was on Hill's tail following a stoppage when Olivier Hart's Chevrolet Camaro smote the Woodcote barrier.

Wood's crew toiled for five hours to get the Capri, with new left-front suspension and settings to compensate for a bent chassis leg, to the grid. That the ballsy Hill was prepared to top 140mph in it – barely slower than the ballasted Camaros and Mustangs – was remarkable, but with his steed jumping out of second gear, propshaft vibrating and pulling under braking, he rewarded the team by staving off the Camaros of Rob Huff and Hart, its stern bandaged, to win the heat.

The smaller capacity race went to the wire too. After Jim Morris survived an excursion on the exit of the chicane, inexplicably keeping his family heirloom Volkswagen Golf GTI out of the wall, Mini 1275GT battler Nick Swift seized the advantage. Onlookers saw Morris power back past to take the chequer, but the result was backdated a lap because the flag was not shown at 20 minutes. Both deserved to win. Morris's team-mate Tom Shepherd (Scirocco) regained third from Dave Devine (Ford Escort RS2000).

The top 15 from each heat qualified for Sunday's finale, with Swift on pole but minus Hart. Hill screamed into the lead, pursued by a huge smokescreen for which he was black-flagged, freeing Huff and last year's winner Jack Tetley (Camaro). Hill pitted, whereupon Wood found an allen key to replace the oil dipstick bung, resuming a lap down. He was reprieved by a red flag when Mark Wilson's Golf capsized.

From 21st in the new race, Hill was 10th inside a lap and fourth in four – "One thing the BTCC teaches you is to choose your side and keep looking ahead" – as Tetley harassed Huff. Travelling faster than before, Huff was already locked up when Tetley outbraked himself down his outside, walloped the barrier and rolled. "He went for a move which I don't think the laws of gravity allow," smiled Huff, who saw Fred >>

Patrese stars as Brabham BT52 duo head demonstrations



GARY HAWKINS

Forty years after Nelson Piquet won three grands prix and his second world championship, driving 1500cc Brabham-BMW BT52s (the first title for a turbocharged car), two BT52Bs sent by team chief and F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone turned the clocks back 40 years to F1's most powerful era. Claims that Piquet broke a minute testing at Goodwood may not be apocryphal: I timed him at 63s in a Cosworth DFV-powered BT49!

For team-mate Riccardo Patrese, being reunited with his South African GP winner and Brabham personnel including team manager Herbie Blash brought tears to his eyes. "I felt comfortable immediately in my driving position and my first time at the circuit. It was most important that I could drive [the car] again at such a beautiful place," said one of F1's most popular competitors two days before his 69th birthday.

Patrese was joined on track by the versatile David Brabham, son of three-time World Champion Sir Jack, whose maiden F1 season in 1990 with a Brabham-Judd BT59 was disastrous, netting one finish. David loved the BT52, as did F1 racer-turned-TV pundit Karun Chandhok. Riccardo's understudy on Sunday.

Magnificent Porsche 911 racing derivatives including the 1998 Le Mans-winning GT1 marked the icon's 60th anniversary. Saturday's extraordinary twilight GT1 demo – Aston Martin DBR9 V12s, husky Chevrolet Corvettes and Chrysler Vipers, Ferrari 550 GTS Maranellos, Lister Storms, Cor Euser's rebuilt Marcos Mantara LM600, Maserati MC12s and Johnny Mowlem in a Saleen S7-R – stirred souls.

And Tom Kristensen and Guy Smith exercising a Bentley Speed 8 alongside a Continental R, 20 years after their Le Mans triumph, was joyous too.

"The twilight GT1 demo stirred souls on Saturday evening"



Shepherd grunt past as he caught an enormous tail slide. Reds flew again, so Huff won on countback from Shepherd, whose Mustang jumped out of first at Saturday's start, triggering a fine recovery, and Olly Bryant (Camaro), with Hill bumped to fifth behind Whitaker.

Poleman Ray Mallock and Stuart Roach's Threlfall Cup Formula Junior duel opened Sunday's programme in style. Mallock forged his father Major Arthur's U2 brainchild ahead and had it won when he went off-line to lap Richard Bishop-Miller's Canadian Autosport-Triumph at St Mary's on the last lap, hit oil and spun onto the grass. In a flash Roach's Alexis HF2 – back in its 1960 works orange for the first time in decades – went past for a surprise victory. So far ahead of Tom Waterfield (in Xavier Kingsland's Hillwood-Fiat) were they that Mallock kept second. After a first-lap rotation at St Mary's avoiding Michael Gans's gyrating Stanguellini, as Chris Drake's Terrier bounded down the grass as if chasing a ball, Alex Morton (Condor) recovered from last to regain his original fourth place.

Piloting Alan Middleton's nimble Aston Martin Speed Model – first raced by the ill-fated locally born Richard Seaman – Trofeo Nuvolari polesitter Richard Bradley chased down buddy Gareth Burnett's fast-starting Alta, which faded when its exhaust blew, to win the renamed Pre-'39 sportscar race. Chain-ganger Robert Beebee (Frazer Nash TT Replica) resisted Michael Birch's lusty Talbot for third.

A special Tony Gaze Trophy race celebrated "the Grandfather of Goodwood", pulling road-racers of 1948-54 into focus. When runaway top qualifier Bobby Verdon-Roe's HWM Alta-Jaguar fell early, as in practice, Jonathan Abecassis – grandson of George, Hersham and Walton Motors marque's co-founder with John Heath – won well in his Austin-Healey 100M. Frazer Nash Le Mans Reps of different hues squabbled over the other podium places, Cliff Gray, John Ure and Patrick Blakeney-Edwards finishing in that order after young Oliver Marcais retired from the battle.

Banished to the back for mistaking the Salvadori Trophy green flag lap – in a dust storm following an oil down – for the start, fifth qualifier Shane Brereton's progress through the field, in the coil-sprung Cooper Monaco built by Mike Keele for Stirling Moss, demonstrated the non-contact commitment of his short oval National Hot Rod days. From 24th to 10th on the first lap, Brereton's control of



the pale green T49 produced several audacious but clean outside passes. He'd reached third when a safety car was deployed for marshals to shift Malcolm Gammons's Devin-Chevrolet.

Only the Lister-Jaguars of Martin Stretton and David Hart lay ahead as racing resumed, but, having rounded the Dutchman at Lavant, Brereton was crowded onto the grass. As he rejoined undeterred, Michael Gans (Lotus 15) nabbed third back. Exclusion, for "driving in a manner incompatible with general safety", meant Brereton's drive, among the weekend's highlights, was in vain.

A well-driven 1962 AC Cobra, even with the smaller 4.2-litre V8 engine, was always likely to outgun contemporary 3.8 Jaguar E-types in the Stirling Moss Trophy GT race. Nonetheless James Cottingham had to work hard in DK Engineering's newly restored car to overcome the stunning FHCs of Alex Buncombe (former MGB GT Modsports racer Bob Neville's car) and Olly Bryant. Germany's Nikolaus Ditting (Aston Martin DB4 GT) and Dutchman Hans Hugenholtz (Ferrari 250 SWB/C) broke the monopoly in ninth and 11th. Dwight Merriman's ex-Jim Clark DB4 exited in a shower of sparks at Woodcote after shedding its left-front wheel mid-race. 🌿

RESULTS GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING, 15-16 APRIL			
GURNEY CUP: SPORTS PROTOTYPES 1960-66 (32 LAPS)			
1 Shaun Lynn/Dario Franchitti (Ford GT40P/1025);			
2 Andrew Kirkaldy/Stuart Hall (Chevron-BMW B8) +8.819s;			
3 Miles Griffiths/Gordon Shedden (GT40); 4 Richard Meins/			
Rob Huff (GT40); 5 Max Lynn/Marino Franchitti (GT40);			
6 David Forsbrey/Andy Newall (B8). Pole D Franchitti			
Fastest lap Huff 1m21.498s (106.01mph). Starters 27.			
JIM CLARK TROPHY: FORD LOTUS CORTINA Mk1s (29 LAPS) 1 David Dickenson/Andrew Jordan; 2 Alex Brundle/Julian Thomas +4.574s; 3 Matt Neal/Gordon Shedden; 4 Guy Smith/Ben Clucas; 5 Mike Gardiner/Josh Cook; 6 Ambrogio Perfetti/Neel Jani; 7 Paddy Shovlin/Tom Kristensen; 8 Ollie Streek/Jake Hill; 9 Craig Jamieson/Darren Turner; 10 Kyle Tilley/Nicolas Minassian. P Gardiner (Cook). FL Cook 1m30.702s (95.25mph) S 29.			
GORDON SPICE TROPHY: GROUP 1 SALOONS 1970-82 FINAL (2 LAPS) 1 Rob Huff (Chevrolet Camaro Z28); 2 Fred Shepherd (Ford Mustang Boss 302) +0.878s; 3 Olly Bryant (Camaro); 4 Michael Whitaker (Rover 3500 SDI); 5 Jake Hill (Ford Capri III 3.0S); 6 Nick Swift (Mini 1275GT). P Swift. FL Jack Tetley (Camaro) 1m27.043s (99.26mph). S 29. HEAT ONE (14 LAPS) 1 Hill; 2 Huff +0.151s; 3 Olivier Hart (Camaro); 4 Tetley; 5 Bryant; 6 Whitaker. P Hill. FL Huff 1m27.254s (99.02mph). S 28. HEAT 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Swift; 2 Jim Morris (VW Golf GTI) +0.221s; 3 Tom Shephard (VW Scirocco GTI); 4 David Devine (Ford Escort RS2000); 5 James Dorlin (Ford Fiesta); 6 Rupert Deeth (Mini 1275GT). P Morris. FL Morris 1m30.922s (95.02mph). S 25.			
SF EDGE TROPHY: EDWARDIAN RACING CARS & AERO-ENGINED SPECIALS (5&5 LAPS) 1 Mark Walker (Darracq 200hp); 2 Julian Majzub (Sunbeam Indianapolis) +0.459s; 3 Ben Collings (Benz 200hp 'Blitzen Benz'); 4 James Collins (Hudson Super Six); 5 Neil Gough (K-R-I-T); 6 Rob Hubbard (Vauxhall 30/98). RACE 1 1 Walker; 2 Majzub +0.307s; 3 Collings; 4 Collins; 5 Christopher Mann (Alfa Romeo RTLF); 6 Gough. P Majzub. FL Walker 1m54.972s (75.14mph). S 22. RACE 2 1 Walker; 2 Majzub +0.152s; 3 Collings; 4 Collins; 5 Gough; 6 Hubbard. P Majzub. FL Walker 1m51.934s (77.18mph). S 21.			
THRELFALL CUP: FRONT-ENGINED FORMULA JUNIOR 1958-60 (14 LAPS) 1 Stuart Roach (Alexis-Ford Mk2); 2 Ray Mallock (U2-Ford Mk2) +36.501s; 3 Tom Waterfield (Hillwood-Fiat); 4 Alex Morton (Condor-Ford S2); 5 Robin Longdon (Lola-Ford Mk2); 6 Nick Taylor (Elva-BMC 100). P Mallock. FL Mallock 1m28.980s (97.10mph). S 29.			
TROFEO NUVOLARI: SPORTS RACING CARS TO 1939 (12 LAPS) 1 Richard Bradley (Aston Martin Speed Model 'Red Dragon'); 2 Gareth Burnett (Alta Sports) +11.595s; 3 Robert Beebee (Frazer Nash TT Replica); 4 Michael Birch (Talbot 105 Brooklands); 5 Christopher Mann (Alfa Romeo 8C 2600 Monza); 6 Josef-Otto Rettenmaier (Maserati 8C 3000). P Bradley. FL Bradley 1m41.223s (85.35mph). S 30.			
TONY GAZE TROPHY: ROAD-GOING SPORTS & GT CARS 1948-54 (12 LAPS) 1 Jonathan Abecassis (Austin-Healey 100M); 2 Cliff Gray (Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica Mk2) +5.111s; 3 John Ure (Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica); 4 Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica); 5 Tim Crighton (Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica); 6 Guy Harman (Jaguar XK120). P Bobby Verdon-Roe (HWM Alta-Jaguar). FL Abecassis 1m39.173s (87.12mph). S 25.			
SALVADORI CUP: SPORTS RACING CARS 1955-60 (13 LAPS) 1 Martin Stretton (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly); 2 David Hart (Lister-Jaguar Costin) +1.698s; 3 Michael Gans (Lotus-Climax 15); 4 James Wood (Lotus-Climax 15); 5 Gary Pearson (Jaguar D-type); 6 Mark Donnor (Lister-Jaguar Costin). P Stretton. FL Hart 1m26.986s (99.32mph). S 26.			
MOSS TROPHY: CLOSED-COCKPIT GT CARS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE RAC TT RACES 1958-62 (14 LAPS) 1 James Cottingham (AC Cobra); 2 Alex Buncombe (Jaguar E-type FHC) +1.460s; 3 Olly Bryant (Jaguar E-type FHC); 4 John Spiers (Cobra); 5 Gregor Fisker (Jaguar E-type roadster); 6 Benoit Treluyer (Jaguar E-type FHC). P Buncombe. FL Cottingham 1m29.048s (97.02mph). S 29.			

STAR CARS

**Aston Martin Speed Model 'Red Dragon'**

This Ulster evolution, conceived for Richard Seaman to contest the 1936 RAC Tourist Trophy race at Ards, achieved more with Eddie Hertenberger, contesting the 1937 Mille Miglia and Le Mans. Welshman Dudley Folland acquired it post-war, nicknaming it Red Dragon. Third in the 1948 Paris 12 Hours at Montlhéry, co-driver Ian Connell crashed it while leading the Spa 24 Hours. Folland raced it here in 1949.

**HWM Alta-Jaguar**

A 1950 works car raced by marque co-founders George Abecassis and John Heath, Stirling Moss (who won at Castle Combe), Lance Macklin and Rudi Fischer. Oscar Moore acquired the car for 1951, registering it XMC 34. With Terry Grainger from 1965, it was entered in hillclimbs with Jaguar power for Georgina Baillie-Hill and Gillian Fortescue-Thomas. Bobby Verdon-Roe debuted it here.

**Oakland-Romano**

Intrepid young American John Romano claimed a \$2000 purse for winning the 1916 Pikes Peak hillclimb in Colorado with a unique special powered by a Curtiss OX-5 V8 aero engine. British craftsman Mick Sharpe built this charismatic tribute on an Oakland chassis, then sold it to vintage ace James Baxter of Tip Top Engineering. Overgeared, Baxter didn't need third in Hudson 'box, not reaching 1900rpm in second!

**Porsche 911 Carrera RSR 3.0**

The muscular 330bhp fuel-injected twin-plug Carrera RSRs are stunning to behold almost 50 years on. Those who witnessed the IROC series, in which 12 top racers from different genres went head to head in identical but different coloured cars, were privileged! This Brumos-supplied example was raced by F1-bound Hector Rebaque at Daytona, Sebring and elsewhere with Cafe Mexicano backing. Mike Wilds demoed it.

**HRG 1500**

Racer Betty Haig, a founder member of the HSCC, ordered this car as a chassis and commissioned Automarine to create one to her spec with curved wings and a raked windscreen. The intrepid combo contested the 1950 Alpine Rally, the Maloja hillclimb in Switzerland, and raced at Goodwood later in the season. Hamburg's Rudolf Ernst, a connoisseur of motoring oddities, brought it back.

**Aston Martin DBR9**

Thirty years after its inception, the FIA's production-derived GT1 racing category opened a new chapter, attracting big makes and engineering powerhouses of Prodrive's calibre. Aston Martin's six-litre V12-engined DBR9 scored a stunning Le Mans class victory in 2007, driven by Darren Turner, David Brabham and Rickard Rydell. Turner helped build Goodwood's celebration and demoed the glorious #009 car.



GALSTAD

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IMAGES

Tandy and Porsche win as the others stumble

IMSA SPORTSCAR
LONG BEACH (USA)
15 APRIL
ROUND 3/11

Porsche scored a historic maiden victory for its 963 at Long Beach with Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet, which owed as much to disasters befalling the dominant Acuras as it did the strategic gamble that led to victory.

The Penske-run cars really struggled for pace on the fabled Californian street track, with Tandy qualifying down in sixth and Felipe Nasr starting last in the eight-car GTP class. Ahead of the race, the team surmised that its only chance was to run on a single set of Michelin tyres for the duration of the 100-minute race.

The opposition, however, seemed on a mission to eliminate itself. Sebastien Bourdais ended Chip Ganassi Racing's day

at the first corner when he spun his Cadillac into the wall under braking. Its complex electronics registered such a big hit that it refused to allow him to restart. Also in trouble was the Daytona 24 Hours-winning Meyer Shank Racing Acura ARX-06 of Tom Blomqvist, pushed into a spin by the BMW of Nick Yelloly as he checked up to allow Bourdais to shoot across the track. Blomqvist lost a lap persuading his car to refire.

Through the chaos steered Tandy – “in the right place at the right time” – to run second behind the polesitting Wayne Taylor Racing Acura of Filipe Albuquerque. The Portuguese stretched his legs to lead by four seconds, until he caught the Action Express Cadillac of Pipo Derani, who had taken over from Alexander Sims under the early yellow. Derani got his elbows out, and obstinately refused to go a lap down. With his pursuers now on his tail, Albuquerque pitted to hand over to Ricky Taylor. A comedy of errors

ensued in the pitstop, as Albuquerque's radio lead first trapped him, then got stuck in the seatbelt adjuster, and the car refused to restart after Taylor unwittingly selected neutral in the commotion.

After a delay of 12s, Taylor rejoined and unleashed the Acura's pace, but suffered more woe when he twice hit the pit limiter button at the hairpin, costing further time. Neither Porsche took fresh tyres in their stops, and so ran 1-2, but the team knew they'd be vulnerable to attack from everyone else who did.

Matt Campbell, who took over from Nasr, spent his race defending for all his worth from the recovering Taylor and the BMW M Hybrid of Yelloly and Connor De Phillippi, who overshot Turn 5 and lost time. Taylor elbowed his way past Campbell, soon after contact that cost the Porsche a chunk of its left-rear corner, and chased down Jaminet in the leading car. A frantic fight for victory ensued as the clock ticked down, but Taylor's bold bid to pass at the inside of Turn 1 ended his day in the tyrewall with two laps to go. “The first phase of braking felt good, but the car just took off on me,” he rued.

So Jaminet won under yellows from De Phillippi (who set fastest lap) and the fading Campbell. The second BMW of Philipp Eng and Augusto Farfus finished fourth, ahead of Sims/Derani and Blomqvist/Colin Braun.

Brits Jack Hawksworth and Ben Barnicoat won GTD Pro with a brilliantly executed race in which their Vasser Sullivan-run Lexus outpaced the pole-winning Heart of Racing Aston Martin and all other rivals.

CHARLES BRADLEY



GALSTAD/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Lightning strikes for Quintarelli

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

Nissan emerged with a 1-2 finish from one of the most chaotic Super GT races in recent memory as rain and lightning caused three stoppages at Okayama. The NISMO Z of Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda led home the sister NDDP machine of Katsumasa Chiyo and Mitsunori Takaboshi as the two Michelin-shod cars reigned supreme in the constantly changing conditions.

Although the start of the race was dry, the arrival of heavy rain forced the whole field to switch to wet-weather tyres before the pit window for driver changes opened. While the NDDP Nissan dropped down the order as Chiyo missed his chance to pit before the full-course yellow and then safety car was called, poleman and early leader Quintarelli was challenged at the front by the TOM'S Toyota of Sho Tsuboi.



The Bridgestones on Tsuboi's Toyota worked best in full wet conditions, allowing him to pass Quintarelli for the lead, but the Italian had the advantage when the track started drying, and was back ahead when he pitted for slicks and to hand over to Matsuda. It wasn't long before more rain arrived, and Matsuda surrendered the lead by coming back in for wets just before the safety car was called again. Lightning strikes then caused a red flag, with the rest of the field switching to wets when the race resumed.

TOM'S duo Tsuboi and Ritomo Miyata were denied second behind the NISMO Nissan when Miyata was sent out of the pits with a loose left-front wheel, promoting the NDDP car before the contest was suspended

again amid worsening rain. The race got going for two more laps behind the safety car, after which the red flags were shown for a third time, ending the race with 62 of 82 laps completed.

Third place went to the ARTA Honda of Tomoki Nojiri and Toshiki Oyu, recovering from a stop/go penalty in the early stages for an unauthorised chassis change. The Tsuboi/Miyata disaster meant Rookie Racing pair Kazuya Oshima and Kenta Yamashita were the top finishers for Toyota in fourth.

JAMIE KLEIN

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WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR
LONG BEACH (USA)

GTP Nick Tandy/Mathieu Jaminet
Porsche Penske M'sport (Porsche 963)

GTD Pro Jack Hawksworth/Ben Barnicoat
Vasser Sullivan (Lexus RC F GT3)

GTD Bryan Sellers/Madison Snow
Paul Miller Racing (BMW M4 GT3)

SUPER GT
OKAYAMA (JPN)

Ronnie Quintarelli/Tsugio Matsuda
NISMO (Nissan Fairlady Z)

NASCAR CUP SERIES
MARTINSVILLE (USA)

Kyle Larson
Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)

NLS
NURBURGRING (DEU)

Dan Harper/Max Hesse/Neil Verhagen
BMW Junior Team (BMW M4 GT3)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

NASCAR steal is grand Larsony

NASCAR CUP SERIES
MARTINSVILLE (USA)
16 APRIL
ROUND 9/36

Back-to-back late-race cautions following a round of green-flag pitstops flipped strategy and helped Kyle Larson emerge as the surprise winner at Martinsville.

Until well into the third stage, the Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet star had not been a contender for the win, but he moved into the top five by staying out when most others pitted under caution on lap 305 of 400. Larson did pit under another caution on lap 343, but this time he took on only two new tyres. He lined up fifth on a restart, while the top four had elected not to pit.

After a multiple-lap duel with leader Joey Logano, Larson cleared for the lead with 29 laps remaining and never looked back, driving away to pick up the win by 4.142 seconds. Although he's one of the Cup series' most versatile drivers, he admitted he hadn't been able to master the 0.526-mile flat, short oval and was stunned with the win.

"I never, ever would have thought that I would win here at Martinsville," said



Larson. "This place has been so tough on me. Just does not suit my driving style at all. I like to roll momentum, and that's just not what this place is like."

Logano held off a late charge by Martin Truex Jr to hold on to second place, with Denny Hamlin and Chase Briscoe next.

Chase Elliott, making his first start after missing six races due to a fractured tibia in his left leg, rallied to finish 10th.

JIM UTTER



MOTOGP
AUSTIN (USA)
16 APRIL
ROUND 3/21

There were many ironies to the MotoGP Americas Grand Prix weekend. The rider who won the main race started the round complaining that his manufacturer underutilised him for bike development. Said rider was ultimately the only runner from that marque to see the chequered flag and ended its grand prix win drought dating back to 2021.

Alex Rins is no stranger to CoTA success – he has won at the Texan venue in all classes, and tallied up a maiden MotoGP success here in 2019. But his dominant ride in the 20-lap Grand Prix for his sixth career win is undoubtedly the sweetest. Honda's

2023 had been woeful so far, but Rins was strong all weekend. Second on the grid in qualifying, he stayed there for his first podium as a Honda rider in a sprint race dominated by Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia.

Bagnaia was expected to control the main GP on Sunday, but Rins wasn't going to let him get away without a good fight. As Bagnaia leaped off the line to grab the holeshot from pole, Rins slotted in behind and the pair were quick to put over a second between themselves and the chasing pack. Rins admitted that he was "risking a lot" to keep Bagnaia within arm's length, but didn't look out of control. Neither did Bagnaia, the reigning world champion feeling "unbeatable" on his Ducati. And yet something wasn't quite right.

On lap eight of 20, Bagnaia tipped into the Turn 2 right-hander and slid out of the

race to register a second successive GP non-score, a feat that has cost him a potential 45 points. The Italian was convinced that the crash was "100% not my fault". Windier conditions on Sunday didn't affect him, neither was there any issue with his front tyre. He simply felt that his bike was so stable through the corners that it was not giving him any feedback from the front end.

As Ducati despaired at yet more Bagnaia misery, Honda was offered hope. The previous time Honda won in MotoGP, it was because of a Bagnaia crash, when the Italian slid out of the 2021 Emilia Romagna GP and allowed Marc Marquez to win. History would repeat itself. Bagnaia's fall released Rins into a lead of 2.1 seconds over Yamaha's Fabio Quartararo, who would be outdragged by Luca Marini on the VR46 Ducati on lap 13. Once into second, Marini put some pressure on Rins, cutting his lead down to 1.7s as they started lap 14.

But Rins's LCR team would not be denied its 100th podium, and a first win since Cal Crutchlow was victorious in Argentina in 2018. On lap 15, Rins responded emphatically to restore his lead to well over 2s and would take the chequered flag 3.4s clear of Marini.

Marini made sure Ducati's day wasn't wholly ruined as he scored his first GP podium, briefly hoping for "revenge" in Valentino Rossi's honour after Rins beat the MotoGP legend to victory at CoTA in 2019. Quartararo completed the podium on a



Marini beat Quartararo
in the battle for second



Rins scored first win since LCR Honda move



Miller was one of many to fall

Yamaha he says hasn't made any big gains in four years and needs a radical overhaul, with a crash in the sprint rendering his title challenge a non-starter for now.

KTM rider Jack Miller believed that he could have taken the fight to Rins had he not crashed out of third place a lap before former team-mate Bagnaia's exit. The Australian added his name to the list of nine non-finishers, which included Ducati pair Alex Marquez and Jorge Martin after a first-lap tangle, and Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro, who crashed due to a ride-height-device issue. The other factory Aprilia of Maverick Vinales recovered to fourth despite clutch issues sending him backwards off the line, with Miguel Oliveira taking fifth on his return from injury ahead of championship leader Marco Bezzecchi.

The attrition rate proved useful for Johann Zarco, Franco Morbidelli, Fabio Di Giannantonio and rookie Augusto Fernandez, who took the other spots in the top 10. Brad Binder almost etched his name into the DNF guestbook when he fell on lap 11, but remounted his KTM to score points in 13th behind substitute riders Jonas Folger and Michele Pirro.

The final irony of the CoTA weekend is that, had it not been for Suzuki's exit — and Rins's search for a new job — at the end of 2022, then Honda's win drought would not have been ended. So MotoGP's loss is very much Honda's gain, and perhaps it will now place a bit more value on Rins's input.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 3/21, AUSTIN (USA), 16 APRIL (20 LAPS – 68.512 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Alex Rins (ESP)	LCR Honda	41m14.649s
2	Luca Marini (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+3.498s
3	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+4.936s
4	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+8.318s
5	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	RNF Aprilia	+9.989s
6	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+12.049s
7	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	+12.242s
8	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Yamaha	+20.399s
9	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+27.981s
10	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	GasGas Tech 3 KTM	+28.217s
11	Michele Pirro (ITA)	Ducati	+32.370s
12	Jonas Folger (DEU)	GasGas Tech 3 KTM	+1m08.065s
13	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+1m23.012s
R	Stefan Bradl (DEU)	Honda	18 laps-accident
R	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	11 laps-accident
R	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	8 laps-accident
R	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	7 laps-accident
R	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	6 laps-accident
R	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	RNF Aprilia	6 laps-ride-height device
R	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	0 laps-collision
R	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	0 laps-accident
R	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	0 laps-collision

Winner's average speed 99.668mph. Fastest lap Rins 2m03.126s, 100.159mph.

SPRINT RACE (10 LAPS – 34.256 MILES)

1 Bagnaia 20m35.270s; 2 Rins +2.545s; 3 Martin +4.706s; 4 Espargaro +5.052s; 5 Binder +8.175s; 6 Bezzecchi +8.877s; 7 Marini +9.453s; 8 Oliveira +10.768s; 9 Miller +12.448s; 10 Vinales +12.739s; 11 Zarco +14.251s; 12 Mir +14.988s; 13 Nakagami +15.592s; 14 Morbidelli +16.534s; 15 R Fernandez +19.290s; 16 A Fernandez +23.128s; 17 Di Giannantonio +25.626s; 18 Bradl +25.787s; 19 Quartararo +27.169s; 20 Folger +46.973s; R Marquez 6 laps-accident; R Pirro 5 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 99.834mph.

Fastest lap Bagnaia 2m03.082s, 100.195mph.



Bagnaia won sprint, but crashed out on Sunday

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

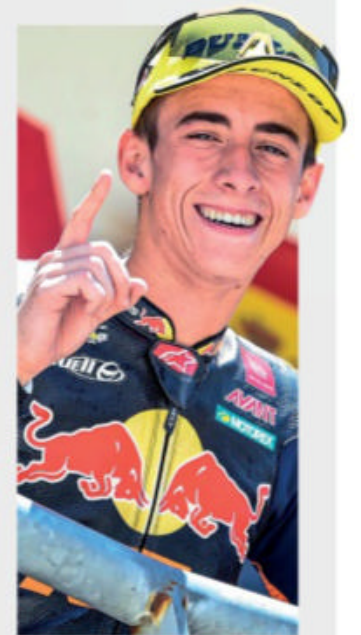
AUSTIN (USA)

Pedro Acosta (below)
KTM Ajo
(Kalex)

MOTO 3

AUSTIN (USA)

Ivan Ortola
MTA Team
(KTM)



QUALIFYING 2 1 Bagnaia 2m01.892s;

2 Rins 2m02.052s; 3 Marini 2m02.181s;
4 Marquez 2m02.242s; 5 Bezzecchi 2m02.268s;
6 Espargaro 2m02.539s; 7 Quartararo 2m02.749s;
8 Vinales 2m02.882s; 9 Zarco 2m03.062s;
10 Miller 2m03.084s; 11 Binder 2m03.107s;
12 Martin 2m03.292s.

QUALIFYING 1 Zarco 2m02.387s; Bezzecchi

2m02.523s; 13 Mir 2m02.743s; 14 Morbidelli
2m02.950s; 15 Oliveira 2m03.065s;
16 Di Giannantonio 2m03.350s; 17 Nakagami
2m03.403s; 18 Pirro 2m03.452s; 19 R Fernandez
2m03.527s; 20 A Fernandez 2m03.798s;
21 Bradl 2m03.907s; 22 Folger 2m07.597s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Bezzecchi 64; 2 Bagnaia 53; 3 Rins 47; 4 Vinales 45;
5 Zarco 44; 6 Marini 38; 7 Quartararo 34; 8 Marquez 33;
9 Binder 30; 10 Morbidelli 29.


CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 103;

2 Honda 54; 3 Aprilia 51; 4 KTM 49; 5 Yamaha 43.

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SPANISH GRAND PRIX 4 MAY ISSUE

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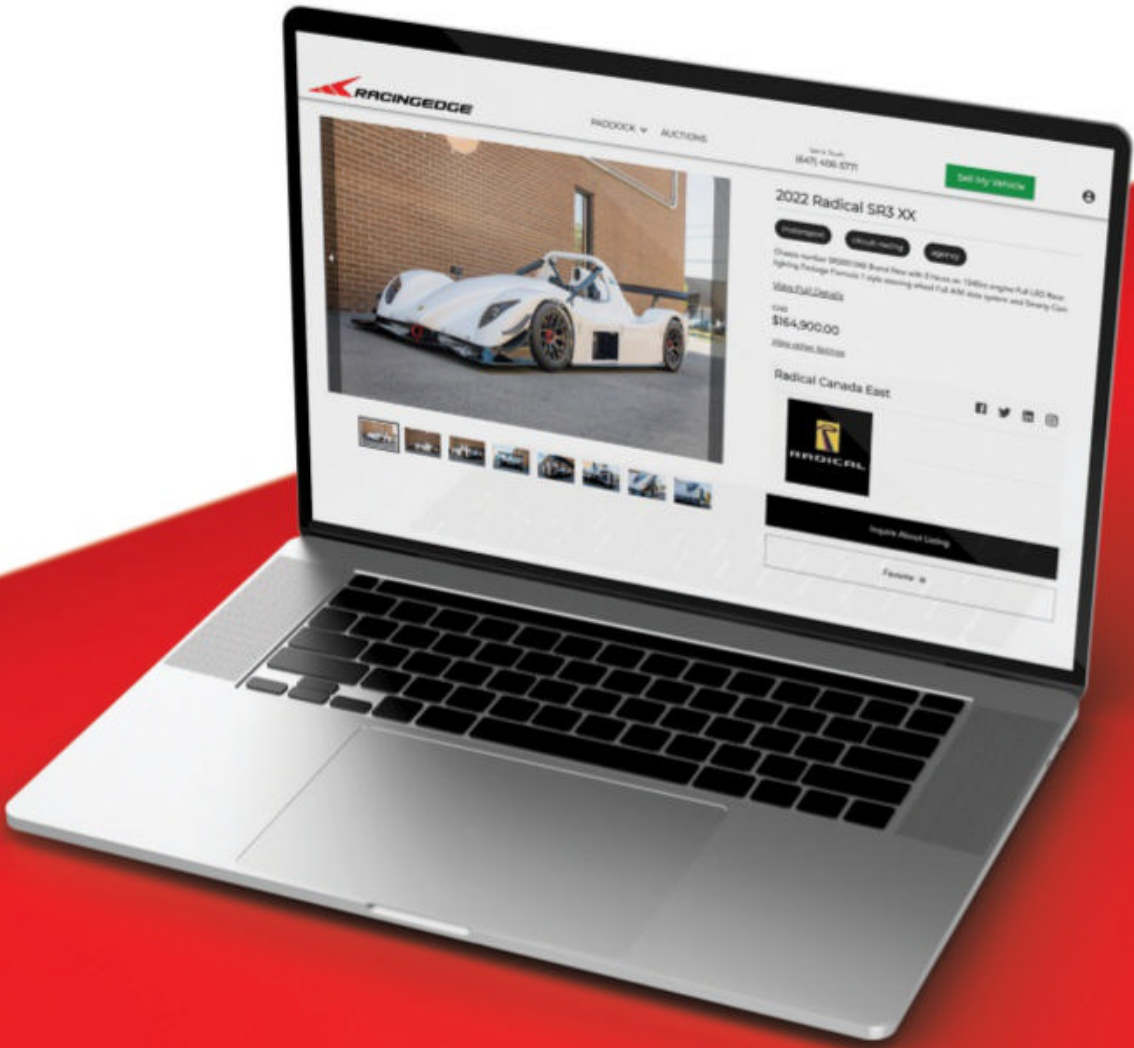


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- Manage single-supply projects with external suppliers and competitors, in particular the FIA standard ECU project, ensuring prioritisation and delivery of hardware and software developments

Compliance auditing:

- Coordinate inspections of competitors' systems and data for compliance with technical and sporting regulations, including chassis and powertrain electronic, electrical and software systems
- Liaise with suppliers of sensors, actuators and electronic units and coordinate the inspection and homologation of components
- Specify tailored embedded and off-car tools to support the auditing activities of the group

Regulations:

Contribute to regulations and to the vision for future control systems

- Attend working groups on electronic systems
- Race and test support:
- Attend Formula One races and tests (expect around 17 events)

Profile:

- Engineering degree or equivalent expert level in Electronics and Control Systems Engineering
- At least 5 years post-graduate experience in motorsport control systems with a strong preference for a direct and recent F1 experience

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RACE TEAM SUPPORT COMPOSITES TECHNICIAN
Haas F1 Team

General Summary:

This position reports to the Factory Operations Team Leader or their designee in Banbury, UK. Responsible for the assembly, servicing and repair of all composite components fitted to the Haas Formula 1 race and show cars. Cover and attend Races Events and Tests as required reporting to the Chief Mechanic when trackside.

Key Responsibilities:

- Promote teamwork and effective communications to develop working relationships between all personnel and departments.
- Responsibility for the cleanliness and condition of your work
- Following Engineering procedures and protocols as dictated by the Haas F1 Team pertaining to assembly, operation, and safety.
- Collaborate and work cohesively with the Factory Operations Team Leader daily regarding workloads, fault reporting & diagnoses.
- Responsible for the condition and maintenance of all Wings, Bodywork, Floors and Brake ducts when trackside ensuring they meet all build and quality specifications.
- Expected to work on the Car during running under the lead of the Number 1 Mechanic and Chief Mechanic.

Education and Work Experience:

- Previous experience in a similar mechanical role within Formula 1, World Sports Cars, or F2 is preferred – however consideration will be given to a candidate who can demonstrate professionalism and a sound record of service within the Motorsport Industry.

Specialized Knowledge and Skills:

- A comprehensive mechanical understanding gained in Formula 1 motor racing.
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DEVELOPMENT TECHNICIAN - MOTORSPORT
McLaren Motorsport & Automotive

Purpose of Role

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- This is also a key role to managing and enhancing the relationships between McLaren motorsport development and production departments

Principal Accountabilities

- Build and execution of prototype development cars.
- Build and preperation of McLaren motorsport racing cars to the required specification.
- Accountable for build and preperation of the car and respective sub-assemblies
- Understand and follow detailed work instructions relating to the constuction, assembly, and operation of the vehicles.
- Ensuring cars are tested with 100% reliability.
- Work as part of a team to define and aide solution to any problems that may arise during build, that could affectthe quality, cost, or build efficiency of the product.
- Support the team and the wider business functions to ensure all quality targets are correctly specified and achieved

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Experience of working within low volume vehicle production / motorsport build environment
- Experience of composite trimming and metal fabrication to high standards
- Experience in understanding technical and assembly drawings.
- Extensive trackside / race experience in GT race series
- Understanding of track based work practices is essential.
- Experience of race car set up procedures.

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Key Responsibilities:

- Manage relevant stock and consumables and distribute them within respective areas at both the track and factory.
- Help to progress kitting shortages.
- Pick orders for various departments, including Race Team spares.
- Maintain stock control, conducting stock counts and audit checks at appropriate intervals.
- Serve stores customers quickly and efficiently.
- Oversee goods in to receive all delivered goods, book in all receipts and distribute throughout the factory.
- Purchase and monitor consumables to keep the race team supplied.
- Manage the component lifing of hardware at the track and at the factory and liaise with the trackside build teams post events.
- Support on car spec hardware allocation using SAP/hardware management systems, including updating serial numbers where required, event to event and session to session.
- Provide freight/logistics support race to race.
- Assist with hand carry as required for each event.
- Help to ensure a clean and tidy working environment.

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T & D DESIGN ENGINEER
Mercedes F1 Team

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- Assist with the development of the Test Lab's capability – via improvements to hardware and procedures.
- Structural analysis, either by hand calculations or use of proprietary software, to support the above design process.

What do we offer?

- At the heart of our performance are our people. Every member of our team has a voice and plays their part in contributing to our successes on and off the racetrack.
- We take pride in creating an innovative, collaborative and high-performance culture where all of our team members are respected, empowered and valued.

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- Develop key relationships with cross functional teams at Williams and with external vendors.

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- Prior experience successfully delivering complex projects
- Prior experience working with 3rd party vendors or contractors to execute a project
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Top national racers progress to **European GT4**

AUTOSPORT NATIONAL

CLUB RACING • HISTORICS • FEATURES

The supporting acts set to shine

The drivers to watch on the
BTCC undercard this year



BRITISH HILLCLIMB BATTLE
READY TO RESUME



DIVERSE ENTRY FOR THE
AUTOSPORT 3 HOURS



CLUB ENDURO THRILLS AT
CROFT 750MC EVENT

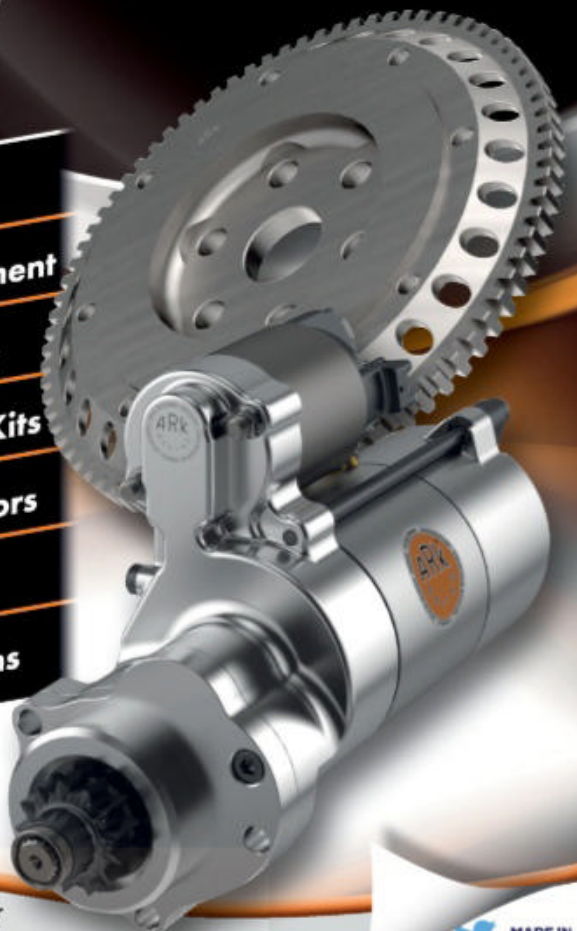
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Rattican, Emson, Mitchell and
Crees will drive Elite McLarens

RICHARD STYLES



Successful UK racers join Euro GT4 battle

EUROPEAN GT4

A collection of successful drivers from the UK national motorsport scene will race on the continent this season in European GT4, starting at Monza this weekend.

Leading Ginetta Junior squad Elite Motorsport had already announced that it would be fielding two new McLaren Artura GT4s in the European series this year, and has now revealed that Josh Rattican and Tom Emson will share one car, and Jack Mitchell and Michael Crees the other.

Former Ginetta GT4 Supercup drivers Rattican and Emson have long been part of the Elite set-up, Emson finishing runner-up in the category's final season last year, while Rattican only contested a couple of rounds after securing second in 2021.



Denning will pilot Aston
in European GT4 this year

"Elite have supported me and given me great opportunities since my first test with them in 2017," said Emson. "While I'll be needing to learn the circuits, it's our intention to be challenging for podiums."

Rattican added: "I'm especially excited to be driving the new McLaren Artura GT4. Based on our limited pre-season testing, I feel a good connection with the car and believe it will be very competitive."

Mini Challenge frontrunner and 2018 British GT4 champion Jack Mitchell and fellow ex-British Touring Car driver Michael Crees, who took a podium on his British GT debut earlier this month in a Ginetta G56, have struck a late deal to form a Pro-Am pairing in the second Elite McLaren. "Although it's been a bit last-minute, I'm extremely pleased that we've got our second McLaren out with such a quick duo," said team boss Eddie Ives.

Meanwhile, fellow British squad Newbridge Motorsport will also join the European GT4 ranks this year. British GT4 frontrunner Matt Topham will partner Mini runner-up Alex Denning at the wheel of an Aston Martin Vantage after Denning became part of Aston's academy.

"I recognise that it's a first for myself in the car and a first for all of the team to be competing out in the European championship, but we're confident in our abilities to adapt quickly," said Denning.

MEADOWS, ORTON AND PORTER IN LATE MINI DEALS

MINI CHALLENGE

Mini Challenge Trophy graduates Oliver Meadows and Josh Porter are among a number of late confirmations on the JCW grid for this weekend's season opener at Donington Park.

Teenager Meadows made the jump from karting to cars in the Cooper class last year and was 12th in the standings, and now takes his next step up with Excelr8 Motorsport.

"Last season was a big learning curve for me as I had to learn a completely different driving style with the switch into cars and into front-wheel drive," he said. "I feel I was able to develop a lot as a driver, and I'm excited to keep learning and to push myself as I now move up into JCWs."

Porter, meanwhile, took a season out last year but has been a Mini Challenge Trophy podium finisher. Like Meadows, he makes the leap to JCWs with Excelr8. "I have a lot of confidence in the car and I know I have one of the best teams in the paddock behind me," he said.

Other drivers to confirm their places on the grid include a quartet of racers for Hybrid Tune, the squad that powered Sam Weller to last year's title. Joe Tanner, ninth in 2022, has entered the first few rounds and will be joined by former Mazda MX-5 star Sam Smith, who won last season's Brands Hatch finale. Ryan Faulconbridge also makes the move from Lux Motorsport, while Ginetta GT5 Challenge frontrunner and 2020 Fiesta Junior runner-up Will Orton (below) completes the team's line-up.



GARY HAWKINS

Elans and TVRs head Autosport 3 Hours entry

HISTORICS

Eight Lotus Elans are set to battle with a pair of TVRs among a diverse entry for this weekend's revived Autosport 3 Hours race at Snetterton.

Lotus has enjoyed success in the historic contest, with Formula 1 world champion Jim Clark winning the race in both Elite (1959) and 23B (1963) machinery, adding to an earlier Elite victory for John Lawry (1958). Now, in the manufacturer's 75th anniversary year, further glory could follow in the Historic Sports Car Club's pre-'66 GT enduro, which is returning for the first time since 2015.

Among the Elan clan are soloists including former Historic Formula Ford frontrunner Horatio Fitz-Simon, who has competed in an Elan in the States, and ex-F3 racer Stephen Shanly, while the combinations of Nigel Greensall and Ben Snee, Martin Stretton and Martin Angle and father-and-son duo Ross and Charlie Hyett will be ones to watch.

But among those aiming to prevent a Lotus victory will be rapid TVR Griffith pairing Harry Barton and Oliver Reuben plus the Grantura of Joe and Piers Ward. Other notable entries include a Porsche



RICHARD STYLES

Shanly is among Elan horde, while Barton/Reuben TVR (inset) will threaten

911 shared by 2014 European Le Mans Series champion Oliver Webb and Guy Ziser, while Austin-Healeys and a pair of Gilbern GTs add further variety.

There is also due to be a significant MGB contingent, with a special trophy awarded to the highest-placed in the overall results. Scottish Fiesta ace Steven Gray will make his historic race debut alongside Sandy McEwen in one of eight MGBs entered.

"I have raced in a team of Scots put together by IndiGO Motorsport in Citroen C1 Endurance races at Silverstone and Anglesey over the past five years," said Gray. "I am therefore excited to have the opportunity to try something completely different with the team and get my first



MICK WALKER

experience of historic racing in such an iconic race as the Autosport 3 Hours. Although Sandy's background is in single-seaters and GTs, and mine is with front-wheel-drive cars, I'm sure we will gel and hopefully get a reasonable finish."

Sunday's race will be held on the Snetterton 200 layout, and follows a day of action from the HSCC's regular series on the 300 configuration on Saturday.

Mickel escapes serious injury in Cadwell roll

LEGENDS

Five-time Legends champion John Mickel escaped serious injury in a frightening series of rolls at Cadwell Park last weekend.

Mickel was attempting to bumpdraft his way past a rival along the Park Straight on the second lap of the fifth Legends race when there was slight contact that sent him onto the grass and pitched him into a barrel roll.

The race was red-flagged and Mickel was taken to hospital, but avoided any major injuries. He was still being kept in for observation when Autosport closed for press on Tuesday, although



STEVE JONES

Multiple champion crashed heavily at Park

he was optimistic of being released later that day.

"They kept me in for two nights because I had a blunt force trauma to my chest," explained Mickel. "I just clipped a back wheel, the car turned and all I remember is hitting the grass and going

into a barrell roll. It was a pretty horrendous one and I was lucky really.

"My thanks go to Mark Beaty and Daniel Pooley who came back to check on me. Thank you also to all the marshals and to my sponsors and the team who did a great

job getting the cars back while I'm in hospital."

Mickel, who is eager to return to the cockpit as soon as he can, was not the only driver taken to hospital following last weekend's action at Cadwell. Superkart competitor Lee Harpham had a brief hospital stay after an accident at Coppice.

Elsewhere, at Donington Park, Caterham 420R racer Stewart Calder was also hospitalised with concussion, and kept in for observation, following a crash with Simon Griffiths during the first 7 Race Series contest. Griffiths received points on his licence.

STEPHEN LICKORISH & STEVE HINDLE

Unique Alvis GP car on display after extensive restoration

HISTORICS

The sole surviving Alvis Grand Prix car has made its first public appearance after being restored, having been abandoned in a Warwickshire scrapyard, and an outing at Brooklands is now planned in 2027 to celebrate its centenary.

The innovative car pioneered the use of front-wheel-drive technology when it emerged on the racing scene in 1927. It was powered by a 1.5-litre supercharged engine and had a longitudinally mounted gearbox, resulting in the car's extended length.

But it did not prove particularly reliable, and both entries to that year's British Grand

Prix did not ultimately make the start. Chassis #2 (the restored car) then led the 200-mile race at Brooklands later in 1927 with George Duller at the wheel but retired with engine woes. It was subsequently discarded and never raced again.

"The lack of historical information presented a key challenge during the restoration, but at the same time has made the project more intriguing, and one that has been a journey of discovery," said Alan Stote, owner of The Alvis Car Company that has undertaken the restoration.

The car was revealed at the Automobile Council event in Japan last weekend by Meiji Sangyo, Alvis's Asian distributor.



IN THE HEADLINES

STILP JOINS BRITISH F4

British Junior X30 karting champion Gabriel Stilp is a late confirmation for Donington Park's British Formula 4 opener this weekend. He will race with Hitech GP, and has also tested with Fortec. "It was a late decision to race this year – I'm hoping I can get up to speed and be fighting for podiums by mid-year," he said.

NORTHERN DRIVERS TESTED

Northern Saloon and Sports Car Championship drivers were required to take a multiple-choice Circuit Racing Driving Standards test at Donington Park on Saturday, as part of an initiative by Motorsport UK to increase understanding of competition rules. From 2024, similar tests will be linked to the competition licence renewal process.

ROBINSON'S DOMINATION

Matt Robinson dominated Superkart proceedings at Cadwell Park last weekend. In the opening race for the BSRC Super Cup, he led from Liam Morley before a late safety car. With a one-lap dash to the flag, Morley took the lead before Robinson snatched victory at the hairpin. There was then another tight finish between the pair in the first of the Super Series point-scoring races. Race two was close until, when lapping a backmarker, Morley was put on the grass at Chris Curve and suffered damage that forced him out of the finale.

FOOTE IS REMEMBERED

A new rescue vehicle was launched at Goodwood last weekend in memory of Rob Foote, the marshal who was killed at Brands Hatch in 2021 and was a regular Goodwood volunteer. After a fundraising campaign spearheaded by W Series driver Alice Powell, a cheque for £59,000 was presented to the Goodwood Marshals Club to buy the rescue unit.

HILL TESTS F1 MACHINES

Jake Hill took time out of his British Touring Car preparations last week to shake down Frederic Fatien's Fittipaldi F8 and ex-Rikky Von Opel Ensign N173 at Donington Park. "It's my first time in a DFV-powered single-seater and it took a bit of getting used to," Hill said. Fatien is expected to be in action during the Historic Formula 1 season, mainly in the ex-Emerson Fittipaldi car.

F1 Esports champion back in FF1600

UNITED FF1600

Reigning Formula 1 Esports champion Lucas Blakeley shone on his return to Formula Ford competition at Silverstone last weekend with leading team Kevin Mills Racing.

The 21-year-old, who famously defeated Sebastian Vettel in a heat at the 2022

Race of Champions, held his own in United FFord against experienced counterparts, with two-time Walter Hayes Trophy winner Michael Moyers only edging him to pole in the final seconds of qualifying.

Blakeley, who competed in two rounds of Scottish FF1600 last year in a Graham Brunton Racing-owned Ray, quickly

adapted to the KMR Spectrum, leading all but two laps of the opening contest before finishing third. His challenge was cut short in race two when a nudge from behind caused him to crash into the pitwall, but he was nonetheless happy with the weekend.

"I'm just grateful to be here, excited to be driving a race car, something I thought I'd never do," said Blakeley, who will also take part in this weekend's National FF1600 opener at Oulton Park. "Now I have that opportunity, I'm grabbing it, trying to make the most of it."

"I had a very open mind with expectations, driving a new car and it's a track I'd never driven. This has certainly been a good start, and I'll just keep on building from here."

STEVE WHITFIELD



Menzies targets fourth title as season beckons

BRITISH HILLCLIMB

Reigning British Hillclimb champion Wallace Menzies says this year's championship, which gets under way this weekend, could be the most competitive season ever.

The Scot will bid for a fourth straight title in his Gould GR59M as another season of top-level hillclimbing opens at Prescott. The leading contenders will contest 30 top-12 run-offs across 14 events at 10 venues, on a schedule that takes them from Northern Ireland to the Channel Islands.

As last year, two of Menzies's biggest rivals are both former champions. Alex Summers, the 2022 runner-up, is back in his IndyCar-powered DJ Firestorm, despite recently completing his P4t hillclimb car. And Scott Moran has ambitions for a record-breaking seventh crown in the Gould GR59 he shares with Graham Wynn.

"Last year was absolutely fantastic and everyone wants to win," said Menzies. "Alex is a given and Scott is on it."



Triple champion Trevor Willis, Dave Uren and Sean Gould are also capable of winning run-offs. The new challenger in the pack is young Matthew Ryder, who goes into his second season sharing the Gould GR59J built by Gould and the team. Ryder has shown stunning pace already but needs to add consistency to be a real title contender.

Also back in the mix will be Will Hall, who returns with a new Gould GR59 after

a couple of troubled seasons.

One key change for 2023 is that all of the leading cars will be back on Avon tyres as Pirelli cannot supply, at least temporarily, the hillclimb scene. This adds another challenge for Menzies, who has won all his titles on Pirellis: "It will certainly spice it up and we've got a lot of catching up to do [on Moran and Summers, who have run Avons]."

PAUL LAWRENCE

Hillclimb run-offs for tin-top competitors



BRITISH HILLCLIMB

The fastest saloon and sportscars will have their own top-10 run-offs at three events in the British Hillclimb Championship this year.

Building on the success of trial events last season, the 'BHC Tin-Top Top 10' will be held at Harewood

(1-2 July), Shelsley Walsh (12-13 August) and Loton Park (23-24 September).

The 10 fastest eligible competitors from each of the timed class runs will qualify for the run-off, giving six run-offs in total. Points will be scored in each run-off, with 10 for the fastest time down to one point.

Series coordinator Tim Wilson said: "Spectators will see some of the fastest saloon and sportscars battling for points at three iconic venues. I'm sure that it will be a great spectacle and will hopefully develop into something bigger in future years."

PAUL LAWRENCE

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New TV portal launched by Motorsport UK

MOTORSPORT UK

Motorsport UK has launched a new internet video portal that, in collaboration with national racing clubs and championships, will showcase nearly 175 livestreams this year.

Motorsport UK TV has been launched by the governing body to offer content to new and existing members and make greater use of the video medium. As well as the livestreams, it will feature training guides, exclusive interviews and behind-the-scenes footage.

“Motorsport UK TV is an exciting new internet platform that will bring our community even closer to every aspect of motorsport via the most dynamic media out there; video,” said Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers.

“We are thrilled to launch this breakthrough offering, which we hope will inspire and educate



both existing and new motorsport fans. We think this will be a game-changer for the way fans and participants find and enjoy their motorsport content, while also extending the appeal of motorsport to newcomers.”

The British Automobile Racing Club is one of a number of clubs in the UK that has started to livestream its events during the season, and the club’s CEO Ben Taylor believes the portal is another positive step. “Motorsport UK TV is a great way for BARC, and all clubs, to place our content and showcase brilliant motorsport videos,” he said.

Kelly/Colman end season on a high with win at Anglesey

CIRCUIT RALLYING

Mark Kelly and Neil Colman made it two wins in a row as the Circuit Rally Championship concluded with the SMC Stages Anglesey on Sunday.

Kelly’s Skoda Fabia R5 took control of the event from the very start in damp and slippery conditions and was fastest on all eight stages at the Welsh race track. Into second place with improving pace through the afternoon came the Ford Fiesta Rally2 of former British GT racer Michael Igoe

and Will Atkins, who were 10 seconds up at the finish on rallycross ace Ollie O’Donovan and Ashleigh Morris in their Hyundai i20 R5.

Second place points were enough to secure the championship runner-up slot behind John Griffiths for O’Donovan after the eighth and final round of the series.

“The car has been faultless and it’s nice to be back and smiling,” said Kelly, whose 2022 season was hit by two major accidents.

PAUL LAWRENCE



IN THE HEADLINES

HALE EXCLUDED AT CROFT

Mitchell Hale, the 2010 Formula Renault BARC runner-up, made a brief return to racing last weekend at Croft in the Type R Trophy. But overaggressive on-track driving meant a trip to the clerk’s office, before his off-track actions escalated the situation. He was excluded from the event and had his licence suspended for failing to adhere to Motorsport UK ‘Race with Respect’ guidelines. The matter has been referred to Motorsport UK.

CREW CHIEF TURNS RACER

American John Botner, a crew chief on the F-35 fighter jets at RAF Lakenheath, made his car racing debut in a Storm in the Formula Vee rounds at Donington Park earlier this month. Engine woes prevented him from contesting the opener but he opted to start race two. “I couldn’t get hold of the parts to repair it but thought the track time would be valuable,” he said. “When I saw the leaders coming, I figured that was enough so stopped. The engine will be running properly the next round.”

MONDELLO’S BUMPER GRIDS

Mondello Park’s first Irish Championship Circuit Racing meeting of 2023 last weekend attracted a bumper entry, with over 200 drivers signing up, the largest number at an Irish car meeting since 2007. The ICCR will travel overseas for the first time this year, with an August trip to Anglesey in Wales.

TOUGH RETURN FOR JAMES

Former British Touring Car Championship driver Chris James made his full-season return to racing in the 750 Motor Club’s Sports 1000 Championship at Croft. James, who competed in a Chevrolet Lacetti and Vauxhall Vectra during the 2011 and 2012 BTCC seasons, had a difficult debut in a Rotor (below). Gearbox issues hampered the car in qualifying, and a lack of engine power meant the car was uncompetitive in the races. His best result was 20th.



Stacey stuns with thrilling run to Club Enduro victory in Lotus



Head gasket woe in qualifying didn't stop Stacey storming to win

CROFT 750MC 15-16 APRIL

Will Stacey came out on top in a two-hour Club Enduro thriller that concluded an exciting 750 Motor Club event at Croft last weekend.

Stacey's Lotus Elise blew a head gasket in qualifying, which meant he started down in 11th, but joined a six-car squabble for the lead in the early stages as various shapes and sizes of car dived for position. It took

until lap 14 for him to take the lead away from Dylan Brychta's Audi TT, which had grabbed the top spot on the opening lap when it passed poleman Carl Swift (Volkswagen Golf), and Mark Grice (SEAT Cupra) fell off the circuit at Sunny. Joel Oswick (BMW M4) and Adam Bessell (Ginetta G20) were also involved in the fascinating lead battle.

During the mid-race pitstop cycle, Stacey lost a couple of positions when he missed the pitbox, which meant he had to first chase down William Beech, who took

over from Grice, and then Danny Silvester, replacing Brychta. An impressive move at Barcroft on lap 48 through traffic enabled Stacey to grab a lead he would never lose.

Silvester retired from second place when the driveshaft popped coming out of the hairpin with half an hour to go. Therefore it was Beech who held off Rob Baker, in for Swift, for runner-up spot after a couple of late safety-car periods. Scott Parkin (Golf TDI) passed Chris Plaskett (Golf GTI) for Class B honours near the end, while racing newcomers David Lawrence and Ilya Krylov won Class C in a Honda Civic FN2.

Nigel Greensall starred in the opening stint of the 45-minute Roadsports race in James Collins's BMW E46 M3. After starting eighth, he took the lead by passing the impressive Ian Jones in an M3-powered BMW Compact on lap 11. Swift grabbed the advantage during the stops, replacing Baker, but a track-limits penalty stopped their Golf from winning and promoted the Grice/Beech SEAT as Collins fell to sixth.

Paul Smith looked set to dominate the opening Sports 1000 race, building a five-second lead in his Mittell MC-53, but he was caught when throttle issues struck by Dan Clowes (Mittell) and Ryan Yarrow (Spire GT3). On the penultimate lap, two-time champion Yarrow passed Clowes at the hairpin and then went on to take the lead at Tower on the final tour, only to spin at the complex when he



L-r: Hancy, Johnson and Richardson shared the MX-5 spoils in close races



Jessup was the class of Type R Trophy field



Village victorious in Historic 750 Formula



Beech/Grice Cupra took win in Roadsports

clashed with a backmarker. That allowed F1000 regular Clowes to pounce into the lead to take his first win in the category, with Smith and Yarrow chasing.

Smith lost out again in the second race after making another quick start. This time Yarrow grabbed the lead on the ninth lap of 11 at the hairpin and held on to the flag. The double champion was delighted to be back on top after a winless 2022 campaign, and embraced the challenge of a much larger grid this year, which meant dealing with lapped traffic while battling for position was key.

Yarrow won again in race three in more dominant fashion after Smith failed to get off the line. A nasty clash between the Spires of John Cutmore, who had spun after a brush with Clowes, and Jonathan McGill necessitated a red flag. Matt Thomas and Carl Austen, both in Spires, scored their maiden podium finishes over the weekend.

Ben Hancy waited until the final lap to pass Jordan Johnson in the opening MX-5 Cup encounter. But when Johnson recharged into the complex, Hancy lost control. This caused Johnson to go grass-tracking, for which Hancy admitted fault and was very apologetic. The chaos allowed Oak Richardson to take his first victory, with Hancy and Scott Leach completing the podium and race-long leader Johnson falling to sixth.

Johnson picked off his competitors one by one from sixth on the grid in race two.

He took the lead at Hawthorn on a one-lap restart following a late safety-car period to grab the victory off Richardson. Double champion Hancy, third in the second race, took the victory in the reversed-grid finale after passing polesitter Ian Tomlinson. Johnson came through to second with Richardson close behind.

Joe Jessup dominated the opening rounds of the Type R Trophy. He gapped the field in the first contest when front-row starter Daniel Chapman made a sluggish getaway and dropped to seventh. That allowed Jessup, who finished third in the championship last year, to pull out a 5s lead in the seven-lapper over Matt Digby. Chapman recovered to third.

It took just half a lap in the second race for Jessup to take the lead after starting 10th on the reversed grid. He admitted he took a risk by driving down the middle of the circuit at the start, but it ended up being successful. Ex-Clio man Ross Boorman was able to hang onto second until lap four, when brief Formula Ford 1600 racer Miles Nathaniel-James fought through. He held second to the flag but received a penalty for exceeding track limits, promoting Chapman and newcomer Trafford King.

Reigning champion Jonathan Lisseter won all three Ma7da races. Martin West, the 2021 Locost title winner, led on his debut in the category but fell off the circuit at Sunny in race one and then

had to retire with a misfire in the third encounter. Daniel Sibbons, West, Ben Powney and Martin Shelton joined Lisseter on the podium over the weekend.

Multiple champion Andy Hiley won both Sport Specials races in his Chronos. He had an almighty scrap with Paul Collingwood's Eclipse in the opener after Collingwood went off course at Sunny. Finally, Hiley grabbed the lead on the penultimate tour at the complex while in lapped traffic. The Cyanas of Anton Landon and Rob Johnston finished on the podium in race two.

John Village dominated both Historic 750 Formula races on his return to Croft and his first race on the new layout in his Village 750F recreation. Gregg Catton starred in the opening race, taking his rare ex-1172 Formula Dison Special to second ahead of Timothy Roebuck (Austin 7 Special). After his late arrival at the circuit, Trefor Slatter (Centaur Mk11) took second in race two ahead of Roebuck.

JOSHUA BARRETT

WEEKEND WINNERS

CLUB ENDURO

Will Stacey (Lotus Elise S2)

ROADSPORTS

Mark Grice/William Beech (SEAT Cupra)

SPORTS 1000

Race 1 Dan Clowes (Mittell MC-53)

Races 2 & 3 Ryan Yarrow (Spire GT3, below)

MX-5 CUP

Race 1 Oak Richardson

Race 2 Jordan Johnson

Race 3 Ben Hancy

TYPE R TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Joe Jessup

MA7DA

Races 1, 2 & 3 Jonathan Lisseter

SPORT SPECIALS

Races 1 & 2 Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA

Races 1 & 2 John Village (Village V2)



For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

Foden delivers a Brands MX-5 masterclass

BRANDS HATCH
BRSCC
15-16 APRIL

Steve Foden admitted that his weekend “could not have gone any better” after he claimed a superb hat-trick of wins in three action-packed Mazda MX-5 Championship races at Brands Hatch.

Foden was beaten to pole for race one by Adam Sparrow, but he was able to grab an immediate lead from the outside of the front row and hold the place thereafter. Sparrow initially kept pace with Foden, but soon dropped back into the clutches of rising teenage star Ted Bradbury, who in turn had his mirrors full of five other cars. A thrilling battle for the runner-up spot ensued, but Sparrow did just enough to resist the pressure and claim the position.

A similar situation developed in the second contest until a late safety-car period turned the race into a two-lap dash to the finish. Foden, concerned about a gearbox issue, managed to maintain his race-long advantage, but Bradbury was able to relieve Sparrow of second around the outside of Graham Hill Bend on the final tour.

A lights-to-flag success in the third encounter completed Foden’s perfect event, while a delighted Adam Craig – “after 10



Hat-trick of wins as Foden fought off all challengers

years of trying” – claimed a maiden podium finish with second. A breathless nine-car battle for third was finally resolved in favour of the impressive Bradbury.

There was no lack of drama in the three MX-5 Supercup races either as Aidan Hills came close to emulating Foden’s achievement and replicating his own treble at the Silverstone opener. Hills dominated race one from pole, while James Blake-Baldwin fought off reigning champion Will Blackwell-Chambers to claim second. Hills was declared the winner of a truncated second event following a violent incident involving Jack Brewer, Nic Grindrod and Simon Baldwin on the climb up Hailwood

Hill. The partially reversed-grid race was won by Ali Bray on the road, but a penalty for earlier contact with Patrick Fletcher dropped him to fifth and handed the spoils to Blake-Baldwin, with Hills claiming second from Fletcher.

Mike Williams was victorious twice in the MG Metro Cup double-header despite Rhys Claydon’s best efforts. In the first encounter, an incorrect gear selection by Williams at Paddock almost spelt disaster for Claydon. Forced to brake heavily to avoid contact, Claydon slewed wildly onto the infield and narrowly missed the barriers. He recovered to finish second ahead of reigning champion Mark Eales.

Tovey edges close contests as 2CV season begins

CADWELL PARK
BARC
15-16 APRIL

There was little to split Kris Tovey and Nick Crispin in the first 2CV race at Cadwell Park last weekend as the season began in entertaining style.

Crispin led until lap four of eight, when Tovey took charge, before Sandro Proietti split the pair a couple of laps

later. But, as Proietti lost ground with a grassy exit from Barn, Crispin was back in front with a lap to go, taking the outside line through Chris Curve. At this stage, it was still any one from four but, after Crispin ran wide onto the Mountain, Tovey sealed it into Hall Bends, with Crispin second and David O’Keeffe holding off Proietti for third.

Tovey led from Coppice on the opening lap of race two and left Crispin to fight with O’Keeffe and Luca Proietti for the other podium places. Crispin dropped to fourth with a fuel starvation problem, as O’Keeffe defended robustly from Proietti for second.

It was nose to tail from the start of the first Junior Saloons race, with Oskar Dix heading Daire Flock, and Charlie Constable just off the back in third. As all three began to close up, Constable mounted his challenge for second, which allowed Dix to consolidate his advantage. On lap six of nine, Constable was through and managed to reduce Dix’s lead, while Flock was left to

settle for third. It was a lights-to-flag win for Flock in race two, however, with Dix ousting Jack James from third three laps in.

Both CNC Heads Sports/Saloons races were dominated by Andrew Southcott and his MG Midget Lenham. He led the first throughout from Roddie Paterson (Caterham) and Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20). Paterson led race two initially, but couldn’t hold off Southcott for long. Once ahead, he just drove away, with Cryer once again a distant third.

Andrew Neal was the class of the Track Attack pack as he eased clear to two dominant wins in his Peugeot 106. The Renault Clio of Lee Bull was second in the opening contest, while Nick Tasker (VW Scirocco) was runner-up in race two.

Stephen Berry outpaced the field three times over in the inaugural weekend of the Mini Challenge Clubsport category. Charlie Newton-Darby held a strong second in race one until he was forced out with a broken exhaust, which left Zac Blackwell and



Pett was a double winner in Legends

STEVE JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

BRANDS HATCH

MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1, 2 & 3 Steve Foden

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP

Races 1 & 2 Aidan Hills

Race 3 James Blake-Baldwin

MG METRO CUP

Races 1 & 2 Mike Williams

BMW COMPACT CUP

Races 1 & 2 Guy Davis

FUN CUP ENDURANCE

Team Olympian

(Kristian Rose/Chris Dovell/Riley Phillips)

AUDI TT CUP

Race 1 Andrew Dyer

Race 2 Ross Makar

MAZDA MX-5 CLUBMAN

Race 1 Jordan Pimley

Race 2 Matt Fletcher

EVOLUTION TROPHY

Race 1 Nick Gwinnett (Renault Clio 172)

Race 2 Adam Marshall (VW Golf GTI)

CADWELL PARK

2CVs

Races 1 & 2 Kris Tovey

JUNIOR SALOONS

Race 1 Oskar Dix

Race 2 Daire Flock

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Southcott (MG Midget)

TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Neal (Peugeot 106)

MINI CHALLENGE CLUBSPORT

Races 1, 2 & 3 Stephen Berry (Cooper S, below)

LEGENDS

Race 1 Will Gibson

Races 2 & 4 Andy Bird

Races 3 & 5 Marcus Pett

Race 6 Matt Isherwood

SUPERKARTS

Races 1, 2, 3 & 4 Matt Robinson

(Anderson/Redspeed VM)

CATERHAM ACADEMY

Green Callum McIntyre

White Adam Kene

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Faller leads but it was Davis (left) who topped Compact Cup battles



Race two was controlled by Claydon once he had got ahead of Williams at Druids on lap six of 16, but a track-limits-infringement penalty handed the win to Williams.

Another pair of drivers at the centre of the action were Guy Davis and Oliver Faller in the BMW Compact Cup double-header. After trying to regain the initiative for several laps once he was beaten into the first corner by Faller, race one poleman Davis made a decisive move for the lead at Paddock and stayed ahead. A strong start, coupled with a poor getaway for Faller, helped Davis emerge victorious once again in race two. After regaining his rhythm, Faller pulled off a superb move around

the outside of Paddock to relieve Rudi MacMillan of second before the race was stopped following an incident involving Joseph Doble and Sam Strong at Clearways.

Changeable weather conditions and caution periods brought tactical challenges aplenty for the drivers in the first Fun Cup Endurance race of the year on Saturday. A blistering final stint from Riley Phillips helped Team Olympian claim the win, while a pass from Neil Plimmer (sharing his drive with Ben Pitch) helped PLR Racing snatch second from former category champions UVio/Hofmann Lotus deep into the four-hour event.

MARK LIBBETER



Crispin was among those putting pressure on Tovey (49)

Freddy Hewitt to complete the podium. And that proved to be the finishing order in the second and third races as well.

In Saturday's Legends encounters, Will Gibson and Chris Needham carried their race-one duel to the flag, with numerous swaps and changes. Gibson finally made it stick on the last lap, from Needham and Miles Rudman. Andy Bird then led the three-lap restart in race two, with Luke Simmons fending off a late challenge from Matt Isherwood for second. Marcus Pett led most of the third contest, until a late-race

attack from Isherwood. After losing his lead with two laps to go, Pett managed to snatch it back on the final tour, with John Mickel grabbing third.

Bird and Pett had both taken a second win apiece on Sunday, before Isherwood claimed the final success of the weekend from Needham and Gibson.

Matt Robinson won all four Superkart races while, in the Caterham Academy, there were wins for Callum McIntyre and Adam Kene.

PETER SCHERER

Romanek romps to FF1600 double despite quali crash

SILVERSTONE
MSVR
15-16 APRIL

Lucas Romanek fought back from a qualifying crash to take two wins and the Jim Walsh Trophy in the United Formula Ford Championship at Silverstone.

A collision with Jacob Tofts, who had slowed at Woodcote to avoid another car, left Romanek 10th on the grid for the opening contest, his Van Diemen JL13 having suffered a damaged upright. But the Oldfield Motorsport driver made swift progress to move up to fifth on the opening lap and was soon into third.

He then took second away from Michael Moyers, who had started from

pole in his Medina Mk2, before challenging impressive Esports convert Lucas Blakeley for the lead. Romanek briefly slipped to third behind Elliott Budzinski, but quickly reclaimed the position and forced Blakeley to defend into Luffield before completing his race-winning move into Copse.

Blakeley's Spectrum remained close behind on the final lap but ran deep at Brooklands and dropped to third behind Moyers, with Budzinski and Ammonite Motorsport Ray team-mate Nolan Allaer also within 1.2 seconds of Romanek.

Race two became essentially a four-minute sprint after two safety-car periods. A stalled car caused the first intervention, with Blakeley turned into the pitwall by Budzinski at the restart then causing a lengthy caution. Romanek made a great restart to break the tow and maintain a slender gap until the finish, while Budzinski was disqualified post-race for the Blakeley contact, with Moyers and Allaer promoted to second and third.

The Clubmans Sports Prototypes featured an impressive 32-car entry and an emphatic hat-trick from James Clarke in his Phantom PR22. After running a dry set-up during a damp qualifying, Mark Charteris stormed from 10th to first on the opening lap in race



Starting 10th in race one didn't prevent Romanek coming through to win



Gibbins beat Law in both Sports 2000 Duratec races

STEVE JONES

one before getting involved in a three-way scrap with Clarke and Steve Dickens. Clarke eventually managed to secure the lead and pull clear, with second going to Dickens in his Mallock Mk29 after prevailing against Charteris's Mallock Mk20/21.

Charteris made another great start to lead race two, but Clarke again reclaimed the advantage and scampered clear before the safety car was deployed when Tom Bellamy became beached in the Copse gravel. Clarke pulled away at the restart, with Charteris this time edging Dickens to second by 0.365s. Charteris lost a cylinder and pulled

Caterhams, Minis and Bentleys put on a show

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR
15-16 APRIL

There was a 'best of British' feeling at Donington Park as a bevy of Caterhams, Minis and a dozen fabulous Bentleys – including a rare Speed Six – treated the crowd to a complement of thrills.

Stephen Lyall was intent on matching his father Alastair's famous win here in 1977, when the circuit reopened, and took pole for the 7 Race Series 420Rs. But, as is

so often the case in Caterham racing, a lead is seldom long lived and Lyall immediately came under pressure from Mark Stansfield, Jonathan Mitchell and Andy McMillan.

Sensing the threat from the pack, Stansfield and Lyall tried to break free, only for McMillan to collect the polesitter, eventually forcing an early retirement for both. Further back, Mark Farmer had made progress, and soon he and Mitchell were together for the lead before a serious collision involving Simon Griffiths and a hapless Stewart Calder resulted in a safety-

car period. Farmer led as racing resumed but, by the end of the lap, Gary Smith found himself perfectly placed to put pressure on and collect the win from Mitchell.

The second contest was Caterham racing at its best, with Smith, Mitchell, Andy Perry and Jose Magalhaes seldom more than a second apart, while Lyall determinedly made his way forward from the very back. Mitchell and Smith pulled enough of a gap to leave Anthony Barnes and Lyall to fight for third. Side by side into Redgate and then through the Craner Curves, it was only settled at the last corner, where Lyall earned the final podium spot by two tenths, with Mitchell edging Smith for the win.

Lyall and Stansfield produced an epic duel in race three, testing each other through every turn. Barnes did his best to join in, but it was only ever going to be between the lead two, and Lyall did just enough to cross the line a fraction ahead.

Ben Winrow enjoyed a little luck, and then an equal amount of magic, to conjure up back-to-back victories in the first two 7 Race Series 1600 encounters. Stephen



Mitchell leads Smith. Each took a 420R win

MICK WALKER



off in the final encounter, with Clarke taking a lights-to-flag win ahead of Dickens, while Cody Tree (Phantom P94) overcame a weekend of set-up woes to finish third.

After a 2022 campaign hampered by car issues, three-time champion Michael Gibbins made a great start to the new Sports 2000 Duratec season with a double victory. Gibbins was chased hard by reigning champion Josh Law, who was runner-up in both contests despite a 5s track-limits penalty in the first, with Richard Johnson taking a pair of thirds as MCRs locked out the podium in both races. The Historic class

held its own separate races, with William Schryver passing Charlie Hyett in both to take a brace of wins in his Simon Hadfield-prepared Royale RP37.

An eclectic mix of cars took part in the Bernie's V8 Outlaw races, which were dominated by TVR Tuscan. Robert Hollyman put up a valiant fight in race one to finish third in his less powerful Porsche 911 behind Tuscan duo Jason Clegg and Matt Holben. This pair also took first and second in the sequel ahead of Stewart Robb.

STEVE WHITFIELD



Clark, however, found consolation by building an unbreachable lead in race three.

Jeff Smith must have broken a mirror while hitting a black cat on his way to the circuit, the former British Touring Car racer encountering engine woes in Mini Miglia qualifying. He worked his way into the lead in race one, only to lose his gearbox on the penultimate lap, before suffering a cambelt failure at the start of race two. All this left Kane Astin and Aaron Smith to enjoy a win apiece, via the usual close Mini action.

Joe Thompson and Ross Billison traded wins and seconds in two equally enjoyable Mini Se7en contests, both taking advantage

of polesitter Spencer Wanstall's early retirement with a dropped engine valve.

The Snetterton Saloons headed away from Norfolk and produced a thrilling dice between the BMW M3s of Kevin Clarke and Bryan Bransom – the two were separated by just 0.3 seconds after 45 minutes of racing.

The Northern Saloons and Sports Cars returned wins for Jon Woolfitt's Spire and Matty Cobb with his Beetlesque Radical.

David Little (Supersports) took both wins in the Benjafields Bentley Challenge, with many competitors racing their vintage Bentleys for the very first time.

STEVE HINDLE

WEEKEND WINNERS

- SILVERSTONE**
UNITED FORMULA FORD
Races 1 & 2 Lucas Romanek (Van Diemen JL13)
- CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPES**
Races 1, 2 & 3 James Clarke (Phantom PR22)
- SPORTS 2000 - DURATEC**
Races 1 & 2 Michael Gibbins (MCR S2n)
- SPORTS 2000 - HISTORIC**
Races 1 & 2 William Schryver (Royale RP37)
- BERNIE'S OUTLAW V8s/HISTORIC OUTLAWS**
Races 1 & 2 Jason Clegg (TVR Tuscan)
- ENDUROKA**
Sukaru Racing (Chris Hilson/Peter Dignan/Tristan Judge)
- MSVT TRACKDAY CHAMPIONSHIP**
Steve Summers (Lotus Elise S1)
- MSVT TRACKDAY TROPHY**
Charlie Palk/Adrian Pottinger (Renault Clio)
- DONINGTON PARK**
7 RACE SERIES - 420R
Race 1 Gary Smith
Race 2 Jonathan Mitchell
Race 3 Stephen Lyall
- 7 RACE SERIES - 1600**
Races 1 & 2 Ben Winrow
Race 3 Stephen Clark
- MINI MIGLIA**
Race 1 Kane Astin
Race 2 Aaron Smith
- MINI SE7EN**
Race 1 Joe Thompson
Race 2 Ross Billison
- SNETTERTON SALOONS**
Kevin Clarke (BMW M3)
- NORTHERN SALOONS AND SPORTS CARS**
Race 1 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR)
Race 2 Matty Cobb (Radical Beetle)
- BENJAFIELDS BENTLEY CHALLENGE**
Races 1 & 2 David Little (Supersports, below)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Byrne led the way in the opening Ford Zetec contest en route to victory



Zetec wins shared between Byrne and Dawson

MONDELLO PARK
MPSC
15-16 APRIL

Reigning Fiesta Zetec rookie champion James Byrne drove like a seasoned campaigner in the 2023 opener at Mondello Park. He moved ahead of poleman Derek Graham by lap two and held off an initial challenge from Keith Dawson, and then Michael Barrable in the closing stages.

In the second race, with the top six reversed on the grid, Alan Dawson held off Sean McGovern for the win, with Graham

completing the podium. Byrne was sixth.

Reuben Kernohan took the opening Junior Mini Challenge victory on his car racing debut, holding off Mondello Scholarship winner Bobby Joe McFall to the flag. Holly Dunnion fell back at the start, but charged to third, matching the leading duo's pace. Later, Kernohan won again, with a late-race restart nearly costing McFall second as the flying Dunnion almost made a perfectly timed attack on the resumption.

Harry McGovern drove well to take the first SEAT Supercup contest before, in race two, Shane Murphy carved his way to the

front to take the honours.

Darragh McMullen took both Fiesta ST wins, Kian O'Brien following him home in the first and former rally champion Roy White his closest challenger in race two.

Owain Drought took a dominant win in the Irish Touring Cars opener aboard his VW Golf, while Cathal Ward drove superbly to cross the line second and also claim Honda Cup honours. In race two, Rob Savage took the spoils in his newly built Accord, with Drought in his wheeltracks as he crossed the line. Ward took Honda honours once again, after a scrap with the

Black and McLeish dominate

KNOCKHILL
KMSC
15-16 APRIL

Last year's Scottish Legends title contenders Stewart Black and Ryan McLeish took centre stage as the 2023 season kicked off in spectacular fashion across two days of action at Knockhill last weekend. Each driver took three wins from the six races, with Black winning both finals, but it was McLeish who left the Fife circuit with the points lead.

There was, however, a distinct feeling of cobwebs being blown away on Saturday, with both heats and the final red-flagged due to incidents. Between those stoppages the racing was excellent, and Black eased away to victory in the opening heat before trailing McLeish in the second.

After missing out on victory in the first final, McLeish had his revenge on Sunday when he dominated both heats, while Black endured a pair of trips

through the gravel in what he described as "a difficult day". Black did produce a superb final performance though, racing through from 14th on the grid to win, with McLeish equally impressive in his charge from 17th to take second.

The opening weekend of the year was billed as a 'best of Scottish' affair and featured a mix of Knockhill Motor Sports Club and Scottish Motor Racing Club competition. The SMRC's Mini Cooper Cup provided plenty of action, with Jamie Blake prevailing in an epic drag finish to beat brother Craig by just 0.011 seconds. Mechanical dramas unfortunately blighted Craig's first outing in a brand-new car and he failed to start race two, which Jamie won comfortably.

In the Coopers, Olly Mortimer celebrated his return to the championship after an eight-year hiatus with two wins out of three, while Jack Irvine cemented his status as a reversed-grid expert by winning the Cooper-only finale. A sensational start



from fourth to the lead by Duffus proved key to a 3s win over Chad Little, who bagged a trio of runner-up finishes.

Liam McGill thought he had made the perfect start to his Scottish Fiesta ST Cup title defence but was denied a double victory after failing a ride-height check following the second race, resulting in his disqualification. He wasn't the only one excluded, with impressive youngster Broddy Orr stripped of third for the same reason. Gerry Hendry was elevated to victory and, with it, a



similar Integra of David Flynn.

Cian Carey was in flying form in BOSS Ireland, dipping below his own lap record in qualifying to become the first man ever to lap the National Circuit in under 49 seconds. Conditions weren't quite as good in the races, but two strong wins in his F3 Dallara were a good consolation for not officially breaking the record.

After all the frontrunners received penalties for breaking the barrier time, David Hammond's Fiat Uno took the opening Future Classics race. Thomas O'Rourke (Honda Civic) then claimed race two after a late move on Gary Duggan.

Richard Kearney took his customary pair of Formula Sheane wins, despite the best efforts of class returnee Keith Hogg. Kevin O'Hara took two dominant Stryker wins while guesting in the Michael Cullen car.

Alan Crossen claimed two out of three victories as the 250cc Superkarts returned

to Mondello, with Liam Fox just holding him off in race three. In the 125cc section, Aaron Newell took two wins, with Mick Dunnion victorious in the middle outing.

Cameron Fenton took Global GT race one from perennial class pacesetter Peter Drennan. In race two, Drennan fought off the attentions of Jack Finlay and former ITCC champion Ulick Burke to take the win.

Ian Conroy, Peter Barrable and Owen Lawlor shared the Irish Legends triumphs. Jackie Cochrane won both Historic races as he pleased, despite the best efforts of a fast-starting Stephen Kelly, whose Mallock Mk23 made the early running in both.

Novice Ronan Doherty impressed with a win in the Formula Vee B/C race on his first visit to Mondello while, in the A race, reigning champion Anthony Cross fought his way to the front to take an impressive victory from Lee Newsome and Dan Polley.

LEO NULTY



surprise championship lead.

As ever, the Scottish C1 Cup was closely fought across each of the 10-lap encounters, with Marc Nisbet edging the opener from polesitter Ayden Wilson by less than half a second. Nisbet was in the mix in the second race but finished third as newcomer Henry Gillespie produce a sterling drive to take his first win, an impressive 1.45s clear of Ross Dunn.

A healthy Scottish Classics field took to the grid for a pair of races dominated by

Andrew Graham's Triumph TR8, with Alastair Baptie (Fiat X1/9) and Charlie Cope (VW Golf GTI) second and third each time. It was a similar story in the Modsports where Gordon Duncan swept the weekend in his Radical, lapping almost the entire field in Sunday's contests. The pick of the racing came in Class G, with Natalie Cowie edging out Adam Kindness by just 0.003s in their Mini battle in race two.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

WEEKEND WINNERS

MONDELLO PARK

FIESTA ZETECs

Race 1 James Byrne Race 2 Alan Dawson

JUNIOR MINI CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Reuben Kernohan

SEAT SUPERCUP IRELAND

Race 1 Harry McGovern Race 2 Shane Murphy

FIESTA STs

Races 1 & 2 Darragh McMullen

IRISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Owain Drought (VW Golf)

Race 2 Robert Savage (Honda Accord)

FORMULA BOSS IRELAND

Races 1 & 2 Cian Carey (Dallara Formula 3)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Race 1 David Hammond (Fiat Uno)

Race 2 Thomas O'Rourke (Honda Civic)

FORMULA SHEANE

Races 1 & 2 Richard Kearney

IRISH STRYKERS

Races 1 & 2 Kevin O'Hara

NI SUPERKARTS

Races 1 & 2 Alan Crossen (Anderson Maverick)

Race 3 Liam Fox (Anderson Maverick)

IRISH GLOBAL LIGHTS

Race 1 Cameron Fenton Race 2 Peter Drennan

IRISH LEGENDS

Race 1 Ian Conroy

Race 2 Peter Barrable

Race 3 Owen Lawlor

HISTORIC RACING CAR ASSOCIATION

Races 1 & 2 Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)

FORMULA VEE IRELAND

Race 1 Ronan Doherty (Sheane FV94)

Race 2 Anthony Cross (Sheane)

For full results visit: timing.ie

KNOCKHILL

SCOTTISH LEGENDS

Race 1, 3 & 6 Stewart Black

Race 2, 4 & 5 Ryan McLeish

SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP

Races 1 & 2 Jamie Blake (R53)

Race 3 Jack Irvine (Cooper)

SCOTTISH FIESTA ST CUP

Race 1 Liam McGill Race 2 Gerry Hendry

SCOTTISH C1 CUP

Race 1 Marc Nisbet Race 2 Henry Gillespie

SCOTTISH CLASSIC SPORTS & SALOONS

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Graham (Triumph TR8)

KMSC MODSPORTS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Gordon Duncan (Radical PR6)

For full results visit: smart-timing.co.uk

SEASON
PREVIEW



PREVIEW TOCA SUPPORTS

THE DRIVERS TO WATCH AMONG THE BTCC SUPPORTS

There's a refreshed look to the TOCA package this season as a mixture of familiar faces and new names are set for some intriguing fights at the front

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY PORSCHE AND JEP

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

There have been some incredibly close Porsche Carrera Cup GB title battles over the years and the 2023 contest could be another to add to that list.

There is certainly no shortage of possible contenders. Proven race winners Adam Smalley, Gus Burton and Theo Edgerton are all continuing, while Porsche Sprint Challenge Southern Europe champion Robert de Haan and Ginetta GT4 Supercup title winner James Kellett will also be ones to watch. Add in reigning Pro-Am champion – and overall winner of the Brands Hatch finale – Charles Rainford and Sprint Challenge GB conqueror Harry Foster, and it's an intriguing mix of drivers set to be fighting at the front.

Of them all, it's perhaps Smalley under the most pressure to land the title. Last season's runner-up is in his second year as the Porsche GB Junior and, given his four most recent predecessors have all won a championship, he is seeking to continue that success – especially as Burton and Edgerton

were fellow Junior finalists. Asked if he feels any weight of expectation, Smalley replies: "Yes and no. There's pressure to win the championship but, at the same token, I feel like I work better under pressure. That's when I get the most out of myself and it helps push myself forward."

While Smalley now has a year of experience of the Type 992 911 GT3 Cup machine, he has switched from Redline Racing to Team Parker Racing – the team that guided Kiern Jewiss to last season's crown – for his sophomore campaign. Smalley tackled the PSCSE winter series to help him settle into his new surroundings. "That was a great introduction to get to know the team," says Smalley, who finished third in the PSCSE standings. "We've built that relationship nice and early and have got three race weekends under our belt – I feel like I've settled in well."

Nevertheless, Smalley recognises the size of the challenge he faces this year. "The competition looks

tougher than ever," he adds. "But, to be the best, you want to race the best. I know it's not going to be easy and I'm just going to focus on myself. After finishing second in my debut season, there's only one goal now and that's to win the championship. I will be giving it everything in my power to make that dream a reality."

But Century Motorsport driver Burton will be among those attempting to give Smalley nightmares. Having won the 2021 British GT4 title with Century, the team and driver stepped into the Carrera Cup for the first time last year and achieved some impressive results. In fact, over the second half of last season, Burton was outscored only by Jewiss, but a few mistakes early on left him fourth in the final standings.

"Last year, I didn't realise until now how much of the deep end we, as a team, were throwing ourselves into," admits Burton, who will also be tackling the Porsche Supercup this year with



PORSCHE

Smalley is seeking more GB Junior glory

Fach Auto Tech. “It was a new car and new championship, and a very niche car to drive – it’s not a car you can just hop in and be fast straight away. We learned a lot last year, and had some really great results, but it was very volatile.

“Now, it’s nice to come back for pre-season testing feeling at home and knowing what we have to work on from last year. I’m very confident we’ve got all the experience to bring home a championship.”

But Burton reckons de Haan will present stiff opposition after he “obliterated” the PSCSE competition to win four of the six races with the Richardson Racing squad that claimed last year’s GB teams’ title. Elsewhere, Edgerton has swapped JTR for Redline Racing for his second season, while Burton is looking forward to using his team-mates, including Kellett, to help push him forward this year. With so many key contenders, all the ingredients are in place for another gripping season.

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

The Porsche Sprint Challenge GB has not exactly been a roaring success since its launch amid the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Now, with it securing a full-time switch to the British Touring Car support bill for this year, and grids finally nudging 20 cars, it appears to be on an upward trajectory.

Matt Armstrong (Team Parker Racing) and Steve Roberts (Redline Racing) were race winners last year when the series primarily featured at British GT events, and are likely to be frontrunners again in 2023. But they are joined by a host of newcomers attracted by the chance to race/stay on the TOCA bill.

Ginetta Junior graduate Joe Warhurst (Parker), Ginetta GT4 Supercup stalwart Reece Somerfield (Breakell Racing) and Ginetta GT5 Challenge runner-up Will Jenkins (Century Motorsport) will all now race the Caymans,

while established BTCC supports competitor Max Coates and fellow ex-Mini man Ethan Hammerton are also jumping across with Graves Motorsport.

Given Coates’s title-contending experience, you can expect him to be in the mix, despite him and Graves still getting to grips with the Porsche. “It’s very different to the Clio and Mini that have been my stablemates for the last seven years,” Coates says. “The bit I’m learning and adapting to is the ABS – that’s probably the biggest thing and trusting it.

“The team has run rear-wheel-drive cars before; we’ve bolted on a set-up we think is somewhere near and are tweaking it from there. Every session, we’re improving – we’re all learning, but learning is exciting.” And it will be exciting to see how the season plays out as the series seemingly comes of age.

Coates (right) is among the new drivers for the Cayman category



PORSCHE

MAIN IMAGE: PORSCHE

SEASON

PREVIEW



Sophomore Sharp has
no shortage of rivals trying
to deny him the F4 title

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Last year, British Formula 4 was all about one driver. Alex Dunne delivered the most crushing display since the category adopted its current guise in 2015, winning almost three times as many races as the next most successful driver. But there's a feeling that this season's championship won't be quite so straightforward.

Many of the 2022 field have moved to pastures new, but an influx of racers ensures that this year's grid will still feature over 20 cars, with the potential for a few intriguing late additions as Autosport closed for press.

Of the 2022 crop confirmed as continuing, Rodin Carlin's Louis Sharp was the highest-placed – he finished an impressive fourth in the standings, despite missing the opening round because he did not turn 15 until May. The Kiwi admits that his performance – including two wins and taking a

podium on his first weekend – “definitely exceeded my expectations”. “It was my first time racing overseas, so I didn't really know what to expect,” he adds. “We also came over really late, so I only had two test days in the car before the season started, so we were really underprepared. Obviously, to miss the first round as well didn't help us! For us to still finish fourth in the championship, considering everything, that was really cool.”

Given his lack of preparation and late arrival, there was little pressure on Sharp last year. But that's different this time around as he enters the season as one of the title favourites – not that he's letting this faze him. “Obviously, being a second-year, there are some expectations and some added pressure, but I'm not really thinking about that too much,” Sharp says. “I'm just focusing on developing myself and getting better as a driver.”

But Sharp is not the only sophomore eyeing title glory. Unlike Sharp – who is firmly established in the Rodin Carlin set-up and had already received the backing of new team owner and fellow Antipodean David Dicker – Daniel Guinchard had a more “stressful” winter. He arrived in F4 last year after winning two British karting titles and securing the support of Mercedes.

Yet things did not work out for the Argenti driver and he finished ninth in the points table with six podiums. Having lost his Mercedes junior status, Guinchard has now jumped ship to Chris Dittmann Racing and is relishing his “fresh start”. “After everything ended last year, which was very unfortunate, I've had endless amounts of support and so many people wanting to help me try and find a drive,” he says. “Now we have, I'm really pleased and excited and I just want to get racing. It's a fresh start with a fresh team in new surroundings – it's a nice, happy environment and we're all really pleased with how testing has gone.”

One of the areas Guinchard has focused on is improving his single-lap pace, especially since the more powerful second-generation F4 cars are not the “easiest to race because of the wash you get when following”. With a change in qualifying format this year – the second race now features a fully, rather than partially, reversed grid – the dynamic of the weekends will also be different.

Other drivers to have sampled the series for a few events last year include Guinchard's CDR

Ginetta Junior runner-up Macintyre
is now part of Hitech's F4 attack



JEP

MINI CHALLENGE

It's all change in the Mini Challenge this season with just two drivers who finished in the top 14 in last year's standings currently confirmed as continuing. And one of those, Joe Tanner, has so far only entered the first few rounds.

The other remaining frontrunner is 2021 champion Dan Zelos, who endured a tricky campaign last year. Eighth in the points with just three podiums were not the results Zelos was looking for, and there has been plenty of soul-searching during the winter. "Last year was really tough mentally – I felt I was putting myself under immense pressure to get the budget together for touring cars," he says. "We were quite unlucky with punctures and bush failures and engine issues through the season, while in my previous three seasons in the Mini Challenge I didn't have a single mechanical failure! After that happens a few times, it does affect your confidence."

Zelos admits those difficulties were costing him a tenth here and there, which made all the difference among last year's competitive grid.

"I took a few months completely off social media and away from racing after the season finished," he continues. "I realised I hadn't enjoyed my racing and I'd never said that before."

Therefore, Zelos has adopted a fresh approach this year, and is focusing on Minis rather than worrying about his next step. He says he has regained his confidence and is looking forward to the new campaign, again driving for Excelr8. But, just because Zelos is the only established frontrunner, he is not anticipating a walkover. "I'm not expecting to have it easy and there's a few drivers really coming of age from last year," he adds. "I know what the Mini Challenge is like, and it will still be five or 10 cars battling for P1."

Picking out Zelos's likely rivals is tricky. Team-mates Bradley Gravett – son of 1990 BTCC champion Robb – and Oliver Meadows are possible contenders, while former MX-5 driver Sam Smith (Hybrid Tune) and dominant Cooper title winner Nelson King (Graves Motorsport) are also ones to watch.

Zelos had a year to forget last season



THE GUEST SERIES THAT ARE SET TO STAR

Ginetta's decision to end its long presence at British Touring Car events has opened the door to a plethora of club series to get a chance to perform on a bigger stage.

First of the guests to appear is the new Legends Elite Cup category, a three-event contest across the pocket rockets' Brands

Hatch Indy, Croft and Knockhill appearances. With a title on the line from these 18 contests, expect excitement and frenetic action.

Also joining the bill for two events this year is the revamped Radical Cup UK series, combining the old Challenge and SR1 Cup divisions. James Lay starred at the opener, winning all three races, and others will be seeking to steal the limelight at the Snetterton and Oulton Park BTCC fixtures.

The Mini 7 Racing Club, meanwhile, has already made a few TOCA appearances in recent years and has provided some fantastic racing. These classic Minis are perfectly suited to the slipstreaming mecca that is Thruxton, so expect more of the same in June. Rounding out the quartet of guests is the top-level Caterham Seven UK series, which is set to provide close battles at Silverstone.

STEVE JONES



Legends are due to feature at three events

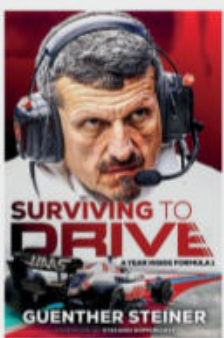
Guinchard is settled at CDR now after a "stressful" winter



team-mate Jack Sherwood – the GB4 race winner admits to having lost weight over the winter after working on his fitness – James Higgins (Fortec) and Argenti pair Jaden Pariat and Isaac Barashi. But the squad of newcomers from Hitech, including Ginetta Junior runner-up Will Macintyre and fellow Ginetta frontrunner Kanato Le, along with Australian Fford star Jimmy Piszcyk and karting champion Gabriel Stilp, will be tough to beat. Given the success Dunne enjoyed with the team last year, it will be looking to replicate that with its new recruits as they take on Sharp, Guinchard and co.

FINISHING STRAIGHT

The highs and lows of a season with Haas



BOOK REVIEW
SURVIVING TO DRIVE:
A YEAR INSIDE
FORMULA 1
Guenther Steiner
RRP £20

“We look like a bunch of wankers.” It’s fair to say that a star was born

when Guenther Steiner uttered words to that effect on an early season of *Drive to Survive*. Just as much as the Netflix documentary has propelled Formula 1 into the limelight and helped it amass a new following, so too it has done the same for the Haas F1 team principal.

T-shirts emblazoned with his face and catchphrases have cropped up across the globe on F1’s travels, and the Italian is almost as much of a celebrity as some of the drivers.

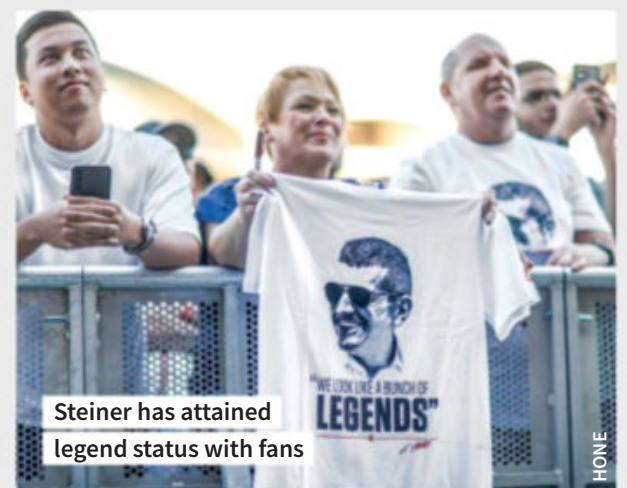
It was perhaps inevitable, then, that he has published a book, which is aptly titled *Surviving to Drive: A year inside Formula 1*. Firstly, and very unsurprisingly, reader discretion is advised since there are so many expletives – a Steiner trademark, which, along with his sudden outbursts and forthright comments, have made him a star.

All of those aspects feature in abundance

throughout the book, which rather than being an autobiography is essentially a diary in which Steiner charts each weekend of the 2022 F1 season with Haas, and any other notable bits in between during the campaign. This begins with dropping Nikita Mazepin and the team’s Uralkali sponsorship in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and culminates on something of a high with Kevin Magnussen earning the team its first pole position at the Brazilian Grand Prix – via ups and plenty of downs.

Those hoping for a Steiner performance similar to his *Drive to Survive* exploits are in for a treat – there are plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, witty comments and rants galore. He’s certainly not afraid of being sued for any of his remarks, which include taking aim at the FIA decisions that impacted Haas over the course of the season, as well as former F1 driver Ralf Schumacher. The German becomes a critic of Steiner due to the perceived way his nephew, Mick, is being treated by the team, but the Haas boss pulls no punches.

His honesty is refreshing given that almost all who work in F1 are generally subjected to toeing a PR line – but not Steiner. And although happy to criticise others, he’s certainly not above berating himself or being the butt of a joke.



Weaved in among Haas’s exploits are moments from Steiner’s life, such as how he got into motorsport in the first place, in rallying, before joining three-time F1 champion Niki Lauda at the Jaguar F1 team, plus his time in America before convincing Gene Haas to set up an F1 operation. There are some wonderful stories, from his experiences in the 1992 Dakar Rally, to he and Lauda being driven to a hotel in Japan by a man who “had an Olympic medal in foking about”.

It’s not all comedy, though. More serious topics are discussed, such as his thoughts on needing more inclusion and diversity in F1, as well as the drive for sustainability. There’s also a touching section on Haas mechanic

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Rally Croatia

World Rally Championship
Round 4/13

Zagreb, Croatia

20-23 April

TV Live BT Sport 3, Sat 0800,
BT Sport 4, Sat 1600,
BT Sport 2, Sun 0730,
Sun 1200

TV Highlights BT Sport 2,
Fri 2200, Sat 2330,
BT Sport 1, Sun 2230,
Red Bull TV, Fri 2100,
Sat 2100, Sun 2100,
ITV4, Wed 2000

Formula E

Round 6/11

Berlin, Germany

22-23 April

TV Live Channel 4, Sat 1330,
Eurosport 2, Sat 1400,
Channel 4, Sun 1330

Super Formula

Round 2/7

Suzuka, Japan

23 April

TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Sun 0100,
Sun 0600

European Le Mans Series

Round 1/5

Barcelona, Spain

23 April

TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Sat 1335,
Sun 1010

GT World Challenge
Europe Endurance Cup

Round 1/5

Monza, Italy

23 April

TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Sat 0750,
Sat 1240, Sun 0750

Formula Regional
European by Alpine

Round 1/10

Imola, Italy

22-23 April

TV Live Viaplay, Sat 1350,
Sat 1515

NASCAR Cup Series

Round 10/36

Talladega, USA

23 April

TV Live Viaplay, Sun 1930

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 9/33

Talladega, USA

22 April

TV Live Viaplay, Sat 2030

UK
MOTORSPORT

Donington Park BARC

22-23 April

BTCC, British F4, Mini
Challenge, Porsche
Carrera Cup, Porsche
Sprint Challenge
TV Live ITV4, Sun 1045

Oulton Park BRSCC

22 April

C1 Endurance, Clubsport
Trophy, National FF1600,
Super Classic FF1600

Silverstone VSCC

22 April

Allcomers, FISCAR, Pre-'55
Sports Cars, Pre-'66 Racing
Cars, Pre-War, VSCC Specials

Snetterton HSCC

22-23 April

'70s Roadsports, Autosport
3 Hours, Classic F3, Classic
FF1600, Historic FF1600,
Historic FF2000, Historic
Formula Junior, Historic
Roadsports/Modsports,
Monoposto

Brands Hatch BARC

22-23 April

Britcar Trophy, British
Endurance, CTCRC (Pre-'66,
Pre-'83, Pre-'93/Pre-'03/
BOSS, Classic & Historic
Thunder Saloons,
Jaguar Challenge)

British Hillclimb
Championship

Round 1/14

Prescott

22-23 April

NATIONAL MEETING
OF THE WEEK

An integral part of the national
racing landscape, the British
Touring Car Championship never
fails to thrill. With TOCA support
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provides the perfect
backdrop.



SBLOXHAM



SUTTON



BINGHAM

Humour and refreshing
honesty are Steiner hallmarks

Harvey Cook, who died from cancer and to whom Steiner has dedicated the book.

If there is a criticism, it's that writing in a diary form means some entries – usually covering what happened in FP1 and FP2 sessions – are almost irrelevant, although they are kept to a minimum.

While Steiner plays up to his *Drive to Survive* persona, it's clear that underneath the humour there's an intelligent man who is in F1 to succeed, someone who cares passionately about the team while trying to overcome the many blips of an F1 season, all of which is retold in his unique way. Just like Steiner is one of a kind, there's never been a book quite like this!

STEFAN MACKLEY



JEP

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
motorsport
IMAGES



Nurburgring GP

Rob Bell doesn't care a jot that the Nurburgring Grand Prix circuit is the poor relation to the 12.944-mile Nordschleife. Victory there on his GT racing debut launched the Briton's sportscar career, and it has been the scene of several triumphs for Bell down the years.

"Every time I go there, I just feel comfortable," says the McLaren factory driver, who from his first four visits scored three Le Mans Series class wins.

Bell had never been to the Nurburgring or raced a sportscar before his call-up for the 2005 LMS round to drive a Cirtek-run Aston Martin DBR9 GT1. He admits that a "white lie" – that he had sportscar experience from instructing in Porsches at Bedford Autodrome – helped the ex-Formula Renault V6 racer into the seat alongside Darren Turner before they took a straightforward win. "I landed myself in an opportunity that I didn't have a clue how good it was," he recalls.

Back-to-back Nurburgring victories contributed to consecutive LMS GT2 titles in 2007 and 2008 with the Virgo Motorsport Ferrari F430. Bell counts the second, alongside Gianmaria Bruni, as "one of my most special memories in racing" after a practice fire "decimated the car" and they started from the back: "To come from such adversity to then have a car which was a dream to drive and win has always stayed with me."



Only a driveshaft failure, which cost seven laps, while leading in 2009 stopped a Nurburgring hat-trick and was crucial in losing the GT2 title by a single point.

Bell also took outright spoils in the 2015 Blancpain Endurance Series finale aboard a Von Ryan Racing McLaren 650S GT3 with a canny strategy. Another victory followed aboard a Garage 59 example in the Sprint Cup round the following July, and it was at the Nurburgring that he sealed that year's Endurance Cup title, despite a tough slog to finish 30th after a penalty, two spins and a puncture.

Bell isn't bothered that his CV lacks a Nordschleife race appearance and counts himself "very lucky" to have made 24 starts to date in around-the-clock enduro races, something that appeared highly unlikely prior to that transformational weekend almost two decades ago.

JAMES NEWBOLD



IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

What's going on at Ferrari?

F1 GIANT NEEDS TO TURN THINGS AROUND...AGAIN



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