

**F1 2023** Mercedes makes bold reshuffle

# **AUTOSPORT**

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

27 APRIL 2023

## What's going on at Ferrari?

How things have gone wrong  
and what happens next

'Red Bull is superior  
and we need  
to change'

**CARLOS  
SAINZ**

'We are sticking to  
the plan and will try  
to update massively'

**FRED  
VASSEUR**



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Evans wins as **WRC**  
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# What does Ferrari have to do now to beat Red Bull?

Should Ferrari stick or twist? It's clear that Red Bull has gone down the right aero path and that Mercedes needs to change its concept, but Ferrari sits somewhere in the middle – even Carlos Sainz and team boss Fred Vasseur don't seem to entirely agree on what to do next.

On paper, things look bad for Ferrari – it currently sits fourth in the constructors' table with 26 points. But, as Jake Boxall-Legge shows on page 16, things aren't *that* bad. Various factors, some self-inflicted and some unfortunate, have prevented Ferrari from showing the full potential of the SF-23 over the three grands prix so far in 2023.

The big question, though, is this: even if Ferrari can get everything running smoothly, is the SF-23 fast enough to beat the RB19? That seems unlikely, so Ferrari may need to change its development direction, even if it waits until 2024 to do so.

Elsewhere in this issue, we continue our build-up to Le Mans with a look at Cadillac's brief and troubled time at the 24 Hours (p24), go behind the scenes of top LMP2 squad United Autosports (p30), and report on last weekend's events in the WRC, Formula E and BTCC.

• Congratulations to all the competitors who braved appalling conditions to contest the revived Autosport 3 Hours at Snetterton last weekend. As we show on p67 and 70, the enduro for pre-1966 GT cars proved a success and we look forward to doing it again in 2024. Our thanks to the Historic Sports Car Club for making it happen.



*Kevin Turner*

**Kevin Turner**  
Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK**  
**4 MAY**

**Action from Azerbaijan**  
Our report from the  
high-speed street track,  
plus WEC at Spa



Cover image

Mark Sutton/Motorsport Images

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# PIT + PADDOCK



➔ P13 COMMENT

## Struggling Mercedes makes big changes to technical team

### FORMULA 1

Mercedes has reshuffled its Formula 1 technical leadership team, with former technical director James Allison reclaiming his old role in place of Mike Elliott, who has moved to become chief technical officer. The move forms part of a vast number of changes the team is making to speed up its return to the front of the grid after it missed the mark with its car for the second consecutive season.

According to Mercedes, the change, which comes 20 months after Allison originally moved into the CTO position, was initiated by Elliott himself after concluding that

his skillset was not best suited to his position as technical director.

Speaking exclusively to Autosport about the move, Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said: "This was very much driven by Mike owning the process. We have reversed the roles. Mike has moved up to CTO, as he has a brilliant switched-on scientific mind. And James has returned to his technical director position, reporting into Mike."

It is understood that Allison will retain a level of involvement in the America's Cup yachting project he was working on as CTO.

Wolff explained that Elliott believed Allison is far better suited to the technical director role, with a more hands-on responsibility for the car, while Elliott gets to focus on the bigger picture of the entire technical organisation. "What Mike's assessment was, and the introspection is really admirable, is that with James we have a gladiator on the field and the troops are going to go through the fire for him and with him," added Wolff. "Mike came to the conclusion that the way he approaches things, his skillset, is best utilised in developing the organisation going forward: from technical capabilities to human capabilities and putting together the structure that can be successful for many years to come."

"We're seeing huge changes in the technical developments, artificial

intelligence and machine learning. And at the same time, looking at how is a modern Formula 1 team going to be organised and structured: what kind of innovation can be brought in? Mike sees himself very much in his sweet spot there and obviously he's a super-capable engineer, very credible and respected in the organisation. He is going to be a coach and sparring partner for the most senior people. And I'm actually very happy that Mike took this decision by himself to put himself in this role, with both him and James coming to this conclusion, as we are having both of them in their genius."

As well as Allison and Elliott switching positions, Mercedes has changed the job profiles of its senior designers to better adapt the team to the cost cap environment. The chief designer role is now split between John Owen and his former deputy Giacomo Tortora, who will become the engineering director. This means that Owen will now be able to exclusively focus on the car design, while Tortora looks after the design office and the organisational development.

Mercedes' personnel change comes against the backdrop of its decision to stick to its ultimately flawed 2022 design concept for this year, a decision that it realised was wrong even before the season started in Bahrain. The team had hoped that solving its crippling porpoising issues would allow



SUTTON/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

...after swapping  
jobs with Elliott





SUTTON  
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ETHERINGTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Allison has returned  
to the frontline...

it to fully exploit its unique design concept, but instead it found out that its existing development avenue would not allow it to bridge the gap to the dominant Red Bulls.

The eight-time world champion squad is working on a raft of updates for its W14 that are slated to debut at the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix at Imola in mid-May. The updates go far beyond simply abandoning the much discussed 'zeropod' sidepod design and will also address the floor of the car among other areas. The biggest gains are found from the management of airflow beneath the car and through the diffuser, areas that are less visible to the public yet more critical for aero performance than the sidepods' controversial shape.

Expect the Imola package to be the first of several update steps as Mercedes chases a moving target of optimising its 2023 machine around its tweaked design philosophy.

**JONATHAN NOBLE**

## AUDI PLEDGES ENGINE TEST THIS YEAR

### FORMULA 1

Audi has said that it is on course to test its complete hybrid Formula 1 engine by the end of 2023.

The Ingolstadt marque is buying into Sauber to enter F1 in the 2026 season and become a works partner of the Swiss team currently racing as Alfa Romeo.

Audi's F1 entry hinged on the introduction of updated power unit regulations, which do away with the complex and expensive MGU-H system and rely on more energy regenerated by the MGU-K. From 2026 onwards F1 will also run on fully sustainable fuels.



AUDIAG

At the Auto Shanghai motor show last week, Audi announced that a "full hybrid drivetrain unit, consisting of the combustion engine, electric motor, battery and electronic control unit" is scheduled to run on the test bench before the end of 2023.

While sister marque Porsche has officially put the brakes on any F1 involvement after failed Red Bull talks, Audi is

going full steam ahead.

It is expanding its F1 facility at Neuburg, including the installation of test rigs for power unit development in a new 3000-square-metre building. It has already recruited over 260 specialists from rival F1 teams and existing Audi programmes. Its total number of F1 recruits is set to exceed 300 before the end of this year.

**MATT KEW**



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## Abbey gets asphalt run-off

### FORMULA 1

Silverstone has modified its circuit in response to the dramatic crash for Alfa Romeo Formula 1 driver Zhou Guanyu on the opening lap of the 2022 British Grand Prix.

After contact with George Russell's Mercedes, Zhou's car was sent into a flip and then skated on its roll hoop across the asphalt and gravel trap at Abbey. The Alfa then became airborne and cleared the tyre barrier until it was stopped by the catch fencing.

Silverstone has now modified the run-off at Abbey, the first

turn on the circuit's GP layout.

"We've done a load of work this winter — there's a big piece of asphalt out the front rather than the gravel," Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle told Autosport. "This is to stop them digging in. It's the digging-in bit that was the real issue there."

For 2023 the FIA has also increased the stringency of crash testing for the roll hoop to reduce the likelihood of it digging in, by reducing the height at which a revised homologation test will be applied. Further structure tweaks are expected for 2024.

**MATT KEW**



# F1 drivers back standalone sprints

## FORMULA 1

Formula 1 drivers have backed the move to make sprint races standalone events with their own qualifying sessions.

After formal approval at the F1 Commission, the revised format is set to be used at this weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix, the first of this season's six sprint events.

Friday will run to a familiar sprint pattern with FP1 followed by qualifying, but with the grid counting for Sunday's main event. In place of FP2, a shorter version of qualifying will be run on Saturday to determine the grid positions for the sprint later that day.

The new format has received widespread approval from drivers, who say they can take bigger risks in the sprint

without compromising their grand prix chances. It also replaces a pointless practice session under parc ferme with an extra qualifying session, providing more competitive action for spectators.

"We can take a bit more risk in a sprint qualifying without putting your complete weekend away, so that is good," said Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc.

Team-mate Carlos Sainz said the drivers had been pushing F1 for it. "It is the direction that we asked the F1 and FIA to go if they want a better show," he said. "They asked us. We said we need the sprint not to count [for the main grid], so I'm happy they took our feedback on board, and it should be the right direction and an exciting weekend."

While the teams are



behind the move, some are wary of the prospect of a sprint on Baku's high-speed street circuit, which has a history of producing chaos.

"I'm nervous about a sprint in Baku because you just have not enough time to repair if you have major damage," said Aston Martin

team principal Mike Krack, "because straight after the sprint you have the covers on, and in the morning you have only three, four hours to repair your car if it's heavily damaged. So, there is a high risk with that exercise, but I think it will be a good show."

**ADAM COOPER**

## Aston's WEC team change



## WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

World Endurance Championship GTE Am title winner Paul Dalla Lana is retiring from racing with immediate effect. But his NorthWest AMR Aston Martin entry will not be disappearing from the WEC: it will be taken over by US entrant Heart of Racing from this weekend's Spa round.

The 57-year-old Canadian, who won the GTE Am crown in 2017, is hanging up his helmet in order to fully focus on his business interests. A stalwart of GTE in the WEC, he joined Aston Martin in 2013, initially in the Pro ranks before swapping to Am the following season. He took a total of 17 class victories including four in the year he claimed the title with long-time

team-mates Pedro Lamy and Mathias Lauda.

Dalla Lana never won class honours at Le Mans. He scored a best of third in 2022 with Nicki Thiim and David Pittard, although he looked set for victory in 2015 until he crashed at the Ford Chicane in the final hour.

"To race for Aston Martin, compete at Le Mans and win a world championship title has been one of the greatest adventures of my life," said Dalla Lana. "But it has become increasingly challenging to find enough time to prepare and compete at the highest level; and to fight for a world championship you must be able to give your all."

Heart of Racing, which was established for 2020 under the stewardship of expat Briton Ian James and claimed last year's GT Daytona title in the IMSA SportsCar Championship, will field the NorthWest AMR entry for the remainder of the season. Bronze-rated James will share the Aston Martin Vantage GTE with regular team-mate Alex Riberas and Italian Daniel Mancinelli.

James explained that HoR, which fields two Astons in IMSA, has had "ambitions to compete at Le Mans and the WEC for some time". It is aiming to follow up on its GTD crown in this year's Daytona 24 Hours with James and factory drivers Darren Turner, Marco Sorensen and Roman De Angelis.

**GARY WATKINS**



# Drugovich tops rookie testing

## FORMULA E

Aston Martin Formula 1 reserve Felipe Drugovich topped Formula E's Berlin rookie test on Monday with Maserati MSG Racing, setting a time only 0.208 seconds off the fastest lap set from the preceding double-header race weekend.

Drugovich (right), the reigning Formula 2 champion, set his time during the afternoon's running on a day where 21 drivers were in action on the Tempelhof Airport circuit. It fell narrowly short of the standard set in Saturday's FP2 session by Maserati race driver Maximilian Guenther.

Two current F2 drivers were next, with Nissan's reigning F3 champion Victor Martins 0.101s adrift in second and runner-up Zane Maloney third with the Andretti Autosport Porsche squad.

Fresh from the opening round of the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup at Monza on Sunday, reigning DTM champion Sheldon van der Linde's morning-session topper for Jaguar was just 0.5s off the fastest time posted over the Berlin E-Prix weekend and, with 67 laps under his belt, he logged the most miles of any driver in that session. But in the afternoon the South African ended up in the wall at Turn 6 with



damage to his front-right. His morning time gave him fifth on the day behind Nissan's fourth-placed Luca Ghiotto.

Another driver to arrive from Monza was Ferrari F1 reserve Robert Shwartzman, who was seventh overall for DS Penske. That put him one spot behind Mahindra reserve and F2 stalwart Jehan Daruvala, whose time was good enough for third in the morning. Just

behind Shwartzman finished 2022 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Luke Browning, who took part for the McLaren Nissan team. Porsche reserve David Beckmann and ex-F1 driver Daniil Kvyat (NIO 333) completed the top 10.

MEGAN WHITE

➔ P40 BERLIN FORMULA E



## Aitken in Cadillac for Spa

### WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Jack Aitken has been drafted into the Chip Ganassi Racing-run Cadillac Racing squad for this weekend's Spa round of the World Endurance Championship. The ex-Formula 1 driver has been brought in to share with Ganassi regulars Sebastien Bourdais and Renger van der Zande from the Action Express Racing Caddy squad with which he is racing against them in the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

Ganassi is fielding the extra V-Series.R in the Hypercar class as Cadillac builds up to its three-car assault on June's Le Mans 24 Hours, and the move to expand the roster is

"another example of the 'one-team' concept that Cadillac Racing is all about", according to the squad's director of operations, Mike O'Gara. His opposite number at Action Express, Chris Mitchum, described Aitken's one-off with Ganassi as "another opportunity to learn as one team" as AXR gears up for its debut at the French enduro.

Ganassi had initially named only Bourdais and van der Zande for Spa because Scott Dixon, who will join them at Le Mans, is racing in the Barber Motorsports Park IndyCar round. Aitken will return to Action Express for Le Mans alongside regular teammates Alexander Sims and Pipo Derani.

GARY WATKINS

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## INDIANAPOLIS 500

Bump Day looks set to return for next month's Indianapolis 500 qualifying, with a 34th entry for the 33-car grid.

The Indy tradition was put on ice last year, when there were 33 entries, but now Indy NXT team Abel Motorsports is to make its first foray into IndyCar with RC Enerson at the wheel. The brave Floridian finished fourth in the 2015 Indy Lights championship and impressed in four IndyCar starts, but failed to qualify for the 2021 Indy 500 with Top Gun Racing.

Abel was the only entry not to take part in last week's Open Test on the Speedway. This was shortened from two days to one due to inclement weather, but all rookies

and refreshers completed their programmes.

After three poor years at the 500, Team Penske will have been relieved to see Josef Newgarden (fastest in the test at 227.686mph), Scott McLaughlin and Will Power all show strong pace over the course of the day in varying conditions – a cool start, warm afternoon and then heavy winds.

Another couple of Chevrolet teams that also turned fast laps were Ed Carpenter Racing – Conor Daly was second fastest – and Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, for which Stefan Wilson was sixth quickest.

Predictably, Chip Ganassi Racing and Andretti Autosport led the Honda charge: Devlin DeFrancesco (Andretti) turned the fastest lap without the aid of a tow, while Alex Palou (Ganassi) looked notably able

to carve through traffic, continuing a trait seen from the CGR cars for the past three years at the Speedway.

That said, veteran drivers reported that the 100-150lb of additional downforce provided by the extra pieces now allowed by IndyCar at IMS afforded more passing opportunities, and that being more than four cars back in a train no longer meant there was too much dirty air to make progress to the front.

The standard caveats for Indy testing still apply: no one is absolutely sure whether either engine manufacturer had its engines 'turned up' to Indy spec, and the cooler, denser air of mid-April naturally creates more downforce than is often the case on a sweltering day in Indy at the end of May.

**DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ**

## UK 2024 calendar bid granted an extra month

### WRC

The World Rally Championship is willing to give the UK's bid for a 2024 round until the end of May to secure the necessary funding.

The UK has been absent from the WRC since Rally GB in 2019 (right), after COVID-19 forced the cancellation of the 2020 event amid reduced support from the Welsh government. A bid fronted by promoter Bobby Willis attempted to take the WRC to Northern Ireland

in 2021, 2022 and 2023, but the project failed to secure the funding required.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Motorsport, an informal group of UK members of parliament, met in February with senior representatives of the WRC, Motorsport UK and the event promoter, as well as Tourism Northern Ireland and Events Northern Ireland. This resulted in the end of April being set as a deadline to secure the £3.5million funding for an event next year.

"Every second day I'm talking to Bobby Willis and it's not over yet," said WRC event director Simon Larkin. "There is still a bit more time to go. The government in Northern Ireland is now starting to maybe be a bit more effective following the new Brexit agreement.

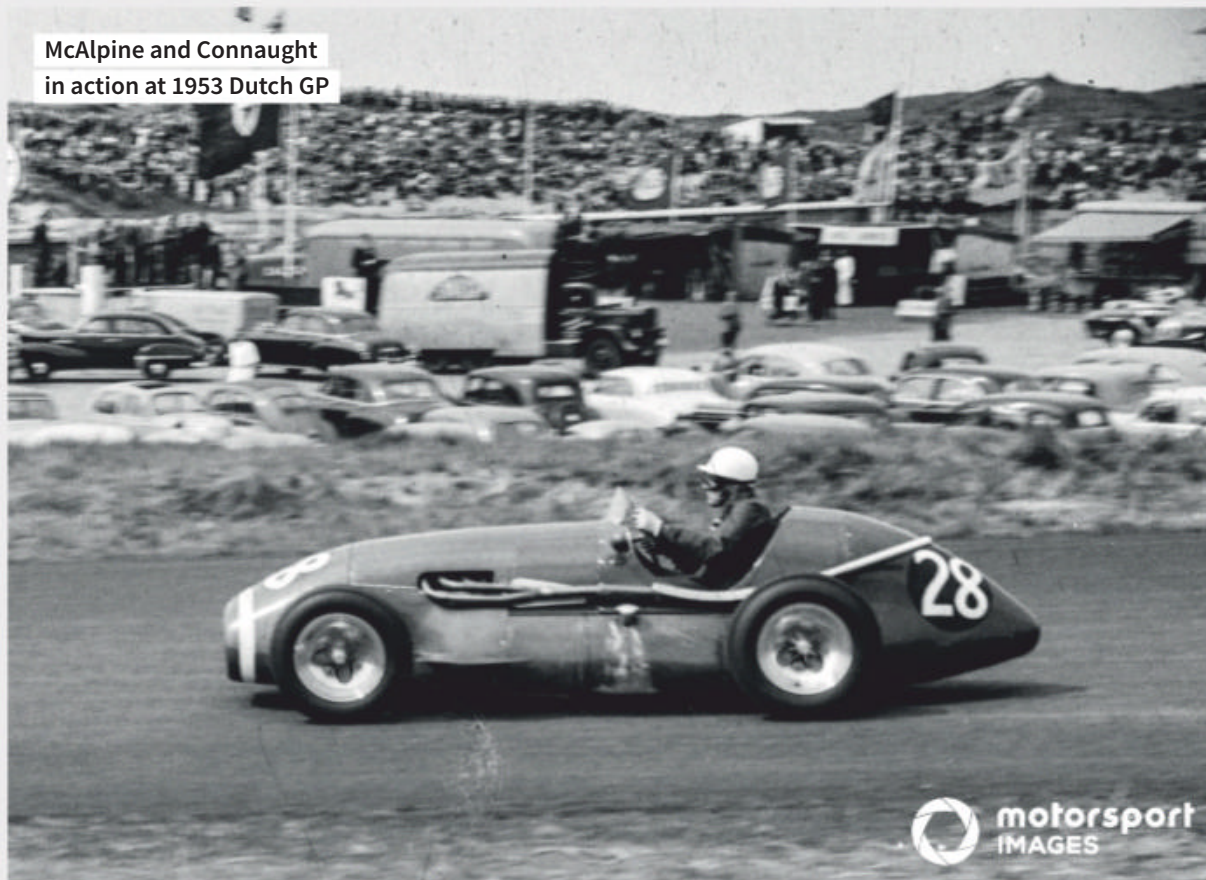
"It is unfortunate to say but the reality is Craig Breen's death has awakened the entire island of Ireland about the sport a bit more, its legacy and even its size and scope there."

**TOM HOWARD**





McAlpine and Connaught  
in action at 1953 Dutch GP



## Kenneth McAlpine 1920-2023

### OBITUARY

Kenneth McAlpine, one of the last links with the ascendancy of British teams in grand prix racing in the 1950s and the oldest grand prix driver, died on 8 April at the age of 102.

A member of the McAlpine civil engineering family, he financially supported the endeavours of Rodney Clarke and Mike Oliver of Continental Cars to create competitive single-seaters and sports-racing cars in the immediate post-war years. McAlpine himself competed successfully with the ex-Earl Howe and ex-Whitney Straight Maserati CMs in the myriad of airfield races, sprints and hillclimbs that proliferated in the British Isles at the time, his cars race-prepared by Continental Cars.

From this arrangement evolved the Connaughts, which McAlpine and many of the UK's leading drivers of the time campaigned prolifically and successfully. The A-type Formula 2 car made its debut at Castle Combe in October 1950 when McAlpine finished second to the HWM

of Stirling Moss. When Formula 2 became the Drivers' World Championship category in 1952/53, McAlpine competed in several races at the highest level, his best result being 13th in the 1953 German GP.

For the new 2.5-litre Formula 1, the B-type Connaught was created and McAlpine raced it twice in 1955, in the BRDC International Trophy at Silverstone and the British Grand Prix at Aintree, retiring on both occasions. McAlpine saw out the 1955 season with the little AL/SR sportscar, with which he finished second to the Lister-Bristol of Archie Scott-Brown in the British Empire Trophy. His last race before retirement was the Goodwood 9 Hours in which, with Eric Thompson, he finished fifth in class.

An RAF flight instructor during the Second World War, McAlpine maintained his interest in aviation with his McAlpine Helicopters company, also establishing a vineyard in Kent and doing much to promote viniculture in the UK. McAlpine's status as the oldest surviving GP driver now passes to 95-year-old Hans Herrmann.

IAN TITCHMARSH

### IN THE HEADLINES

#### NEW WILLIAMS ACADEMY

A Frank Williams Academy funding initiative has been launched to support and empower people living with spinal cord injuries. The FWA has been established by the late Williams's daughter, former deputy team principal Claire, and aims to raise £1.5million to kickstart its work over three initial years. It has been created in conjunction with the Spinal Injuries Association, which supported Williams after the 1986 car accident that led to his injury.

#### BORTOLETO TOPS TEST

The FIA Formula 3 Championship held the second of its two quickfire two-day in-season tests at Imola last week. Series leader Gabriel Bortoleto continued his strong form by topping the times for Trident. The Brazilian's effort on the second morning narrowly pipped the quickest lap of the first day set by Jenzer Motorsport's Nikita Bedrin. Franco Colapinto (MP Motorsport) was third, followed by another Jenzer driver, Taylor Barnard.

#### LINDBLAD WINS AT IMOLA

Imola was also the venue for the opening round of the Italian Formula 4 Championship last weekend, which ended with British Red Bull Junior Arvid Lindblad atop the points table. Lindblad won what was effectively the final – each of the 37 drivers had contested two of the three 'heats' – in his Prema car. A last-lap clash between Van Amersfoort Racing team-mates Brando Badoer and Ivan Domingues elevated Alfio Spina to second and Ugo Ugochukwu to third. Lindblad (below) had two second places earlier in the weekend, one of them behind ex-British F4 ace Ugochukwu.



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## QUALIFIER GIVES FERRARI 296 ITS MAIDEN RACE WIN

### NURBURGRING 24 HOURS

Ferrari's new 296 GT3 car scored its first overall race victory last Sunday in the second of two Nurburgring 24 Hours Qualifiers.

Nordschleife specialist Frikadelli Racing Team was victorious in the four-hour race thanks to the efforts of Earl Bamber, Nicky Catsburg, David Pittard and Felipe Fernandez Laser. The quartet narrowly defeated the GetSpeed Mercedes of Daniel Juncadella and Adam Christodoulou.

"That was a really good race for us," said Bamber. "Nicky did a good qualifying and then put in a very good first stint. It's the perfect preparation for the big 24-hour race in May."

The GetSpeed duo had triumphed in the two-hour race on Saturday evening, shading the Manthey Porsche 911 GT3-R of Michael Christensen and Frederic Makowiecki. In this race, Bamber and Pittard combined to secure fifth behind Matt Campbell and Mathieu Jaminet (Car Collection Porsche), and Martin Tomczyk and Mike Rockenfeller (Phoenix Audi).

Alexander Sims was also part of the Phoenix line-up, and shared with Kim Luis Schramm on their way to fourth place in Sunday's four-hour race, behind the Falken Porsche of Martin Ragginger and Tim Heinemann.

Top BMW result in the build-up to the 'big one' next month was sixth position for the Walkenhorst Motorsport M4 GT3 of Andy Soucek, Jesse Krohn and Jens Klingmann on Sunday.

Also in action was Darren Turner, the Aston Martin veteran sharing a Vantage GT3 to a best of 13th with German brothers Phil and Ben Dorr.



GRUPPEC/FRIKADELLI



Crews honoured Breen on sombre Rally Croatia

THUILLIER/HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH

## FIA investigates Breen accident

### WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

The FIA will not hesitate to take action to improve safety in the World Rally Championship should lessons emerge from a thorough investigation into Craig Breen's fatal accident.

The 33-year-old factory Hyundai WRC driver died a fortnight ago in a testing crash in preparation for Rally Croatia. Team principal Cyril Abiteboul explained last week that a fence post had come through the driver's-side window of the i20 N. The team is working alongside the FIA in carrying out a full investigation into the incident.

"There is an ongoing investigation," said FIA rally director Andrew Wheatley at Rally Croatia. "We are not in a position to say one way or another if there is any future action to be taken. I can assure you that there is a dedicated team in the FIA that is investigating every opportunity to understand how we go forward."

"The specifics with regard to Craig's accident are very unique and I'm not sure there is a simple fix to that. We have a lot of information but we are not in a position to share the results. We can't bring Craig back, but we can try to make sure we can take every action that we can do."

While Breen's accident occurred at a relatively slow speed, Wheatley (right) says that the FIA is constantly reviewing the performance of Rally1 cars to ensure that safety is not compromised through natural progression and development of the cars. The Rally1 hybrid regulations have spawned vehicles capable of 500bhp when

hybrid boost is engaged, but the cars do feature a much tougher spaceframe chassis and safety cell than their predecessors.

"Absolutely, and it [speed] is a constant consideration because the reality of the situation every year is the speed increases," he added. "That's not something that is planned, but it's because we have a service park full of talented engineers who are making every part of the car faster. The constant role of the FIA, whether it's safety, technical or sporting, is to understand at what point do we get to a position where we have to balance the safety versus the speed?"

"The lesson from this tragic accident is we need to understand what could be done to make the 10% possibility into an 8% or a 6% possibility. I think we will never stop learning and hopefully we can use the information to understand what small changes we can make."

Safety standards at private pre-event tests are also being discussed at the FIA.

Meanwhile, Kris Meeke will return to rallying this weekend after agreeing to stand in for Breen in the Portuguese Rally Championship for Hyundai Portugal.

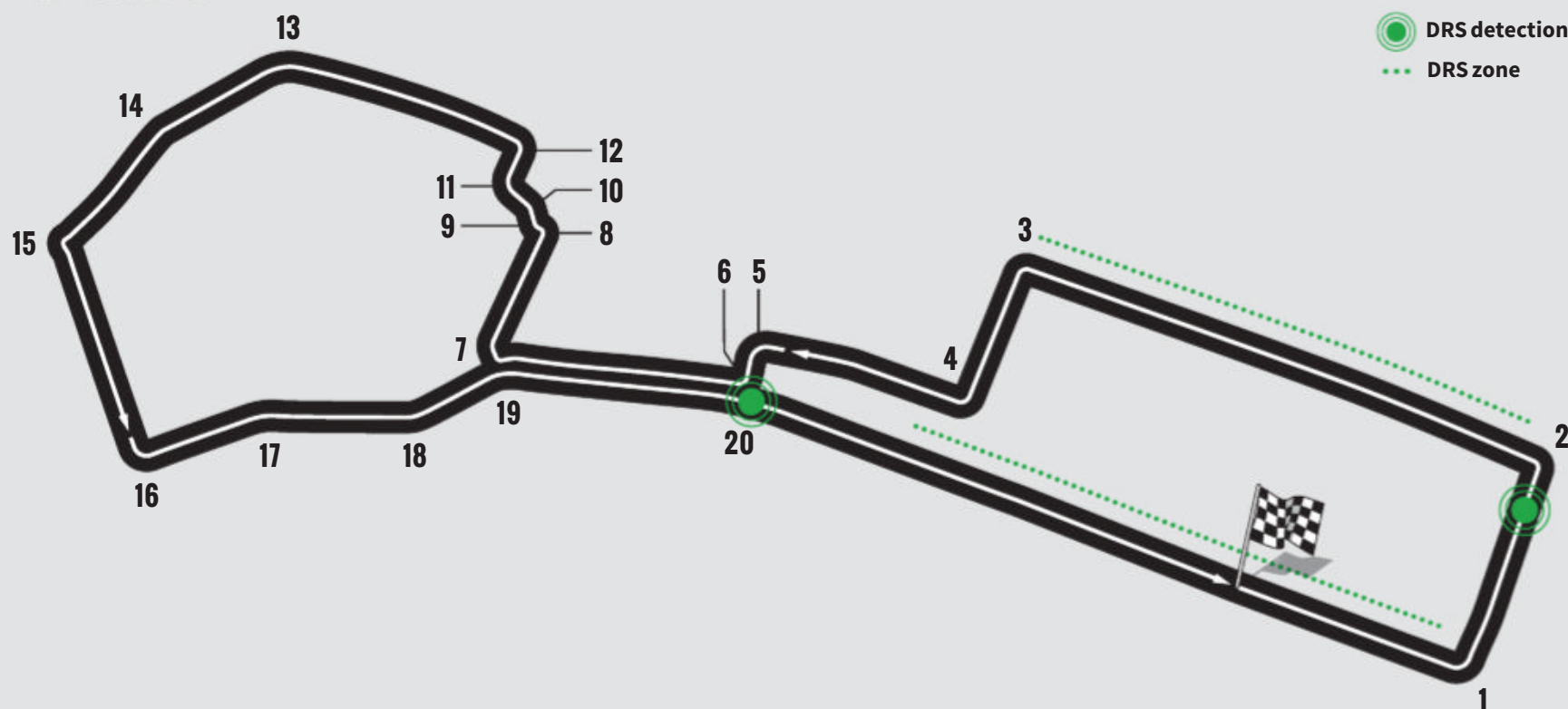
**TOM HOWARD**



MCKLEIN



## F1 AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



## UK START TIMES

Friday 28 April  
 FP 1030 QUALIFYING 1400

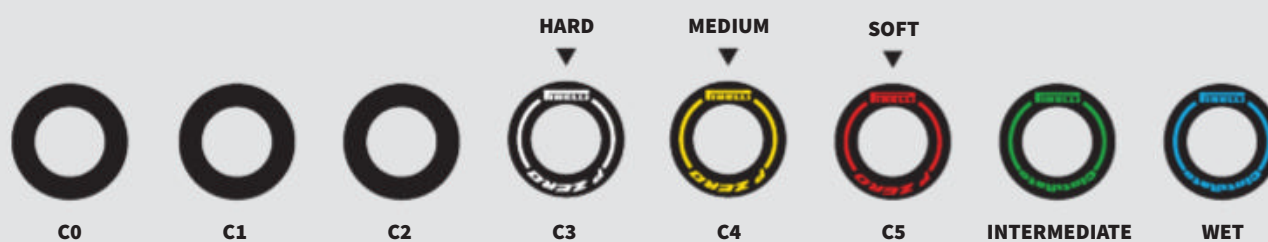
Saturday 29 April  
 SPRINT QUALIFYING 1030  
 SPRINT 1430

Sunday 30 April  
 RACE 1200

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## TYRE ALLOCATION



## CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

## Drivers

1	Verstappen	69
2	Perez	54
3	Alonso	45
4	Hamilton	38
5	Sainz	20

## Constructors

1	Red Bull	123
2	Aston Martin	65
3	Mercedes	56
4	Ferrari	26
5	McLaren	12



## BAKU STATS

## Previous winners

2022	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2021	Sergio Perez	Red Bull
2019	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes
2018	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2017	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull
2016	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes

## 2022 POLE POSITION

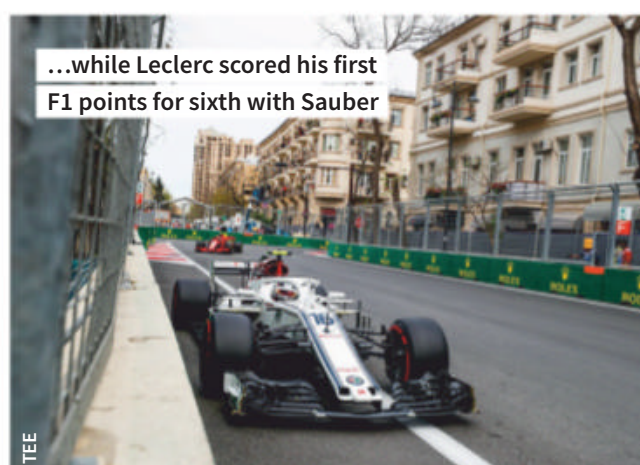
**Charles Leclerc**  
 1m41.359s

## POLE LAP RECORD

**Valtteri Bottas**  
 1m40.495s (2019)

## RACE LAP RECORD

**Charles Leclerc**  
 1m43.009s (2019)



## Laps led

Max Verstappen	65
Nico Rosberg	51
Valtteri Bottas	49
Lewis Hamilton	43
Sebastian Vettel	37
Sergio Perez	22
Charles Leclerc	21
Daniel Ricciardo	18





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# What Allison's return reveals

*The surprise job swap at the top of Mercedes' technical set-up highlights the scale of the challenge it faces and is a demonstration of the team's staff-centric culture*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

**I**n several ways, James Allison's return as technical director is starkly new ground for the modern Mercedes squad. It finds itself in such dire straits compared to how it previously dominated Formula 1 that a major change to its technical staff has been felt necessary. At the same time, the reshuffle is very Mercedes. Team boss Toto Wolff says it was at former technical director Mike Elliott's urging that the change was made, that Elliott felt "with James we have a gladiator on the field and the troops are going to go through the fire for him and with him".

There has so far been no official message from Mercedes that the change has been made, which softens the impact for both Elliott and the organisation overall. But the team wanted the news out there in its own way, giving Motorsport.com F1 editor Jonathan Noble an exclusive interview with Wolff to discuss the development. This was both an attempt at preserving its much-vaunted united team culture and also, apparently, a bid to stoke its fire and revitalise its fortunes. What cannot be fully known for now is how much Elliott's decision was reached in reaction to the internal pressure at Mercedes that had been building ever since the innovative 'zero-pod' W13 was revealed as a 2022 dud.

Perhaps the most significant word of Mercedes' carefully curated change, with Allison and Elliott swapping roles, is in Wolff's declaration that the switch was "very much driven by Mike Elliott

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**"The axe has not swung for Elliott in the traditional F1 sense. Instead, he's been kept on board"**

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owning the process". 'Owning' suggests that Elliott reacted to the shortcomings of Mercedes' technical team under his leadership, but the subsequent reaction from Wolff is again very Mercedes. The axe has not swung for Elliott in the traditional F1 sense, as it did for Mattia Binotto at Ferrari and James Key at McLaren. Instead, Wolff has kept Elliott on board, and his position as a full-time CTO reflects the worth he clearly has to the organisation. Elliott will now address how best to deploy Mercedes' technical resources from an overarching organisation development perspective and with the next F1 rules reset in 2026 in mind, with Allison directly working on how to make the W14 and W15 into winning packages.

Major change has happened within Mercedes' technical department through its time heading F1 between 2014 and 2021. Yet before 2022, the Silver/Black Arrows squad carried on winning.

Things are very different for Allison and Wolff now. It's no coincidence that Aston Martin is doing so well having hired not only ex-Red Bull aero chief Dan Fallows, but also former Mercedes aero leader (up to late 2021) Eric Blandin as deputy technical director. So, rather than just the top of the pyramid being replaced, as it was after Paddy Lowe left in 2017, the inner structure is weaker than it was when Allison handed over Mercedes' technical director reins in early 2021.

That, therefore, focuses the spotlight on this new development. Mercedes is shifting the responsibility that comes with the pressure to return to winning ways to Allison, but it has done this precisely because of his value to the team. Allison expected to leave Mercedes when giving Elliott his previous promotion, but instead Wolff created the part-time CTO role for him and kept him in the fold, a decision that appears to be paying off significantly in that Mercedes has a proven technical director to try to revitalise its fortunes still on its books. At the same time, the major role swap reflects that a key moment in Wolff's Mercedes leadership — its second technical director change — was ultimately unsuccessful.

But Wolff's explanation of Allison's "gladiator" worth via Elliott reflects that Mercedes thinks this third technical director appointment will be a well-received reshuffle internally. Allison is a popular and respected figure among Mercedes' staff, while his amiable and detailed persona chimes with its fans too. Allison bringing that back to F1 also restores what Mercedes had lost on this front when the very polished and comprehensive James Vowles headed to Williams.

Allison also possesses quite the F1 track record, from all of Michael Schumacher's Benetton and Ferrari titles, then Fernando Alonso's at Renault. As full technical director for the then-Lotus squad, his designs won praise and races with Kimi Raikkonen. But just because Mercedes has returned to the technical department leadership that brought it to previously unscaled F1 heights doesn't mean it will instantly be winning again. Indeed, Allison must galvanise that now altered technical structure and lead it on a concept path fully laid down by Red Bull. It will likely be in 2024 when we see the main fruits of his efforts, with Mercedes' car concept change already started under Elliott.

But convergence is always likely in any new F1 design rules era. What was unexpected was Mercedes' team culture and the decisions surrounding Allison's succession as technical director being so tested. Therefore, such a response couldn't be foreseen until it had to be considered by Wolff. But the results of that unexpected challenge for Mercedes and its leader will be the story of how a modern F1 superteam fully evolves. Mercedes has either peaked and cannot climb so high again, despite its moves to correct its slide, or its current predicament is but a brief dip in between winning chapters. ❄️



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# YOUR SAY

*It saddened me to see that Felipe Massa is looking into challenging the outcome of the 2008 title. I can understand his frustration, but surely enough time has passed*

**K SKOYLES**

## **Sad to see Massa raking up the past**

Although not having been a particular fan of Ferrari and its various drivers, I was full of admiration for the way in which Felipe Massa conducted himself after losing the 2008 title to Lewis Hamilton at his home event in Brazil.

So therefore it saddened me to see that Felipe is looking into challenging the outcome with reference to the shenanigans by the Renault team (Pit + Paddock, 13 April).

I can understand his frustration, but surely enough time has passed and this does nothing but change personal perspective of him. As that woeful song says, 'Let it go'.

**K Skoyles**

**By email**

## **Alonso should raid Aston's back catalogue**

Since Fernando Alonso has firmly established himself as master of the 'Green Arrows', he really should head to

Goodwood and drive an example of the 1959 Le Mans-winning Aston Martin DBR1. I saw one recently in a museum, which was driven by legends such as Jack Brabham, Jim Clark, and Stirling Moss, the latter of whom drove the car to victory in the 1959 Nurburgring 1000Km.

When I saw it, I immediately thought Fernando should drive one, in order to properly celebrate Aston Martin's return as a serious competitor in the highest echelons of motorsport.

**Ryan Keogh**

**New York, USA**

## **Great job done at Goodwood**

Can I just applaud Alice Powell's excellent commentary at Goodwood! Considering she wasn't even born when most of the competing cars first raced, absolutely brilliant, well done.

**Jonathan Moorhouse**

**York**



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**What's going on at Ferrari**







# ...and what happens next?

*Just three races into the new season and the Italian team is struggling.  
Good thing that new boss Fred Vasseur appears to be holding his nerve*

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

SUTTON



I

t was all smiles at Ferrari's pre-season launch event at Fiorano. Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz exuded a quiet confidence and ease on the day that the SF-23 was revealed to the world, while new team principal Fred Vasseur was equally assured in his first public event with the team.

There were plenty of reasons to be optimistic within the confines of its Maranello headquarters. A lean period, instigated by the FIA's investigation of Ferrari's power unit design that resulted in many of its horses bolting, proved to be finally over and the team had enacted a recovery for 2022. Although the season exposed many of the squad's weaknesses, new leadership would surely help Ferrari to challenge Red Bull on a much more consistent basis, particularly after its charge last year tailed off.

Three races into the 2023 season, and Ferrari appears to be in disarray once again. Confidence in its design concept appears to be wavering, Leclerc and Sainz have made uncharacteristic errors, and the haul from the Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Australia tripartite of opening races has yielded just 26 points.

On raw pace, Ferrari shouldn't be in this position. The SF-23 is quick, particularly in qualifying trim, and Leclerc has twice been close to pole this season. He was just 0.3 seconds behind pole-winner Max Verstappen in Bahrain, and under 0.2s off Sergio Perez's best lap in Jeddah to underline the competitiveness of the scarlet machine in qualifying. If Leclerc can unearth that last nugget of time, or if Sainz can string a lap together, there ought to be a more concerted challenge to break the Red Bull deadlock on the front of the grid.

The races, however, are a separate story. While performance in Australia was much improved — Sainz was able to push Fernando Alonso for a podium finish at Albert Park — Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were far more difficult nights to endure. Good qualifying performances were not built upon, and the cars around the SF-23 on-track were better at contending with the added demands of a two-hour Sunday drive.

We'll take that into consideration as we assess why Ferrari has faced such a torrid start to 2023, and what the team needs to do to turn its fortunes around. For the engineers, the task is thankfully not nearly as daunting as being forced to turn an uncompetitive car around, but rather to ensure that a promising design can be taken advantage of.

The speed is there to be unlocked in the SF-23; consistency is more tricky



SUTTON



FERRARI

## Does Ferrari need a concept change?

It's evident to all that Red Bull had found the best way in to mastering the 2022-spec Formula 1 regulations. As such, many of the 2023 cars feature influences from the RB18, much in the same way as the F1 field did in 2003 in bearing design hallmarks from the all-conquering Ferrari F2002. Ferrari has largely followed its own path with its channelled sidepods developed to help get the beam wing working harder.

Although 'concept change' has been a frequently bandied-about term when it comes to F1 car design, it usually ends up referring to the sidepod design given the vast differences in shapes and dimensions initially seen on the first fleet of cars under the current regulations. In 2022, many of those differences initially stemmed from various approaches to getting the floor to create a seal, either through a light flex or in shaping the edges, and to offer interaction with tyre wake after the bargeboards were axed.

Although Ferrari has stuck to the formulation that it used to pose some threat to Red Bull last year, the Milton Keynes squad has made quite the leap over the off-season to pull some way clear. Those in charge at Ferrari must therefore work out whether to stick or to twist. Developing a car more similar in dimensions to the RB19 would hardly be the work of a moment; it would require the



*“We are sticking to the plan. We won’t come with something completely different. We will continue to update this one and we’ll try to update massively”*



Ferrari says there’s no intention to make a switch in concept...



...although for Sainz nothing should be left off the table

team to completely change course mid-season, hardly a desirable outcome given the limitations of the cost cap.

Sainz made his support of a concept shift evident in Melbourne. “At the moment the Red Bull is superior everywhere,” he said. “It’s superior in quali, in races, in straightline speed. They are superior in medium/low-speed corners, they are superior with tyre management, superior over the kerbs and bumps. It just shows that we clearly need to change something.

“We need to go and check something very different from where we are now. I think the extremely good performance at the start of last season made us keep pushing with this concept, with this project of car. But I think we realise now that Red Bull has a clear advantage everywhere and that we need to start looking to our right and to our left.”

That’s a somewhat damning indictment but, although the drivers can make their case for the car’s development direction, the team principal has the final call. In that instance, Vasseur says that copying the school swot’s homework isn’t an option for the team – instead, he still has faith that, with development, the SF-23 can work out for the team once the key issues have been addressed.

“No, I don’t think so,” Vasseur replies, when it’s put to him that Ferrari could consider a switch in concept. “I think that we have a flow of updates, that some will come, not for Baku, because we have the

aero package for the level of downforce, but with the sprint race it is not the easiest one. But for Miami, Imola, not Monaco, but Barcelona, at each race we’ll have an update on the car.

“And we are sticking to the plan. But we made some adjustment I think in terms of balance and behaviour, and it was much better in Melbourne, and we’ll continue on this direction. It’s not a B-car if that is what you want to say. We won’t come with something completely different. We will continue to update this one and we’ll try to update massively.” >>



## Suppressing the appetite for tyres

Without a full shift in design direction, Ferrari must eke out every drop of performance from its current concept. One key issue that became increasingly apparent in the opening couple of races was the SF-23's proclivity to munch through its tyres like a bowl of cereal. The effect was diluted in Melbourne thanks to a recently resurfaced track, but the heat of Saudi Arabia and the abrasion of Bahrain turned Ferrari's tyres into a soft camembert.

This was partly why Ferrari's race performance was so stilted, notwithstanding the grid penalty that Leclerc took in Jeddah following the electrical issues faced in the Bahrain opener. There were reasons to be cheerful in that race at Sakhir – Sainz did well to hold off Lewis

Hamilton in the final 10 laps, while Leclerc was on for a podium before his car ground to a halt. But the arrears to the Red Bull duo were vast, and neither driver could continue to push throughout the race in the same vein as Fernando Alonso. Where the Aston Martin driver had the tools to keep chipping away at gaps and mount overtaking moves, the Ferraris had to ease off and were led by degradation.

"Honestly our analysis from the first few races is there's no fundamental issue with the car, it's just a very peaky car – a very unpredictable car in the race," Sainz explained when asked to assess the SF-23's shortfalls. "It eats the tyres quite a lot. So, it's just we need to improve our package; it's just too peaky and we need to find a way to calm it down a bit, which is what also makes the car difficult in the race.

"The good thing is that everyone knows it. We know it on the race track, they know it in Maranello and the good thing is that Ferrari has this manpower, this capacity to react.

"At the moment we are very limited – we cannot race people too much because the car is difficult in dirty air. We eat the tyres so it doesn't allow you to push in the race to overtake people or we need to tyre manage a lot. And this means in the race you are a bit stuck – you cannot play around too much."

There are a few ways of suppressing the car's appetite for Pirelli's finest rubber that Ferrari can take advantage of, but it's dependent on which school of wear the team struggles most with. Running a tyre for too long outside of the 'window' – the optimum range for peak performance – is going to have detrimental consequences for the tyre:





either through degradation of the compound through overheating, or graining while the tyre is too cold. For qualifying, the engineers command the drivers to do preparation laps in a certain way to anticipate slotting the tyres into that window for the bulk of the lap – but in a race, it's harder to keep the tyres there.

This is one of the key design traits that Red Bull appears to have going for it. With a stable aerodynamic platform, the RB19 appears to avoid any unnecessary pitch and roll, ensuring that the sprung mass does not stuff the tyres with load when there is a coupling effect. There are many other considerations too, such as set-up and mechanical loading, and Ferrari must strike a perfect balance between speed and tyre management to ensure that it can continue to progress.

## Reducing points waste

Many of the early derailments in Ferrari's bid to close the gap to Red Bull afflicted Leclerc in Bahrain, but the tremors were felt in the following rounds. The ignominy of a non-score at the Sakhir circuit when a podium looked nailed on will have hurt. But the resulting penalty for taking a third ECU, outside of the year's allowance, inflicted further pain and snatched away a front-row start two weeks later in Jeddah.

Leclerc's over-eagerness at the start of the Australian Grand Prix, when an attempt to go around the outside of Lance Stroll ended with the Ferrari in the gravel, wasted more points. Once



Poor points return so far means a clean race is essential next time out

NG



ETHERINGTON

Leclerc looked set for a podium in Bahrain – instead it was a DNF

Embarrassingly early bath for Leclerc after binning it in Melbourne

NG

again, the Ferrari was a podium contender, and the late restart at Albert Park offered Sainz the chance to break into the top three – at least, until he came to blows with Alonso. The time penalty that the younger Spaniard was handed dropped him out of the points, ensuring that the resources Ferrari expended in going to Australia were wasted at the end.

Ferrari thought it had a case with which to appeal the decision, citing a crash in 2014 at Montreal between Perez and Felipe Massa. Perez took the blame and a time penalty, and Force India – for which Perez drove at the time – submitted a right to review petition on the grounds that the drivers could not give evidence at the time. This was granted, since both Perez and Massa had not been able to go to the stewards' office because they were in the medical centre. It didn't matter to Ferrari that the 2014 decision was upheld in favour of Massa, but the team hoped that Sainz's testimony counted as new evidence. Ultimately, the FIA did not rescind Sainz's penalty.

This has left Ferrari to sit fourth in the constructors' table after three races, with Leclerc's only contribution coming with seventh in Jeddah. Ferrari is 78 points short of where it was at the same point last year, and much of that deficit has not come from a lack of performance. Despite a poor return of results, Vasseur is adamant that the drivers (particularly Leclerc) have not let their heads drop.

"I have absolutely no doubt about the motivation of Charles," he says. "For sure the start of the season is not ideal. We had the DNF in Bahrain and the penalty in Jeddah, and the DNF in Melbourne. It was not at all the plan. But the motivation is still there. You know that I have a good relationship with Charles. And this won't affect the mood."

"But when you are jumping on Charles or Carlos or any other drivers in the TV pen 30 seconds after the race, for sure they can't be happy. And I would be very frustrated if they were relaxed and happy with the situation. The most important thing for me is to keep everybody motivated, pushing in the same direction and they are supporting the team. The motivation is not an issue at all. For sure the results are not as expected. But we all know that."

The main target for this weekend's Azerbaijan GP will be a clean event. That's far easier said than done, but the race team must take each session step by step and focus on getting the basics right. Preparation for qualifying will certainly be of importance, but not as life-or-death as Melbourne given the strength of DRS along the Baku circuit's Neftchilar Avenue. For the drivers' part, they just need to avoid the walls. >>



*“It’s very easy to say that all teams should simply copy the best car in the field. It may not necessarily offer all the answers in the long term”*





## The SF-23 hasn't shown its full hand yet

Owing to the proliferation of issues that have pegged Ferrari back in the opening rounds of the season, it's fair to say that the full potential of the SF-23 has yet to be unleashed. Qualifying in Bahrain and Jeddah offered glimmers of impressive out-and-out speed, but it seems to be difficult for the team to consistently draw out. It, again, appears to relate to a lack of consistency in finding the best operating window for the tyres.

Looking at the GPS traces, the Ferrari does have clear strengths relative to the Red Bull and the Aston Martin, particularly in the low-speed corners. The RB19 is the best car in terms of dealing with anything at high speed, and can also build up lots of downforce in the medium-speed corners to cling onto the road. The AMR23, meanwhile, is a much stronger car in traction zones. Aston Martin has produced a draggier proposition than the Red Bull, but the team has the initial acceleration that could offer great opportunities at lower-speed circuits.

For everything else in between, the Ferrari seems to do quite well.

The car is very good on the brakes, and seems to be quite compliant in the slow-speed corners — a trait that the Ferrari lineage has possessed over the past few years. It also seems to, according to the traces, occupy the hinterland between Aston Martin and Red Bull in the acceleration stakes. Outright traction is not as strong as the Aston Martin but, once the AMR23's top speed tails off, the Ferrari is a quicker car until the Red Bull has built up its momentum. Extrapolating that, it's possible that the Ferrari could shine at the likes of Monaco and Hungary, depending on developments and the success of its high-downforce package.

These are, admittedly, situational strengths. Ferrari needs to do more than just be best outside of the Red Bull/Aston Martin Venn diagram. But those strengths exist; the car is not fundamentally flawed

in every facet, and perhaps Vasseur's keenness to persist with the current upgrade path will be justified.

It's very easy to say that all teams should simply copy the best car in the field; although it has been done before, to varying degrees of success, it may not necessarily offer all the answers in the long term. Ferrari may feel that its own concept is the best interpretation of the 2022-spec F1 regulations in the long term, but big-picture planning is difficult in an environment where the stopwatch and results are the only quantitative measures of success.

Whether the 2023 car offers a pathway to success, or a switch to a Red Bull-influenced concept for 2024 is in the offing, only Ferrari can make that call. A difficult start to the year should not result in kneejerk decisions, and Vasseur continues to assess the team's structure after coming in at the start of this year.

But it must not come to decide on its future purely based on pride, nor should it be afraid to make unpopular decisions in the interests of long-term success.

After all, Ferrari's title drought is reaching 15 years — and it must surely become apparent that sentimentality rarely offers positive results. 🍀

SF-23 is strong in  
low-speed corners  
and on the brakes

Vasseur believes  
upgrades in pipeline  
hold key to turnaround

### NEXT WEEK

## AZERBAIJAN GP

Can Ferrari come back fighting on the streets of Baku after Formula 1's surprise spring break?





# DIFFERENT CADILLAC, DIFFERENT STORY

*The American marque has taken a long and winding road to return to Le Mans. But its endurance racing tale is one of success at home as well as unfulfilled promise in France*

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport  
IMAGES**





Cadillac is back at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2023 after an absence of 21 years. It arrives on a wave of success in North American sportscar racing that began on its return to the prototype ranks in 2017 and is continuing into the new era with its latest V-Series.R LMDh. Comparisons with the Northstar LMP campaigns of 2000-02 somehow look fatuous.

The Northstar programme was disjointed and yielded merely a ninth-place finish at Le Mans and a handful of podiums in the American Le Mans Series. The current endeavour, by contrast, is built on stability and has been successful since the get-go.

It is already into its seventh season on the race track and has achieved a trio of drivers' and manufacturers' title doubles in the IMSA SportsCar Championship and four victories in the Daytona 24 Hours. Those successes were garnered with the V-R.DPi. It's successor, the new-for-2023 Caddy LMDh, has already notched up a victory in the Sebring 12 Hours. It was Cadillac's fifth since the introduction of its Daytona Prototype international.

Now the General Motors marque has the chance to make amends for its failures at Le Mans at the turn of the century. And it's serious about it. Until Porsche decided to field a third official Penske-run car at the French enduro, Cadillac was set to have the biggest presence on the Hypercar grid. Cadillac is only running one LMDh full-time in the World Endurance Championship with the Chip Ganassi Racing-run Cadillac Racing squad, but its entire fleet will be on hand at the big one in France. Ganassi will field a second entry for its regular IMSA crew, while Action Express Racing, winner at Sebring in March and a key component of its DPi era,

## BY THE NUMBERS

## CADILLAC AT LE MANS

9<sup>TH</sup>

Best finish

75%

Finishing rate

2000

Factory debut with Northstar  
LMP campaign

3

Full-factory  
campaigns

6.492

Seconds off the pace on debut in 2000



1950 Briggs Cunningham's  
standard sedan and 'Le Monstre'

*“Cadillac’s first official entry yielded less than that achieved by Briggs Cunningham”*

will travel to Le Mans for the first time with its IMSA line-up.

It won't be the biggest Cadillac entry at Le Mans, however. There were four Northstar LMPs on the grid in 2000: two full works cars run by Riley & Scott and two on a semi-works basis by DAMS. Which was all part of the problem. The marque spread its limited resources too thinly in year one of the programme. Put simply, Cadillac underestimated what was required when its name graced the Le Mans entry list for the first time since 1950, when US entrant Briggs Cunningham fielded two Caddys, including a machine dubbed 'Le Monstre' by locals for its outrageous looks.

Cadillac's first official participation yielded less than that achieved by the wealthy socialite with pockets to match his aspirations 50 years before. The three Northstars that saw the chequered flag filled out positions 19, 21 and 22.

The Northstar programme that started a quarter of a century ago was more three projects than one. That goes a long way to explaining its lack of success. Not only did Cadillac underestimate the size of the task, but it dithered when faced with the failings of the first car and, when the project was coming good, it was stopped in its tracks. The twin-turbo V8 powerplant developed by McLaren Engines in Detroit in the back of all three iterations of the Northstar wasn't a match for the best engines. It was generally reckoned that

Cadillac and its engine partner were too conservative.

Cadillac subsequently admitted that it got it wrong ahead of year one in 2000 with the original Northstar LMP, developed by Riley & Scott in North America. There was “a fairly significant misunderstanding of the culture and nature of European racing, particularly Le Mans”, said long-time GM Racing boss Herb Fishel in an interview with this author early in 2003. “Another thing was a failure to stand back and fully understand the competitive nature of that [sportscar] industry,” continued the architect of Cadillac's Le Mans entry.

Bill Riley, who led the programme, has admitted that he underestimated what was required. His team had taken one of its R&S MkIII World Sports Cars to Le Mans in 1996 in pursuit of the triple crown of endurance racing after winning at Daytona and Sebring. The programme with an Oldsmobile-badged V8 was the starting point for the Northstar project.

Within a year, Riley was in discussions with Fishel about taking Cadillac to Le Mans. The technical level of what became the Northstar LMP900 class contender and the budget were essentially set at 1997 levels. Le Mans, then as now, was entering a new era with increased manufacturer participation. The bar moved upwards, and then some when Audi produced the R8 LMP900 for 2000. >>



## CADILLAC AT LE MANS



**YOU MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN...** Long-time General Motors driver Ron Fellows was the first to sample the first-generation Northstar prototype. He drove the car at Sebring in September 1999 and had the chance to continue with the programme. He opted to “finish what I’d started with Corvette Racing”. The first-generation Corvette GTS/GT1 racer was already up and racing and was on course to go to Le Mans the following year. A year after that, the Canadian would score the first of his two class victories.



The reality was that Cadillac pitched up at Le Mans in 2000 with a car that was behind the times. Riley concedes that he made a mistake in not attending Le Mans in 1998, but also insists that he was given a bum steer by race organiser the Automobile Club de l’Ouest.

Riley was told that he couldn’t run a raised front section of the monocoque *a la* Formula 1, yet by the time he went back to Le Mans in 1999, it was *de rigueur* on the frontrunning cars. There was neither time nor money to react: the Caddy tubs were already in construction for the following year.

Fishel was casting his net far and wide as he reviewed the future of the project even before the 2000 race: he visited Prodrive on the way to the race and there were approaches to other organisations.

Cadillac ended up going with a new group put together by driver Wayne Taylor, who had long-standing links with GM, and his former boss at the Spice Engineering Group C squad, Jeff Hazell. The third member of the new set-up was designer Nigel Stroud, who was responsible for the 1991 Le Mans-winning Mazda 787B.

Hazell is almost certainly joking when he says he went to Tesco in Brackley to find a designer after his original first choice proved unavailable: “If you want an engineer you go to Tesco at lunchtime and that’s where I collared Nigel.”

Yet Hazell had been frank in the extreme in his discussions with Fishel. He admits today that he warned the GM big wig that the chances of beating Audi were slim. “I told him, ‘I probably can’t get you first and second, but I could get you third and fourth,’” he recalls. “Audi had taken a much higher view of it.”

Hazell also suggested that Cadillac take a year out from Le Mans to regroup for 2002. That wasn’t an option, according to the GM Racing boss. “I have learned over the years that if you get out of a programme it is extremely difficult to re-engage,” he explained in his Autosport interview 20 years ago. “The landscape changes too quickly.”

The contract with the new organisation, named 3GR, wasn’t in place until November 2000. Producing an all-new car for the following June wasn’t an option, so it reworked the Riley car, keeping little apart from the tub, the twin-turbo V8 and the Xtrac gearbox, while looking ahead to 2002 to produce an all-new contender. “We had one hand tied behind our backs from the beginning,” says Hazell. “We were compromised because we couldn’t get on with it [the new design]. We had 80% of the design team on the old car until March.”

The hurried nature of the programme meant 3GR contracted DAMS to run the cars at Le Mans. Its own race operation headquartered in Atlanta wouldn’t begin running the cars until after Le Mans when a short programme in the ALMS began. The revised car, the LMP-01, wasn’t on the pace, though one of them was running







**2020** Last of four consecutive Cadillac Daytona 24 Hours wins

fifth in the closing stages when clutch problems hit. A best result of 15th at Le Mans only proved that Cadillac was treading water.

The all-new machine, the LMP-02 conceived by Stroud, wasn't ready to test until January. Though a major step forward, it took time to show its promise. The Le Mans Test Day, then held the better part of two months before the race, was a disaster for Cadillac. The team would find a whopping 6.5 seconds between the test and the race as it overcame aerodynamic issues. Finally, in the late-season ALMS races Cadillac began to challenge Audi; there was a run of four podiums post-Le Mans.

Cadillac's Le Mans adventure had been signed off for three seasons, so it's not quite right to say that the axe fell on the programme. But there was an intent to extend it; Fishel had talked about that as early as Le Mans 2001. There was any number of

*“ORECA's Hugues de Chaunac sealed a partnership with Dallara, just beating Cadillac to the punch”*

options on the table to continue, including an ALMS-only campaign, the cars running on a privateer basis, and the Northstar engines going in the back of a Dallara chassis to be run by ORECA.

It wasn't Cadillac's first approach to Dallara, nor would it be the last. Caddy driver Max Angelelli, whose links with the Italian manufacturer stretched back to 1989 and the start of his marathon career in Formula 3, initiated a dialogue with the constructor on GM's behalf. It had a new LMP on the stocks, the SP1, but the design would become a Chrysler, not a Cadillac.

ORECA had stepped up to the prototype ranks with Reynard on the back of its successes with Chrysler's Dodge Viper. It had already announced plans to build its own car when it changed tack and company boss Hugues de Chaunac sealed a partnership with Dallara, just beating Cadillac to the punch. “The plan was to go with Dallara and I arranged that meeting,” recalls Angelelli. “When we went there Mr [Giampaolo] Dallara had already shaken hands with de Chaunac. He told us, ‘When I shake hands it means more than a contract.’”

Fast forward 15 years, and Cadillac and Dallara finally got together on the DPi programme, with Angelelli the man in the middle. IMSA had bought into the new ACO/FIA LMP2 concept and came up with a formula for its premier class whereby manufacturers would use their own engines rather than the one-make Gibson V8 and produce their own bodywork.

GM, incumbent in IMSA's top class with its Chevrolet Corvette-bodied Daytona Prototypes, was an early adopter. It was the first >>



**2002** Nigel Stroud with his LMP-02. It showed promise



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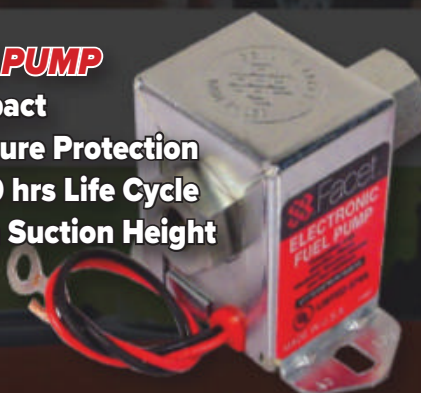


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**2023** Action Express delivered  
Cadillac Sebring 12 Hours glory

LEWITT

manufacturer to have a car up and running. Angelelli reveals that Dallara schemed different designs with different engines while it awaited a decision on which route would be chosen for the programme. That included staying with Chevrolet. “We didn’t know what the engine configuration was going to be and we didn’t want to lose time,” explains Angelelli. “That meant we were ready to go when the decision was made.”

Cadillac hadn’t stopped racing after the Northstar programme. It moved into the Sports Car Club of America’s Pirelli World Challenge, first with the four-door CTS-V, then the GT3-spec ATS-V.R. But DPi presented “the right moment” for the marque to return to the prototype ranks, according to Laura Wontrop Klauser, GM’s sportscar racing boss. “The decision was made to give Cadillac a chance to shine and we wanted to do it at the absolute pinnacle,” she says. “We’d been racing in GT, but it was time to take the next step.”

The rationale behind Cadillac’s programme remains unchanged today; or rather it was strengthened with the creation of a global category with the convergence process that allows a manufacturer to race the same machinery in the WEC and IMSA.

“The whole mission of the programme is to spread the Cadillac message and showcase the performance credentials of the brand,” explains Klauser. “Now we can do that globally. It really strengthened the opportunity and the desire to go with Cadillac. I’m not saying the programme wouldn’t have continued if there hadn’t been a wider platform because North America is where

*“North America is where we sell the majority of our cars, but the global side of LMDh made it appealing”*

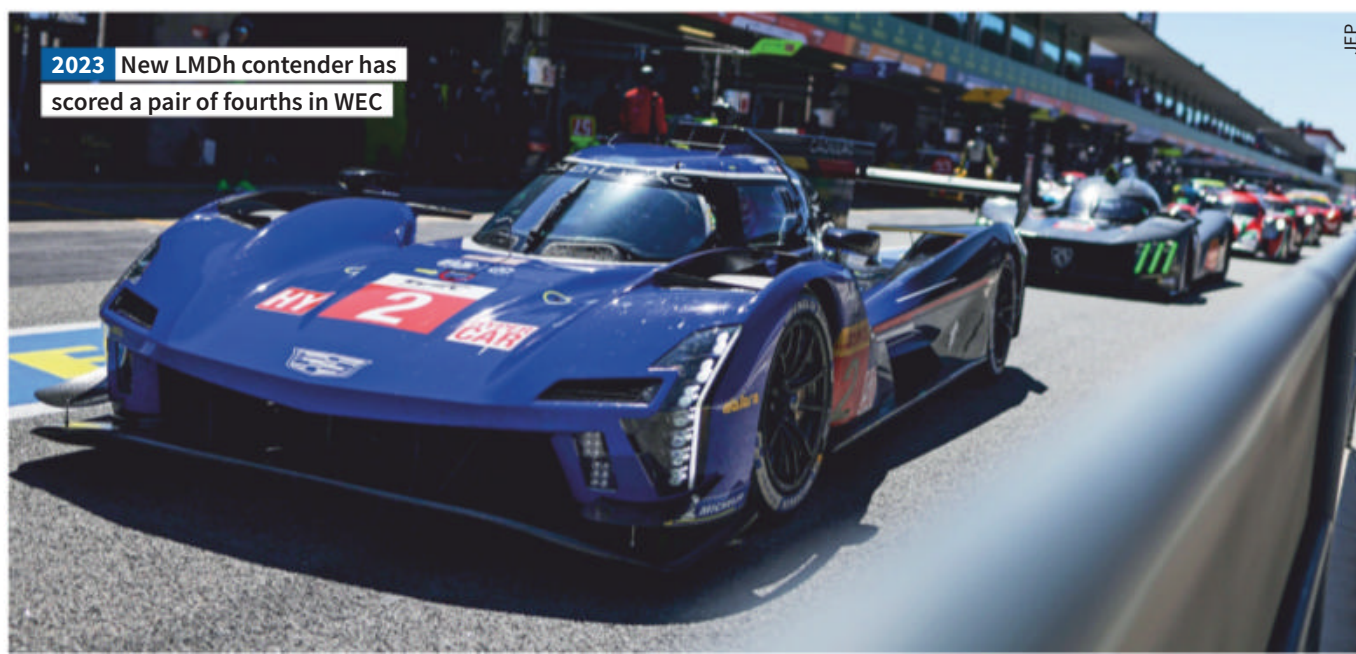
we sell the majority of our cars, but the global side of LMDh is what really made it appealing.”

The latest Caddy has already proved its credentials. A 3-4 finish first time out for the Chip Ganassi Racing squad at Daytona in January was followed up by victory for Action Express Racing at Sebring six weeks later. Over in the WEC, Cadillac hasn’t collected any silverware as yet, but it was close in the opening two rounds.

A late penalty didn’t help the cause of Earl Bamber in his efforts to catch the third-placed Ferrari at the Sebring 1000 Miles in March. Bamber and team-mates Alex Lynn and Richard Westbrook ended up fourth again at the Portimao 6 Hours this month on the first run for the V-Series.R on European asphalt – the car had not so much as tested on this side of the Pond. A safety-car interlude with an hour to go undid a strategy enforced on the Ganassi team after Westbrook flat-spotted a tyre locking up as he braked to avoid a dawdling Peugeot. The solo Caddy would most likely have been the first LMDh home ahead of Porsche but for the late caution.

Caddy’s focus was on racking up the miles in North America prior to Daytona, but now it is ramping up its European-based campaign. Action Express is joining Ganassi at the Spa WEC round this weekend, and then there will finally be some European testing when Ganassi returns to the Algarve circuit in the wake of the final pre-Le Mans WEC round.

Cadillac knows there is work to do between now and Le Mans, but it also knows where there are gains to be made in the weeks ahead of the big one. Says Bamber: “There’s plenty of low-hanging fruit.” ❧



**2023** New LMDh contender has  
scored a pair of fourths in WEC

JEP



# UNITED TO BEAT THE BEST

*It started as a bit of fun in GT3, but now United Autosports is one of the world's top endurance teams and has big ambitions*

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY UNITED AUTOSPORTS AND JEP 

**I**'d like to say it was mapped out and planned, but it wasn't. We only intended to get a race trailer and GT3 Audi, and have some fun. I sometimes wonder how we ended up here!"

Ex-Formula 3000 and endurance racer Richard Dean is pretty honest about the modest origins of the United Autosports squad he set up with current McLaren boss Zak Brown in 2009. It may only have been intended to allow them to race in GT3, but the team must now be regarded as one of the leading privateers in international motorsport. The 2019-20 World Endurance LMP2 title and class success in the Le Mans 24 Hours top its list of achievements, and United currently sits atop the WEC LMP2 points table after a 1-2 in Portugal earlier this month, against heavyweights WRT and Prema as well as reigning class champion Jota.

United currently employs 60 full-time members of staff (which increases to almost 150 at major events) at its impressive 62,000sq ft Wakefield headquarters, where it has been based for nearly four years, and competes in multiple series. It has an Extreme E involvement with Andretti, plus Australian Supercars as a part-owner in the Walkinshaw Andretti United Ford squad, and regularly competes in the IMSA SportsCar series.

It's also much more than just a race team — it restores and prepares historic machinery, including Brown's personal collection, has its own carbon shop for repairs on LMP2 and LMP3 cars, an in-house

wrapper, and is dabbling in classic road-car restorations.

"There are so many very strong teams and really good people in motorsport," says Dean. "It's a tough place to stand out. Race wins are so important for the survival of your business. If you're winning, you're popular and the phone's ringing. You need the best drivers and best budgets to win, but how do you get those if you're not already winning? The other parts of the business allow you to do a better job and financially give you a lot more stability."

United was a consistent frontrunner in GT competition, particularly in Britain, and dabbled in the British Touring Car Championship, but Dean believes the catalyst for the team's expansion was the arrival of LMP3 — and being at the right place at the right time. "We decided to do LMP3 with Ligier, and Ligier was the car to have," explains Dean, whose old unit was opposite Ginetta, so he had an early introduction to LMP3.

Success came quickly. United took both the LMP3 teams' and drivers' (Alex Brundle, Christian England and Mike Guasch) titles in the 2016 European Le Mans Series. It also made an important off-track move. "We were having success but there was also significant investment from [Ligier company owners] Pierre and Jacques Nicolet," explains Dean. "LMP3 took off and they had a lot of enquiries from the UK. It was clear they didn't have a UK agent and weren't set up to support so many customers, so I just asked, 'How about we be the UK agent?'"

"That was the trigger and realisation that race teams are one thing, but you can complement the business with a motorsport-related

United Autosports is a major LMP2 player with its distinctive ORECA-Gibson 07s







Algarve 1-2 was latest World Enduro success

product. Suddenly, if you’re having a bad race result you’ve still got some income and stability from other streams of motorsport.”

The ELMS success was key because it meant United won a Le Mans entry, “which we thought was a good idea”. It took a Ligier JSP217 and had a faultless run to fourth in LMP2 and fifth overall in 2017, the same year United again did the LMP3 ELMS double. It also stepped into LMP2 in the same series and scored two victories, including first time out at Silverstone with Filipe Albuquerque, Will Owen and Hugo de Sadeleer.

“We won LMP2 and LMP3 on the same day – it was a dream start,” says Dean, who believes LMP3 deserves more credit. “It’s an incredible series, incredibly affordable – €249,000 ready to go to the track. It’s

a high level of performance, incredibly safe, and goes to great tracks. Look at how many drivers and teams have come through that into LMP2. It was definitely the springboard for us.”

It’s United’s success in LMP2 that has grabbed attention. After finding it increasingly difficult to take on the ORECA hordes with the Ligier, notwithstanding an Asian Le Mans Series title in 2018-19, United switched to the ORECA 07 during 2019 and immediately became more of a threat.

The 2019-20 World Endurance ‘superseason’ was perhaps United’s biggest highlight so far. Albuquerque, Phil Hanson and Paul di Resta won LMP2 in four of the eight rounds to take the title in a campaign topped by class victory at the 2020 Le Mans 24 Hours. “Le Mans takes some beating,” enthuses Dean. “It’s addictive; we want to win it again. It’s annoying me that we haven’t so we are having a big push.

“With regards to the historics side of the business, people are more inclined to give us a restoration project because we’ve won the WEC and Le Mans. It improves your credentials and helps credibility. It helps everywhere.”

Remarkably, United also took ELMS title doubles in LMP2 and LMP3 – the only team ever to have done so – in 2020. Since then, the quality of LMP2 competition has kept increasing. GT3 king WRT stole the show in 2021, while single-seater powerhouse Prema arrived last year. This season the Signatech team is back for one campaign before returning to the top class with Alpine. >>

UNITED AUTOSPORTS HIGHLIGHTS



YEAR	RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS
2022	1 win in WEC LMP2 (ORECA), 1 win in ELMS LMP2 (ORECA) and 1 win in ELMS LMP3 (Ligier), 2 wins in ALMS LMP2 (ORECA)
2021	Drivers’ and teams’ titles in European GT4 Silver Cup (McLaren), 2 wins in WEC LMP2 and 1 win in ELMS LMP2 and 4th in LMP2 at Le Mans 24 Hours (ORECA)
2020	Drivers’ and teams’ titles in ELMS LMP2 (ORECA) and LMP3 (Ligier)
2019-20	Drivers’ and teams’ titles in WEC LMP2 and 1st in LMP2 at Le Mans 24 Hours (ORECA)
2019	1 win in ELMS LMP2 (ORECA)
2018-19	Drivers’ and teams’ titles in ALMS LMP2 (Ligier)
2018	2 wins in ELMS LMP2, 4th in Daytona 24 Hours and 3rd in LMP2 at Le Mans 24 Hours (Ligier), 2 wins in ELMS LMP3 (Ligier)
2017	Drivers’ and teams’ titles in ELMS LMP3 (Ligier), 2 wins in ELMS LMP2 and 4th in LMP2 at Le Mans 24 Hours (Ligier)
2016	Drivers’ and teams’ titles in ELMS LMP3 (Ligier)
2014	Titles in GT Cup (McLaren) and Ginetta GT4 Supercup, 14th in BTCC (Toyota)
2013	1 win in British GT (Audi), Matt Bell/Mark Patterson 2nd in points
2012	3 wins in British GT (McLaren), Matt Bell/Charles Bateman 3rd in points
2011	4th in Daytona 24 Hours (Riley), 1 win in British GT (Audi)
2010	3rd in GT3 in Spa 24 Hours (Audi)







A lot of LMP2 and LMP3 work is done in-house



Dean now heads up a big squad



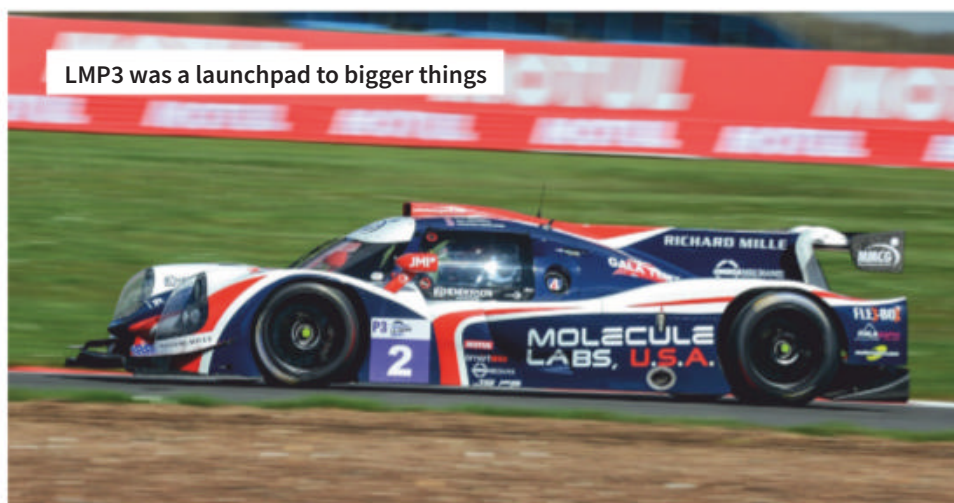
First British GT win came with Audi R8 at Snetterton in 2011



LMP2-LMP3 double at 2017 Silverstone ELMS



Andreasen is a big signing for UA



LMP3 was a launchpad to bigger things



Just a bit of Zak Brown's collection



LMP2 win at 2020 Le Mans a major highlight



Leading the other LMP2 big guns at Sebring



Dean believes such opposition is a positive, even if it means scoring eight consecutive LMP2 wins across the ELMS and WEC, as United did in 2019–20, is less likely. “We perhaps raised the level when we moved to ORECA and had a dominant season, then WRT and Prema came in and continued to raise the level,” he says. “WRT are winning everything in GT3 and have been for a number of years, Prema have been winning everything in single-seaters, so it’s great to measure yourself against them. We’ve won a race every year we’ve been in LMP2. Winning Sebring in 2022 against these teams makes it all the more rewarding.

“We’ve all got this ambition to go another step, and the more these teams add credibility to the series the more seriously people can take you – you’ve been tested against the very best.”

Such competition also brings new demands, which is where the added financial security of UA’s wider activities can again help. “We don’t really consider ourselves as just a race team now, we’re a motorsport business,” explains Dean, who points to the benefits of shared overheads, such as buildings and staff, across different projects. “Motorsport moves quickly all the time and there are always new things to invest in, new regulations etc. You’ve got to find a way to get budget.

“We have several race teams, they are our flagships and we’re all still racers. A lot of who we employ are here to make the cars go faster and win races, so when they are knocking on your office door saying, ‘If we invest in this – another day of testing, another day on a seven-post rig, buy the latest simulation software...’, it’s very hard to say no. You’ve got to find a way of funding it. Having this motorsport business allows us to take a view on a project, invest up front and remain competitive.”

LMP2 used to be as high as a privateer could go and undoubtedly helped the team’s profile, but Dean now has his sights on the next step. The arrival of Hypercars and the lower-cost LMDh route into the top class has brought the potential of new manufacturer deals or running a car as a privateer, as Jota and Proton are doing with their Porsche 963s.

“To win Le Mans, a world championship or the IMSA series outright is the ambition,” asserts Dean. “From a business perspective, to enter a multi-year agreement to run or be involved with a factory programme – it’s got to be a goal. Once you’ve done a factory deal you’re probably more likely to get another one or extension and you can invest more into your people and the business, which makes you even stronger.”

Dean admits that he has been speaking with “a few manufacturers” since 2019 and has helped some with studies: “We’re here and available and we’re continuing to talk. We’ve got pretty close, but then you get

people like Penske and AF Corse and WRT, there’s a lot of tough competition. And a lot of them have relationships with manufacturers, like Porsche and Penske, AF Corse and Ferrari, Rahal and BMW. They’re difficult to break down and get a foot in the door.”

Dean is not so keen to go down the privateer route but hasn’t ruled it out. “If you could fund it and beat Penske you’d definitely get attention, but those two things are pretty big obstacles,” he points out. “It’s interesting to see if Jota can go and compete – that’s a good team that has access to the right equipment.

“The priority is a factory programme, but if you can’t do it that way then you’ve got to look at every option. It’s not something we’re pursuing seriously at the moment – the privateer approach. We’re watching with interest.”

In the meantime, the build-up continues. United Autosports already had long-time Williams manager Dickie Stanford and Charlie Kemp,

***“You’ve got to hope that the racing is going to be close in the top class. Le Mans is only going to get bigger”***

whose successful HHC Motorsport operation joined United for 2021 and immediately took European GT4 title success, and is still attracting talent. Its new technical director is ex-McLaren and Toyota man Jakob Andreassen. He joined the day after last year’s Fuji WEC round.

“We’ve challenged Jakob with raising ourselves to the task of the new competition and making ourselves factory-ready, ensuring we have the latest tools and technology,” says Dean. “That’s a big investment for us, a man of his level and ability. He’s here not just to make the cars go faster but to help structure the team and how we manage this number of people effectively. Jakob is one of many new appointments and structures we’re putting in place. When you start getting bigger and bigger, you enter new ground.

“There’s been exciting racing in LMP2, you’ve got to hope that the racing is going to be close in the top class. It’s an exciting time to be in sportscars and Le Mans is only going to get bigger. We’re trying to make ourselves factory programme-ready.”

## HELPING TO FIND THE NEXT BRITISH STARS

Last year was United Autosports’ first official involvement with the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award, running the LMP3 Ligier that provides a different challenge for the British single-seater talents.

Wayne Boyd was on benchmark driving duties and the team provided the judges with feedback on eventual winner Luke Browning, Ollie Bearman, Jamie Chadwick and Louis Foster. Along with the data from the MotorSport Vision-run Formula 2 and Beechdean Motorsport GT3 Aston Martin, the running provides the meat of the assessment.

“Ligier had asked before but we couldn’t do it because the tests clashed with Portimao ELMS, so Ligier did it themselves,” says Richard Dean. “But they’re not really into operating a car so they asked me again.”

Both Dean and Charlie Kemp, who oversaw the car at the Silverstone tests, have worked with many young drivers in various series



over the years – from Formula Ford to Ginetta Junior – so had a keen interest in the process led by ex-Formula 1 racer Derek Warwick.

“I’ve known Derek forever and it was just an easy process and enjoyable,” says Dean. “So many people at United have worked with young drivers. My JLR days when we ran Justin Wilson and Dan Wheldon, all these drivers that had been nominated in the past.

“We’ve been through that process from the other side and we know how important it is for those drivers and motorsport. It’s a nice thing to do and see it from a different perspective.

“All through my career in motor racing the Autosport Awards has been *the* motorsport event of the year worldwide and the young driver Award has been so crucial, so it was nice to play a part in it.”



# RACE CENTRE





# Evans ends his drought on sombre event for rallying

*The victorious Toyota driver was in no mood to celebrate an overdue win on a weekend when all were still raw from the loss of Craig Breen*

TOM HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN

**“T**he most important thing is that everybody is here to drive for Craig Breen,” uttered world champion Kalle Rovanpera. That was the objective as the World Rally Championship headed to Croatia mourning the loss of the much-loved Hyundai driver following a tragic pre-event testing crash.

The title race was very much secondary to honouring and celebrating the 33-year-old Irishman. Putting on a show that Breen would have wanted was paramount. It was perhaps fitting that Toyota’s Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin, the co-driver who guided Breen to his first WRC podium in 2016, came through in emotional scenes to end an 18-month WRC victory drought.

The news of Breen’s death in preparation for Croatia rocked the rally community, but it was united in its grief and determination to deliver a tribute to the nine-time WRC podium finisher. Hyundai had contemplated whether it should compete in the event at all but, after discussing the situation with Breen’s family and his surviving co-driver James Fulton, it was decided that Craig would have wanted the show to go on. After such harrowing events only a few days earlier, many wanted to see Hyundai emerge victorious with either Thierry Neuville or Esapekka Lappi from its reduced two-car line-up.

The motorsport family has become a cliché over the years, but it was never more visible than in the Croatia service park. Following the news that Hyundai would be one car short, rival Toyota reminded everyone that true sportsmanship still exists, announcing it would register only Rovanpera and Sebastien Ogier of its three factory cars to score manufacturer points. A magnanimous gesture.

The raw emotion was all too clear when the crews climbed aboard the cars for Thursday shakedown two days after Breen was laid to rest. All eyes were drawn to the Irish tricolour-liveried Hyundais

that had been freshly wrapped just hours before with a perfect tribute. Following Hyundai’s lead, all crews participating carried some form of tribute on their cars to honour Breen.

The mental challenge with which the drivers grappled in order to compete was all too clear in shakedown as Lappi logged his first run with tears in his eyes. “The car looks amazing – the team did an amazing job to make it look like this at such short notice,” said Lappi. “I said to Janne [Ferm, co-driver] that I was shaking at the finish line, and not because I pushed hard. Every one of us takes it in different ways and for me it’s tough.”

But it was M-Sport’s Ott Tanak who summed up the general

**“It’s difficult, it’s demanding and it’s so hard for all of us. It’s empty inside. But we keep going”**

feeling of the rally community after one of its darkest weeks. “It’s difficult, it’s demanding and it’s so hard for all of us,” he said. “It’s empty inside and it’s eating us alive. It’s tough, but I promised to give a smile to Jackie [Breen’s mother]. We keep going.”

Applying a Breen-style smile through the pain was a request from the family. Adhering to one of the late Irishman’s mantras – “Don’t forget to enjoy, you have to have fun, life is too short” – emblazoned on the doors of the Hyundais was a sentiment Neuville felt was important to show. “I know there is a message that we need to transmit now, not only for ourselves but for other people,” he said shortly before the entire service park came >>

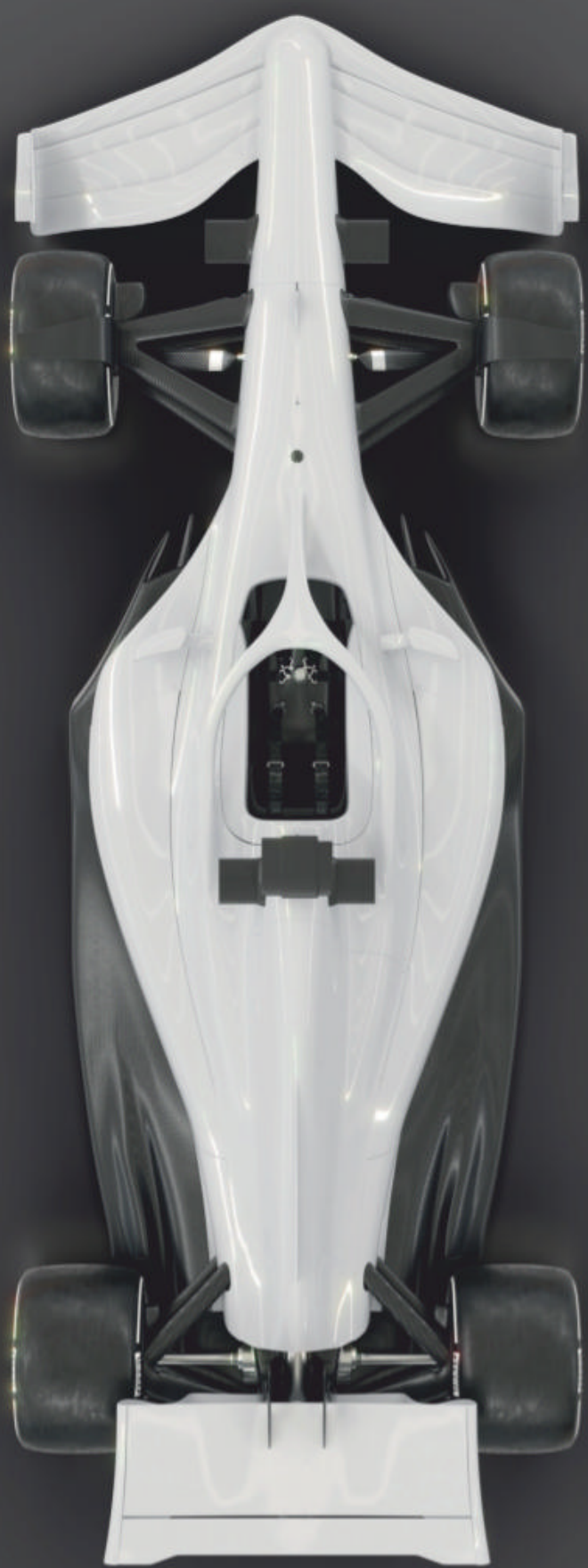


Crews gathered for a minute's silence



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## “I will never forget it as Craig’s mother took my face in her hands and said, ‘I want to see you smile’”

together for an emotional group photo to pay tribute to Breen alongside the car he would have driven. “It is something that I have realised that we have often forgotten over the past years. First of all, we need to have fun, and I think that was one of the strongest messages he was transmitting.

“I had the chance to go to Ireland this week and meet Craig’s family, to see his mother. I will never forget it as she took my face in her two hands and said, ‘I want to see you smile, Craig was smiling most of the time and you guys need to transmit that message to the people out there.’”

Neuville lived up to that message and it was the Belgian who was smiling come the end of Friday’s eight asphalt stages after emerging with a 5.7-second lead over Evans. It was a small beacon of hope for a team that had worked tirelessly through its darkest hours to prepare for the event.

“It is a small sign of light and a welcome one because the whole team has had to put in a big effort to be here,” offered Hyundai team principal Cyril Abiteboul. “There were a lot of logistical challenges and emotional challenges, so it is good, but it is only day one.”

It wasn’t an easy lead to build since Neuville, who clouted a hay bale marking a chicane in stage two, was fighting the car and had to drive on the limit to navigate around set-up deficiencies. It was clear that Toyota and the M-Sport Ford of Tanak would put up a strong fight. “It was a big relief when we crossed the finish line and



Tanak cursed (literally) his various issues on way to second place





His car in fresh Irish colours, Neuville gave it his all, but it wasn't to be

we found out we were still in the lead, so that is very positive,” said Neuville after Evans had slashed a 16.1s lead across the afternoon. “This morning was really tough and we changed the dampers and so on and I got a bit more comfortable, but I feel like I can't go for the last couple of tenths that makes the difference at the end, and Elfyn was always able to go slightly faster than me. But we still have the lead and that is the thing to remember.”

Despite completing only one shakedown run due a turbo issue, Evans had emerged as the lead Toyota after both Ogier and Rovanner fell foul of a pothole on stage two on Friday morning. The pair were wary that the rougher asphalt roads and cuts would require more puncture management than in previous years. But in avoiding taking a cut to preserve their tyres, they hit a compression that broke a wheel on each of their GR Yaris Rally1s. “I avoided the cuts as much as I could but it was just the compression. What can I do?” asked Ogier.

A quick change in the stage realistically ended their hopes of victory on the spot. Starting first on the road, Ogier faced the best road conditions that became progressively worse by gravel being dragged onto the surface and was leading the rally, but lost a minute and a half in the change. Rovanner, who was also struggling with his car's handling, shipped more than two minutes, sending him outside the top 10. It would also transpire that in Ogier's swift change, he and co-driver Vincent Landais failed to fasten their safety belts sufficiently before setting off, resulting in a one-minute penalty. That dropped the pair to seventh overall.

Changeable weather threw crews a curveball when light rain arrived. It prompted Tanak, his M-Sport team-mate Pierre-Louis Loubet and Toyota's Takamoto Katsuta to fit two wet tyres for the afternoon stages. It proved to be the wrong call because the conditions were not wet enough.

Lappi bravely stuck to the team's weather and dry-tyre call and inherited third from Tanak, who was also finding it difficult to find the sweet spot in his Ford Puma. Tanak did wrestle the position back from Lappi, and 3.4s separated the pair heading into Saturday.

The victory that Neuville and so many wanted to see wasn't to be. He misjudged a braking point by 50 centimetres at a long right-hander in stage 11, which resulted in his Hyundai i20 N clipping a piece of concrete on the exit, damaging his left-rear suspension. The dream was over.

“When you are fighting for victory a small mistake can have huge consequences,” said a clearly disappointed Neuville. “We need to live with that. I think we were all dreaming about the victory this weekend and we know for what reason – we were close but to be honest it hasn't been easy in the car all weekend and we were fighting hard to keep believing and dreaming, but unfortunately it ended too early.”

This elevated Evans into a 19.1s lead from Tanak, with Lappi in »

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the sole remaining Hyundai slotting into third.

Evans had a wild moment of his own, and was lucky that his slide only resulted in his GR Yaris skimming a barrier in stage 12: “I don’t want it to be much closer now but it was OK. You could have touched it and got away with it but I really wouldn’t want to try.”

The afternoon developed into a head-to-head between Evans and Tanak, with the Toyota man struggling for confidence behind the wheel. Tanak was growing in confidence as he cut the deficit to 12.5s heading into the day’s penultimate stage. But the Estonian’s charge was halted by a transmission problem and hydraulic issue that restricted the use of his handbrake in stage 15.

“Quite a f\*\*\*\*\* disaster – handbrake is not working and things like this so it is tricky when it is shitty like this,” said a frustrated Tanak at stage end before elaborating further in service park. “We have quite a few things [going on] so it is definitely good to be here [in service park].”

Tanak faced a 25.4s deficit heading into the final day, and felt it was the Toyota driver’s victory to lose. Evans on the other hand wasn’t taking anything for granted after a difficult day of his own. “I wasn’t really happy with my afternoon to be honest and probably the worst I have felt through the weekend to this point, especially that first long stage after service, I couldn’t get any confidence,” he recounted. “It’s only a spin or a puncture or whatever, it [the lead] is nothing, so we still have to get on with the job and still drive at the same pace.”

Further down the leaderboard, head-to-head battle raged between the recovering Ogier and Rovanperä, who had now found the sweet spot in his GR Yaris and benefited from being first on the road. Rovanperä chalked up four stage wins to Ogier’s three to end the day 2.0s adrift of his veteran part-time team-mate in the battle



## “We really wanted that victory – we wanted to make Craig proud – but we missed the opportunity”

for fourth overall. Ogier’s day was hampered by a further drama that cost him a 10s penalty for checking into stage nine late. This was caused by a mistake made by the team in service that rendered his car “undriveable” and required Ogier to summon his mechanic skills to attempt a fix on a road section.

“It is satisfying that the speed is there and we are clearly the fastest this weekend again, but at the end of the day the most important thing is to win rallies and not being just the fastest,” said a frustrated Ogier.

Desperate not to let this victory chance slip, Evans adopted a measured approach for Sunday’s final four stages. With Tanak hinting that he was happy to nurse his Puma to the finish, Evans extended his lead before ultimately sealing an emotional win by a comfortable 27.0s from Tanak. Lappi represented Hyundai on the podium in third, 58.6s adrift to offer the team some consolation for the incredible effort undertaken to get through this rally.

But for Evans and Martin, the emotions bottled up from a mentally challenging week boiled over as they crossed the finish line for their first win since Finland in October 2021. “It feels so insignificant now, that’s the bottom line,” said a clearly emotional Evans before taking an Irish flag to stand on the podium, where a minute’s silence was held. “We’ve been working towards this for a long time but it’s surprising how little it means just at the moment. We’re back to missing our friend after the real focus on the weekend, and straight away after crossing the finish line that’s all we can think about.”

The victory moved Evans to the top of the championship, tied on points with Ogier, with Rovanperä a point further back after coming through the battle of the world champions to claim fourth. “A difficult weekend – and I need to prepare better on the set-up side,” he said. “We cannot start rallies like this.”

Behind Ogier came Katsuta and Loubet, the last-named also having battled issues with his Puma. Yohan Rossel’s Citroen won WRC2 in eighth overall.

Although heartbroken after failing to take the win for Hyundai, Neuville, who rejoined the action on Sunday, channeled his emotions into a truly mesmerising maximum-attack run to win the Power Stage, which he dedicated to Breen. “I am so disappointed for the team and for us after everything that happened,” he said. “We really wanted that victory – we wanted to make Craig proud – but we missed the opportunity. We gave it everything in here. I didn’t care about the car, I just went for it. This one was for Craig.”



## A VICTORY DEDICATED TO BREEN

Elfyn Evans had “mixed emotions” following an important drought-ending World Rally Championship win in Croatia held just days after the death of friend and rival Craig Breen.

Evans labelled the win as “insignificant” after he crossed the finish line at the final stage. Reflecting on the moment, the Welshman admitted that he was relieved to win, but also proud of how the rally community has pulled together to pay tribute to Breen.

“Pretty mixed emotions obviously and it’s back to the reality now after being fully focused on the rally weekend,” said Evans. “It’s pretty difficult to know what is the right thing to say. It’s been a tough week for everybody. The whole WRC family can be proud of how everyone has come together and paid tribute to Craig. It’s a great showing of his character and how liked he was around the service park.

“The competition went on as usual, it’s for sure what Craig would have wanted. We went to see the family last week and it was their wish that we made sure to enjoy ourselves. We promised that we would and we’re able to do that, but now it’s all over our thoughts turn to them now.”

Co-driver Scott Martin dedicated the victory to Breen, for whom he navigated from 2014-18. “It’s really emotional,” he said. “The emotions, I managed to keep tucked away for most of the weekend, but crossing the finish line they all came flooding through.

“As we know it has hit the rally community hard and we were all together really and got through this together, and it’s really nice and special to win it. It’s something I will never forget.

“This is for him. He has been with us, with me, watching over us all this weekend. I can’t put it into words how special it is. I think it will take a few days, weeks and months for it all to soak in.”

## RESULTS ROUND 4/13, RALLY CROATIA, 20-23 APRIL

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	<b>Elfyn Evans</b> (GBR) <b>Scott Martin</b> (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	2h50m54.4s
2	<b>Ott Tanak</b> (EST) <b>Martin Jarveoja</b> (EST)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+26.9s
3	<b>Esapekka Lappi</b> (FIN) <b>Janne Ferm</b> (FIN)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+58.5s
4	<b>Kalle Rovanpera</b> (FIN) <b>Jonne Halttunen</b> (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1m18.3s
5	<b>Sebastien Ogier</b> (FRA) <b>Vincent Landais</b> (FRA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1m27.9s
6	<b>Takamoto Katsuta</b> (JPN) <b>Aaron Johnston</b> (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+2m22.5s
7	<b>Pierre-Louis Loubet</b> (FRA) <b>Nicolas Gilsoul</b> (BEL)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+4m22.5s
8	<b>Yohan Rossel</b> (FRA) <b>Arnaud Dunand</b> (FRA)	PH Sport / Citroen C3 Rally2	+7m51.2s
9	<b>Nikolay Gryazin</b> (RUS) <b>Konstantin Aleksandrov</b> (RUS)	Toksport WRT 2 / Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+8m07.4s
10	<b>Oliver Solberg</b> (SWE) <b>Elliott Edmondson</b> (GBR)	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+9m16.7s

### OTHERS

33	<b>Thierry Neuville</b> (BEL) <b>Martijn Wydaeghe</b> (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+58m59.9s
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## STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 <b>Mali Lipovec - Grdanjci 1</b> (11.93 miles)	Ogier 11m57.7s	<b>Ogier</b>	Neuville +2.6s
SS2 <b>Stojdraga - Hartje 1</b> (15.95 miles)	Neuville 15m18.1s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +13.9s
SS3 <b>Krasic - Vrskovac 1</b> (6.90 miles)	Ogier 5m30.8s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +16.4s
SS4 <b>Pecurkovo Brdo - Mreznicki Novaki 1</b> (5.66 miles)	Ogier 4m48.2s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +16.1s
SS5 <b>Mali Lipovec - Grdanjci 2</b> (11.93 miles)	Ogier 12m06.8s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +13.7s
SS6 <b>Stojdraga - Hartje 2</b> (15.95 miles)	Lappi 15m33.3s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +8.0s
SS7 <b>Krasic - Vrskovac 2</b> (6.90 miles)	Tanak 5m29.1s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +8.4s
SS8 <b>Pecurkovo Brdo - Mreznicki Novaki 2</b> (5.66 miles)	Evans 4m56.3s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +5.7s
SS9 <b>Kostanjevac - Petrus Vrh 1</b> (14.76 miles)	Rovanpera 12m43.6s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +10.5s
SS10 <b>Vinski Vrh - Duga Resa 1</b> (5.46 miles)	Rovanpera 4m30.3s	<b>Neuville</b>	Evans +10.8s
SS11 <b>Ravna Gora - Skrad 1</b> (6.29 miles)	Rovanpera 5m47.9s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +19.1s
SS12 <b>Platak 1</b> (9.71 miles)	Ogier 8m22.9s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +22.6s
SS13 <b>Kostanjevac - Petrus Vrh 2</b> (14.76 miles)	Ogier 12m55.0s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +15.9s
SS14 <b>Vinski Vrh - Duga Resa 2</b> (5.46 miles)	Tanak 4m32.2s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +12.5s
SS15 <b>Ravna Gora - Skrad 2</b> (6.29 miles)	Rovanpera 5m50.6s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +16.8s
SS16 <b>Platak 2</b> (9.71 miles)	Ogier 8m28.0s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +25.4s
SS17 <b>Trakoscan - Vrbno 1</b> (8.17 miles)	Rovanpera 6m56.5s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +30.5s
SS18 <b>Zagorska Sela - Kumrovec 1</b> (8.76 miles)	Neuville 8m08.2s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +29.2s
SS19 <b>Trakoscan - Vrbno 2</b> (8.17 miles)	Rovanpera 7m02.5s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +28.1s
SS20 <b>Zagorska Sela - Kumrovec 2</b> (Wolf Power Stage) (8.76 miles)	Neuville 8m06.5s	<b>Evans</b>	Tanak +27.0s

**DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Ogier 69;  
2 Evans 69; 3 Rovanpera 68; 4 Tanak 65;  
5 Neuville 58; 6 Lappi 31; 7 Breen 19;  
8 Katsuta 18; 9 Sordo 17; 10 Loubet 14.

**MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP**  
1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 161;  
2 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 132;  
3 M-Sport Ford WRT 108.

## NEXT REPORT

**RALLY PORTUGAL**  
**18 MAY ISSUE**





# Kiwis storm to the front in Berlin

*Jaguar-powered Mitch Evans and Nick Cassidy kept the New Zealand end up*

STEFAN MACKLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

**W**hile not short of motorsport heritage, it's fair to suggest that New Zealand doesn't quite have the same lineage as some other nations around the globe when it comes to high-profile success on the world stage (we reckon it's pretty good for a country with a population of just over five million, but continue! — ed).

Yet last weekend at the Berlin E-Prix double-header, the country took Formula E by storm courtesy of Mitch Evans and Nick Cassidy. Both scored a win to propel themselves firmly into a title battle that is finely poised heading into the second half of the 16-race season.

While the all Jaguar-powered podium in Brazil last month might have appeared a one-off to some during a season largely dominated by Porsche, the narrative firmly shifted in favour of the Big Cats with the double-header in Germany. The British marque locked out the front row on Saturday courtesy of Sebastien Buemi's Envision Racing machine, his 16th Formula E pole and a new series record, with Sam Bird alongside. But Bird's Jaguar team-mate Evans, who won last time out in Sao Paulo, was down in ninth and had missed out on a spot in the qualifying duels. Not that it mattered to the Kiwi, who admitted that "if you start in the top 10 you're still within shot of a good result as we've seen in the past few races".

As had been the case in Sao Paulo, the opening salvo at the Tempelhof Airport circuit turned into something resembling a stage of the Tour de France, with drivers leading before dropping back into the peloton so as not to punch a hole in the air for the cars behind and allowing them to save energy. This style of racing generated eight



Consecutive wins for Evans have pushed him up the points table

different leaders via 23 changes for the lead and, come the end of the race, 190 passes in total. It meant that as early as lap 17 Evans found himself at the front of the pack before falling back. Approaching the final segment of the race, it became clear that the Jaguar power units were once again the ones to have as Buemi led from Bird and Evans.

The pivotal moment came on lap 39 out of 43 — the race distance extended by three laps following two earlier safety-car periods — as Bird began to pressure Buemi for the lead. The Briton looked to the inside of the Turn 9 right-hand hairpin, which the 2015-16 Formula E champion covered off, but moving to the inside allowed Evans a clear run on the outside line. He then pulled alongside Bird into the braking zone and the pair ran side by side through the corner before Evans completed the pass on the run to the final turn. Sensing this was the key moment of the race, Evans then immediately pounced on Buemi into



Strong start by Ticktum (left) gained him an early lead in Saturday race

GALLOWAY





BAGNALL

## “I knew it was going to be chaos but that was on another level. It was a bit extreme”

Turn 1 with a late dive down the inside to secure back-to-back wins.

“I knew it was going to be chaos but that was on another level,” said Evans. “To navigate through some of the slow [cars], people backing up in front of you. That concertina effect, and then people trying to overtake you where they’re not really meaning or wanting to and you’re doing the same as well... It was a bit extreme.”

It was a day to remember for the Jaguar operation, Bird completing the team’s maiden FE 1-2 with a final-lap pass on Buemi. The Swiss was once again forced to defend, this time into the Turn 6 left-hand hairpin, but Bird sent it around the outside with a late-braking manoeuvre and just kept on-line through the exit of the corner.

Buemi’s day went from bad to worse when, approaching the final bend, Maximilian Guenther attempted a similar move to the one Bird had pulled off. The Maserati MSG driver had shadowed the leading trio during the final stages after starting one place above Evans in eighth. He moved over to cover the inside line into the final bend after sweeping ahead, but he clipped and damaged Buemi’s front wing as both ran wide through the turn, with Guenther getting the final podium position after a drag race for his first points of the season.

While Buemi was left fuming – he felt that victory had been on the cards – his Envision team-mate Cassidy was also left to rue what might have been after putting in an incredible recovery drive. The 28-year-old had been among the leading pack during the opening half of the race but damaged his front wing through Turn 9, and had it replaced under the second safety-car period.

The caution had been deployed after NIO 333’s Dan Ticktum and DS Penske’s Stoffel Vandoorne came together on the exit of Turn 3, with the McLaren Nissans of Jake Hughes and Rene Rast also involved. Only



BAGNALL

Cassidy does his best Vettel impression after first victory of 2023

the German was able to continue. Ticktum’s race had come to an end after an impressive showing – the Briton jumped from fourth on the grid to lead at the start after running around the outside of Buemi into Turn 1, before the inside line for the following sequence of corners handed him the position.

Cassidy dropped to the back of the field after his visit to the pits, but unleashed the true potential of the Jaguar powertrain over the second half of the race with a meteoric rise to be classified fifth. That served as something of a warning to the rest of the field ahead of Sunday’s race, in which the Envision Jaguar driver took his first victory of the season. And it was a commanding performance that has brought him to within reach of the championship lead.

Not that it was easy... There was controversy earlier in the day when Cassidy once again lost out to team-mate Buemi in their quarter-final qualifying duel, despite posting the quicker time in a wet session. He was stripped of his lap time due to an improper use of the 350kW mode – Cassidy activated it during the opening sector of his qualifying lap as drivers tried to find better grip in the tricky conditions with lower power settings. That was in breach of the regulations, which stated >>





Abt duo surprised by locking out the front row. It didn't last

BAGNALL

that it could only be activated on the last sector of the out-lap, and consigned him to eighth spot on the grid. This had come in the wake of a bizarre radio message during FP3 from Cassidy, where he criticised Buemi for holding him up by imitating his team-mate as tensions between the pair noticeably increased over the weekend.

While Cassidy endured a frustrating qualifying, there was jubilation in the Abt garage when Robin Frijns and Nico Muller claimed a shock front-row lockout after the slippery and treacherous conditions negated their Mahindras' performance deficit. The team had yet to register any points this season ahead of its home race, but any chance of a strong race result evaporated, along with any water on the track surface, as blue skies and bright sunshine returned for the start of the race. This turned into a start delayed by several minutes after climate change protesters gained access to the circuit before they were swiftly removed by security (see panel, right).

Once again the usual race dynamic of drivers not wanting to lead reared its ugly head again, with all the top runners using both Attack Mode activations in the first half of the race. On lap 24 out of 40 Cassidy hit the front and, remarkably, stayed there for the duration of the race. He was able to maintain his position while saving enough energy, despite not running in another car's slipstream.

"I thought I was leading too early, I was hoping someone would pass me and I was thinking I was really going to struggle on energy – but luckily I held on," admitted Cassidy, who is now just four points off the top of the championship standings. "It shows that maybe the not wanting to lead thing is a bit overhyped."

Cassidy's cause had been aided somewhat by Jake Dennis in second, the Andretti Autosport Porsche driver apprehensive about making a move having not scored a point since January following a run of incidents. The latest had come on Saturday when the Briton attempted to pass Guenther into Turn 6 but lost control – which he later blamed on a rear brake issue – before collecting an innocent Antonio Felix da

## “By saving energy you can slowly start to increase pace and move forward. We did that too late”

Costa, who was running ahead in fourth after starting down in 19th.

Not wanting to be involved in further incidents, Dennis was initially shuffled back in Sunday's race, but moved into second when Cassidy hit the front. After the problems earlier in the season, he admitted that second "felt like a win", and he also marginally reduced his deficit to Porsche's championship leader Pascal Wehrlein.

Jean-Eric Vergne battled back to third, having been demoted briefly by da Costa and Evans in quick succession, but admitted that his DS Penske squad "need to wake up" to the performance advantage of both Jaguar and Porsche. The Frenchman sits third in the championship standings, and finished seventh in the opening Berlin race despite facing the wrong way at one stage. This was after he was tapped into a spin at the final turn by Andretti's Andre Lotterer, who finished fifth but was knocked back to eighth by a five-second penalty for the incident.

Porsche's home event proved a difficult one, with championship leader Wehrlein's lead slashed by 20 points over the course of the weekend. The German suffered another difficult qualifying session – Porsche's one-lap pace Achilles' heel was on display again – but he was able to make steady progress from 15th to claim sixth at the flag.

Perhaps of greater disappointment, though, was Wehrlein's performance in the second race, when he took seventh after starting one place higher. He was unable to make any headway to the cars in front, finishing behind fourth-placed Evans, team-mate da Costa and Guenther after the final segment of the race surprisingly featured little in the way of overtaking. "By saving so much energy the race gets quite energy unlimited and then that's the point where you can slowly start to increase pace and start to move forwards, and clearly we did that too late," explained Wehrlein. Guenther put in the performance of the race, climbing from 21st to sixth after he and Maserati MSG team-mate Edoardo Mortara had a disastrous qualifying in the wet session.

Abt, the main benefactor of the tricky qualifying conditions, struggled as expected, although both drivers did lead for various points in the early running. Frijns slipped to 17th, but Muller was able to hold on and finish ninth for his first points of the season behind Vandoorne. Ticktum completed the top 10, the Briton given a five-place grid penalty for his collision with Vandoorne in race one. The two biggest losers from the second race, though, were Bird and Buemi, both of whom finished outside the points after they'd pitted to replace damaged front wings.

The season enters its second phase with the championship battle finely poised ahead of the trip to Monaco next month. The top five contenders are covered by 24 points but, based on their Berlin performances, it would be a brave person to bet against either Evans or Cassidy being at the top come the end of the season. ❧



Wehrlein failed to take off at his home races

SBLOXHAM



## IN THE HEADLINES

### PROTESTERS INVADE TRACK

German climate change group Letzte Generation (Last Generation) claimed responsibility for the track invasion at the start of the second Berlin E-Prix. Several protesters entered the circuit from the far side of the venue by climbing over the barrier as drivers performed burnouts before taking their positions on the startline. The start was delayed by several minutes while the protesters were removed and arrested. The activists held a series of demonstrations around the capital city over the course of the weekend, with the group calling on the German government to take action against climate change.

### POINTS FOR MULLER

Nico Muller took his and the Abt team's first points of the season after he and team-mate Robin Frijns locked out the front row following a wet qualifying session. The Swiss went on to lead a Formula E race for the first time before slipping back to ninth in the dry conditions. "I rarely have goosebumps in the car," he said. "But today I was sitting there and got live updates on Robin's duel in the semi-final. When he crossed the line and it was clear we were both in the final, I did have goosebumps."

### NO LUCK FOR HUGHES

Jake Hughes and McLaren endured a difficult weekend in Berlin, failing to score points in either of the two races. The Briton qualified 12th for the opening race, two spots ahead of team-mate Rene Rast, and was running on the fringes of the top 10 when both were collected in a crash ahead between Dan Ticktum and Stoffel Vandoorne. Hughes was left in 14th for the second race, but struggled with pace and slumped to 18th. "We know the problem we have with the car at the moment together with our manufacturer partner Nissan, and the four cars are limited by the same problem," said Hughes. "We're trying to fix it, and we will fix it."



### RESULTS ROUND 6/11, TEMPELHOF (DEU), 22-23 APRIL (43 LAPS – 62.923 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	<b>Mitch Evans</b> (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-Type6	55m10.391s
2	<b>Sam Bird</b> (GBR)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-Type6	+1.850s
3	<b>Maximilian Guenther</b> (DEU)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	+2.738s
4	<b>Sebastien Buemi</b> (CHE)	Envision Racing / Jaguar I-Type6	+2.849s
5	<b>Nick Cassidy</b> (NZL)	Envision Racing / Jaguar I-Type6	+4.787s
6	<b>Pascal Wehrlein</b> (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+9.111s
7	<b>Jean-Eric Vergne</b> (FRA)	DS Penske / DSE-Tense FE23	+9.191s
8	<b>Andre Lotterer</b> (DEU)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+9.504s
9	<b>Edoardo Mortara</b> (CHE)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	+10.159s
10	<b>Oliver Rowland</b> (GBR)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M9Electro	+10.308s
11	<b>Lucas di Grassi</b> (BRA)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M9Electro	+19.449s
12	<b>Sacha Fenestraz</b> (FRA)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+21.549s
13	<b>Norman Nato</b> (FRA)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+24.561s
14	<b>Robin Frijns</b> (NLD)	Abt / Mahindra M9Electro	+25.627s
15	<b>Nico Muller</b> (CHE)	Abt / Mahindra M9Electro	+27.580s
16	<b>Sergio Sette Camara</b> (BRA)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 ER9	+34.847s
17	<b>Rene Rast</b> (DEU)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	-1 lap
18	<b>Jake Dennis</b> (GBR)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	-5 laps
R	<b>Antonio Felix da Costa</b> (PRT)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	30 laps-accident damage
R	<b>Dan Ticktum</b> (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 ER9	19 laps-accident
R	<b>Stoffel Vandoorne</b> (BEL)	DS Penske / DSE-Tense FE23	19 laps-accident
R	<b>Jake Hughes</b> (GBR)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	19 laps-accident

**Winner's average speed** 68.427mph. **Fastest lap** Dennis 1m06.604s, 79.094mph.

**QUALIFYING 1** Buemi 1m05.605s; 2 Bird 1m05.742s; 3 Vandoorne 1m05.524s; 4 Ticktum 1m05.670s; 5 Dennis 1m05.656s; 6 Cassidy 1m05.679s; 7 Sette Camara 1m05.761s; 8 Guenther 1m05.878s; 9 Evans 1m06.265s; 10 Vergne 1m06.193s; 11 Mortara 1m06.354s; 12 Hughes 1m06.309s; 13 Lotterer 1m06.415s; 14 Rast 1m06.418s; 15 Wehrlein 1m06.493s; 16 Nato 1m06.518s; 17 Muller 1m06.496s; 18 Fenestraz 1m06.571s; 19 da Costa 1m06.498s; 20 di Grassi 1m06.574s; 21 Rowland 1m07.104s; 22 Frijns 1m06.775s.

#### RACE 2 (40 LAPS – 58.533 MILES)

**1** Cassidy 46m34.509s; 2 Dennis +0.442s; 3 Vergne +1.292s; 4 Evans +1.769s; 5 da Costa +2.460s; 6 Guenther +2.981s; 7 Wehrlein +3.545s; 8 Vandoorne +4.851s; 9 Muller +6.612s; 10 Ticktum +7.822s; 11 Fenestraz +9.461s; 12 di Grassi +9.462s; 13 Rast +9.678s; 14 Rowland +11.780s; 15 Sette Camara +13.687s; 16 Nato +13.749s; 17 Frijns +22.937s; 18 Hughes +29.580s; 19 Bird +34.381s; 20 Buemi +1m03.532s; 21 Lotterer +1m04.102s; 22 Mortara 37 laps-not running.

**Winner's average speed** 75.404mph. **Fastest lap** Buemi 1m06.903s, 78.740mph.

**QUALIFYING 1** Frijns 1m18.748s; 2 Muller 1m19.380s; 3 Buemi 1m19.071s; 4 Vergne 1m19.237s; 5 Evans 1m18.492s; 6 Wehrlein 1m18.805s; 7 Dennis 1m19.727s; 8 Cassidy no time; 9 Vandoorne 1m18.974s; 10 da Costa 1m19.297s; 11 Bird 1m19.010s; 12 Rowland 1m19.459s; 13 di Grassi 1m19.600s; 14 Hughes 1m19.257s; 15 Lotterer 1m19.741s; 16 Mortara 1m19.422s; 17 Rast 1m20.848s; 18 Ticktum 1m19.232s\*; 19 Sette Camara 1m19.441s; 20 Fenestraz 1m21.059s; 21 Guenther 1m19.961s; 22 Nato 1m21.272s.

**CHAMPIONSHIP 1** Wehrlein 100; 2 Cassidy 96; 3 Vergne 81; 4 Dennis 80; 5 Evans 76; 6 da Costa 68; 7 Bird 62; 8 Buemi 57; 9 Rast 40; 10 Hughes 32.

### NEXT REPORT

**MONACO E-PRIX**  
**11 MAY ISSUE**





BTCC DONINGTON PARK

# Ford team enjoys a twin-Cam power boost

*Ash Sutton and Dan Rowbottom starred in qualifying, but it was Dan Cammish who claimed two victories in his Motorbase-run Focus*

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport  
IMAGES



**D**an Cammish was looking forward to last Sunday's opening races in the British Touring Car Championship at Donington Park, his anticipation paradoxically heightened by a relative struggle on Saturday. The sister Ford Focus STs of Dan Rowbottom and Ash Sutton were ballistically, head-scratchingly quick; everyone in the paddock admitted that they couldn't get close to those NAPA Racing-liveried, Motorbase Performance-run machines. And that included team-mate Cammish.

"I'm not disappointed to be fifth," mused Cammish in the aftermath of qualifying. "Somehow we've engineered a car that's the complete opposite of last year's — I used to look forward to Saturdays and dread Sundays! But now we just need to understand how to switch the tyres back on. My team-mates are fast on laps one and two, whereas I'm on lap 10 and the car's still at its peak — the tyre comes off and it still looks good." The inference was that he knew he had a car that would be good over a race distance, whereas his team-mates may fall back...

Then Cammish opened his hotel-room curtains on Sunday morning and saw that the dismal British spring was unleashing its worst. "I'm not lying — it was a bit of a surprise when I saw the rain

this morning," related the Berkshire-domiciled Yorkshireman. And then the traditional Donington traffic access raised the stress levels: "I was passing people with my hazards flashing just to get into the track!" But by the evening he was celebrating two race wins plus the championship lead, and looking forward to a proper title challenge.

Contrast that with the fortunes of Rowbottom and Sutton, whose Saturday domination had washed away in the rain. Three-time champion Sutton, now a new father after a baby boy arrived on the Tuesday before the weekend, was quickest (see panel, p47), but it was Rowbottom who had claimed pole position. The amiable bearded Midlander had unfairly received a lot of stick after his winter departure from Team Dynamics played a part in that heritage team of the BTCC no longer being on the grid. He had a point to prove, and did so superbly. "It was edgy," described Rowbottom of his run to get through Q1 and into the top-10 shootout. "We only had a two-lap run the way we had the car set." Even more so for the final showdown: "We had a very aggressive set-up, and we only had one lap to do the time — then the left-front would fall off the cliff." Hence also the optimism of Cammish, sitting on the opposite side of the set-up/tyre-life fence.

The outcome of Sunday was very much down to a ferocious opening lap, which featured enough Ford-versus-BMW battling



Drama at the Old Hairpin. Cammish emerged on his way to the first of two wins...



to be reminiscent of the 1973 European Touring Car Championship. Jake Hill had pulled a last-lap flier out of the bag in the top-10 shootout to pip the sister West Surrey Racing-run 330e M Sport of Colin Turkington to third on the grid. "To be totally honest there's not a lot I or my team-mates can do about the Fords," considered the Kentishman. "But it's nice to be the best of the rest. The car's fantastic – I've got no issues with it."

Hill then, predictably, got stuck in among the Fords at the start of race one. Helped by the BMW's rear-wheel drive, he immediately got alongside the sluggish Rowbottom ("I was trying to be too cheeky with the clutch," said the poleman). Sutton ("I got a lovely launch") was ahead but, as he swung across the track, Hill reacted and brushed the side of Rowbottom, which then pinged the BMW into the back of Sutton, who in turn was fired onto the grass. Sutton bounced back onto the track, still among the leading bunch, but the off-track moment had torn away the floor, which in turn pulled off the water radiator.

Hill now led from Turkington and Rowbottom, but fourth-placed Cammish was caught out by the cars in front checking up for the Old Hairpin. He went into the back of Rowbottom, pushing the other Ford into Turkington, who was forced through the gravel >>



...and ended the day at the top of the points table



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trap. This episode elevated the furious Sutton — all he knew was that Hill had punted him onto the grass — back into second, but he had to bring his ailing Focus into the pits to retire.

Opinions were divided among the protagonists on the incident at the start. Sutton complained that Hill's position was "not classed as a significant overlap and he should yield", Rowbottom reckoned that Hill "turned across the front of me and used Ash to bounce off", and Hill argued that "Dan was totally innocent, and as I got

## **“It was a great race by Jake – not many rear-wheel-drive drivers could keep it going like that”**

alongside him Sutton decided to chop me off and the end result was he took himself out”.

Hill, his rear tyres clearly fading, somehow clung onto the lead in the face of Cammish's pressure until the 19th lap of 21. At that point, Hill defended into Redgate, but Cammish got the cutback on the exit, they ran side by side down the Craner Curves — Hill's BMW visibly squirming for grip — and the Ford got the inside line and the lead at the Old Hairpin. It was terrific, clean racing and the mutual respect between the two knew no bounds. "It was a great race by Jake — there's not many rear-wheel-drive drivers who could keep it going like that in those conditions," approved Cammish. "He drove a fantastic race," replied Hill, "but at the end my rears were so gone it was unreal."

Afterwards it all turned a little sour when Hill was given a three-place grid penalty for race two for the kerfuffle at the start. In the eyes of many, this had 'racing incident' written all over it. Yes, Hill is a feisty little blighter, but there have been numerous examples in the past 12 months of far more belligerent driving that's gone unpunished.

Not that it really mattered, for the second race was a bizarre encounter in which nearly all the leading contenders were eliminated from contention through being on the wrong tyres. The field went



Sutton on the grass as Rowbottom, Hill and Turkington get away...

to the grid on slicks, but subsequent rain caused many of the midfielders and backmarkers — either on pace or through misfortune in race one — to dive for the pits on the green-flag lap to switch to grooved Goodyears. The top men played a game of dare in which nobody dared and, after the inevitable early safety car periods, they were easy prey as the rain intensified.

Cammish had led early doors from reigning champion Tom Ingram, who had finished a close third in race one and been elevated to the front row by Hill's penalty. But they were too late to the pits, so was Hill, and Sutton was latest of all. Meanwhile, out front, Ingram's team-mate Tom Chilton was able to splash his Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N to victory from the WSR BMW of Adam Morgan. It was the cheerful Surrey veteran's second Donington BTCC win, and those victories are 19 years apart — surely some sort of BTCC record!

It's fair to say that Chilton hasn't really been a force in recent seasons, but there were signs at Donington that perhaps there's an Indian summer looming. He was fifth overall in free practice, only for a damper failure to restrict him to 14th in qualifying. Chilton was then spat out of the pack on the opening lap of race one and came to rest on the grass at Schwantz Curve. That triggered a brief safety »

### **SUTTON BECOMES THE TRACK-LIMITS VICTIM**

Ash Sutton fell foul of the BTCC's early introduction of governing body Motorsport UK's new track-limits rules in qualifying at Donington, handing pole position to Motorbase Ford team-mate Dan Rowbottom.

The contentious regulations, which many argue will be almost unworkable, mean that if any tyre is beyond the white line or kerb this will constitute a track-limits breach. They are slated by MSUK for introduction in June, so it's a bit like the FA deciding to bring in a

controversial new offside rule three months into a season.

The BTCC drivers' association met on Friday and decided that, whatever they think of the rules, better to implement them for the full season. "It's not fair to start the season and switch to another set of regulations," explained BTCC boss Alan Gow. "We've gone about it in a grown-up fashion."

Because the Donington track-limits sensors are set further out to the old

rules, the onus is on judges of fact. There weren't enough to monitor every corner — "There aren't enough judges of fact on the planet for that!" joked Gow — but if you're breaching track limits on the Craners, you're likely heading for the wall anyway...

Sutton had set a 1m07.570s to top Q1, then did a 1m07.486s to Q2, but he went too far over the chicane exit kerb in doing so and had that lap deleted. At this point he was ninth on the grid, but Motorbase stuck two new front tyres on his Focus and he went again. He was up on Rowbottom's 1m07.598s after sector two, but excessive caution through the chicane meant a 1m07.639s. On theoretical bests, he had an eye-watering 1m07.272s...

"I was playing it safe and threw it away — I'm kicking myself," Sutton groaned. The irony is that, with Adam Morgan, the prime movers in the drivers' association are... Sutton and Rowbottom.



...and it ended with a steamy exit from race one





Terrific stuff in race three.  
Ingram fends off Turkington,  
plus charging Sutton and Hill

car, but he got it fired up and clambered back up to 15th. He was strong in the final race too, driving from 12th on the reversed grid to eighth. But it was the unexpected victory that was the highlight. “It’s incredible that I went from being hit off on the first lap of race one to this,” bubbled the BTCC showman. “The alarm bells [to switch to wets] were going off on the green-flag lap – that’s what happens when you’ve been doing it 21 years!”

Otherwise, it was predictably Ingram who led the Excelr8 Hyundai charge. He qualified sixth, but he was some way off the Motorbase Ford pace after losing most of FP1 to an electrical failure. “We were playing catch-up from there,” he recounted, “so we had to do our FP1 housekeeping in FP2, which meant I only did four flying laps. The car feels all right, but it doesn’t feel spectacular. We’re on the back foot.”

On race day Ingram was superb, as usual, but while pressuring Cammish and then Hill in the opener he found himself having to watch his mirrors for an attack from a most unexpected contender. For all his experience in international GT racing, Andrew Watson was not tipped as a top-four force for his BTCC debut in Power Maxed Racing’s ex-Plato/Crees Vauxhall Astra. But he did a superb job to get into the top-10 qualifying shootout, and stormed his way forwards in the opening race, the Astra seemingly immune to the tyre-fade difficulties that hit most of the others. “I’m not sure what they did to the car but it just made my job so easy,” beamed the Northern Irishman. “To be battling and fighting with Ingram and the others is amazing for my confidence.”

Another debutant to impress was Ronan Pearson from the same Excelr8 Hyundai camp as Ingram and Chilton. The Scottish youngster just missed out on Q2 (11th), but pursued Chilton and Morgan home in race two for third place. Unfortunately for him, he failed the ride-height check, and his exclusion elevated Motorbase’s Sam Osborne to his maiden BTCC podium. This also turned into an

unexpected belated wedding present for Osborne’s team-mate Cammish, who got married on the eve of the season. His 13th-place finish turned into 12th, and hoisted him onto pole for the reversed grid. He didn’t let the opportunity slip.

Ingram led the pursuit. He’d been flying in the second race once he was on the right tyres, unlapping himself from Chilton and setting fastest lap on his way, but in the finale “we really didn’t have the pace. We were quite punchy at the start, but once the gap started to open up I didn’t have enough.” Ingram came under pressure from first Turkington, then the charging Sutton: “It’s tough with a car that’s much faster than yours to play a game of chess, especially in these conditions. It was damage-limitation.”

It was also superb defensive driving. For all his pressure on Ingram, Turkington was “just hanging onto it. We’ve just struggled for pace, to get the car where we want it in the wet.” Sutton and Hill, who had both stormed from the eighth row, zoned in. Late in the race, Sutton dived for the inside at McLeans, and Turkington’s bid to cling on around the outside of Coppice opened a chink of daylight for team-mate Hill to squeeze through at the chicane, via minor contact. Sutton then attacked Ingram into the chicane on the final lap, there was more contact, but Ingram kept his foot planted across the gravel and held on.

“It’s a what-could-have-been weekend,” summarised Sutton, who left Donington ninth in points. “It was clear we were one of if not the fastest cars in the dry, so this has been a tough pill to swallow.” He was absolutely right – Antonio Carrozza, Sutton’s wizard engineer, quipped that “I haven’t slept since November” developing the Focus after they both joined Motorbase too late in the 2021-22 winter to produce what they needed. To boot, Carrozza had never engineered a front-wheel-drive car before last season...

But it was the approach of Cammish and his techy James Mundy that reaped the rewards on this occasion. “I think I’ve looked at myself more after last year,” revealed Cammish, “and I’ve prepared for this season in the best way I can. Last year I had a car I could not move forward with, and now I’ve got one that takes me forward. Our qualifying needs a little bit more tweaking, but on Sunday I knew we’d be a rocketship and we are. The reversed grid was fortunate, but that’s touring cars in a nutshell – you need speed and you need luck.”



## P68 SUPPORTS REPORT

Louis Sharp stuns with British F4 win from 20th on the grid



RESULTS ROUND 1/10, DONINGTON PARK (GBR), 23 APRIL RACE 1 (21 LAPS – 41.559 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	29m16.715s
2	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+2.114s
3	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+2.207s
4	Andrew Watson (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+2.614s
5	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+6.350s
6	Ricky Collard (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+9.057s
7	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+13.907s
8	George Gamble (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+14.057s
9	Josh Cook (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R	+14.283s
10	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+14.691s
11	Rory Butcher (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+15.307s
12	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+15.997s
13	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R	+17.774s
14	Dexter Patterson (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+21.655s
15	Tom Chilton (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+22.238s
16	Bobby Thompson (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+23.285s
17	Sam Osborne (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+23.990s
18	Will Powell (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R	+24.523s
19	Dan Lloyd (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+24.823s
20	Mikey Doble (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+31.804s
21	Nicolas Hamilton (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+37.492s
22	Stephen Jelley (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+45.255s
23	Jack Butel (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+46.757s
24	Ronan Pearson (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	-1 lap
R	Nick Halstead (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	3 laps-spun off
R	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	1 lap-accident damage
R	Jade Edwards (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	0 laps-power steering

Winner's average speed 85.09mph. Fastest lap Cammish 1m16.089s, 93.63mph.

QUALIFYING

Q2 1 Rowbottom 1m07.598s; 2 Sutton 1m07.639s; 3 Hill 1m07.698s; 4 Turkington 1m07.810s; 5 Cammish 1m07.927s; 6 Ingram 1m08.014s; 7 Cook 1m08.134s; 8 Morgan 1m08.315s; 9 Watson 1m08.941s; 10 Collard no time.

Q1 Sutton 1m07.570s; Rowbottom 1m07.705s; Cammish 1m07.827s; Turkington 1m07.963s; Hill 1m08.169s; Ingram 1m08.185s; Cook 1m08.186s; Watson 1m08.271s; Morgan 1m08.298s; Collard 1m08.319s; 11 Pearson 1m08.381s; 12 Lloyd 1m08.438s; 13 Butcher 1m08.464s; 14 Chilton 1m08.482s; 15 Jelley 1m08.493s; 16 Taylor-Smith 1m08.521s; 17 Gamble 1m08.526s; 18 Moffat 1m08.528s; 19 Osborne 1m08.731s; 20 Patterson 1m08.831s; 21 Doble 1m09.019s; 22 Thompson 1m09.035s; 23 Butel 1m09.124s; 24 Powell 1m09.474s; 25 Hamilton 1m09.634s; 26 Halstead 1m09.735s; 27 Edwards 1m10.010s.



GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1, with Hill given a three-place penalty to fifth.

RACE 2 (21 LAPS – 41.559 MILES)

1 Chilton 30m08.272s; 2 Morgan +7.394s; 3 Osborne +18.622s; 4 Jelley +22.322s; 5 Doble +35.360s; 6 Hamilton +35.619s; 7 Halstead +51.253s; 8 Turkington +59.353s; 9 Ingram +1m17.130s; 10 Thompson +1m18.439s; 11 Rowbottom +1m18.641s; 12 Cammish -1 lap; 13 Lloyd -1 lap; 14 Butcher -1 lap; 15 Sutton -1 lap; 16 Hill -1 lap; 17 Moffat -1 lap; 18 Patterson -1 lap; 19 Cook -1 lap; 20 Taylor-Smith -1 lap; 21 Watson -2 laps; EX Pearson +15.617s; R Powell 17 laps-damage; NC Edwards 17 laps; R Gamble 10 laps-accident damage; R Butel 6 laps-mechanical; R Collard 0 laps-accident damage.

Winner's average speed 82.66mph.

Fastest lap Ingram 1m15.746s, 94.05mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top 12 reversed.

RACE 3 (21 LAPS – 41.559 MILES)

1 Cammish 29m30.236s; 2 Ingram +3.044s; 3 Sutton +3.771s; 4 Hill +3.884s; 5 Turkington +4.683s; 6 Thompson +12.615s; 7 Cook +14.883s; 8 Chilton +15.964s; 9 Taylor-Smith +16.192s; 10 Rowbottom +17.196s; 11 Butcher +17.309s; 12 Watson +18.080s; 13 Gamble +20.757s; 14 Collard +24.005s; 15 Moffat +25.906s; 16 Patterson +26.183s; 17 Butel +26.473s; 18 Lloyd +28.684s; 19 Pearson +29.396s; 20 Jelley +34.562s; 21 Hamilton +48.236s; 22 Morgan -1 lap; R Doble 16 laps-accident damage; R Edwards 15 laps-mechanical; R Powell 6 laps-overheating; R Osborne 4 laps-accident damage; R Halstead 0 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 84.43mph.

Fastest lap Hill 1m16.627s, 92.97mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Cammish 48; 2 Ingram 40; 3 Hill 32; 4 Chilton 30; 5 Morgan 26; 6 Turkington 23; 7 Rowbottom 23; 8 Watson 17; 9 Sutton 16; 10 Thompson 16.

NEXT EVENT

BRANDS HATCH 11 MAY ISSUE

It's home ground for those Motorbase chaps; can anyone beat the Focuses on the Indy circuit?



# Deletraz on a charge as Jani kneels in wake

**EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES**  
**BARCELONA (ESP)**  
**23 APRIL**  
**ROUND 1/6**

A charging comeback drive and stunning overtake on former Porsche LMP1 driver Neel Jani meant Louis Deletraz led Racing Team Turkey's Pro-Am entry to an upset overall win in the Barcelona 4 Hours.

Deletraz, together with Salih Yoluc and Charlie Eastwood, beat Jani's Duqueine Team to victory in the European Le Mans Series season opener. The win came after a late black-and-orange flag seemed to dash the Turkish-flagged, British-based team's hopes. After impressive performances by Bronze-rated Yoluc and Eastwood, whose stint was filled with passing moves, Deletraz looked to have the race under control when the contest was thrown on its head. Damage to the left-rear panel of the TF Sport-run Racing Team Turkey ORECA led race control to throw out the 'meatball' flag.

While Deletraz's father, ex-Formula 1 driver Jean-Denis, was raging in the garage, his 26-year-old son put the hammer down on track. Combine that with some excellent work by the TF Sport mechanics, replacing the tail of the ORECA-Gibson 07 in under 10 seconds, and Deletraz emerged back behind Jani still very much in contention. The Swiss star (reigning ELMS champion, lest we forget), rapidly closed the gap to his compatriot and retook the lead with a stunning pass at Turn 7, much to the delight of his team-mates. From there, Deletraz cruised to an historic win for the team. A Pro-Am squad had just beaten the on-paper much faster 'regular' LMP2 teams to an outright win.

Jani, Rene Binder and Nico Pino finished second, while the AF Corse trio of Francois Perrodo, Ben Barnicoat and Matthieu Vaxiviere completed the podium.



It proved a day in the sun for Pro-Am squads, with two on the podium and three in the overall top five. Cool Racing's Malthe Jakobsen proved why he's considered a star of the future with a terrific drive to finish fourth, notably charging his way past Panis Racing star Job van Uitert in the closing stages. But for some teams the Barcelona opener was a day to forget.

Algarve Pro Racing led for much of the opening half when disaster struck with James Allen at the wheel. A clumsy attempt by IDEC Sport's Laurents Horr to unlap himself resulted in contact, sending Allen spinning and stuck in a gravel trap. Also, Toyota World Endurance Championship star Jose Maria Lopez had a tricky LMP2 debut when he made contact with Ben Tuck's TF Sport Aston Martin late in the race and served a penalty for his troubles.

In LMP3, a comeback from Racing Spirit of Lemans' Antoine Doquin proved futile after a post-race penalty. Doquin, having led the class, charged back to the front after serving a drive-through for entering the pits after a full course yellow was declared. The stewards deemed the mandatory timed stop that Doquin served under caution was null and void and the team was dropped to third. Instead, the Cool Racing trio of Marcos

Siebert, Adrien Chila and Alejandro Garcia was declared the winner. GTE went the way of Proton Competition and Ryan Hardwick, Zach Robichon and Alessio Picariello.

**DAVEY EUWEMA**

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## WEEKEND WINNERS

### **EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES** **BARCELONA (ESP)**

- LMP2** Louis Deletraz/Salih Yoluc/  
 Charlie Eastwood  
 Racing Team Turkey (TF) (ORECA)
- LMP3** Marcos Siebert/Adrien Chila/  
 Alejandro Garcia  
 Cool Racing (Ligier)
- GTE** Ryan Hardwick/Zach Robichon/  
 Alessio Picariello  
 Proton Competition (Porsche)

### **NASCAR CUP**

#### **TALLADEGA (USA)**

Kyle Busch  
 Richard Childress Racing (Chevrolet Camaro)

### **SUPER FORMULA**

#### **SUZUKA (JAP)**

Ritomo Miyata  
 TOM'S (Dallara-Toyota)

### **LE MANS CUP**

#### **BARCELONA (ESP)**

- LMP3** Julien Gerbi/Gillian Henrion  
 Team Virage (Ligier)
- GT3** Arnold Robin/Valentin Hasse-Clot  
 Racing Spirit of Lemans (Aston Martin)





# Busch lucks in as Wallace and Blaney collide

**NASCAR CUP**  
**TALLADEGA (USA)**  
**23 APRIL**  
**ROUND 10/36**

Bubba Wallace wrecked from the lead on the final lap of overtime to gift Kyle Busch a surprise NASCAR Cup win at Talladega.

Wallace was forced to defend on the final lap of the second two-lap overtime period as Ryan Blaney was closing fast. The leader moved his Toyota high and low to block Blaney's advance, but on the third attempt Wallace was hit by his pursuer, which triggered a multi-car wreck and ensured the race finished under caution.

Busch had lined up third on the final restart but was ahead of Blaney when the caution was displayed and was declared the winner. He led just three times in the race for a total of three laps, including the last and most important one.



Busch was cooking with gas after fortune fell in his favour at 'Dega

KINRADE/NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

"Sometimes you got to be lucky," Busch said. "Some of these races come down to that. You got to take them when they come your way. The seas kind of parted there when [Wallace and Blaney] went up the race track. They were trying to push-draft. These cars are just not stable enough to do that."

"I saw [Wallace] turn a little bit sideways. I was like, 'Get out of the way, just miss it'. I was ahead of [Blaney] when it was called."

The win is the second of the 2023 season for Busch, who joined Richard Childress Racing in the off-season. It's the two-time Cup champion's 62nd career victory and his first at Talladega since 2008.

Blaney was credited with second place, Chris Buescher third and Chase Briscoe fourth. Brad Keselowski made it a Ford Mustang 2-3-4-5.

**JIM UTTER**

# Awkward clash opens door for Miyata's maiden

**SUPER FORMULA**  
**SUZUKA (JAP)**  
**23 APRIL**  
**ROUND 2/7**

Ritomo Miyata stormed to a maiden Super Formula win in a Suzuka thriller as Tomoki Nojiri crashed out after making contact with poleman Toshiki Oyu.

TOM'S driver Miyata broke his duck after passing Sho Tsuboi around the outside at Turn 1 on the penultimate lap, having been vaulted into contention by a mid-race safety car.

That was caused when Nojiri uncharacteristically ran into the back of Oyu, who had led from pole position until making his mandatory stop on lap 19 of 30, at Turn 5 while the latter was trying to get his tyres up to temperature.

Nojiri accepted full blame and was seen trying to console Oyu – his new team-mate in Super GT – trackside after registering his first failure to finish since 2020.

TGM driver Oyu had already been jumped by early stoppers Tsuboi and Liam Lawson, who had made rapid early progress from eighth on the grid, but the safety car

allowed those that went for a longer first stint, like Miyata and Ryo Hirakawa, to make a cheap stop.

Tsuboi led Lawson, Miyata and Hirakawa when the race resumed on lap 24, but the latter two drivers had a major advantage on fresh tyres.

After making quick work of Red Bull junior Lawson, Miyata cruised up to Tsuboi and, going into the penultimate lap, got a better run out of the final chicane to draw alongside his Inging rival, going the long way round at Turn 1 to complete the move. Miyata's first win, and a first in almost two years for TOM'S, was all the more remarkable as he had started 12th after having his best lap in qualifying deleted for track limits.

At the same time as the winning pass was made, Impul's Hirakawa demoted Lawson from third to complete the first all-Toyota podium since 2020.

Team Mugen's Nojiri maintains the lead of the championship on 42 points, having earned a sole bonus point for qualifying third. Miyata is now his nearest rival on 38, while series rookie Lawson is third on 35.

**JAMIE KLEIN**



Toshiki Oyu led from pole until Tomoki Nojiri knocked him off

ISHIHARA

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SRO/PECKS 1VIER

# Plenty of vitesse for Rowe as BMWs take a 1-2

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE  
ENDURANCE CUP  
MONZA (ITA)  
23 APRIL  
ROUND 1/5**

BMW romped to victory in the GT World Challenge Europe season opener at Monza, with Nick Yelloly, Marco Wittmann and Philipp Eng leading a Rowe Racing 1-2 in the first round of the Endurance Cup.

The trio topped a truncated qualifying on Sunday morning in which BMW locked out the first four places, and maintained their clear advantage over the chasing pack to deliver the Bavarian firm its first GTWCE victory since 2018 – and the first for the M4 GT3. “After the struggles of last year, we’re back to where we belong,” beamed Briton Yelloly. “Our first Endurance win at Monza is just awesome.”

WRT was Rowe’s closest challenger all day in its first GTWCE event since switching from Audi to BMW, but Sheldon van der Linde, Charles Weerts and Dries Vanthoor missed out on a certain second place thanks to a tyre issue in the final 25 minutes. That elevated Lamborghini’s Iron Lynx crew of Mirko Bortolotti, Andrea Caldarelli and Jordan Pepper to the final step of the podium, with Bortolotti staving off a fierce charge from Patric Niederhauser’s Audi late on.

There were a number of questions ahead of the new season, most notably how well the BMW would work on a power-heavy circuit such as Monza. That question was answered in stunning fashion in qualifying as Rowe bookended the top four and WRT provided the meat in the sandwich. But electrical power issues at the circuit forced the final segment of qualifying to be

cancelled, with the grid set by the combined Q1 and Q2 times.

Eng led away at the rolling start and maintained his advantage over WRT’s Valentino Rossi either side of two full-course-yellow periods. At the second restart, Eng continued to lead, but was soon chased hard by the GetSpeed-run Mercedes of Maro Engel, who dived past Rossi to grab second after superbly leaping six places to run third early on. But the race soon unravelled for Engel, Luca Stolz and Fabian Schiller when they lost several places in the pits before contact with Dennis Marschall’s Audi sent them out of the race. The ASP Merc of Jules Gounon and Raffaele Marciello also retired, a result of overzealous defending – and subsequent missed pit entrance – by their co-driver Timur Boguslavskiy.

All the while, the one constant was BMW. But an overshoot at the Rettifilo chicane from Rossi sent his car into anti-stall and damaged the gearbox, putting that M4 out before Vanthoor’s late pitstop dropped the other WRT machine to sixth. Rowe, however, stayed out of trouble, with youngsters Dan Harper, Max Hesse and Neil Verhagen taking second place, 6.6 seconds ahead of the Iron Lynx Lambo. Niederhauser was joined by Christopher Mies and Simon Gachet in the fourth-placed Sainteloc Audi, while the Marschall Audi held on for fifth.

A late overtaking move from Dennis Lind gave Barwell Motorsport the Pro-Am spoils, the Dane sharing his Lamborghini with Rob Collard and Adam Balon. Audi’s series newcomer Comtoyou won two classes.

**STEPHEN BRUNSDON**



SRO / TWENTY-ONE CREATION / BENICHO



# Stenshorne stars with debut victory

**FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN  
IMOLA (ITA)  
22-23 APRIL  
ROUND 1/10**

Martinius Stenshorne, Kas Haverkort and the safety car driver were the winners during a crash-infested opening round of the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine.

Norwegian FRECA rookie Stenshorne was very much the surprise package of the weekend, and it started when he earned pole for Saturday's race after qualifying topper Rafael Camara lost his best lap to a yellow-flag infringement. Andrea Kimi Antonelli topped the other group and started alongside Stenshorne on the front row.

Race GP driver Stenshorne led throughout, while Mercedes F1 protege Antonelli fended off his Prema teammates, Ferrari junior Camara and Lorenzo Fluxa, who in turn had Haverkort's Van



Haverkort leads Stenshorne  
in the second race

VAN DER LAAN/DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY

Amersfoort Racing car behind them.

The race was eventually red-flagged, with Irish youngster Adam Fitzgerald sustaining broken vertebrae as a result of launching over the controversial sausage kerbs.

Disaster struck Antonelli on Sunday when electrical issues left him slowest in qualifying, and he failed to start the race. R-ace's Tim Tramnitz was on pole, but was beaten away by Haverkort, while second-row men Camara and Josh Dufek collided at Tamburello to cause the first safety car.

Stenshorne pulled off a magnificent dive

on Nikhil Bohra at Rivazza after the restart to claim third. Then, after another caution, he went around the outside of Tramnitz at Tamburello, and the German spun into the gravel. The fourth-placed battle also imploded at Tamburello when Michael Belov and Owen Tangavelou collided, causing yet another safety car.

There was time for one more lap of racing, and Haverkort held on to win from Stenshorne, who leads the points. Trident driver Bohra was third from Victor Bernier and Matias Zagazeta.

## WEEKEND WINNERS

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

Philipp Eng/Marco Wittmann/Nick Yelloly  
Rowe Racing (BMW M4 GT3)

**FREGIONAL EUROPEAN BY ALPINE  
IMOLA (ITA)**

**Race 1** Martinius Stenshorne  
R-ace GP

**Race 2** Kas Haverkort  
Van Amersfoort Racing

**GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES  
MONZA (ITA)**

**Race 1** Benjamin Lariche/Robert Consani  
Team Speedcar (Audi R8 LMS GT4)

**Race 2** Gabriele Piana/Michael Schrey  
Hofor Racing by Bonk Motorsport  
(BMW M4 GT4)

**BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS  
INTERLAGOS (BRA)**

**Race 1** Gabriel Casagrande  
A Mattheis Vogel (Chevrolet Cruze)

**Race 2** Ricardo Mauricio  
Eurofarma RC (Chevrolet Cruze)



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# Piana in tune as Edgar shines



Speedcar Audi  
scored first win

AUDISPORT CUSTOM RACING / KRÄLLING

**GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES  
MONZA (ITA)  
22-23 APRIL  
ROUND 1/7**

BMW and Audi split the wins at Monza in an entertaining GT4 opener.

The opening bout was won narrowly by Team Speedcar pair Robert Consani and Benjamin Lariche. Their Audi topped qualifying, and Lariche led before a multi-car shunt brought out the red flags. When the race resumed, Lariche was usurped by Gael Castelli's Audi just before the pitstops.

Consani restored Speedcar's lead over Castelli's team-mate Alexandre Cougnaud,

but Tom Edgar was making superb progress after taking over the Borusan Otomotiv BMW from Berkay Besler. The Northern Irish youngster closed the gap to Consani late on to end up just shy of the win.

Consani started second on the grid on Sunday but any chance of completing the double was extinguished by a puncture from first-lap contact. That left the polesitting BMW of Gabriele Piana in a clear lead, and he and Michael Schrey went on to win. Edgar and Besler were third this time.

Among the other Brits in the field, Josh Rattican and Tom Emson took a best of seventh in their Elite Motorsport McLaren.

**STEPHEN BRUNSDON**



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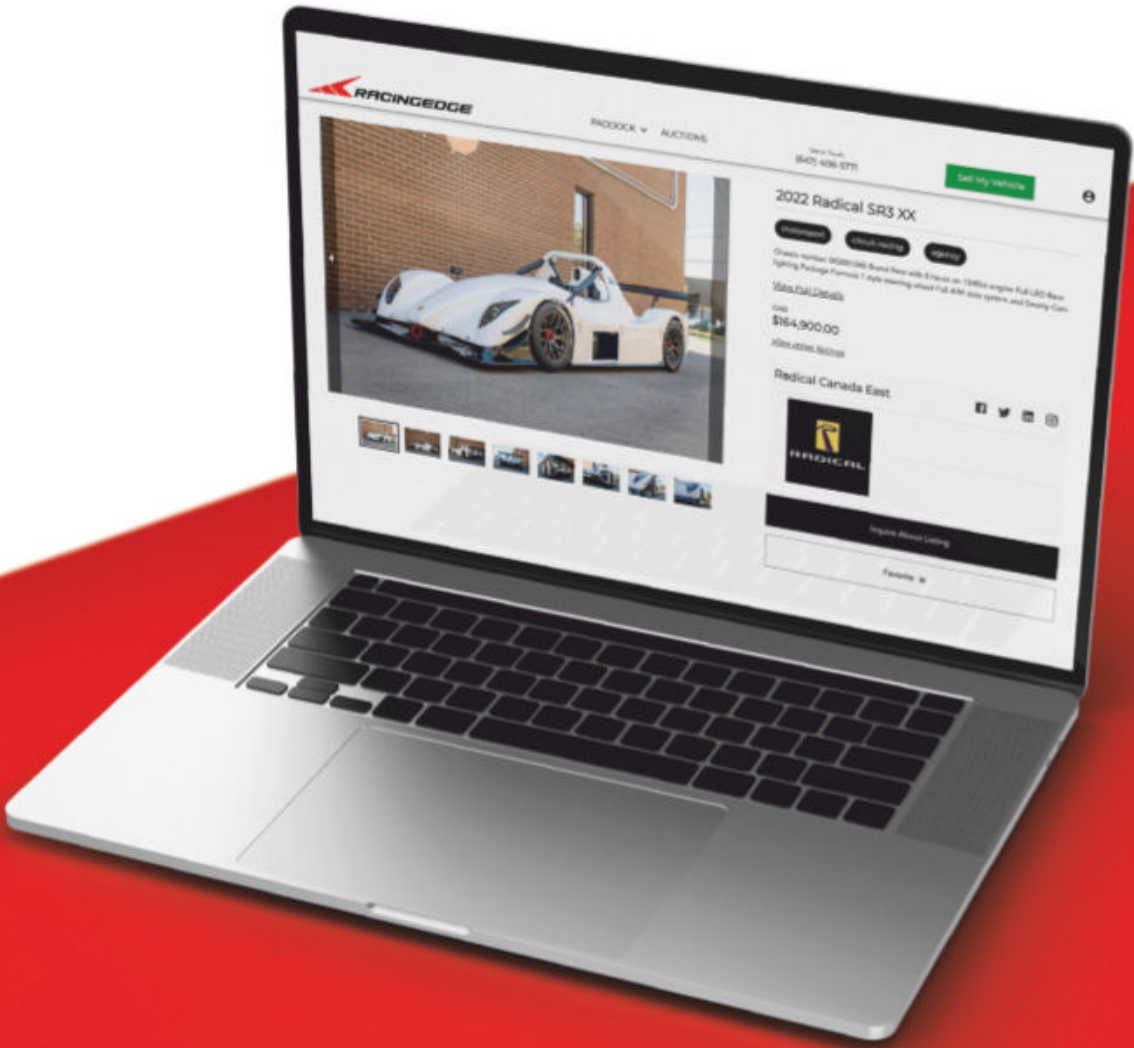


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AlphaTauri F1 Team

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**Your areas of knowledge and expertise that matter most for this role:**

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- Business savvy with demonstrated curiosity of global business/ trends
- At least 3 years years of professional experience (Previous experience in sales/analysis, financial services/banking, or management consulting a plus)
- Preferred knowledge of financial markets incl. capability to analyze business condition and financial reports
- Thorough working knowledge of the sport sponsorship market and research toolsets
- Maintain first-class organizational and time management skills with high attention to detail
- Capability to quickly acquire/synthesize new information into clear and helpful sales materials
- Capability to quickly establish strong relations with colleagues and external clients
- Well-calibrated moral compass with high integrity & professionalism
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills with high EQ and a 'team player' mindset
- Available for occasional travel when required to fulfill the requirements of the role
- Team Player Mentality
- Fluent in English. Italian or additional languages a plus

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**PROCESS ENGINEERING INTERN**  
Alpine F1 Team

We are looking for a Process Engineering Intern to work in our Quality & Efficiency and Supply Chain teams. This role would suit someone ideally looking for a 12 month placement from this summer.

**The Role**

- As a Process Engineering Intern, you will work closely with our team, gain exposure and experience in a wide range of activities including investigations to improve operational quality and supply chain efficiency.
- You will review system control processes as well as capture requirements of future systems, identify gaps in processes to improve working procedures, report on outcomes and propose solutions. You will need to proactively support and develop proposals for change between departments and management that improves efficiency, processes, policies, and standards. You will work with quality, purchasing, stores, and manufacturing departments to improve operational and supply chain performance.

**The main responsibilities may also include:**

- Analysis of different data sources to support qualitative discussions and the decision-making process
- Provide support, awareness, and assistance throughout supply chain and manufacturing in development and execution of Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) and auditing of these multiple processes.

**The Person**

- Our ideal candidate is someone with strong multi-tasking and collaborative skills who can support the team in developing solution-oriented processes for products not meeting design expectation.
- You will be an undergraduate in at least second year, on target for a 2:1 or above.

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Based at our Media & Technology Centre in Biggin Hill with occasional travel to our office in St James's Market, you will:

**Recruitment**

- Once trained, interview prospective candidates for roles at F1 alongside the relevant manager.
- Raise new starter forms, ensuring appropriate authorisation is recorded.
- Create job files, file interview notes and generally keep them in order; to also destroy details after 12 months in line with our Candidate Privacy Notice.
- Maintain an interview question 'library'.
- Create job descriptions in line with template and F1 format.

**Welfare**

- Receive phone calls from staff, log and email managers advising of the employee's sickness absence.
- Carry out welfare meetings, provide support, take notes and follow up where appropriate.

**Training**

- Book and coordinate training for your business area, whilst following the Training Procedure to ensure the best ROI.
- Raise POs in a timely manner
- Manage new starter process
- Draft contracts of employment and send with new starter pack.
- Follow extensive new starter procedures.
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**JUNIOR ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN**  
Haas F1 Team

**General Summary:**

This position reports to the Electronics Workshop Team Leader or their designee; located in Banbury, UK. The Junior Electronics Technician is responsible for manufacturing, maintenance and testing of harnesses, sensors, actuators, and electronics assemblies for On-and Off car systems. The role will also include supporting RIG testing, car build and race/test events when required.

**Key Responsibilities:**

- Promote teamwork and effective communications to develop working relationships between all personnel and departments.
- Play an active role in the manufacturing of chassis wiring harnesses, building-up of sensors, actuators and electronic assemblies for use with On- and Off Car systems.
- Continuously monitor and improve design and manufacturing standards and operational processes and procedures.
- Support race/test car build at the factory ensuring all electronic units, wiring harnesses, sensors and actuators are fitted correctly.
- Support the electronics trackside team at race and test events as required.

**Education and Work Experience:**

- GCSE, High School diploma or equivalent required. Further education including electronics training to HNC level, desirable. Previous experience of working in a high-level motorsport environment is essential.

**Specialized Knowledge and Skills:**

- Knowledge and practical experience of working with Raychem System 25 and motorsport/ aerospace connectors.
- Strong technical background in racing car electrical and electronic systems.
- Work to a consistently high standard in stressful and time sensitive situations.

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**PRODUCTION DATA ANALYST**  
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**The responsibilities of this position will include:**

- Maintain planning demand.
- Maintain effective communications with production, sales and dispatch teams.
- Manage information and data within the ERP system.
- Release work orders for designated production departments
- Determine work constraints impacting production scheduling and on time deliveries.
- Prepare purchase orders for raw materials and inventory.
- Support the production and data teams.

**Requirements:**

- Min 3 years' experience in data analysis/demand planning.
- Good Office 365 skills and expertise in Excel.
- Experience with ERP/MRP systems.
- Pro-active approach to problem solving.
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**HIGH VOLTAGE TECHNICIAN**  
Porsche Penske Motorsport

**General Notes:**

- Porsche Penske Motorsport is looking for a qualified 12V and HV Technician to join our team.
- This role will be a vital member of our travelling racing organization as we develop a racing prototype and prepare to race in both the WEC and IMSA with our manufacturer partner Porsche.
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- Executing and respecting HV system protocols and responsible for the safe installation and maintenance of the hybrid powertrain system
- Designing, building, repairing and maintaining motorsport looms and harnesses
- Aide in car radio setup and communication systems during the testing phase

**Desired Qualifications:**

- Required 2-3 years of experience in top level professional motorsport in an electrical technician role
- F1, IndyCar, IMSA, WEC, Formula E preferred
- At track position experience preferred
- Hybrid powertrain experience required
- Motorsport hybrid powertrain experience preferred
- Applicable certifications for handling High Voltage Hybrid Systems

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**DESIGN SUPPORT ENGINEER**  
Red Bull Racing

**Job Description**

Red Bull Technology are looking for an experienced Design Support Engineer to help support the use and development of our core Design and PLM (Product Lifecycle Management) systems within Red Bull Powertrains. This role will require the successful candidate to develop strong relationships with key internal groups including Design and Electronics and Manufacturing and Inspection.

**Key Accountabilities of this Design Support Engineer role:**

- Provide technical support and mentoring across our Design and Manufacturing groups, focussing on our core design tools and apps.
- Assist our engineers with helping in defining our best practice processes and workflows.
- Work with business unit stakeholders to identify opportunities and deploy solutions to provide more efficient automated solutions to current workflows using NX Open Tools.
- Support the on-going development and maintenance of the NX CAD System, integrations to our Teamcenter PLM system, configuration, templates and custom utilities.
- Assist with testing of systems during upgrades and deployment of development updates.
- Provide or help facilitate the development of targeted user training and mentoring.
- Essential Competencies of this Design Support Engineer role:
- Excellent working knowledge of Siemens NX CAD application at user-level including modelling, assemblies and drafting tools.
- Experience and knowledge of Teamcenter PLM integration with NX CAD.
- Excellent IT and PC skills (Microsoft Windows, Word , Excel, Powerpoint, Project, Visio)

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**TOCA** introduces new track-limits rule early

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## **Sharp stuns with F4 victory from 20th**

Rodin Carlin driver's remarkable Donington display



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STEVE JONES

# Britcar to stick with Prototype Cup

## BRITCAR

Britcar has vowed to persevere with its Prototype Cup despite the cancellation of last weekend's Brands Hatch round due to a shortfall of entries.

The series was launched this year and incorporates the one-make Praga Cup, which Britcar administered as a standalone category last year. But its inaugural round on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit last month featured just six cars – five Praga R1s and a single Radical SR3 RSX.

With a similar number set for the Brands Indy circuit meeting, a decision was made to scrap the round and focus on building a stronger entry for the next event, scheduled for Oulton Park at the

end of May. A meeting between stakeholders was set to take place earlier this week to discuss options, including the possibility of one-day meetings.

“Unfortunately, numbers were low at the beginning of the week and the decision by those teams was to pull out,” said Britcar boss Claire Hedley. “When they realised the numbers were relatively low, they decided that their sponsors needed double figures to make it justifiable to them.

“The people that we were hoping to come said that Brands is a little bit too tight for them; for those sorts of cars it was just too tight a circuit. So we're not deterred – we're going to focus on the next round.

“It's not over, absolutely not over yet. There is great track-time available. Oulton

Park is over a three-day weekend [with no track activity on the Sunday], so we're now going to potentially put qualifying on the Monday, or they can choose between the Saturday and Monday. We're talking with Praga, talking with all our competitors, to see how we can make it work for them.”

Meanwhile, Britcar has reached agreement with TCR organising body the WSC Group to put an official stamp on its TCR class within the British Endurance Championship, initially in a one-year deal. “It's something that's a great privilege,” said Hedley. “We've got the data-logging team checking all the cars and submitting all the data to WSC, and they're happy with the way it's going so far.”

**MARK PAULSON**

## XXR performance upgrades for SR1

### RADICAL

Radical Motorsport will give its SR1 model an upgrade for the first time in six years as it implements its XXR performance package.

The SR1 was first conceived in 2012 and has acted as an entry point for drivers wishing to race prototype machinery.

The XXR modifications have already been implemented on Radical's SR3 and SR10 models. They include a new aerodynamic design in the form of a central LMP-inspired 'fin', a new Generation 5 1340cc power unit from Radical's bespoke engine facility, and uprated reliability.

Radical Motorsport CEO



RADICAL

Joe Anwyll said: “After the launch of SR3 XXR and SR10 XXR, it was only right to align the SR1 under the XXR banner too as, after all, it has proven to be the pillar

of our company ethos – we make racers.”

The updated SR1 XXR is available to order now, with production expected to begin later this year.



# TOCA adopts new track-limits definition early

## TOCA

New track-limits rules were adopted for the British Touring Car Championship season-opening event at Donington Park last weekend to ensure consistency throughout the year, rather than wait for their scheduled full introduction across circuit racing in June.

Controversial regulation changes were proposed by Motorsport UK earlier this year and put out for consultation. As a result of this, plans to introduce penalties from the very first offence during races have been dropped, and the revised changes instead concern the definition of a track-limits violation rather than the punishment.

The existing rules regard a breach to be when the tyre goes completely beyond the white line or edge of a kerb, but the stricter new regulations stipulate that an offence occurs when any part of the contact patch of the tyre goes beyond the track/kerb's edge.

This change is not due to come into effect for another month, leaving BTCC organisers to discuss the matter with drivers' group leaders. It was decided to introduce the new definition for Donington, with the support categories following suit.

The stricter measures were policed at



Redgate, the Old Hairpin, McLeans and the exit of the Roberts chicane – locations where observers were sited.

Event director Ian Watson said: "I spoke to them [leaders of the BTCC drivers' group] on Friday morning, explaining the situation that the new rules were going to come into effect in June. We all agreed it made more sense to go with the stricter rules now to have consistency across the year and so everyone knows where they stand. To have one system for Donington Park now and a different one when we go back in August, and likewise with Brands Hatch, didn't make sense to them."

"Whether they agree with the rule change or not, I applaud them for deciding to introduce it now. I took it to the other championships and said, 'This is what we're going to do in touring cars', and the clerks were all in agreement and the drivers were advised. I haven't heard of any objections in terms of introducing the new rules early."

Watson admitted that there were "a few challenges operationally" with the new system. The wet weather on Sunday meant drivers were generally steering clear of the kerbs anyway, so it was not a true test of the full impact of the new rule.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

# Smith injured by hefty crash into Zelos

## MINI CHALLENGE

Mini Challenge frontrunner Sam Smith has been taken to hospital following a hefty crash with Dan Zelos in the third race at Donington Park last weekend.

Former Mazda MX-5 star Smith lost control of his Mini towards the end of the Wheatcroft Straight upon a safety-car restart and speared onto the grass on the inside approaching Redgate before clattering into Zelos at high speed as the 2021 champion was rounding the corner.

While Zelos suffered just "bumps and bruises", Smith

was extracted from his Hybrid Tune car and taken to Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham, where he was found to have a broken rib, fractured vertebrae and bruised lungs. He remained in hospital as Autosport closed for press on Tuesday.

"Sam remains in a positive frame of mind and is already planning his return to the grid when medically cleared to do so," read a statement from the championship. The series is also investigating what caused the crash and a full analysis is taking place alongside suppliers.

Zelos, meanwhile, now



needs to find an alternative car for the next event at Brands Hatch next week.

The Excelr8 driver won the first two races and believed he could have made it a hat-trick without the crash.

"These things happen in motorsport and I'm glad I got to walk away from it and Sam is on the mend," Zelos said. "If he hadn't made

contact with my car, he might've gone into the barriers at some speed and it could've been even worse. I got a really nice restart and I had my eyes peeled on the cars in front and it [Smith's car] was in my blind patch. We're now on the hunt to find another car that's ready for Brands Hatch."

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**



## IN THE HEADLINES

## THE SMITHS TEAM UP IN C1

Former European Le Mans Series GT champion Rob Smith made his C1 Endurance debut at Oulton Park last weekend, sharing with his GB4 racer son Sid. "I had really wanted to do something with Sid and this was a great chance," Smith Sr said. The duo finished sixth before being excluded for a technical infringement.

## KENT SHARES EX-BTCC AUDI

Two-time TCR UK champion Lewis Kent was called up at short notice to join former Ginetta Junior scholar Maurice Henry in Team Hard's ex-Bobby Thompson Audi S3 NGTC car for last weekend's British Endurance race at Brands Hatch. Adam Hatfield had to withdraw from the event due to family illness so Henry's regular partner, Team Hard scholar Daryl DeLeon, joined Brad Thurston in the squad's Porsche 991 Cup car. Kent and Henry finished 10th overall and third in class.

## COLLIER'S LATEST 206 BLOW

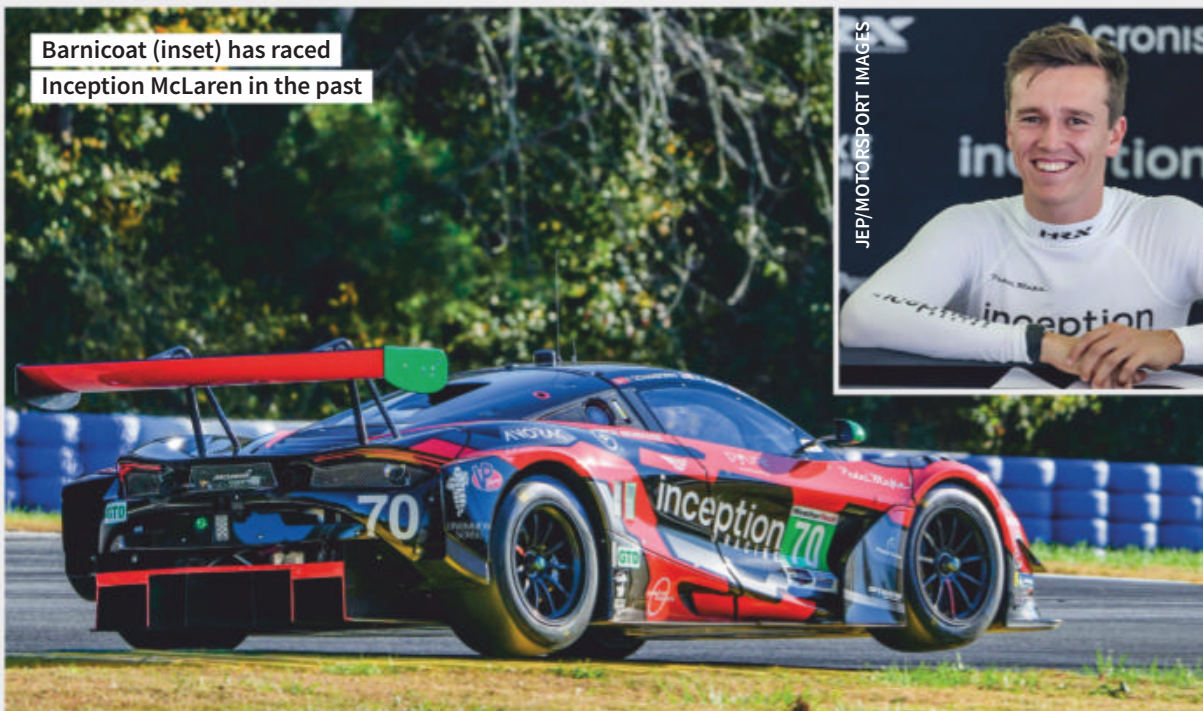
Joe Collier watched his Classic Thunder Peugeot 206 silhouette racer go up in smoke for the second time in two meetings last weekend. Its exhaust caused a relatively minor underbody fire at Silverstone last month, while transmission failure at Brands Hatch cut a fuel line and ignited a bigger inferno. The race was rescheduled for Sunday morning.

## MARATHON EFFORT IN VAIN

Two-time Pre-'93 Touring Car champion Ian Bower last weekend attempted the extraordinary challenge of racing at Brands Hatch and competing in the London Marathon on the same day (below). But his plan was derailed by a timetable change when the series' second race was brought forward by nearly two hours. It made Bower's mission impossible despite his sub-three-hour marathon run, although gearbox failure on his BMW M3 was set to thwart him anyway.



GARY HAWKINS



Barnicoat (inset) has raced Inception McLaren in the past

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

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## Barnicoat to make British GT return in Inception McLaren

## BRITISH GT

Lexus factory driver Ben Barnicoat will return to British GT for the first time since 2018 at next month's Silverstone 500 in an Inception Racing McLaren 720S GT3.

Barnicoat, who leads the IMSA SportsCar Championship GTD Pro standings, will share the Optimum Motorsport-run car at the 7 May race with IMSA GTD class regular Brendan Iribe, reuniting the team and drivers that won the 2022 Asian Le Mans Series GT class title.

The series' blue-riband three-hour race represents Barnicoat's first British GT outing since a troubled 2018 campaign in a GT4 McLaren that peaked with a class victory at Oulton Park. The 26-year-old told Autosport that his first series outing in a GT3 car is "a huge personal tick", and that he believes he and Iribe

can challenge for the win.

"Not only is it nice to be coming back this time in a GT3, but with a great team in Inception by Optimum, and to go for my GT3 debut at the star event for British GT at the Silverstone 500 is going to be absolutely epic," he said. "I certainly believe that Brendan is up to the challenge of jumping in for a one-off entry and I'd like to think that one of my strengths as a driver is my adaptability, so I feel we've got all the items we need."

Barnicoat added that the runner-up finish secured by Garage 59's McLaren as a one-off Silverstone entry last year "proves it can be done".

At least 20 GT3 cars are expected at Silverstone, with Greystone GT fielding an additional 720S for GT Open regulars Fran Rueda and Andrew Gilbert.

**JAMES NEWBOLD**

## Alpine junior Neate's late F4 deal

## BRITISH F4

New Alpine Formula 1 junior Aiden Neate was among a clutch of late additions to the British F4 grid for Donington Park's first round last weekend.

Neate spent the bulk of the two previous F4 campaigns with Argenti, finishing sixth in last year's standings, but has swapped to Fortec for 2023. He climbed from 15th to finish runner-up in the

reversed-grid Donington race.

"We were looking at different options," said Neate of his uncertain winter. "I'm happy to be staying with what I know and getting more experience. Going into this weekend, I didn't know what to expect as I was a late entry."

Neate added it was "pretty surreal" to have secured the backing of Alpine and says he is already feeling the benefits of the manufacturer's support.

One of the stars of the weekend was Noah Lisle, a late confirmation with Rodin Carlin. Although the Australian is only due to contest a partial season, while he focuses on Spanish F4, he achieved a double pole and a win at Donington, after finishing 13th in last year's table with JHR. Former Ginetta Junior racer Sonny Smith's deal with Argenti took the grid to 21 cars.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**



# More Autosport 3 Hours races are planned

## HISTORICS

The Autosport 3 Hours is likely to continue in future seasons after the successful revival event at Snetterton last weekend.

The race for pre-1966 GT machinery attracted 26 cars, and 22 completed the event on the 200 circuit. It was the first time the Autosport 3 Hours, which dates back to 1957, had been held since 2015.

Organiser the Historic Sports Car Club is keen to run the race again. CEO Andy Dee-Crowne said: “It brought cost-effective endurance racing back into the market. I thought it was fantastic and had an atmosphere.

“I’d have liked another 10 cars from a profit point of view, but we had a very good race and we’ll see what the feedback is. I can’t see a reason why I wouldn’t want to run the event again. It was successful and we want to continue to do it. I think people will see they’ve missed out on a good event and it will spark more interest.”

Only one ‘big banger’ GT – the TVR



Webb impressively led much of the revived race in a 911

RICHARD STYLES

Griffith of Ollie Reuben and Harry Barton – entered the race, perhaps due to the proximity of the Goodwood Members’ Meeting the weekend before and Donington Park Historic Festival this weekend. Reuben took pole by 2.6 seconds in the dry, but rain levelled the playing field and three cars were still in contention in the final 20 minutes.

Helped by making both mandatory pitstops during safety-car periods, the Porsche 911 of contemporary sportscar ace Oli Webb and Guy Ziser led for much of the distance, despite qualifying ninth. But the charging Lotus Elans of Nigel Greensall and Horatio Fitz-Simon overcame Webb late on.

Regular historics racer Greensall was full of praise for the event. “I thought it was superb because the Autosport 3 Hours has such history and illustrious names on the trophy,” he said. “It’s not over-regulated and attracted a great mix of cars and a good standard of driving. The 200 circuit is a great choice for this type of race – it’s more entertaining for drivers and spectators. The spirit in the pits was brilliant because [despite the weather] everybody who was there wanted to be there having fun.”

KEVIN TURNER & MARCUS PYE

P67 OPINION

# Donington Historic to celebrate 1993 Euro GP



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## HISTORICS

Two 1993 Formula 1 cars are among those due to appear at the Donington Park Historic Festival this weekend as part of a special 1993 European Grand Prix celebration.

The historic event will mark the 30th anniversary

of the fabled Donington F1 race, which is regarded as being one of Ayrton Senna’s greatest wins after he stormed from fifth to lead by the end of the first lap in wet conditions.

A Benetton B193, driven by Michael Schumacher and Riccardo Patrese during 1993, will perform

on-track demos, while there will be a static display for the 1993 teams’ and drivers’ title-winning Williams FW15C.

Other F1 machinery set to be at the event include a Benetton B190, Toleman TG184 and Minardi M198, which will also perform track demos.

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**FORTUNATE ESCAPE FOR DIX** Super Classic Formula Ford 1600 driver Stuart Dix was fortunate to emerge uninjured from this dramatic roll at Oulton Park last weekend. The Cooper Chinook pilot tangled with Seamus Wild's Swift SC93F at Old Hall on the second lap of the first race, which was instantly red-flagged. **Photograph by Steve Jones**

IN THE HEADLINES

HANCOCK BACK TO HIS DELTA

Long-time Formula Ford 2000 racer Tony Hancock turned the clock back 40 years at Snetterton last weekend when he raced the Delta T81 he bought new in 1981. After selling it in the 1980s, he found the car three years ago and bought it back. "The last time I raced it was in 1983," said Hancock. "When I first got in it, it was definitely my seat from 40 years ago."

DEMPSEY'S WINNING RETURN

Former Irish Formula Ford champion Morgan Dempsey returned to racing for the first time in nine years when he won both Super Classic FF1600 races at Oulton Park last weekend in a Van Diemen RF92. "This was the car I won the Irish title in and was second in the Formula Ford Kent Festival in 2006," he said. His comeback may be shortlived, though, because son Jordan could be at the wheel soon.

McCOURT OVERCOMES ROLL

Morgan McCourt escaped injury when his Leastone-Suzuki PH01 rolled at Brundle during qualifying for Sunday's Monoposto round on Snetterton's 200 circuit, due to too much rear brake bias. Amazingly, the Irish surgeon – seventh in Saturday's 300 circuit opener – made the afternoon's race after the team replaced the car's front-left and rear-right corners, and finished 13th.

KEOGH MAKES AN IMPACT

Irish teenager Codey Keogh (below) won both Monoposto Moto 1000 races on his single-seater debut at Snetterton last weekend in one of local racer/constructor Paul Heavey's Leastone 1000s. "His car control is amazing – he was four-wheel drifting it everywhere straight away," said Heavey. The 16-year-old, a race winner in Ireland's Junior Mini Challenge last season, dominated the first race from pole in the dry and was 6.2 seconds ahead at the end of the second lap of race two.



Felday car back after 50 years as Zolfe debuts at Prescott

HILLCLIMB

The unique Felday 2 hillclimb car created by one-time Formula 1 grand prix starter Peter Westbury was back on track at Prescott last weekend after 50 years stored in a garage.

The two-seater spaceframe car was built by Westbury at his Felday Engineering business with input from Jack Brabham and Rob Walker. Westbury won the 1963 British Hillclimb Championship in the first Felday and planned to move into the European Hillclimb Championship in 1964, where two seats were mandated.

But he then had the chance to drive the Ferguson P99 four-wheel-drive F1 car on the hills and took a second BHC crown in



Former hillclimb champion Westbury created the car for 1964

PAULLAWRENCE

1964, so the Daimler V8-powered Felday 2 was put aside after very little use.

It was sold several times and stood for 50 years until new owner Dave Melton found it. He's spent the past 18 months restoring the car and demonstrated it at Prescott. It may have only run once or twice in period.

Making a debut at Prescott was the Zolfe GT, one of around 12 spaceframe roadsters built a decade ago in Redditch. Former Clubmans racer Mike Luck was driving the neat Ford Zetec-powered car on behalf of the owner and showed good pace. Luck hopes to continue in the Midland Hillclimb Championship.

PAUL LAWRENCE



Unusual Zolfe made its debut at Prescott

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# 3 Hours of fun

*Wet conditions helped create a fascinating contest in the revived Autosport 3 Hours, resulting in a podium featuring a diverse range of cars and driver experience*

KEVIN TURNER

A pole position margin of 2.6 seconds does not usually bode well for a race, particularly one scheduled to last for 180 minutes. But those hardy few who stayed at Snetterton last Sunday to see the revived Autosport 3 Hours were rewarded with an exciting and unpredictable contest.

Not for the first time in our sport, one key ingredient was a change in the weather, even though the rain caused one member of Autosport's party (a former staffer it might be added!) to suggest an early departure could be in order. A wet track meant the TVR Griffith of Harry Barton and Ollie Reuben couldn't benefit as much from its V8 power and helped those in more nimble cars. And the two consistently outstanding performers around the 200 circuit – closer in spirit to the layout used in previous iterations of the race dating back to 1957 – were Oli Webb and Nigel Greensall.

A current pro proving to be quick in a historic club event is perhaps not a surprise, but drivers like 32-year-old Webb always bring an added sparkle; it's great to see them get to grips with cars so far removed from their usual 'offices'. And he was driving a two-litre Porsche 911! Rarely has such a car been so brilliantly driven (Andrew Jordan at the 2015 Goodwood Members' Meeting perhaps), and nobody could have expected a machine that qualified 8.6s off pole and was 17.5mph down through the speed trap in practice to lead for so much of the race.

## “The two consistently outstanding performers were Oli Webb and Nigel Greensall”

Webb thrust the car up to third early on, but it was strategy that gave the 911 a genuine chance of victory. Webb made the first of the car's pitstops, when he handed over to owner Guy Ziser, during a safety car that arrived just as the pit window opened. The TVR and frontrunning Lotus Elans did not, handing the Porsche an advantage of well over a lap when the others finally stopped.

Greensall, with impressive commitment in such conditions, began an outstanding charge (in the Elan started by rookie Ben Snee) that got him onto the same lap. He was poised to take the lead when he made his second stop and handed back to Snee.

Understandably, Ziser was not as rapid as Webb but he was consistent and kept the car in the game, eventually losing out to soloist Horatio Fitz-Simon's Elan and the TVR as the two-hour mark approached, whereupon another safety car period arrived.

Ziser reacted faster than the other frontrunners and dived in to hand back to Webb. By the time others had toured around behind the safety car and then pitted, the Porsche was back in front. Webb went into the final 50 minutes with a 15s margin over Fitz-Simon.

Crucially, however, the Snee/Greensall Elan had made an extra stop for Greensall to climb aboard and he was flying. Comfortably the fastest on the track for much of the stint, he had more than a minute to make up. The race was finely poised until a final safety car brought Greensall within range.

While Fitz-Simon pressured Webb – who was adept at allowing the 911 to dance through the left at Brundle to be in the right place to attack the Nelson right-hander – Greensall closed in. He took the lead with just under 25 minutes remaining and the hard-trying Fitz-Simon soon followed him through. The top three finished covered by 41s and there were five different types of car in the top six, ranging from the fourth-placed TVR to the Morgan +4 in fifth.

So the return of the Autosport 3 Hours provided a good race between wildly different machinery and a huge range of experience – the podium had someone losing their novice cross, a European Le Mans Series champion and a seasoned UK competitor.

Despite the eclectic field and appalling conditions, the driving standards were also pretty high. That was aside from the small number of drivers who ran down the escape road at Brundle and then turned round to rejoin while facing the oncoming traffic coming down Bentley Straight. Most other drivers, presumably those with more imagination(!), simply continued along the run-off and rejoined after Nelson...

If the race had stayed dry, this column would probably have lamented the lack of heavy metal, which is certainly an area to target for the future. But the mix of little and large (and the quick and the smart) in the conditions made this an enthralling contest.

Historic Sports Car Club CEO Andy Dee-Crowne asked Autosport if we were happy and would like to be involved again. Yes, we would, and hopefully others will be attracted now that the concept has been successfully revived.

The first era of the event lasted eight editions (1957-64) and winners included the great Jim Clark, while the second lasted for nine (2007-15) and was won by several of the top names in historic motorsport. It would be nice to stretch those numbers a little further, even if having a double Formula 1 champion on the winners' list this time might be pushing it a little. Perhaps we need to have a think about prizes...

It was getting dark and cold by the time the chequered flag waved, but all our party stayed to the end – even the man who had planned to leave early. 🍷

➡ P71 AUTOSPORT 3 HOURS REPORT



TOCA SUPPORTS DONINGTON PARK 22-23 APRIL

# Sharp on point with great win from the back

## BRITISH F4

For all the impressive drives during his domination of British Formula 4 last year, Alex Dunne never scored a win quite like one Louis Sharp achieved at Donington Park last weekend. Starting 20th on the fully reversed grid for race two, Sharp's expectations were low. Yet he kept his head in tricky wet conditions and claimed a remarkable victory.

The Rodin Carlin driver admitted he was "very lucky" to carve through the pack so successfully, his progress aided by a safety car – caused by polesitter Isaac Barashi being beached at the Old Hairpin – bunching the field, but he had already climbed to fifth by this point.

Hitech's Jimmy Piszcyk was the early leader after passing Barashi into Redgate. But it wasn't long before late Argenti entry Sonny Smith caught the Aussie, and snuck through when Piszcyk ran wide at the Old Hairpin. But Sharp then emerged ahead after Smith made of a mess of the safety car restart, bunching the field up, and took the incredible win from Aiden Neate – the Fortec driver up from 15th.

"It was a crazy race!" said Sharp.



Rodin Carlin driver kept his cool in tricky conditions to take remarkable victory

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP  
motorsport  
IMAGES

"Coming into the race, I wasn't thinking about a podium – I didn't expect a points finish – so it's unreal [to win]!"

Yet there was still time for more drama when Sharp and Neate were initially given 30-second penalties for overlapping other cars on the restart. But these were rightfully later rescinded when Smith's inconsistent pace on the restart was highlighted.

Earlier, Sharp had grabbed the lead of a dry race one from team-mate Noah Lisle with a move around the outside of Redgate. "I knew if I wanted to win, I had to get him at the start," said the Kiwi. But a red flag with Gustav Jonsson's and Aqil Alibhai's cars stranded meant the roles were soon

reversed, although Sharp resisted Lisle.

Sharp's hopes of a perfect weekend were dashed in the finale when he went too deep and through the gravel at Redgate when challenging Lisle. After dropping to the back, he stormed up to sixth, while Lisle completed a perfect weekend for Rodin Carlin by heading home team-mate Dion Gowda and Jack Sherwood (Chris Dittmann Racing).

He may not have the 37-point lead Dunne enjoyed after the opening weekend last year (instead it's eight), but Sharp has still stamped his mark on this year's championship in ominous style.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

# Roberts and Trice share spoils for rampant Redline

## PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

If the racing at Donington Park is anything to go by, then an exciting Porsche Sprint Challenge GB season could be in store, and it was Steve Roberts who left Leicestershire with the early advantage.

Like his Redline Racing team-mate Roberts, Toby Trice is another continuing in the championship as it joins the British Touring Car support bill full-time this year, and he took full advantage of his experience to claim a maiden series win from pole in the opener. But it was not straightforward

– Team Parker's Joe Warhurst finished just 0.28 seconds behind, and Trice said his rear tyres began to get "a bit lairy" towards the end. "What a way to start the season!" Trice added. "It means everything – just to get on the grid has been a challenge."

Roberts was third after a close fight with Ginetta GT5 Challenge runner-up Will Jenkins (Century Motorsport), but passed Trice early on in race two and then grabbed the lead from Warhurst through the Craner Curves on lap 10 of 14. While Roberts scampered clear, there was a thrilling five-car battle for second, with Warhurst just holding on from Max Coates.

There was another close battle behind Roberts in race three. Originally, Warhurst held the position but was relegated late on at Coppice by a charging Coates as the Graves Motorsport driver put a disappointing 11th in the opener, after struggling off the line, behind him.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Roberts leads Warhurst, Trice and Coates. They battled all weekend



# Historic victory for de Haan

## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

History was made at Donington Park when Robert de Haan became the Porsche Carrera Cup GB's youngest-ever victor after taking an impressive win in the opener.

The ex-Ginetta Junior racer dominated the winter Sprint Challenge Southern Europe contest and continued that strong form into Leicestershire. De Haan started



Dutchman became the series' youngest winner

third in his Richardson Racing car, jumped slow-starting Theo Edgerton (Redline Racing) off the line, and grabbed the lead on the inside of the chicane from Porsche GB Junior Adam Smalley. Yet the Team Parker Racing driver quickly reclaimed the place with a good run through Redgate and down the Craner Curves before edging away.

But Smalley admitted to struggling with his tyres as the track dried and de Haan pounced on lap 15 of 24 – again on the inside into the chicane – to become the youngest series race winner aged just 16.

Smalley was determined to bounce back in race two, and a brilliant opening lap set up his first win in a year, grabbing the lead from Gus Burton at the chicane to build a seven-point advantage in the standings. Burton added second to his earlier third, while de Haan was lucky to avoid being hit when he spun down the Craner Curves and across the pack backwards at the Old Hairpin.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

# Zelos endures mixed fortunes

## MINI CHALLENGE

For the majority of the Donington Park weekend, Dan Zelos's miserable Mini Challenge fortune seemed to have been cast aside. The Excelr8 driver led the first two contests from start to finish, and even a late-race power-steering failure in the opener did not derail his charge. But the finale ended with a frightening crash where Sam Smith speared into Zelos's car at Redgate and left two battered cars, and Smith in hospital.

Smith's race had not got off to a good start when he clashed with Hybrid Tune team-mate Joe Tanner into Redgate on the first lap when attempting to take the lead, which enabled polesitter Will Orton

to sneak back ahead. Amid two safety-car periods, Zelos climbed to third from the partially reversed grid, and it was on the restart from the second of these cautions when the sizeable clash occurred.

Smith was out of control on the grass on the inside at the end of the Wheatcroft Straight and clattered into an unfortunate Zelos at the Redgate apex. The race was red-flagged, with Orton declared the winner from Tanner and Cooper class champion Nelson King.

Earlier, Zelos had held off a fast-closing Smith in race one, while in the largely uneventful wet second race he always had the measure of Tanner, Smith and early points leader Orton.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Former champion twice headed the Mini field before finale crash

## RACE RESULTS

### BRITISH FORMULA 4

**Race 1 (14 laps) 1 Louis Sharp;** 2 Noah Lisle +0.582s; 3 Daniel Guinchard; 4 Dion Gowda; 5 Deagen Fairclough; 6 Will Macintyre.

**Fastest lap** Lisle 1m04.596s (110.29mph).

**Pole** Lisle. **Starters** 20.

**Race 2 (15 laps) 1 Sharp;** 2 Aiden Neate +5.434s; 3 Jaden Pariat; 4 Kanato Le; 5 Aqil Alibhai; 6 James Higgins. **FL** Sharp 1m13.851s (96.47mph). **P** Isaac Barashi. **S** 21.

**Race 3 (15 laps) 1 Lisle;** 2 Gowda +13.537s; 3 Jack Sherwood; 4 Fairclough; 5 Macintyre; 6 Sharp. **FL** Lisle 1m13.416s (97.04mph). **P** Lisle. **S** 21.

**Points 1 Sharp 59;** 2 Lisle 51; 3 Gowda 41; 4 Fairclough 26; 5 Neate 22; 6 Higgins 22.

### PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

**Race 1 (18 laps) 1 Toby Trice;** 2 Joe Warhurst +0.280s; 3 Steve Roberts; 4 Will Jenkins; 5 Matthew Armstrong; 6 Ethan Hammerton.

**FL** Trice 1m09.253s (102.87mph). **P** Trice. **S** 19.

**Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Roberts;** 2 Warhurst +2.859s; 3 Max Coates; 4 Trice; 5 Hammerton; 6 Jenkins. **FL** Roberts 1m16.171s (93.53mph). **P** Warhurst. **S** 19.

**Race 3 (14 laps) 1 Roberts;** 2 Coates +3.478s; 3 Warhurst; 4 Trice; 5 Hammerton; 6 Callum Davis. **FL** Roberts 1m15.903s (93.86mph). **P** Roberts. **S** 19.

**Points 1 Roberts 28;** 2 Trice 23; 3 Warhurst 22; 4 Coates 16; 5 Jenkins 11; 6 Hammerton 11.

### PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

**Race 1 (24 laps) 1 Robert de Haan;** 2 Adam Smalley +0.440s; 3 Gus Burton; 4 Matty Graham; 5 Hugo Ellis; 6 Max Bird. **FL** William Aspin 1m08.333s (104.26mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 25.

**Race 2 (24 laps) 1 Smalley;** 2 Burton +3.549s; 3 Graham; 4 Micah Stanley; 5 Harry Foster; 6 Ellis. **FL** Ellis 1m12.507s (98.26mph). **P** Ellis. **S** 25.

**Points 1 Smalley 23;** 2 Burton 16; 3 de Haan 12; 4 Graham 12; 5 Ellis 8; 6 Stanley 7.

### MINI CHALLENGE

**Race 1 (17 laps) 1 Dan Zelos;** 2 Sam Smith +0.352s; 3 Joe Tanner; 4 Will Orton; 5 Oliver Meadows; 6 Barry Ward. **FL** Zelos 1m12.230s (98.63mph). **P** Zelos. **S** 23.

**Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Zelos;** 2 Tanner +2.097s; 3 Smith; 4 Orton; 5 Meadows; 6 Nelson King. **FL** Meadows 1m20.186s (88.85mph). **P** Zelos. **S** 23.

**Race 3 (8 laps) 1 Orton;** 2 Tanner +0.839s; 3 King; 4 Dominic Wheatley; 5 Jamie Osborne; 6 Lewis Selby. **FL** Orton 1m14.378s (95.78mph). **P** Orton. **S** 23.

**Points 1 Orton (below) 130;** 2 Tanner 128; 3 Zelos 112; 4 Meadows 104; 5 King 100; 6 Wheatley 86.



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





# Simms jostles Jomo to Snett Formula Ford glory

**SNETTERTON  
HSCC  
22-23 APRIL**

The transition from the 300 circuit to the 200 layout between days was a novel concept for the Historic Sports Car Club season-opener, made trickier by Sunday afternoon's persistent rain. But the Historic Formula Ford races, often super-close at Snetterton, were peerless.

After electrical gremlins forced poleman Linton Stutely's retirement from Saturday's lead, Matt Wrigley stalked Callum Grant and Benn Simms down and snatched victory on the Bentley Straight with half a lap to spare.

While Simms – in the Jomo he last raced in 2017 – and Grant (Merlyn Mk20A) waged war on Sunday, and over-pressured tyres left Wrigley in fourth, Stutely jostled his Royale RP3 from the back to join them. Although he'd led fleetingly before, Stutely finally crossed the timing line ahead on the penultimate lap. Still the trio traded places, before Simms pulled the decisive move.

Stutely finished 0.066 seconds behind, with Grant shadowing them. "That was fantastic, better than all the [FF2000] races I had last year put together," grinned Simms.

Classic FF1600 was almost as good. Having arrived with seconds to spare after Enigma Motorsport changed the engine in his Kenneth Acheson tribute Royale RP26, Joseph Ahrens, 22, aced Saturday's restarted race, edging Simon Toyne by 0.082s for a resounding first win. Disputing third, Ben Tinkler and Jake Shortland were closer still. Unfazed by Sunday's spray, Ahrens kept Tinkler behind.

Lola's Mike Blanchet won Snetterton's 1978 MCD championship finale in a T580, and debutant Jordan Harrison's Historic FF2000 pole in a sister car made seasoned rivals take notice. A misfire forced the reigning Classic FF1600 champion to pit on the opening lap, leaving Graham Fennymore to outrun Marc Mercer and Ollie Roberts in a podium lockout to start the Reynard marque's 50th anniversary year.

After Sunday's race was restarted so competitors were given time to change

to wets, Fennymore was caught by Mercer, who lunged for the lead into Murray's on the final lap to find Malcolm Scott spinning in their path. Mercer and Fennymore went either side of Scott, Mercer tagging his car as it arced towards them but, as Fennymore had to back off, Mercer won the dash up Senna Straight to the line. Roberts was third again, with Harrison a fighting fifth from the back behind Richard Coleman.

Driving the ex-Tommy Reid Irish Racing Cars Lotus 22, Horatio Fitz-Simon blitzed Saturday's solus Historic Formula Junior race. Clive Richards chased in vain, but the fight for third built to a crescendo. In a battle of Ford France Lotuses, Nick Fennell (ex-Jean Vinatier 27) dived inside Adrian Russell (ex-Henri Grandsire 22) entering Riches two laps from home, but ran wide on the exit. Tim Child split them repeatedly in his 22, only for his engine to cut out, so Russell claimed the place.

Historic Road Sports champion Kevin Kivlochan's Cobra and Will Plant's Morgan +8 were together throughout Saturday's opener. Modsports leader Paul Sibley (MG Midget), who topped the joint qualifying session, clawed through to third from a separate grid, demoting John Shaw's +8. Scottish Snetterton rookie Alastair Baptie (MGB GT V8) and Paul Knapton (Maguire Stiletto) chased Sibley after an electrical glitch stopped Steve Watton's Turner. Sibley passed Kivlochan into the Bomb Hole for Sunday's outright victory.

Plant's devastating first flying lap broke his 70s Road Sports pursuers. His margin might have been less had 'KeKi', now in his Morgan, not taken seven laps to usurp Antony Ross (TVR 3000M).

Globetrotter Ben Stiles and Jon Finch humbled the two Classic F3s in FF2000s. Finch – who raced Ben's dad Trevor in



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD STYLES



## WEEKEND WINNERS

## HISTORIC FF1600

**Race 1** Matthew Wrigley (Merlyn Mk11A/20)

**Race 2** Benn Simms (Jomo JMR7)

## CLASSIC FF1600

**Races 1 & 2** Joseph Ahrens (Royale RP26)

## HISTORIC FF2000

**Race 1** Graham Fennymore (Reynard SF81)

**Race 2** Marc Mercer (Reynard SF79)

## HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR

Horatio Fitz-Simon (Lotus 22)

## HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS &amp; MODSPORTS

**Race 1** Kevin Kivlochan (Shelby Cobra)

**Race 2** Paul Sibley (MG Midget)

## 70s ROAD SPORTS

William Plant (Morgan +8)

## CLASSIC F3

**Races 1 & 2** Ben Stiles (Van Diemen RF82)

## MONOPOSTO 'A'

**Race 1** Tony Bishop (Dallara-Mercedes F307)

**Race 2** Karl O'Brien (Dallara-Mugen Honda F307)

## MONOPOSTO 'B'

**Races 1 & 2** Codey Keogh (Leystone-Suzuki 1000)

## AUTOSPORT 3 HOURS (90 LAPS)

**1 Ben Snee/Nigel Greensall (Lotus Elan);**

2 Horatio Fitz-Simon (Elan) +11.413s; 3 Oli Webb/Guy Ziser (Porsche 911); 4 Harry Barton/Ollie Reuben (TVR Griffith); 5 David & Andrew Wenman (Morgan +4); 6 Ian Pearson/Nigel & Callum Grant (Marcos-Volvo 1800GT). **Class winners** Webb/Ziser; Barton/Reuben; Tim Kary/Richard Wood/Jim Chapman (Austin-Healey 3000).

**Fastest lap** Reuben 1m36.756s (73.82mph).

**Pole** Barton (Reuben set time). **Starters** 26.

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

FF1600s at Brands Hatch 50 years ago – caught the youngster on Saturday, but Stiles dug deep to repel him. Belgian Louis Hanjoul, in a Jo Marquart-designed Argo-Toyota JM1 built in nearby Griston, finished third. With Finch locking brakes following a caliper change, Stiles dominated on Sunday.

Dallaras with five engine types topped the F3-centred Monoposto set. Polesitter Tony Bishop narrowly beat Karl O'Brien on Saturday, pursued by eighth starter Jason Timms, whose 1400cc Suzuki Hayabusa-engined F301 was fastest through the speed traps. O'Brien reversed the order on Sunday.

In the Mono Moto 1000 group another Irishman, Codey Keogh, 16, won brilliantly on his single-seater debut. The works Leystone driver was sensational in Sunday's rain too, rounding poleman Matty Haughton (Jedi) into Riches and streaking clear before the race was stopped.

MARCUS PYE

# Brilliant Greensall propels novice Snee to victory

## AUTOSPORT 3 HOURS

Reintroduced for the first time since 2015, Sunday's Autosport 3 Hours built to a scintillating crescendo as team tactics and superlative driving in treacherous conditions left the result in doubt until the chequered flag fell. Sixty years after Lotus's last contemporary era victory, scored by Jim Clark in a 23B sports-racer in 1963, Nigel Greensall and Ben Snee earned the result in the latter's Elan.

Greensall is one of historic racing's best chasers, but the recently elected British Racing Drivers' Club member's pace was remarkable as he hounded down leaders Oli Webb (back in to finish Guy Ziser's Porsche 911, which he'd started) and Horatio Fitz-Simon, soloing in an Elan. Lap after lap Greensall reduced his deficit by chunks – and a late safety car threw another curveball – until the trio was united. Still Greensall did not relent. Having demoted Fitz-Simon, he zapped Webb's aquaplaning 911 into Riches with less than half an hour to go and kept Fitz-Simon at bay.

When the chequered flag fell, Greensall was 11 seconds clear of HF-S, with the 911 half a minute adrift, having been driven neatly by its owner and with incredible gung-ho by Webb. Snee, in only his sixth race, could not believe the result, which removes his novice cross. "That was great, but Ben drove brilliantly," said his team-mate and coach. Snee added: "We'd planned to maximise my stint but, when the safety car came out, it made sense to put Nigel back in." Suzanne Sears, daughter of 1964 winner Jack, presented the engraved trophy.

Lack of visibility was a major



Greensall takes flag after epic comeback

factor in the race, which finished with a wan sun breaking through the sullen grey clouds over Riches. Fitz-Simon, 23, shattered after his marathon, had a greasy film smeared over his windscreen and a wiper blade melted by fuel. Harry Barton and Ollie Reuben – who planted Barton Racing's TVR Griffith on pole – each led in the wailing V8 monster, but both fell off at the Bomb Hole. "There was a tiny patch of clear screen, which made it virtually impossible to know where we were," said Barton. They finished a gallant fourth, lapped after the engine initially refused to fire at the last stop.

Exceptional performances by David and Andrew Wenman in their open Morgan +4(!) and Marcos 1800GT owner Ian Pearson, partnered with Nigel and Callum Grant, earned fifth and sixth. Martins Stretton and Angle (Elan), and twice Spa Six Hours winner Joe Ward, sharing his TVR Grantura with son Piers, were next home.

The best of eight MGB crews, Hugh and Mark Colman, finished 10th, a lap ahead of rivals Brian Lambert/Mark Hope and Ben Tinkler/Martin Whitlock.



Reuben/Barton TVR led from pole early on



# Pre-'66 thrills as Sheraton and Ibbotson prevail

BRANDS HATCH

BARC

22-23 APRIL

A Pre-'66 Touring Car thriller was highlight of a Brands Hatch weekend that also featured the British Endurance Championship.

Any one of at least six drivers, in four different types of car, could have won the entertaining Pre-'66 opener on Saturday. Piers Grange's rumbling Ford Mustang led the most laps before succumbing to a loose coil wire. But he was continually hounded – and regularly demoted – by a swarming pack including the Ford Anglias of early leader Billy Kenneally and Michael Sheraton, Lotus Cortina debutants Tim Abbott and Ian Thompson, and 2021 champion James Ibbotson (Hillman Imp). Kenneally's chances were dented by a trip through the Paddock Hill gravel, while father Pat had also contended before a flywheel detonation transformed much of his Cortina's engine bay into a shower of debris.

Sheraton's bravery under braking was key to his eventual win and he pipped Abbott and Thompson by less than a second. "Everyone was giving each other room," beamed Sheraton before heading home to his baby daughter, born earlier this month.

Sunday's wet rematch, which Abbott and Thompson also skipped, played into the hands of Ibbotson and fellow Imp runner Will Egby. Ibbotson led from pole but was chased down and passed by Egby. The impressive newcomer won by over 5s before his helmet failed post-race scrutineering. Ibbotson therefore inherited victory and Kenneally Jr second.

No mistakes and strong pace on a drying track earned Datum Motorsport's Axel van Norderveen (Ginetta G56 GTA) a third consecutive Britcar Trophy success, this time in a two-hour race. Opening stint



There was an eclectic and close fight at the front of Pre-'66 opener, Grange's Mustang leading before late woes

leader Will Stacey, first to pit for dry-weather tyres, looked well set approaching half distance, having completed the second of three mandatory stops. But his Lotus Elise blew its engine before team boss Rob Boston could take over. "That's motorsport," reflected Boston. "Without the lows, we wouldn't have the highs, would we?" Simon Clark took his Class 2 Porsche 997 to second overall, breaking up a Ginetta stranglehold at the front.

When cold rear tyres on his unique Aston Martin Vulcan caught out Glebs Stepanovs on the opening lap, it reduced the British Endurance top-class runners to one car. Peter Erceg and Marcus Clutton duly took their Audi R8 to a six-lap victory over Team Hard pairing Brad Thurston and Daryl DeLeon (Porsche 991 Cup). Charlie Hand's early pace in Chris Goddard's Ferrari 458 Challenge might have made for a closer race but for mechanical woe.

Stephen Primett charged from the back of the grid to win Sunday's Pre-'83 Touring Car contest. His polesitting Ford Escort Mk1 had thrown a halfshaft when

leaving the grid a day earlier, letting Mark Cholerton's Mk2 in for a win. Front-wheel-drive traction exiting Clearways in the wet helped Duncan Leftley (Volkswagen Golf) and Anton Martin (Escort RS1600i) to second and fourth places. They sandwiched the spectacularly sideways Tom Harvey (Escort Mk2), who also started from the rear – and with a 10s penalty – after losing his Saturday podium on the scales.

After Stuart Waite (BMW M3 E36) dominated the opening Pre-'93 Touring Car thrash, he had to yield to Blue Oval Saloon Series runners James Dunkley and Sam Daffin for overall honours in race two. The Fiesta duo benefited from front-wheel drive and a freer tyre choice on soggy Sunday. Dunkley's Zetec-powered Mk2 overturned his earlier defeat to Daffin's newer EcoBoost motivation as both recorded maiden BOSS victories. Ross Craig (Honda Civic) twice claimed Pre-'03 honours after an absent catalytic converter on Chris Southcott's Civic EK3 version cost him the opener.

Colin Philpott mastered both dry and wet as his XJS claimed a commanding Jaguar Challenge double. Mike Seabourne looked set for a pair of seconds in Derek Pearce's XK8 only to come in underweight first time around, then coast to a halt having risen from the back in race two.

Bryan Bransom (BMW M3 E46) was only briefly challenged en route to a Classic Thunder brace on Sunday, twice followed by Sam Wilson in Rikki Cann's mighty Aston Martin V8 Vantage. The opener's first attempt on Saturday was abandoned when Joe Collier watched his spaceframe Peugeot 206 violently burn. W Series racer Abbie Eaton starred in dad Paul's Holden Commodore on her way to fourth in race two, the car's pace transformed by new wet rubber.

MARK PAULSON



Vulcan's demise left Audi (left) as BEC winner by six laps





## WEEKEND WINNERS

### PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

**Race 1** Michael Sheraton (Ford Anglia)

**Race 2** James Ibbotson (Hillman Imp Super)

### BRITCAR TROPHY

Axel van Nederveen (Ginetta G56 GTA)

### BRITISH ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Peter Erceg/Marcus Clutton (Audi R8 GT3)

### PRE-'83 TOURING CARS

**Race 1** Mark Cholerton (Ford Escort Mk2, below)

**Race 2** Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1)

### PRE-'93 & PRE-'03 TOURING CARS/BOSS

**Race 1** Stuart Waite (BMW M3 E36)

**Race 2** James Dunkley (Ford Fiesta)

### JAGUAR CHALLENGE

**Races 1 & 2** Colin Philpott (XJS)

### CLASSIC THUNDER

**Races 1 & 2** Bryan Bransom (BMW M3 E46)



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



**THOMSON'S MAXI ATTACK** One-time *Quaife Motorsport News* Saloons champion Gavin Thomson gave a track debut to his asphalt rally-bred Peugeot 205 Maxi in Classic Thunder, his first race outing since 2017. Pug fanatic Thomson switched to rallying in a Group A 205 before acquiring his "dream car" from Spain. It uses 206 Super 1600 running gear with a six-speed sequential Sadev gearbox and is now powered by an improved version of the 306 GTI-6 engine used in his previous circuit racer.



**HARPER'S UNUSUAL BIG CAT** Second time out in his S-type R, Andrew Harper scored a first Jaguar Challenge podium. After taking his turbodiesel X350 to a class title last year, Harper has switched to another mould-breaking one-off. Both were built by Mark Bennett and Craig Baxter at Harper's Auto Reserve Parts business and sport Silk Cut Jaguar Group C liveries. "The back end does like to drift," said Harper. Further work is planned as "this was an MOT'd three-litre petrol car back in December".



**BEETLE BATTLER** For his circuit racing debut in Classic Thunder, long-time race crew member Neil Oakley chose the Volkswagen Beetle that John Aitkenhead campaigned three decades ago. The 1994 Beetle Cup champion developed the car after that series folded, and it now features a Transporter engine stretched from 2.1 to 2.45 litres and Porsche trailing arms. After some trackdays and a Santa Pod run, Oakley was inspired to take the plunge into racing himself after losing brother Craig last year.



# Beebee buzzes past Mann in VSCC thriller

**SILVERSTONE**  
**VSCC**  
**22 APRIL**

The Vintage Sports-Car Club's opening race event of 2023 took place in glorious weather at Silverstone last weekend, with some thrilling races to match.

The highlight came in the standard and modified pre-war sportscars contest, which featured a race-long dice for victory between Robert Beebee and Christopher Mann. Mann led the early stages in his 1931 Alfa Romeo 8C Monza before a mistake at Brooklands allowed Beebee to move ahead in his one-year-old Frazer Nash, but Mann soon reclaimed the advantage.

The pair continued to trade positions before Mann pulled over a second clear, but Beebee caught back up in traffic to snatch a last-gasp win by just 0.19s. Clive Fidgeon finished third despite a late spin on oil at Brooklands in his Nash, while Sue Darbyshire was fourth in her three-wheeled Morgan Super Aero.

"It was fantastic, I don't know how many times we changed the lead," Beebee enthused. "I didn't think I was going to catch him, but I thought maybe



Beebee (left) and Mann regularly traded the lead in standard and modified pre-war contest

with the backmarkers."

A similarly close battle followed in the VSCC specials race, with Robin Tuluie triumphing ahead of Oliver Llewellyn. Michael James put up a valiant early fight in his Riley 12/4 TT Sprite against Llewellyn's more powerful Bentley 3/8 before dropping out with a mechanical issue. Llewellyn then exchanged the lead with Tuluie's Riley Menasco Pirate, but eventually faded with a misfire. Clive Morley edged his Bentley 3/4 to third by 0.15s ahead of Theodore Hunt, who showed strong pace in his Nash.

Llewellyn made amends later in the day

by winning the allcomers and vintage scratch race after a close scrap with Tom Walker's Amilcar Hispano Special, eventually prevailing by 5s, while Julian Wilton passed Justin Maeers (GN Parker) to take third in ERA R7B. Hunt, meanwhile, won a shortened fast handicap race for pre-war cars, with the slow handicap race going the way of William Colledge's Wolseley Hornet Special.

Jack Smith dominated the first Classic and Modern Motorsport Club race in his MGA despite losing the lead to Alexander Hewitson's Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2 on

## Fine margins separate Oldfield FF1600 team-mates

**OULTON PARK**  
**BRSCC**  
**22 APRIL**

Oldfield Motorsport team-mates Lucas Romanek and Brandon McCaughan shared the National Formula Ford 1600 spoils at Oulton Park last weekend, and there was little to split them in either race.

Romanek led McCaughan in race one as



STEVE JONES

they initially shook off fellow Van Diemen runner Morgan Quinn. The lead duo went side by side on numerous occasions, with Romanek just retaining the upper hand. But, as they started the last lap, Quinn had towed a further three cars into contention and it was a five-car train into Lodge. Just 0.078 seconds split the top two at the flag in Romanek's favour, with Quinn just holding off Jordan Kelly's Van Diemen and the Rays of Elliott Budzinski and Nolan Allaer – 0.862s covered all six.

Romanek led again from the start of the second race but, from lap six of 11, McCaughan managed to keep his nose ahead to take the win. The lead pair had escaped early on, with third-placed Quinn caught by Budzinski and Chris Middlehurst's Van Diemen. It became a three-car battle to the flag, Budzinski and Middlehurst both ultimately getting the better of Quinn.

Morgan Dempsey turned pole position into a dominant double victory in Super

Classic pre-'99 Formula Ford in his Van Diemen RF92. With Dempsey clear from the first corner in race one, John Murphy (Van Diemen) and Andrew Schofield (Reynard) had a great battle for second, Murphy edging it by 0.3 seconds.

The second race started similarly, until Schofield had gear-linkage problems and fell back. While Dempsey was dominant again, Murphy just held onto second, but had Richard Higgins in his wheeltracks at the finish. Schofield managed to reclaim fifth.

It was all looking good for JWB Motorsport's Phil House and Nick Beaumont going into the final 30 minutes of the three-and-a-half-hour C1 Endurance contest, as the duo headed the two Trojan cars of Charlie Bingham/Adam Willis and Chris Freeman/Jonathan Munday.

Having built a lead of over a minute, Beaumont was leaving his last compulsory stop late, as was third-placed Munday. But, on lap 77 of 84, the safety car was out again for another two laps. James Little's



## WEEKEND WINNERS



MICK WALKER

**SILVERSTONE****FOX & NICHOLL TROPHY FOR STANDARD & MODIFIED PRE-WAR SPORTSCARS**

Robert Beebee (Frazer Nash TT Replica)

**SILVERSTONE TROPHY FOR VSCC SPECIALS**

Robin Tuluie (Riley Menasco Pirate)

**GP ITALIA TROPHY ALLCOMERS & VINTAGE SCRATCH**

Oliver Llewellyn (Bentley 3/8)

**ALLCOMERS FAST HANDICAP FOR PRE-WAR CARS**

Theodore Hunt (Frazer Nash TT Replica)

**ALLCOMERS SLOW HANDICAP FOR PRE-WAR CARS**

William Colledge (Wolseley Hornet Special)

**CMMC SCRATCH****Race 1** Jack Smith (MGA, above)**Race 2** Mark Daniell (Morgan +4)**HAWTHORN MEMORIAL & PATRICK LINDSAY MEMORIAL TROPHIES FOR PRE-WAR & PRE-66 RACING CARS**

Charlie Martin (Cooper-Climax T53)

**TOM COLE & HAWTHORN TROPHIES RACE FOR FISCAR AND PRE-1955 SPORTSCARS**

Martin Hunt (HWM)

**For full results visit:** [theresultslive.co.uk](http://theresultslive.co.uk)**OULTON PARK****NATIONAL FORMULA FORD****Race 1** Lucas Romanek (Van Diemen JL13)**Race 2** Brandon McCaughan (Van Diemen JL13)**SUPER CLASSIC PRE-'99 FORMULA FORD****Races 1 & 2** Morgan Dempsey (Van Diemen RF92)**C1 ENDURANCE**

Emax Motorsport (Stuart Ratcliff/Jake Little/James Little, below)

**CLUBSPORT TROPHY**

Phiroze Bilimoria (VW Scirocco)



STEVE JONES

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

Tuluie heads Llewellyn in close VSCC specials battle



MICK WALKER

the opening lap. Smith swiftly reclaimed the advantage on lap two before pulling out a 10s gap by the halfway stage and maintaining it until the finish, with Mark Ellis coming home third in his Morgan.

It was a much closer affair in the sequel. Hewitson again held an early advantage while Mark Daniell, taking over from Ellis in the Morgan, passed Smith for second early on. Daniell eventually pounced into Brooklands to take the lead and resisted the close attentions of Hewitson in the final laps to win by 0.7s.

Charlie Martin won the pre-1966 racing cars encounter in his Cooper-Climax T53

by over 48s from the Cooper T43/51 of Tom Waterfield, who prevailed against Geraint Owen's more powerful Kurtis 500 Indy for second. Jon Milicevic ran Martin close early on before retiring when his Brabham BT14 developed a misfire and dropped onto three cylinders.

Martin Hunt won from pole in the Fifties Sports Car Racing and pre-1955 sportscars pitstop race in his HWM, leading home Barry Cannell's Cooper Bobtail T39 by 14s, with Jonathan Abecassis the last driver to finish on the lead lap in third in an Austin-Healey.

**STEVE WHITFIELD**

Romanek leads as the top six was separated by a second



STEVE JONES

Emax car had just grabbed second before the caution and, from the green flag, only nine minutes remained.

Munday pitted while Beaumont retained the lead until he stopped with two laps to go. He rejoined third, handing another victory to the Emax trio of Stuart Ratcliff plus Jake and James Little. Jelly Snake's James Cannings/Jonathan Railton were second on the road, but then received a five-minute penalty, which relegated them to sixth, for pitting too soon after the safety car. Therefore, Beaumont and House moved

up to second yet again, with Munday/Freeman claiming third.

Matthew Bolton had dominated the Clubsport Trophy mini-enduro in his BMW M3, but fell foul of a short stop and was finally classified third after a post-race penalty. Scott Parkin (Audi TT) led the pursuit until his mandatory pit visit, after which he was chasing Phiroze Bilimoria's VW Scirocco for the rest of the race, before both were promoted following Bolton's penalty.

**PETER SCHERER**





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***It's back!***



The award winning  
Longstone lightcar race  
at VSCC Donington  
9th July 2023





Menzies has the honour of claiming opening win of the 2023 season



# Honours even as hillclimb year gets off to an entertaining start

**PRESCOTT  
BRITISH HILLCLIMB  
22-23 APRIL**

The 2023 British Hillclimb Championship started with a tremendous day of competition at Prescott, with the run-off victories shared by Wallace Menzies and Scott Moran.

A cool spring day, a track washed clean by recent wet weather and the growing threat of more rain coming made for challenging conditions as the leading hillclimbers set out their stalls for the season. While Menzies and Moran were the two drivers to top the times, the other star of the day was young Matthew Ryder, who claimed second in both run-offs to leave the Gloucestershire venue as early joint series leader with three-time champion Menzies.

"I'm really happy with what we got from today," said Ryder. "It's a good start and it's

consistency, which is really important."

A stellar entry gathered for what promises to be an epic season of hillclimb competition and, with everyone at the head of the field now running Avon tyres, there was an air of unpredictability about the whole weekend.

But there was nothing unpredictable about the season-opening top-12 run-off, where Menzies took control in his Gould GR59 to edge the rest of the field by just over half a second. For a man who admitted he was up against it two weeks earlier during the Loton Park test weekend, it was a fine performance in tricky conditions.

Ryder was quick and smooth with a 36.30s to take second slot, while it was Trevor Willis who fired his OMS up to third at the expense of Moran and Alex Summers, who both had middling runs to open their accounts. For Summers, the whole weekend was something of a challenge – car problems and a scrappy run when it really mattered left him back from his usual slot at the head of the action.

With the organising Bugatti Owners Club rattling through the programme at a prodigious pace, determined to beat the incoming rain, the second run-off was all about Moran after Ryder had set the benchmark with another impressive performance. Moran was the penultimate runner and had the crowd gasping as he slid through the exit of Orchard and then locked up into Ettore's, and it could so easily have gone wrong. But natural talent and years of experience rescued it and got the Gould back on track to stop the clock with a mighty 35.78s.

As fastest qualifier, Menzies was last



Moran was sensational en route to Round 2 win

## HILLCLIMB RESULTS

### ROUND 1

**1 Wallace Menzies (3.3 Gould-Cosworth GR59M) 35.73s;** 2 Matthew Ryder (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59JB) 36.30s; 3 Trevor Willis (3.2 OMS 28-RTE) 36.41s; 4 Scott Moran (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59J) 36.58s; 5 Alex Summers (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Firestorm) 36.91s; 6 Richard Spedding (1.6 GWR-Hayabusa Raptor 2) 37.26s; 7 David Uren (3.5 Gould-NME GR55B) 37.29s; 8 Sean Gould (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59JB) 37.35s; 9 David Warburton (1.6 Gould-Suzuki GR59) 37.60s; 10 Eynon Price (1.7 Force-Hayabusa TA) 38.49s.

### ROUND 2

**1 Moran 35.78s;** 2 Ryder 35.99s; 3 Menzies 36.14s; 4 Summers 36.85s; 5 Willis 36.87s; 6 Gould 37.07s; 7 Uren 37.47s; 8 Spedding 37.48s; 9 Will Hall (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59) 37.51s; 10 Warburton 37.56s.

### POINTS

**1= Menzies & Ryder 18;** 3 Moran 17; 4 Willis 14; 5 Summers 13; 6= Spedding, Uren & Gould 8.

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

to go, but 36.14s was his best shot, which left him third ahead of Summers, Willis and Sean Gould, who shared the GR59 with Ryder. "That's a cracking start to the season," said Menzies. "I think we're still on the back foot but the results today don't show that and we've still got work to do. It's going to be a cracking year and it's going to be really tough."

From the smaller-engined cars, the standout driver was Richard Spedding, who had the GWR Raptor properly fired up to take a sixth and an eighth place, while David Warburton joined him in the run-offs from the ever-competitive 1600cc ranks.

Dave Uren scored points twice, and Will Hall was buoyed by a ninth place in the second run-off on his first weekend in his very new Gould GR59.

**PAUL LAWRENCE**



# FINISHING STRAIGHT

## Embracing the TT's history



### VIDEO GAME

#### TT ISLE OF MAN: RIDE ON THE EDGE 3

Available on PC, PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo Switch  
RRP £50

Tucked away in an unassuming side street just behind the beautiful Duomo, the 13th-century cathedral bombarded by thousands of selfie-takers every year, lies Nacon Studios Milan. And it is here where the latest video game based on the legendary Isle of Man TT is being polished off.

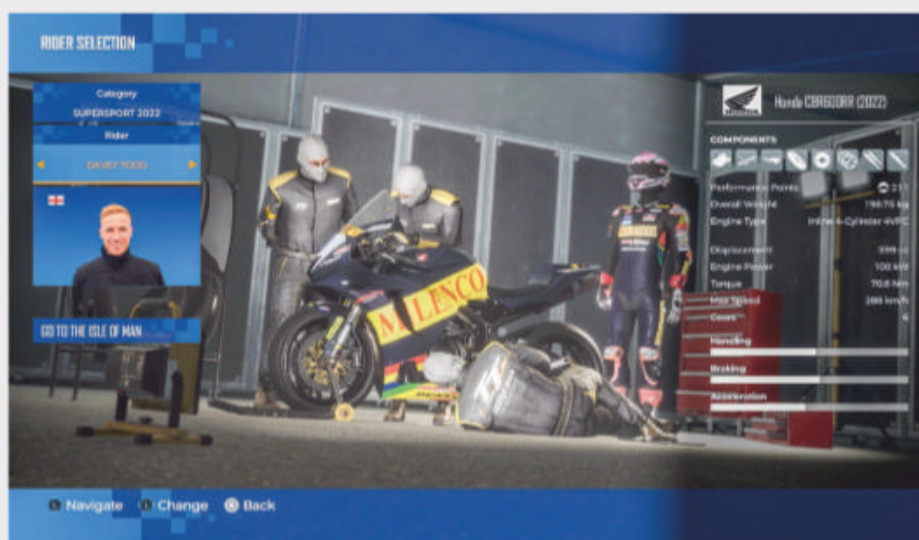
*TT Isle of Man: Ride on the Edge 3* is, as you may have guessed, the third instalment in a series that brought the 37.75-mile Snaefell Mountain Course back to consoles for the first time in over a decade in 2017. The first two games were developed by French company Kylotonn and, while its decision to create a TT game was welcome, both titles were not without their flaws.

Development for *Ride on the Edge 3* has changed hands to Nacon Studios Milan and its recent acquisition, RaceWard Studios, the team behind ultra-realistic bike simulator RIMS Racing from 2021. So *Ride on the Edge 3* is a meeting point for the old and the new; the game is run in the Kylotonn engine, but the mechanics of it have been crafted around what was done in RIMS Racing.

Ahead of its 11 May release on PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo Switch and PC, Nacon invited Autosport to its Milan studios to try *Ride on the Edge 3*.

What's immediately obvious with the new game is how much of a bridge it is between the real event and prospective fans. The developers worked closely with the Manx government not only to create an accurate representation of the TT circuit, but also to bring the history of the tiny island in the middle of the Irish Sea to a new audience.

As you pass through the game, you will unlock various facts about the history of the Isle of Man and the TT, while you can indulge in the challenge of the old St John's TT course used between 1907 and 1910. The open-world element of the previous game returns, with the entire 37.75-mile TT circuit and some connecting roads available for you to explore and take on challenges. It's a quirky system that tries to draw on ideas from well-established open-world racers, but there's not a whole lot of additional content here to keep you engaged outside of the main portion of the game.





## WHAT'S ON

## INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

**Azerbaijan Grand Prix**  
**F1 World Championship**  
**Round 4/23**  
 Baku, Azerbaijan  
**30 April**

**TV Live**

Sky Sports F1, Sun 1255

**TV Highlights**

Sky Sports F1, Sun 1630,  
 Channel 4, Sun 1830

**IndyCar Series**  
**Round 4/16**

Barber Motorsports Park, USA  
**30 April**

**TV Live** Sky Sports F1,  
 Sun 2100

**World Endurance**  
**Round 3/7**

Spa, Belgium

**29 April**

**TV Live** Eurosport 2,  
 Sat 1230, Sat 1615

**Formula 2**  
**Round 4/14**

Baku, Azerbaijan

**29-30 April**

**TV Live** Sky Sports F1,  
 Sat 1310, Sun 0930

**Indy NXT**

**Round 2/12**

Barber Motorsports Park, USA  
**30 April**

**TCR World Tour**

**Round 1/9**

Portimao, Portugal  
**29-30 April**

**International GT Open**

**Round 1/7**

Portimao, Portugal  
**29-30 April**

**Euroformula Open**

**Round 1/8**

Portimao, Portugal  
**29-30 April**

**Australian Supercars**

**Round 3/12**

Wanneroo, Australia

**29-30 April**

**TV Live** BT Sport 6, Sat 0915,  
 BT Sport 1, Sun 0530,  
 BT Sport 5, Sun 0915

**NASCAR Cup Series**

**Round 11/36**

Dover, USA

**30 April**

**TV Live** Viaplay, Sun 1930

**MotoGP**

**Round 4/21**

Jerez, Spain

**30 April**

**TV Live** BT Sport 2, Sun 1430

**TV Highlights** ITV4,  
 Mon 2100

## UK MOTORSPORT

**Snetterton MSVR**

**28-30 April**

Ferrari Challenge

**Brands Hatch MSVR**

**29-30 April**

Boxster Cup, Focus Cup,

GT Cup, Miata Trophy,  
 Modified Fords, Porsche  
 Club, Radical Cup

**Donington Park MSVR**

**29-30 April**

Dunlop Allstars/Classic  
 Alfa Challenge, Ferrari Club  
 Classic, Gerry Marshall  
 Trophy, Historic Touring Car  
 Challenge/Tony Dron Trophy,  
 Jack Sears Trophy, Jaguar  
 Classic Challenge, Pall Mall  
 Cup, Pre-War Sports Cars,  
 Woodcote Trophy/Stirling  
 Moss Trophy

**Silverstone 750MC**

**29-30 April**

116 Trophy, 116 Sprint/  
 Coupe Cup, 750 Formula,  
 Alfa Romeos, Armed Forces  
 Challenge, BMW Car Club,  
 Classic Stock Hatch, Clio  
 Sport, F1000, Mighty  
 Minis, MR2s

**Castle Combe CCRC**

**1 May**

Benjafields Bentley  
 Challenge, BCV8s, CCRC  
 (FF1600, GT, Hot Hatch,  
 Saloons), Dave Allan Trophy

**British Hillclimb  
 Championship**

**Round 2/14**

Craigantlet

**29 April**

**British Drag Racing  
 Championship**

Santa Pod

**29 April-1 May**

Still not close  
 enough to the TT  
 action? Then jump  
 aboard a bike with  
*Ride on the Edge 3*

The main career mode entails creating your own racers and taking part in a championship split across Supersport and Superbike machinery. Unlike in the previous game, your career will remain on the Isle of Man, and you race on various circuits – some real and the rest fictional – on the island as you progress, unlocking upgrades for your bike to boost your performance.

The bike development path is weighty, but not overly complicated, while there are plenty of set-up adjustments to be made to suit your riding style. Difficulty settings are generous to new players and hardcore for the experienced.

Developed with the help of TT podium finisher Davey Todd, the bike handling and physics are as realistic as it gets when you nudge the difficulty right up. The 3D-scanned 1:1 scale replica of the TT course – so realistic that Todd's own corner marker references are 100% accurate – is a joy to try to master, although even on a medium difficulty setting you can expect to crash a lot as you try to nail every inch of the 200-plus-corners circuit.

Mastering the track is the real joy of *Ride on the Edge 3*, every nailed sector a genuine adrenalin rush as you push up your speed with each tour. It's one that will keep you coming back for more.

*Ride on the Edge 3* doesn't break any new ground, and its extracurricular content may not be the most interesting, but its refined TT experience and acing of the game's most important aspect marks it out as the series' high point so far.

**LEWIS DUNCAN**

## NATIONAL MEETING OF THE WEEK

The Festival of Power at Santa Pod promises to offer a weekend of entertainment for all petrolheads, headlined by the British Drag Racing Championship and featuring Top Fuel Dragsters capable of 300mph+.

SANTAPOD





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55







## FINISHING STRAIGHT

### FROM THE ARCHIVE

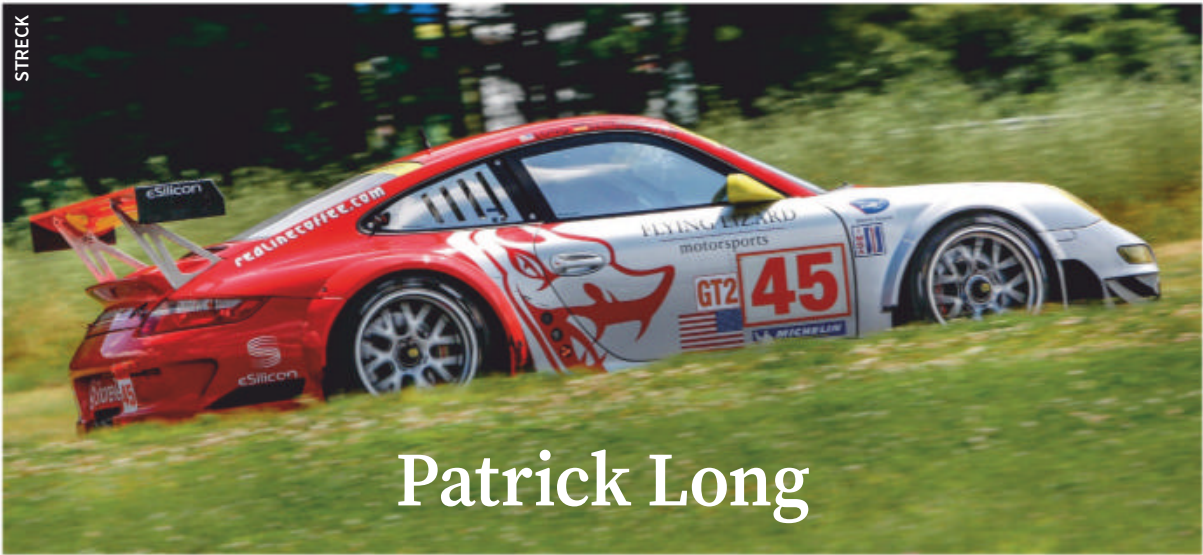
Nigel Mansell holds court in a Brands Hatch pit garage, his captive audience being West Surrey Racing's Peter Vennick, Will Phillips and team head honcho Dick Bennetts, at a test during the motorsport folk hero's headline-grabbing three-round stint in the 1998 British Touring Car Championship season. Bennetts quips now: "We're telling Nigel that the Cosworth engine is only two-litre normally aspirated, but does have 320bhp!" Mansell, dubbed 'Red 55' during his tin-top sojourn after the number carried on his Super Touring Ford Mondeo, didn't exactly cover himself in glory at the Brands and Silverstone rounds, but his performance in the feature race at a rain-soaked Donington Park, where he started 19th on the grid and battled into the lead before finishing a gallant fifth, was magnificent.



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GARY HAWKINS  
PHOTOGRAPHY





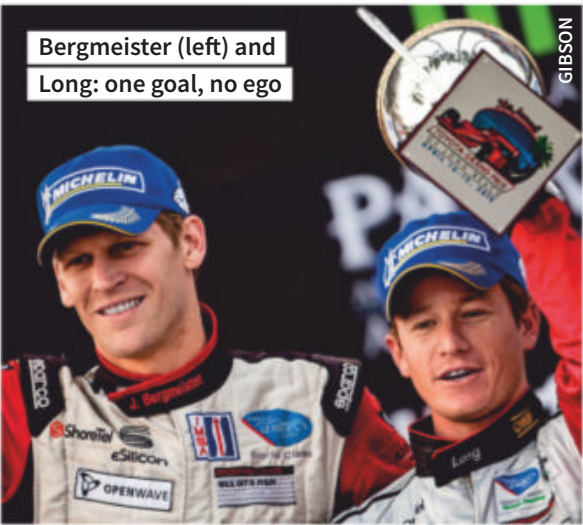
# Patrick Long

They were the little and large of Porsche’s sportscar racing programme, so it’s little surprise that Jorg Bergmeister picks Patrick Long as his favourite team-mate. They drove Porsches together, primarily in the US, for eight seasons out of 10 between 2004 and 2014, including a stint in Daytona Prototypes with Alex Job Racing but perhaps more famously in GTs for Petersen/White Lightning. Together, they shared the 2004 Le Mans 24 Hours class victory with Sascha Maassen.

Bergmeister, 47, is also an overall Daytona 24 Hours winner as well as a two-time Le Mans 24 Hours GT class victor – his GTE-Am win came as recently as 2019, when he also won the WEC title. He was also one of the tallest drivers in the sportscar paddock at 6ft4in, compared to Long’s 5ft9in (“On a good day,” quips the American).

“You want someone quick, who pushes you, but you want someone who gets along with you – therefore I have to say Patrick,” says Bergmeister. “We’re still friends, and to have that kind of relationship – with the person you need to be quicker than! – was always a lot of fun. We always had one goal, no ego involved.

“Winning Le Mans in 2004 together with White Lightning was perhaps the most painful victory I ever had. A week before the race, I had a bike crash. A car



took me out, and I slid over concrete for quite some metres, so I had big [skin] patches of my arm and leg missing and it was not the most comfortable drive! I was lucky that the Porsche doctor also looked after racing cyclists, so he knew road rash very well.”

His buddy Long is also a two-time Le Mans GT class winner, and a three-time American Le Mans Series GT champion.

“We were the odd couple,” says Long, 41. “He’s the smalltown German guy from a quiet town near Cologne and I’m coming from LA and rappin’ my lips!

“He taught me a tremendous amount about the technical side of racing – I loved every minute of driving with him, although there were times I was spending more time with him than with my wife!”

CHARLES BRADLEY



IN NEXT WEEK’S ISSUE

# F1 back in Baku

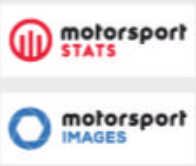
WILL ANYONE CHALLENGE RED BULL?



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A high-angle, wide shot of a Formula One race track during a race. Several cars are visible, with the red Ferrari and orange McLaren teams being prominent. The track is lined with a red and white barrier featuring the 'Lenovo' logo. In the background, a large, modern grandstand is filled with spectators. The sky is clear and blue. The overall scene is dynamic and captures the excitement of a live race.

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