



Ferrari's first **Nurburgring 24 Hours** victory



AUTOSPORT

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25 MAY 2023

IMOLA 2023

How F1 acted decisively amid flooding disaster

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When
bad weather
caused other
F1 chaos

CANCELLED



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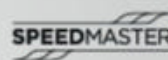
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Right calls made in a tough week but better times ahead?

It's been a sorry past week in motorsport, with flooding forcing the cancellation of the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix, racism over the radio in NASCAR and fatal shootings in the Baja California Rally (page 9).

In Formula 1's case, at least we can say that lessons have been learned since the 2020 Australian GP. As Alex Kalinauckas explains on p16, all the right decisions seem to be made in good time.

Looking forward, various teams will have updates for the Monaco GP this weekend and the nature of the circuit – and relative strengths of the Aston Martin AMR23 and Ferrari SF-23 – mean it *might* not be a foregone conclusion. If Fernando Alonso or Charles Leclerc are going to defeat the dominant Red Bulls this year, this could be their chance.

The second part of motorsport's triple crown will also take place on Sunday, at Indianapolis. Qualifying for the 500 (above) was *extremely* close and it's hard to pick a winner, though rivals Ganassi and Arrow McLaren have multiple drivers up at the sharp end. As well as reporting on some dramatic qualifying stories (p4), Charles Bradley also picks out the key themes in our preview on p36.

Incredibly, the other big motorsport classic is coming up, too. Next week (1 June issue), we will have our traditional Le Mans 24 Hours guide to the 10-11 June event. And to continue our build-up and celebration of a century of the world's greatest endurance race, Gary Watkins looks at the Le Mans king on p42: Porsche.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK
1 JUNE**

Monaco, Indy & Le Mans
All the action from the GP and
the 500, plus our 52-page
Le Mans guide



Cover images

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Palou pips VeeKay to Indy pole

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Chip Ganassi fought hard in the courts last year when Alex Palou wanted to leave to join Arrow McLaren, and pole position for the 107th Indy 500 underlined why he was so determined to keep him.

Palou's Honda-powered CGR machine produced a sensational four-lap run of 234.217mph in the Fast Six shootout to beat Rinus VeeKay's Chevrolet-motivated Ed Carpenter Racing machine by 0.006mph, which translates to 0.004 seconds. That's the second-closest gap between first and second in qualifying since Ryan Briscoe and James Hinchcliffe were separated by half that in 2012.

Felix Rosenqvist completed the front row for this weekend's race for McLaren, the team that Palou is still widely expected to join next season. Amazingly, it was the Spaniard's first oval pole and only the 2021 champion's second in IndyCar competition.

"It was really close last year against [team-mate Scott] Dixon," said Palou. "This year, we knew it was going to be even closer against these two guys. They were really fast all month. We went aggressive. We were the car that was most trimmed [on

low downforce] and it worked this time. The last lap was really, really tough and that's why we dropped so much on speed."

Palou's huge first lap of 235.131mph made all the difference, as VeeKay's second, third and fourth laps were marginally faster, and the closeness of the gap to pole left VeeKay feeling "a bit bummed". The Dutchman's amazing qualifying record here continued, despite a scare when an exhaust header broke in final practice on Sunday, and his 500 starting record now reads a remarkable fourth, third, third and second. "We had that shot, and I wish we could have done it," he rued. "I'm not sure how much better it could have gone. The car felt the best it's felt in qualifying trim, and yeah, I should have had a bit less lunch. I think that's it."

Rosenqvist will start from the outside of the front row in his Alain Prost 1984 Monaco Grand Prix throwback-liveried McLaren. Having topped Q1 and Q2, the Swede was disappointed to miss out when it really mattered. "I think those two found something in the Fast Six that we didn't," he said. "We felt like we were kind of on top of it going into it. But I could feel on the run, pretty much on my warm-up lap, that it didn't feel as sporty as it did earlier today."

Also kicking himself was Santino Ferrucci, who shocked the field with the second-fastest run in Q2 in his AJ Foyt Racing car. But he ran high at Turn 1 on his opening lap in the Fast Six, after entering the corner at over 240mph, and never regained the momentum required for the front row. Still, it put a smile on his 88-year-old team owner's face, ahead of a race that 'Super Tex' conquered four times as a driver.

Pato O'Ward, last year's runner-up, made it two McLarens in the top five, ahead of Ganassi's second charge Scott Dixon, who failed in his bid to take pole for the third consecutive time – which would have been unprecedented. "Too much on the nose," he sighed. "It was super-loose and scrubbing speed from the get-go."

Just failing to make the Fast Six shootout was McLaren's Alexander Rossi, who had set the second-fastest time in Saturday's Q1 session to team-mate Rosenqvist. He'll start on the inside of row three, alongside two-time winner Takuma Sato (Ganassi)





MILLER



and 2013 victor Tony Kanaan (McLaren) – the latter set for his final start this weekend.

Last year’s victor Marcus Ericsson qualified 10th for Ganassi, ahead of top rookie Benjamin Pedersen (AJ Foyt) and the fastest of the Penske entries, Will Power. His team-mate Josef Newgarden, who could only manage 17th, admitted the team “fell short” of its expectations, while Scott McLaughlin qualified 14th.

At least Penske wasn’t in the same boat as Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing. The 2020 winning team with Sato was woefully off the pace, a point that was painfully rammed home when Jack Harvey just managed to bump team-mate Graham Rahal, the son of team owner Bobby, off the grid in last-chance qualifying.

“It’s not a good feeling, to be honest with you,” said Harvey, who admirably made the field on his third and final desperate run. “As a team we’re going to be starting 30th, 31st and 33rd, and I hated it today – felt like we were in the *Hunger Games* with our own team. I said to Graham, ‘I’m sorry, I’m not sorry’. What do you say to someone in that moment?”

Rahal Jr will watch Sunday’s race from the sidelines and said: “We weren’t good enough. We were the slowest on pace all week. You’ve got to be humble and gracious in victory and defeat.”

CHARLES BRADLEY

[P36 INDY 500 PREVIEW](#)



INDY 500 STARTING LINE-UP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM (ENGINE)	SPEED
1	Alex Palou	Ganassi (Honda)	234.217mph
2	Rinus VeeKay	Ed Carpenter (Chevy)	234.211mph
3	Felix Rosenqvist	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	234.114mph
4	Santino Ferrucci	AJ Foyt (Chevrolet)	233.661mph
5	Pato O’Ward	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	233.158mph
6	Scott Dixon	Ganassi (Honda)	233.151mph
7	Alexander Rossi	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	233.110mph
8	Takuma Sato	Ganassi (Honda)	233.098mph
9	Tony Kanaan	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	233.076mph
10	Marcus Ericsson	Ganassi (Honda)	232.889mph
11	Benjamin Pedersen	AJ Foyt (Chevrolet)	232.671mph
12	Will Power	Penske (Chevrolet)	232.635mph
13	Ed Carpenter	Ed Carpenter (Chevy)	232.689mph
14	Scott McLaughlin	Penske (Chevrolet)	232.677mph
15	Kyle Kirkwood	Andretti (Honda)	232.662mph
16	Conor Daly	Ed Carpenter (Chevy)	232.433mph
17	Josef Newgarden	Penske (Chevrolet)	232.402mph
18	Ryan Hunter-Reay	Dreyer & R’bold (Chevy)	232.133mph
19	Romain Grosjean	Andretti (Honda)	231.997mph
20	Helio Castroneves	Meyer Shank (Honda)	231.954mph
21	Colton Herta	Andretti (Honda)	231.951mph
22	Simon Pagenaud	Meyer Shank (Honda)	231.878mph
23	David Malukas	Dale Coyne (Honda)	231.769mph
24	Marco Andretti	Andretti (Honda)	231.682mph
25	Stefan Wilson	Dreyer & R’bold (Chevy)	231.648mph
26	Devlin DeFrancesco	Andretti (Honda)	231.353mph
27	Agustin Canapino	Juncos Hollinger (Chevy)	231.320mph
28	Callum Ilott	Juncos Hollinger (Chevy)	231.182mph
29	RC Enerson	Abel (Chevrolet)	231.129mph
30	Katherine Legge	RLLR (Honda)	231.070mph
31	Christian Lundgaard	RLLR (Honda)	229.649mph
32	Sting Ray Robb	Dale Coyne (Honda)	229.549mph
33	Jack Harvey	RLLR (Honda)	229.166mph



MAUGER
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IMAGES

Honda F1 engines for Aston Martin from 2026

FORMULA 1

Honda will return to Formula 1 in 2026 as the works engine supplier to Aston Martin.

The Japanese manufacturer was listed by the FIA in February as a registered party for the new power unit rules cycle that ditches the expensive and complex Motor Generator Unit – Heat. But with former partner Red Bull starting its own powertrain programme in Milton Keynes, many thought the prospective Cadillac-backed Andretti team entry appeared to be Honda's best bet of coming back. This was helped by ex-F1 driver Michael Andretti partnering Wayne Taylor Racing in the IMSA SportsCar Championship to form solid ties with

Honda's North American division Acura.

While a customer deal could still happen there, Aston Martin will serve as Honda's F1 flagship. Lawrence Stroll's outfit had previously evaluated its own in-house engine set-up after reasoning that it was largely incompatible for both it and current partner Mercedes to be simultaneously chasing race wins and titles.

Notably, Mercedes can increase its stake in the wider Aston Martin Lagonda road car company up to 20% this year. Aston F1 performance CEO Martin Whitmarsh – who helped engineer the ill-fated 2015-17 McLaren-Honda deal – concedes the new partnership does not fit smoothly with Mercedes' investment but reckons the

benefits of works Honda power outweigh the complications.

He said: "[The road car alliance] is planned to continue. We are purely focused on racing activities. Mercedes have been great partners for the team and they remain that. They're in it to win and clearly, we are here to win as well. Ultimately, there is some incompatibility in those two missions. That's why we've taken the decision."

The imminent completion of a new Silverstone factory and a wind tunnel that will be ready to influence car design for 2025 will allow Aston to reduce its dependency on Mercedes, with the team currently reliant on Brackley's aero facility.

JONATHAN NOBLE & MATT KEW

Ferrari postpones upgrades but Merc presses on



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

FORMULA 1

Ferrari is expected to hold off debuting its new rear suspension until June's Spanish Grand Prix following the cancellation of last weekend's Emilia Romagna GP.

The Scuderia, which currently lies fourth in the constructors' table, had already opted to delay the upgrade before the Imola race in the flood-hit region

was scrapped due to the extreme weather forecast but still planned to sport a tweaked diffuser for its SF-23 (left). It has also now opted against validating its new components in Monaco due to the anomalous nature of the tight track, and the increased likelihood of the parts being damaged in a brush with the barriers.

Mercedes, however, will still bring its heavily remodelled W14 to the

principality. The car is expected to sprout more conventional sidepods, a revised floor and new front suspension.

The late loss of the Emilia Romagna GP (see page 16) also means the first trial of new tyre allocation rules will wait until Hungary in late July. The reduced availability (dropping from 13 to 11 sets) is aimed at improving sustainability.

JONATHAN NOBLE



Mercedes to revamp F1 facility

FORMULA 1

Mercedes has unveiled plans for a £70million revamp of its Brackley Formula 1 factory.

A late 2025 completion date will allow for the construction of a pedestrianised zone plus new marketing buildings, leisure facilities and restaurants to improve the working environment.

Motorsport boss Toto Wolff told Autosport: “The Brackley campus was built to accommodate 350 people. Today, we are at 1250. The development of the campus over the last five years was done at an astonishing pace and this now looks like an F1 team with modern state-of-the-art facilities.

“But what we are planning to do is to expand the campus with multiple new buildings and create a modern-style campus, with lots of breakout areas, restaurants, state-of-the-art gyms, new marketing buildings, and getting all the cars out. We want it to become its own

little village, with all the amenities and benefits that you would expect from a Silicon Valley-style environment.”

Mercedes has handed its employees a pay rise for 2023 in line with consumer inflation, which is running at around 10% in the UK. In the longer-term, the refreshed factory will be powered by fully renewable energy. A new car park will include an on-site solar array while a push is also being made to help develop biodiversity in the area and the construction will make use of reusable and recyclable materials where possible.

Wolff added: “All of this is obviously done for our people. We’re not trying to win some kind of architectural prize. This is not like some of our competitors did 20 years ago where you are getting lost and probably emphasising more the architecture. Here, form follows function. It is not the other way around. But nevertheless, it’s all done to create a great place to work at and spend time.”

JONATHAN NOBLE

RISING STAR JAKOBSEN GETS PEUGEOT GIG

WEC

Rising prototype star Malthe Jakobsen has been signed up by Peugeot for its World Endurance Championship squad. The 19-year-old Dane has been named as a junior driver and will undertake testing and simulator duties on the 9X8 Le Mans Hypercar programme.

Jakobsen has been recruited by the French manufacturer after an impressive try-out in a 9X8 at last November’s WEC rookie test in Bahrain. He lapped within a second of the car’s fastest time in the test the day after the 2022 WEC season finale after moving up from the LMP3 ranks where he won the class title in last year’s European Le Mans Series with the Swiss Cool Racing squad.

Peugeot CEO Linda Jackson said that the marque has “ambitious plans for Malthe for the future” and that “identifying young drivers and rising stars has always been a priority for us”.

Jakobsen has graduated to LMP2 with Cool this year. He was a race winner in February’s Asian Le Mans Series aboard an ORECA-Gibson 07 and is now contesting the ELMS in the championship’s premier class.

GARY WATKINS



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International circuit opens in Hungary

BALATON PARK

Balaton Park Circuit opened in Hungary last Tuesday (16 May), the highest FIA standard race track to be built in central Europe in over 15 years.

The circuit has applied for an FIA Grade 2 licence, allowing it to host junior single-seater categories and sportscar racing, but has been built in accordance with Grade 1 specification.

It is a 4.1km anti-clockwise track with six right and 10 left-hand corners, with permanent seating for 10,000 fans. That can be increased to 120,000 with temporary grandstands.

The facility hopes to host international racing from the 2024 season, and has received over €200million in investment.

The first event to be held at the circuit will be Porsche on Track, a two-week programme as part of the German marque's 75th anniversary celebrations, followed by a Festival of Dreams on 10 June.

Formula 1 race winner Giancarlo Fisichella said: "Driving Balaton Park Circuit for the first time, I was impressed by its character. The track really has it all – a thrilling blend of high-speed corners, challenging hairpins and cool chicanes. It's a track that flows nicely, giving you a great racing feeling."

"The first corner and the end of the back straight are prime spots for overtakes. All in all, Balaton Park is a treat to drive."

Balaton Park Circuit board member Gianpaolo Matteucci said: "We are very proud to



be celebrating the official opening of Balaton Park Circuit, a unique project that began as a dream and is now a reality thanks to the unwavering commitment of Balaton Park Group.

"The main phase of construction began four years ago and was executed with particular attention to safety, innovation and

with special care for the environment.

"As we are ready to host international motorsport events, Balaton Park Circuit has been built in accordance to the highest standards as required by FIA and FIM regulations."

MEGAN WHITE

P15 OPINION

Van Gisbergen to NASCAR with Trackhouse

NASCAR CUP

Three-time Australian Supercars champion Shane van Gisbergen will make his NASCAR Cup Series debut in the Chicago Street Course event on 2 July.

NASCAR is running on the streets of Chicago for the first time this year, and the Triple Eight Chevrolet star will be joining them, driving the #91 Trackhouse Racing Camaro.

"I can honestly say I have dreamed about an opportunity in NASCAR, but really never thought it would become a reality," said the 34-year-old Kiwi. "I can't wait to get to the States to meet everyone and prepare for Chicago. It's NASCAR's first time there so in some ways everyone will be a rookie like me, but I don't underestimate that it's going to be a huge challenge."

"The learning curve will be quite steep, but I am ready for everything they will

throw at me. I know a lot of Kiwis and Aussies will be watching and I'm honoured to get this opportunity."

Trackhouse's Project 91 programme, which aims to bring international racing stars to NASCAR, has previously run 2007 Formula 1 world champion Kimi Raikkonen. Two of the team's three Cup victories in 2022 came at road courses, with Ross Chastain winning in Austin and Daniel Suarez taking victory at Sonoma Raceway.

Veteran crew chief Darian Grubb will be on the pitbox for van Gisbergen. He has 23 Cup wins to his credit and won the 2011 Cup title with Tony Stewart.

Team owner Justin Marks said: "We have been very pleased with the fan reaction to Kimi's participation the last two seasons. I'll concede the American racing fan might not be as familiar with Shane as they are with Kimi, but if you talk with anyone in Australia, New Zealand and that part of the world, they will tell you he is one of the most talented drivers on the planet. He's used to street racing in heavy cars and I think everyone will be very impressed with his performance."

NICK DEGROOT



Investigation into radio slur

NASCAR

NASCAR has launched an investigation into a racist radio message directed to Bubba Wallace that marred last Sunday's non-championship NASCAR All-Star Race.

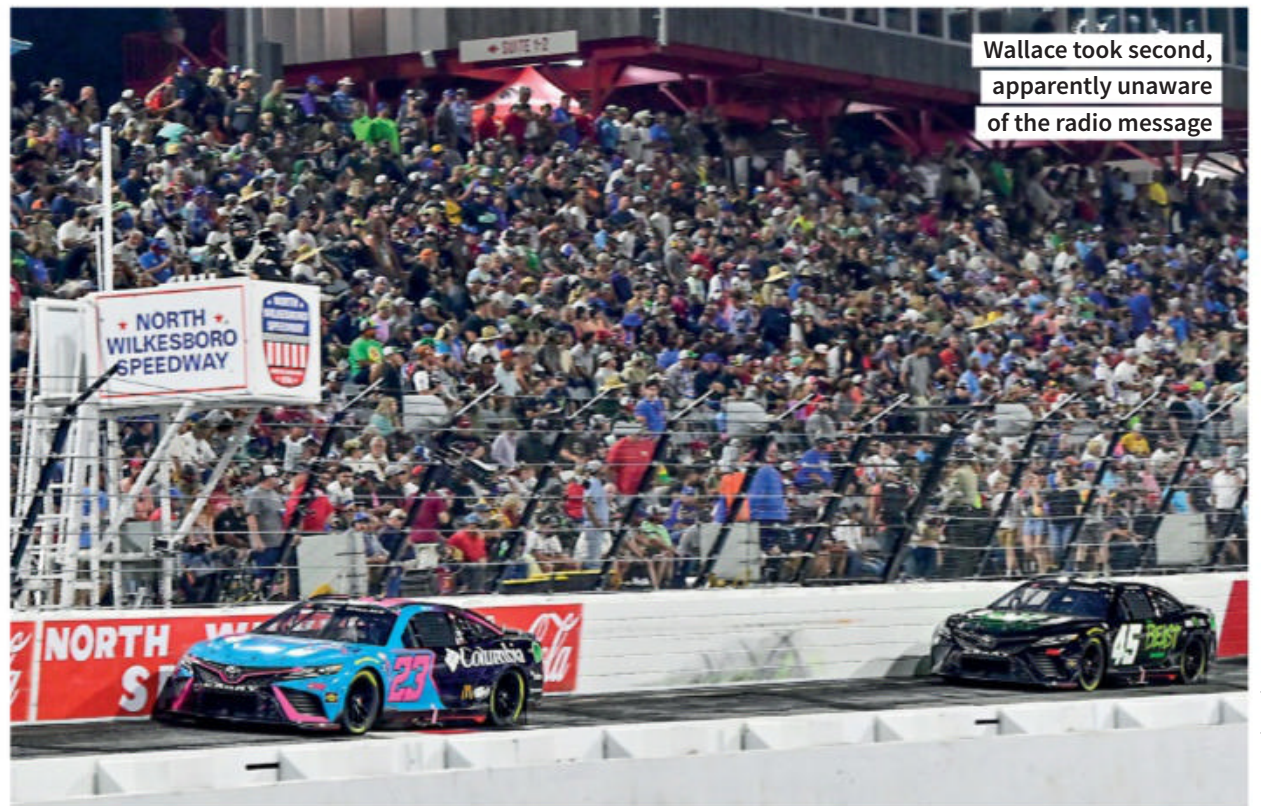
Just after the 23XI Racing Toyota took the chequered flag and finished as runner-up to dominant winner Kyle Larson in North Wilkesboro, an unidentified individual keyed into his team radio channel with a derogatory message.

The person said: "Go back to where you came from you a*****. You're not wanted in NASCAR."

A spokesperson for 23XI Racing told Autosport that Wallace, the only full-time black driver in NASCAR's premier series, did not hear the comments or acknowledge them at the time.

NASCAR officials confirmed their security operation is investigating the incident in an attempt to determine who accessed his radio channel and how.

Wallace and team-mate Tyler Reddick both finished in the top three as the newly renovated North Wilkesboro staged its first Cup event since 1996, but Wallace felt the



JARRETT/NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

result was bittersweet. He admitted that he would likely have been much more upbeat with his result had it been in a normal points-paying event instead of a one-off showpiece.

Following pitstops just after a mandated competition caution, Wallace came off pitroad behind Larson but no caution in the second half of the race meant he never had an opportunity to close the gap on the Hendrick Motorsports driver.

"He could attack hard and have something there in the end," Wallace said of Larson. "If this was a normal race, something to be excited about — but this was for \$1million, and you come up short and walk away with nothing.

"We came up one spot short. Congrats to Larson. He's been on a rail lately."

The championship NASCAR Cup season continues at Charlotte this weekend.

JIM UTTER



People killed in rally attack

RALLYING

At least 10 people were killed in an attack at the Baja California Rally last weekend.

Authorities are investigating an apparent gunfight that broke out last Saturday afternoon at the off-road rally in the Ensenada region of Mexico's Baja California state.

Baja California officials have stated the gunmen in a vehicle opened fire on people and vehicles at the rally. As well as those killed, several others are believed to have been injured. Reports have attributed the incident to a clash between organised crime groups, but

no group had claimed responsibility as Autosport closed for press.

FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem (left) said: "I am horrified by the reports of an appalling attack at the Baja California Rally in Mexico. Motorsport events should be safe places for participants and spectators.

"On behalf of the whole FIA family our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of this senseless violence."

The region is famous for its Baja 1000 off-road rally event, which takes place annually, with this year's edition scheduled from 13-18 November.

TOM HOWARD

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IN THE HEADLINES

BOTTAS HELPS HOME TRACK

Valtteri Bottas has “been in talks” to revive the bankrupt KymiRing circuit that is theoretically capable of hosting Formula 1 races in his native Finland. The FIA Grade 1 standard facility is reported to owe €25million after COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict forced it to renege on hosting deals with MotoGP, Nitro Rallycross and World Motocross.

WRC CONSIDERS COST CAP

The World Rally Championship, in conjunction with the FIA, is investigating implementing a cost cap to make rallying’s top tier more affordable in a bid to entice manufacturers. It is understood that the cost of a current Rally1 car is close to €1million, while Rally2 cars are capped at around €200,000.

SORDO GETS EXTRA RALLY

Dani Sordo will contest next month’s Safari Rally Kenya round of the World Rally Championship. The team’s plans for its third car for the remainder of the season are yet to be determined following the death of Craig Breen, who had been sharing the entry with Sordo, but it has confirmed the Safari has been added to the Spaniard’s 2023 programme.

NEW CEO FOR FORMULA E

Formula E has appointed Jeff Dodds as the championship’s new CEO, replacing Jamie Reigle, from 5 June. Dodds joins from Virgin Media O2, having served as the company’s CEO for the past two years.

WTR TO EXPAND IN IMSA

Wayne Taylor Racing will expand to two factory Acura ARX-06s in next year’s IMSA SportsCar Championship in the wake of the partnership announced earlier this year with Andretti Autosport. Ricky Taylor and Filipe Albuquerque will continue as team-mates, while additional drivers will be announced soon.

FISI AND MOSCA WIN

Ex-Formula 1 driver Giancarlo Fisichella and Tommaso Mosca won the opening Endurance round of the Italian GT Championship at Enna-Pergusa last weekend, driving a Scuderia Baldini Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo. Briton Stuart Middleton took pole and finished second in the Imperiale Lamborghini Huracan he shared with Kevin Gilardoni and Raul Guzman.



A1GP could be set for a return with ex-F1 figures

A1GP

Former Renault Formula 1 team boss Marcin Budkowski is one of the key players behind an effort to revive the A1 Grand Prix nations format for a new championship.

The organisation behind the initiative is called the World Cup of Motorsport and is using the A1GP logo, although it is not yet clear whether that will be the definitive series name.

The original A1GP ran for four seasons between 2005 and 2009 before its financial collapse led to the cancellation of its fifth campaign. Teams ran under the banner

of countries with drivers of the same nationality. For the first three years, a Zytek-powered Lola chassis was used (above) and was then replaced by a Ferrari-supplied car and engine for the fourth season.

The new series is expected to run in a similar format, with 20 identical cars using sustainable fuel, and each nation’s team featuring a combination of experienced and younger drivers.

The man behind the latest initiative is entrepreneur Sir Keith Mills, who is best known for founding the UK’s Nectar and Air Miles loyalty schemes. He was also one of those behind the successful delivery of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics as deputy chairman of the organising committee, and is heavily involved in sailing. It’s understood that Mills and his Origin Sports Group concern are trying to secure the backing to get the project off the ground.

As CEO of the World Cup of Motorsport, Budkowski (left) is the figurehead on the racing side and is charged with putting together the sporting and technical package.

Veteran F1 technical director Mike Gascoyne is also involved in the project, suggesting that his MGI concern could be behind the car design.

ADAM COOPER



F1 MONACO GRAND PRIX PREVIEW

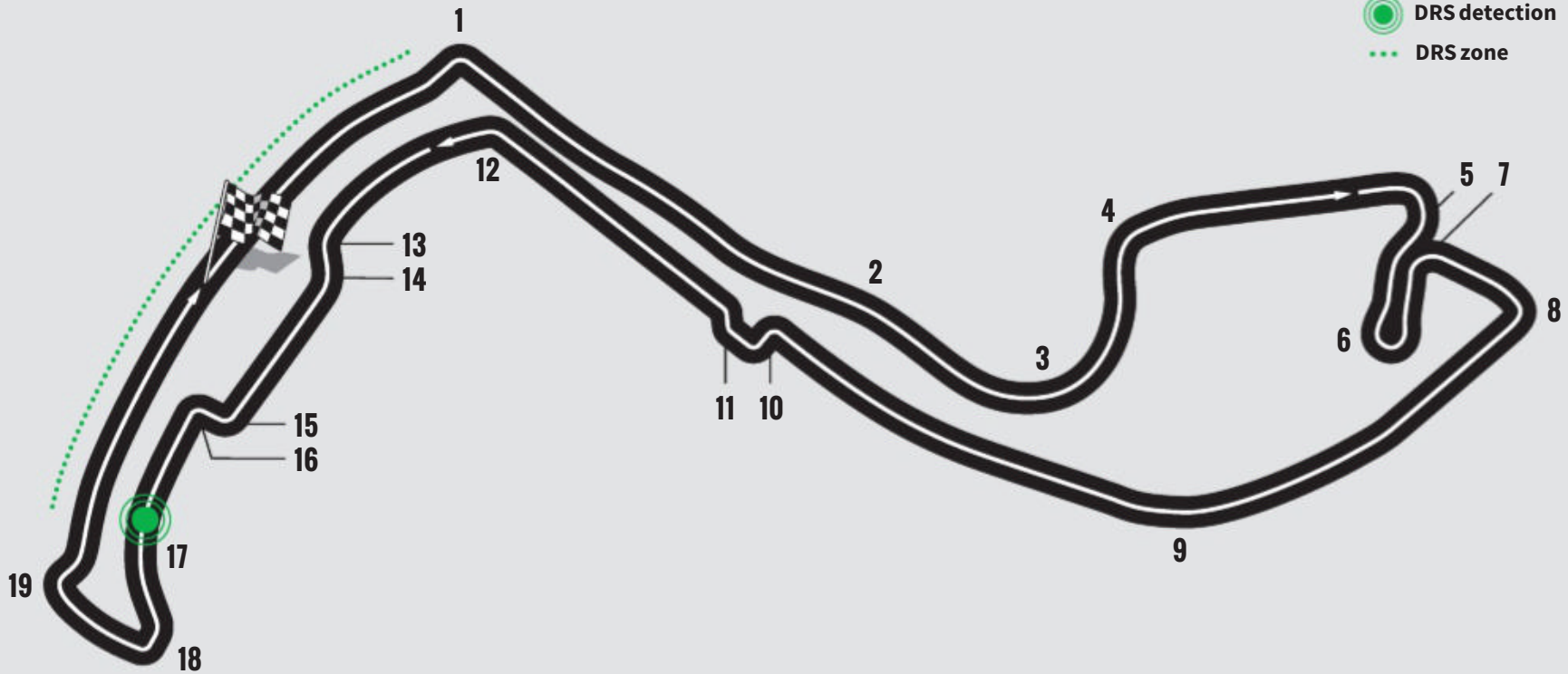


PHOTOGRAPHY



Monaco
Length 2.074 miles
Number of laps 78

DRS detection
DRS zone



UK START TIMES

Friday 26 May
FP1 1230 FP2 1600

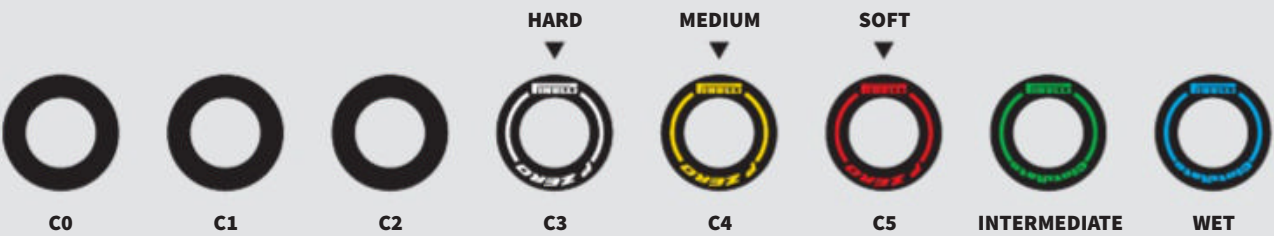
Saturday 27 May
FP3 1130
QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 28 May
RACE 1400

CATCH THE RACE LIVE
SKY SPORTS F1
BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

TV Highlights
CHANNEL 4 1830

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	119
2	Perez	105
3	Alonso	75
4	Hamilton	56
5	Sainz	44

Constructors

1	Red Bull	224
2	Aston Martin	102
3	Mercedes	96
4	Ferrari	78
5	McLaren	14



MONACO STATS

Previous winners

2022	Sergio Perez	Red Bull
2021	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull
2017	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2012	Mark Webber	Red Bull

2022 POLE POSITION
Charles Leclerc
1m11.376s

POLE LAP RECORD
Lewis Hamilton
1m10.166s (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD
Lewis Hamilton
1m12.909s (2021)



Laps led

Michael Schumacher	435
Ayrton Senna	422
Graham Hill	368
Stirling Moss	358
Jackie Stewart	300
Juan Manuel Fangio	250
Lewis Hamilton	245
Alain Prost	232
Nico Rosberg	170
Niki Lauda	164



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A chance for Alonso at Monaco?

The very particular characteristics of the principality could open up an opportunity for the Aston Martin driver to take the fight to Red Bull

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Formula 1 returns this weekend after its unfortunate shock hiatus post-Miami following the cancellation of the 2023 Emilia Romagna Grand Prix. The cars and paddock facilities were extracted from the sodden Imola circuit in the days following that event's cancellation, as the Santerno river's frothing, muddy, maximum height finally subsided.

In the face of such tragedy, much as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic, motorsport can provide delightful escapism. And so, the story of F1 2023 returns. But, in Monaco, might it contain the first real twist of the season?

After all, were it not for just a few small elements being different in the two most recent editions held past 2020's pandemic-enforced break, then Red Bull would be reflecting on just one win in the principality in the last 10 years. And that'd be with the team always going very well here even during the years of Mercedes' dominance. This serves to illustrate the point that this weekend, F1's latest leading team is now facing the biggest challenge to its perfect start so far. While the early forecasts suggest it may well stay away, precipitation could shake up the pecking order. But if the 'sunny place for shady people' stays dry throughout the weekend, there might yet be other reasons to suspect one of Red Bull's rivals could cause an upset.

Home hero Charles Leclerc enters his fifth Monaco F1 weekend

“Should Alonso get among Perez and Verstappen in qualifying, expect something crafty”

still searching for a first podium result from all the six years (since he first raced here in cars in F2 in 2017) he has competed on his local streets. But his form around the 2.1-mile track in the last two years, plus his twin Baku poles this season, elevate him to a pole position favourite. The Ferrari SF-23, for all its struggles with top-end speed and in-race tyre management, performed better than Red Bull's RB19 on traction in both Baku and Miami – according to the GPS data logged by the cars in qualifying at those events. Monaco's layout essentially negates Red Bull's straightline speed and DRS prowess, which swings things back towards Ferrari's downforce-heavy package.

And, looking back to recent historical examples again, Leclerc took Monaco pole in 2021 while running with an even bigger season average deficit to the frontrunners than Ferrari faces in

2023 against Red Bull. However, how he secured that result, with a crash at the second part of the Swimming Pool that eventually prevented him starting, also highlights why Leclerc can't even be considered a certain spot as a pre-Monaco favourite. Leclerc's three crashes across the first five 2023 events at the very least need to be banished from the mind of F1's most exciting qualifier.

Ferrari must also hope its work to improve on strategy since its 2022 Monaco disaster has paid off. At least the team won't have to evaluate the impact and requirements of its major rear suspension upgrade, which had been planned to arrive for Imola and will now debut in Spain next month.

Mercedes has shown flashes of pace and promise in Red Bull's wake so far in 2023, but finally the first steps of its package overhaul are set to arrive – having naturally been delayed from their expected Imola arrival. Although Monaco is one of the worst tracks to assess the true impact of new aero surfaces, Mercedes isn't keen to waste any more time with the W13 evolution design of its current challenger. Getting the newly styled W14 working on a track where its predecessor's severe ride problems (in addition to porpoising) were revealed a year ago will be the main focus for Lewis Hamilton and George Russell.

Perhaps, then, Red Bull will be more preoccupied with the challenge of the other driver from the frontrunners to have reached the podium so far in 2023. The one who has done so nearly as much as Max Verstappen and level with Sergio Perez: Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso.

The Spaniard has shown excellent braking precision and time gains even against the Red Bull drivers at the early rounds, which will be a handy asset in Monaco. So too will Alonso's own brilliance – recalling here his tactic to tour slowly to avoid graining his slicks in the second half of the 2022 event that meant he was able to drop Hamilton late on. Therefore, should he get among Verstappen and Perez in qualifying this weekend, expect something similarly crafty in a bid to climb even further up the podium than the four thirds Alonso has managed to date.

Resting against this expectation is his form against the clock this year. Alonso is yet to qualify higher than third when circumstances have not eliminated the usual suspects ahead in Verstappen and Leclerc. And starting there in a dry race around Monaco would not be a victory omen.

Even with all this understood, things still come out strongest for Red Bull heading into the weekend. Although its car's straightline potency is masked in Monaco, it remains the class of the field. But, for the neutral and the partisan camps of its two drivers, there is hope that even if Verstappen and Perez lock out the front row, then the latter's street track prowess might lead to him at least making a fight of it again after that major Miami defeat. 🌸



The rising star to watch in DTM

Jack Aitken's DTM programme finally gets going this weekend. The return of a British driver to the grid is only one reason why the Ferrari racer will be a man to keep tabs on

JAMES NEWBOLD

During a 15-year stretch between 2004 and 2019, British drivers finished first or second in the DTM standings on nine occasions. The contribution of 51 wins, 41 poles and three titles from Gary Paffett, Jamie Green and Paul di Resta made it all the more jarring when there were no British drivers on the grid for the bulk of last year after the disappearance of Esmee Hawkey and her T3 Motorsport Lamborghini squad following the Lausitzring.

Now the unprecedented modern era absence of a British driver from the DTM has been ended with the arrival of sportscar rising star Jack Aitken at newly aligned Ferrari squad Emil Frey Racing. But his nationality is only one reason why the one-time Formula 1 race starter is arguably the most significant of the 2023 intake.

Aitken won't be doing the full DTM season. He has to skip Zandvoort due to a clash with his third-driver commitments for Cadillac in the IMSA Sportscar Championship's Endurance Cup rounds. Following Aitken's victory at Sebring with Action Express Racing, his transatlantic programme for 2023 has featured an entry for the Spa World Endurance Championship round, and will include a crack at outright Le Mans glory next month.

It's been a rapid rise since Aitken took the plunge into sportscars in 2021, despite the disruption of a broken collarbone and fractured vertebra in a serious Spa 24 Hours crash. He was

“You can get stuck into habits and you need to have some elasticity as a driver”

a winner in ADAC GT Masters last year with an Emil Frey-run Lamborghini, and helped the TF Sport-run Racing Team Turkey crew to secure the European Le Mans Series LMP2 Pro-Am title with three class wins from his five outings and an outright pole at Algarve Circuit. That brought Aitken to the attention of Cadillac for his first sportscar factory gig, and he was signed ahead of the first tests with the new V-Series.R LMDh in December, having “never met the team before” putting pen to paper. “It was a lot of faith that they showed, signing me blind like that,” adds Aitken.

Sebring success went some way towards repaying that, although the circumstances were “very lucky, you can just say it” after a multi-car clash in the latter stages elevated his car from fourth. It was Cadillac's first win of the new LMDh era, and Aitken has a strong chance of becoming the first DTM winner with the

new ORECA-built 296 GT3.

Developing new machinery in both series will bring valuable experience to his toolkit, as will pursuing the ultimate set-up in DTM – driving solo puts a premium on nailing fine details in a way that is not possible in other sportscar disciplines due to the innate compromises of sharing a car. With Emil Frey the only Ferrari entrant, Aitken will reap full reward when the car is on song, much as Nick Cassidy and Felipe Fraga did with the AF Corse-run 488s last year. Both were winners in their first season in the series, a feat Aitken has a clear eye on.

“If we can get to a point mid-season, end of season where we're winning races, that would be pretty mega,” he reflects. Even if the Ferrari's BoP is conservative, as Aitken fears, in his favour is his experience from the calendar's more esoteric tracks from GT Masters last year.

Aitken is enjoying all the seat time he's getting this year, since “the more often I drive and the more variety that I drive, the better I am”, and views his dual programme only as an asset.

“Cadillac have been very helpful, they're quite keen for me to do more racing where I can,” he says, fresh off a first Formula E test in Berlin with Envision Racing. “If you drive the same car again and again, it's great to a point. But you can get stuck into habits and you need to have some elasticity as a driver – that you can jump into something and just be OK with it.

“This year I'm really enjoying that with the Cadillac and the Ferrari on the GT side. That's why I wanted to make sure I had the DTM stuff as well as the prototypes.”

Sooner or later, there will be a decision to make. And that leads onto the other reason why Aitken's arrival in DTM is significant. He admits that continuing to juggle multiple programmes may not be feasible in the long run, and it remains to be seen how DTM will stack up when the time comes for Aitken to weigh up his options. Combining multiple factory deals “always seems a bit messy”, he says, adding: “Sometimes it's better to try and keep things neat and tidy in one package.”

But if Aitken can end the year with his reputation further enhanced by direct comparison against Hypercar drivers-to-be Rene Rast and Mirko Bortolotti, then it may well convince others in similar situations looking to fill their weekends – or on the cusp of a factory prototype deal – to consider the DTM as an ideal destination to prove themselves. As a single-driver category, its position in the sportscar universe is a unique one, which may play to the DTM's advantage when it comes to attracting talent; even if aficionados would bristle at the idea of it being considered a feeder series.

However it plays out, plenty of people will be watching how Aitken gets on this year. Which is just as it should be. 🏁



A refreshing change for F1?

While those behind a new Hungarian circuit are tight-lipped about the venue's chances of hosting a grand prix, we take a look with the help of an F1 race winner

MEGAN WHITE

Amid a desert of street circuits, a rare oasis of a newly built traditional circuit appears – all 4.1km/2.5 miles and 16 corners of it. Four years in the making, Balaton Park Circuit is a proper, old-school track, nestled close to its namesake

Lake Balaton, the largest in Central Europe.

Constructed by a group led by one-time Formula 1 practice runner Chanoch Nissany, the circuit and surrounding complex has received a €200million investment in a bid to draw both motorsport and tourism to the area. Built to FIA Grade 1 specification (though it will initially apply for Grade 2), the track hopes to host international racing from the 2024 season, and will initially focus its attention on sportscar competition and junior single-seater categories. There are also hopes to create an international racing academy for young drivers.

It is an imposing complex, its concrete structure looming into view amid the Hungarian countryside, and has permanent seating for 10,000 fans, with the capacity to increase that to 120,000 with temporary grandstands. A luxury hotel has also been built nearby, with plenty of others already in the vicinity given the area's summertime lure for Budapest residents.

Its nearest competitor is the Hungaroring, just over an hour away on the other side of the capital city. An F1 mainstay that has hosted the Hungarian Grand Prix since its construction in 1986, the current venue's contract runs until 2027. Organisers are thought to be eyeing another long-term extension after that.

Though board member Gianpaolo Matteucci is coy about Balaton Park hosting F1, insisting that is not its "main objective", he emphasised its readiness to host "any kind of international event, and this is the main reason why we wanted to create an infrastructure already for Formula 1, which is FIA Grade 1".

He continued: "Everything has been done under the highest safety regulations for the FIA and also FIM. Formula 1 has been at the Hungaroring for many, many years, and will be there for the future. On our side, we are ready for any kind of motorsport event."

With that said, let's take a look at the circuit itself. Having enjoyed a few trips out in Porsches (a 718 Spyder, a Panamera and a very tidy 911 Turbo S), Autosport's first opportunity to experience the circuit at speed comes courtesy of a familiar face – three-time GP winner Giancarlo Fisichella.

Having already been out for a spin the previous day, Fisichella said he was "impressed by [the circuit's] character", adding that it "really has it all" and is "a treat to drive".

"It's always nice to discover a new circuit and it was an honour for me to be the first going out in this very nice circuit," he said. "If you asked me if there was a special place I liked, I couldn't tell you, because I enjoyed every corner."

Even though the anticlockwise track isn't entirely dry, the man who was team-mate to Fernando Alonso during his glory years at Renault has only good things to say about it as he sweeps through each of the corners – six right and 10 left-hand. The Italian is driving a Ferrari, naturally.

Heading into the Turn 1 hairpin presents an opportunity for overtaking. There's another hairpin following shortly after, albeit a more open one requiring a smooth exit. Fisichella says Turn 4 requires more tact, with a tricky bit of braking heading into the corner while fighting oversteer.

"F1 could do far worse than to consider Balaton Park for its calendar in the future"

Turn 4 opens up onto the back straight, where the former Ferrari test driver had reached 220km/h (around 135mph) the previous day, adding "maybe with a Formula 1 car even 300km/h".

Another hairpin and chicane follow before the difficult, high-speed Turn 7, and then another chicane. Approaching Turn 10, it's important to follow a V-shaped line, before Turn 11, which Fisichella says is "impossible" to take at full pelt in the damp conditions – though he seems to give it a good go!

Approaching the last part of the circuit, another hairpin lies ahead, before the left-hand corners of Turns 13 and 14 and finally, the most important sequence at Turns 15 and 16. We then cut into the pitlane before reaching the start/finish straight. It's a thrilling ride alongside the two-time Le Mans 24 Hours class winner, who insisted it was even better in the dry.

With Balaton Park already open for bookings for the 2024 season, the circuit hopes to attract both two- and four-wheeled racing, with the likes of ACCR Czech Formula 4 already looking to run rounds there. With circuits in short supply across mainland Europe, new facilities like this are vital to smaller championships, which face soaring costs.

Balaton Park is a fantastic track, marking a refreshing departure from the street circuits that have become all too commonplace on the modern F1 calendar. Of course, there is a time and a place for twisting, inner-city tracks, but they should be an exception, not the rule – especially as F1 cars become ever larger.

Despite the board's insistence that F1 is not its objective, the series could do far worse than to consider Balaton Park for its calendar in the future. 🏁

EMILIA ROMAGNA GP

CANCELLED



How F1 acted decisively amid Italian disaster

With memories of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic still fresh, Formula 1's timely call to cancel the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix due to the deadly flooding that afflicted the region has earned it credit

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



STRINGER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

T

he unease felt *exactly* the same. For the second time in just over three years, it was time to fly to a race that had disaster looming large around it.

Previously, Formula 1 has forged a reputation for waiting too long — unwilling to even consider event cancellations and famously earning

criticism for its dithering and deciding to fly paddock personnel to Melbourne as the COVID-19 pandemic unfurled. But, in the case of the 2023 Emilia Romagna race, it acted decisively and early.

On Wednesday 17 May, after five briefings regarding the developing situation had not been followed by any call over the planned race's status amid devastating heavy rain and flooding in the Emilia-Romagna region, once again plenty of the paddock had headed to the airport. By the time many had landed, that situation had changed — the event was off and is unlikely to be rescheduled this year.

Above Florence last Wednesday, the Tuscany rivers were visibly bloated. Many nearby fields were flooded, but the scene at least calm and manageable. Two hours' drive up the road into Emilia-Romagna, the picture was very, shockingly, different. The Giro d'Italia cycling race had passed in the opposite direction only the day before. Starting in the torrential rain that had been soaking north-eastern Italy since the early hours of last Tuesday, at least one commentator had hyperbolically described the weather accompanying the early part of that stage as "apocalyptic". Tragically for many on the ground in Emilia-Romagna, this was rather the reality.

Because by Wednesday, 23 rivers in the region had burst their banks — with 14 people killed and over 20,000 displaced by the surging torrents. Some people had been trapped in their homes by the water, others climbing onto roofs to avoid it. In Riolo Terme, a huge piece of industrial drilling equipment had been swept into the Senio river. Bridges had collapsed in other towns, with widespread power loss to homes. In Faenza, the home of AlphaTauri, mayor Massimo Isola called the situation "a night that we will never forget — we've never known such flooding in our city, it is something unimaginable".

In Imola itself, the swollen Santerno river sits just metres from the track's paddock on its northern edge, the Acque Minerali park to the inside. Its winding banks require a bridge to be crossed to access the site that was by Wednesday morning barely above the water — while the flooding had come on to the circuit's side of the river, as well as west a short way into the town.

In the two days between Italy's Civil Protection Service officials issuing a red alert weather warning and the race being called off, the Santerno had been tracked surging as the rain lashed down in Imola >>



Events timeline

Monday 15 May – 1300

Italy's Civil Protection Service issues a red alert weather warning for the Emilia-Romagna region, with a low-pressure area over the north-east of the country expected to lead to widespread heavy rain.

Tuesday 16 May – 0300-0500

Rain starts to fall across Emilia-Romagna. This causes the Santerno river running through Imola to start to rise from its 0.7-metre starting-point height.

Tuesday 16 May – 1600

F1, the race promoter and the local authorities order staff working in the Imola F1 and support paddocks to evacuate with the Santerno having burst its banks and the recently erected F1 broadcast compound and other areas to the track's north-east confines under several inches of water.

Tuesday 16 May – 1800-2000

The Santerno breaches its declared 3.5m safety height point and continues rising for the next two hours to a maximum height of 3.8m, before beginning to fall as the rain eases overnight.

Tuesday 16 May – 2200

F1 personnel are instructed not to return to the circuit on Wednesday until they receive the all-clear. At this stage, it is still anticipated the race will go ahead with the rain predicted (accurately) to ease later in the week.

Wednesday 17 May – 0430

The Santerno's level starts to rise once again as the rain returns – climbing from 2.9m back to 3.4m over the next 2.5 hours.

Wednesday 17 May – 0700

F1 personnel are informed that the local authorities have not changed the order to stay away from the circuit. Shortly afterwards, it is understood a meeting with all F1 stakeholders is planned to discuss the event's status.

Wednesday 17 May – 1200

During the meeting, the decision is taken to cancel the race. This is communicated to teams and the media at this point. For the first time since 0300 the day before, rain stops falling in Imola for a period greater than 30 minutes.

Wednesday 17 May – 1315

F1 officially announces the 2023 Emilia Romagna race is cancelled.



HONE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

and the mountains to its south-west, water racing into the land below. That ground had been parched for much of the past year, the drought hardening the earth and set to exacerbate the flooding to come.

The Santerno rose from 0.7 metres to 3.8m last Tuesday – critically above its declared 3.5m safety threshold. The Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari and its darkest moments are often referenced along with its watery neighbour. The Santerno's placing is the reason why the Tamburello corner was considered so fearsome during the circuit's previous stint on the F1 calendar. There was no room to install wider run-off areas or alter the profile of the corner where, among other shocking incidents, Gerhard Berger went through a post-crash fire, and Ayrton Senna lost his life. So, the track was altered to include chicanes to slow the cars down through that section.

But, while the water had breached the Santerno's banks enough to flood the F1 broadcasting area and the support paddocks last Tuesday and remain there into Wednesday, this was not the reason why the race was cancelled. After all, forecasts correctly had the rain finally abating on Wednesday.

That call centred first on infrastructure. The disruption caused by the flooding and its impact on the roads around the circuit – and across the surrounding region – was itself at risk of getting made much worse by the arrival of thousands more F1 personnel and vehicles. Nearby hotels were also flooded, putting people out on the street. AlphaTauri driver Nyck de Vries found his drive to Faenza for expected marketing work blocked by a landslip – over 300 were tracked following the rainfall – and ended up sharing a room with McLaren's pitstop front jack operator as the only refuge he could find was a hotel already full.

Teams had been arriving over the two days from last Monday when the initial garage set-up technician crews had left factories across the UK, Switzerland and Emilia-Romagna (where Ferrari is also based, Maranello 55 miles away) and the rain had started falling. When these staff came to install the garages as usual last Tuesday, with the red alert in mind and able to feel the heavy rain themselves, team managers and travel coordinators were in regular contact with F1 – the principal information source and guide for the teams given its position as commercial rights holder and race promoter. They found out decisions from various meetings on the unfolding situation shortly after each >>

“The disruption caused by the flooding was at risk of getting made much worse by the arrival of thousands more F1 personnel and vehicles”



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had been held, in as close to real time as possible. These are understood to have stepped up a gear once videos of the flooding at the track and the towns nearby had begun to spread on Tuesday afternoon, which also reflects when the Santerno had burst its banks.

Approaching 4pm local time on Tuesday, the call came for the paddock to be evacuated as it had begun to be difficult to navigate due to the heavy rain washing around, plus the flooding to the northern end of the site. This was an orderly instruction for the approximately 150 team staff (plus others going through the remaining event set-up work, including building the team motorhomes and finishing installing the miles of cables and other F1 systems) by then on-site. This figure is typical for a European F1 race build-up.

The evacuation came following an official note issued by F1 rather than a dramatic, sudden escape taking place. By this point, more event staff had begun to arrive – and for the teams this included their mechanics.

Nearing 10pm last Tuesday, these staff were issued with an instruction not to attend the track and to stay at their accommodation if possible – the same message issued to officials and media too on Wednesday morning. By then, though, additional support staff were embarking on their typical schedules – the drivers and team bosses set to come even later, with Mercedes duo Lewis Hamilton and George Russell still at their Brackley base at this stage having been doing last-minute simulator preparation in expectation of racing the finally updated W14.

On Wednesday morning, many of the buses and hire cars associated with the event had started to get caught up in traffic – with rescue equipment including fire engines and life rafts being passed through this under priority – even as they had barely left Bologna. Traffic was better coming from Florence, but the routes converged at the areas most heavily hit by the floods. So, here then comes the second, much more important, consideration of this whole saga for the stakeholders. This is how not calling off the race and allowing thousands of people and vehicles to descend on the area would inevitably disrupt efforts to help those imperilled by the floods.

Going ahead with fully setting up and then starting to hold something as trivial as a motor race amid such scenes was not just impractical, it would have been morally wrong. This is surely what Italian deputy prime minister and transport minister Matteo Salvini was getting at when he asked those with the power to do so to “postpone” the race “in light of the bad weather emergency that is scourging Emilia-Romagna” on Wednesday morning. It’s also what F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali – an Imola local – meant when he referenced needing to “ensure safety and not create extra burden for the authorities while they deal with this very awful situation” in F1’s statement announcing the news of the race being cancelled. This landed at 1.15pm local time on Wednesday just as many flights, including special charters arranged by some teams, had done so.



Domenicali stressed need to “ensure safety and not create extra burden for the authorities”

“It’s understood Imola has escaped financial peril caused by having to refund tickets and still pay its 2023 race-hosting fee. With force majeure cited, this isn’t necessary”

The race was indeed finally off.

F1 just did not want to take from the required emergency services response to the flooding and the priority of saving lives. Its call might not have been swift enough to stop a few flights for those already accruing thousands of air miles a year, and some overseas fans too that shouldn’t be forgotten, but it didn’t matter. The fewer people even attempting to make the road journey from destination airports – Bologna the nearest and busiest for F1 personnel – the better.

Given the extent of the initial damage had not been revealed until Wednesday morning, timing-wise there really is little F1 could have done – especially with the forecast suggesting the river levels would fall in the following days, which they indeed did. Once the devastation was fully understood, F1 and its fellow stakeholders acted promptly.

With the efforts of the rescuers and stranded people no doubt in their hearts, the business bods central to the decisions to include Imola on the calendar and then strike it out also had to discuss the fallout. It’s a brutal thing to consider in the face of such devastation and tragedy, but reflects reality. Emilia-Romagna will sadly also have to count an economic cost, too.

The first suggestion from F1 itself is that local hotel and restaurant businesses hopeful a replacement Imola race date might be found in 2023 sadly will not get one. The calendar from this point is just too congested. Any attempt to cram in another event between Silverstone and the Hungaroring in July would require an unprecedented quadruple-header. And while the unlikely can’t be ruled out in F1 terms, especially where money is involved, it’s something that didn’t happen even during 2020 and the season that ended up being just 17 races long despite tracks offering to host more than the doubles registered in Austria, Silverstone and Bahrain.

While more news is likely to come out across the Monaco and Spain weekends coming up, it is understood that Imola has escaped financial peril caused by having to refund tickets and still pay its 2023 race-hosting fee. With force majeure cited, this isn’t necessary. Judging by comments made by Italian Automobile Club president Angelo Sticchi Damiani in the aftermath of the cancellation, the circuit should get an extra race in 2026 beyond its existing contract, which is set to run out in 2025.

Looking at the whole tale, F1 cannot be criticised for failing to act until it was too late. It has also earned credit for donating €1million to the flooding relief effort, as well as the food organised for the event to food banks established to help feed the displaced. Ferrari has also donated €1m to the Emilia-Romagna Region’s Agency for Territorial Safety and Civil Protection.

In our time of climate crisis, catastrophes such as these are occurring more regularly. Just three weeks ago, two people were killed in flooding in Faenza, which last week had mud slew through – the town’s clean-up assisted by team members including driver Yuki Tsunoda. When it comes to restaging this GP for 2024, perhaps the timing of such unfortunate events will be considered when F1 comes to implementing the plan to group races together by region for sustainability reasons. Spring rain is common. This devastating flooding is not.

Hopefully, the calendar work will be accelerated given little in the 2023 schedule was different to 2022 in regard to reducing big distances between rounds. There is no excuse for not at least thinking about it, let alone getting rid of absurd journeys for people and equipment, such as the recent Baku-Miami double-header. That would be a step in helping the climate crisis, along with car technology developments and team organisation breakthroughs from the geniuses that inhabit the F1 community also hopefully helping end it for good one day. That is for the future. Even as it heads to Monaco, F1 is rightly thinking of the people who have died in Italy last week. ❄

WHEN BAD WEATHER CAUSED F1 CHAOS

*After last week's sad disruption in the Emilia-Romagna region,
here are some of the races worst affected by bad weather*

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY



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1966 Belgian Grand Prix

Spa is notorious for its changeable weather, and just three years earlier the 1963 Belgian GP had been desperately wet, dominated by Lotus maestro Jim Clark.

In 1966, it was the sudden deluge that enveloped the field halfway around the opening lap that resulted in chaos, and provided a trigger to Jackie Stewart kicking off his safety campaign. Just seven of the 15 starters filed through at the end of lap one, and among those missing was the Scot, who was being extracted from the wreckage of his BRM by team-mate Graham Hill and Bob Bondurant. They laid him in a barn, while removing his fuel-soaked overalls.

Remarkably, those who completed the first lap all finished, with John Surtees taking victory in his Ferrari after passing the Cooper-Maserati of Jochen Rindt at three-quarters distance.

Stewart was on his way to hospital in Liege, but only after being left on the floor on his stretcher in the 'medical centre', and via a detour after the ambulance driver got lost.

Typically for Spa, the weather had been fine in the build-up to the race, with Saturday qualifying even delayed while the local *pompier*s put out a fire that had broken out in the woods at Burnenville.

1975 British Grand Prix

Few would attempt to compare a flat former airfield on the Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire border with the rolling hills of the Ardennes, but there can be similarities...

There have been plenty of wet grands prix at Silverstone over the years, but this one is infamous because, much like the 1966 Belgian GP at Spa, it was a wet-dry track that caused chaos.

The race had begun in the dry, with Carlos Pace leading in his Brabham before Clay Regazzoni took over for Ferrari. But a sudden rain shower just after one-quarter distance resulted in most of the field heading for the pits to switch to wet-weather tyres. One of those who stayed out on slicks was James Hunt and, when the circuit dried out and those on wets returned to the pits for dry rubber, his Hesketh moved into a comfortable lead.

A failing exhaust began to hamper Hunt, and at two-thirds distance he was overhauled by the McLaren of Emerson Fittipaldi, with Pace and Jody Scheckter's Tyrrell also moving past. And then back came the rain... It arrived from the south of the circuit, meaning it hit Stowe and Club corners first. Tony Brise, Scheckter, Pace, Hunt, Dave Morgan, Wilson Fittipaldi, Brian Henton and John Nicholson were involved in a pile-up at Club; Stowe claimed John Watson, Patrick Depailler, Mark Donohue and Jochen Mass.

Six cars remained on track. Emerson Fittipaldi headed for the pits for rain tyres, returned to the circuit and encountered red flags. He was the winner, but it took three days for the result to be confirmed.

1975 Austrian Grand Prix

With its stunning location in the Styrian mountains of central Europe, the Österreichring – these days known in its truncated form as the Red Bull Ring – is prone in mid-August to scorching heat or torrential thunderstorms.

Quite often race weekends in the summer at the venue have featured both, but only in 1975 did adverse weather result in such a severe impact on the Austrian GP. Conditions had been dry in the build-up to the race, and remained so during the race morning warm-up when Mark Donohue crashed his Penske-run March at the ultra-fast first turn of Hella Licht, sustaining fatal injuries.

Rain swept in during the day, and it was home hero Niki Lauda, in the process of cruising to the world title with Ferrari, who led early on from pole. Then James Hunt moved ahead with his Hesketh, only to be baulked by new team-mate Brett Lunger, allowing Vittorio Brambilla to move in front with his March.

At 29 laps – a tad over half-distance – the decision was made to wave the chequered flag. Brambilla flung an arm aloft after crossing the finish line to claim his first – and only – GP victory, and clonked into the barriers. Hunt, who was about to take his ailing Hesketh >>



Surtees survived first lap carnage to win at Spa in 1966



Wilson Fittipaldi tries to figure out where the rain came from – while Emerson takes victory!



Nobody told Brambilla it's 'win or crash': the Italian managed both in Austria

into the pits to retire, spotted the flag, changed his mind, crossed the line to take second place, and then pulled over in the pitlane exit.

As team personnel stood around wondering what to do next, there was a break in the weather and discussions began about restarting the race. But the ever-sharp March team principal Max Mosley pointed out that the waving of the chequered flag without a black flag for accompaniment meant that the race was definitively over. Only half-points were awarded, but Brambilla's win was confirmed.

1979 Race of Champions

The British climate is temperamental at the best of times, and through the 1970s the wisdom of hosting non-championship F1 races, which traditionally acted as curtain raisers to the European leg of the grand prix season, so early in the year could be called into question.

Yes, it was a gloriously sunny Silverstone where James Hunt took victory for Hesketh in the International Trophy of 1974, but just a year earlier Jackie Stewart had triumphed at the same venue after navigating his Tyrrell through snow flurries. In 1978, again at Silverstone, Keke Rosberg scored a shock win for Theodore after nearly all the fancied runners – and some decidedly unfancied – skated off the road early in the race due to heavy rain on a newly laid, and grippless, track surface.

Things were even more slippery at Brands Hatch in the middle of March 1979, where some teams – including Ferrari, all the way from Maranello – had already assembled for the Race of Champions. With six inches of snow covering the rolling Kent hills, and little chance of it melting, circuit impresario John Webb had no option but to make the decision on the Thursday afternoon to call off the event.

A new date was confirmed for the Easter weekend a month later. Brands was already slated to host a round of the Aurora British F1 Championship on that date, so paradoxically the Race of Champions was a non-championship race that awarded points – at least to some! Ferrari hero Gilles Villeneuve took victory after passing the ailing Lotus of reigning world champion Mario Andretti, with up-and-coming Brabham starlet Nelson Piquet also overtaking the American to claim second place. A lap down, Guy Edwards won the Aurora 'class' in his Fittipaldi.

1984 Monaco Grand Prix

What happened in Monte Carlo in 1984 has gone down in motorsport folklore because it cemented a win for Alain Prost and denied chasing rookies Ayrton Senna and Stefan Bellof of what could have been their maiden F1 victories.

Prost was leading in his McLaren, from the fast-closing Toleman-Hart of Senna and the even-faster-gaining Tyrrell-Cosworth of Bellof, when the Frenchman began gesticulating for the race to be stopped amid the worsening conditions. Senna overtook Prost along the pitstraight at the end of the 32nd lap, but Prost had already slowed – clerk of the course Jacky Ickx had brandished the red flag.

On results countback to the end of lap 31, Prost was given the verdict by 7.4s from Senna, who had carved 10.7s from the Frenchman's advantage over the preceding three laps. Bellof, in turn, was 13.7s behind Senna and had at times been lapping even quicker than the Brazilian... Ickx, as a factory Porsche driver in the World Endurance Championship, was condemned by some for his decision, which had resulted in a victory for a car powered by a Porsche-built engine. But there's no question that the conditions were appalling.

1991 Australian Grand Prix

Everyone enjoyed the Australian Grand Prix when it was run in Adelaide. Coming as it did at the end of the season, it was either a dramatic title decider (most memorably in 1986) or a pleasant end-of-season blast around the South Australian streets.

The 1991 running should have belonged in the latter category, with Ayrton Senna already confirmed as world champion, and it was the Brazilian who headed a 1-2 on the grid from the sister McLaren-Honda of Gerhard Berger.

But rain hit the city on Sunday. This was nothing new – two years



Villeneuve won at a snow-free Brands on the 1979 Easter weekend



Prost escaped with victory at Monaco in 1984



Adelaide was simply too flooded for the 1991 Australian GP to last long



42 minutes of safety car running
went by before Hamilton could
stretch his legs at Fuji



Button followed dry
Melbourne victory with
a wet Malaysian one



Max Verstappen
scored easy points
at Spa in 2021

earlier, Thierry Boutsen had splashed to victory in his Williams-Renault in the 1989 finale. The field set off, but it was clear that this time the conditions were on a different level. Nigel Mansell had just crashed his Williams out of second place, amid increasing intensity of the downpour and several other incidents, when the race was halted. Senna claimed victory, with just 14 laps of racing in the books, with Mansell reinstated in second on countback.

Half-points were awarded, meaning that sixth-placed Gianni Morbidelli, subbing at Ferrari for the sacked Alain Prost, goes down in history as scoring half a point during what amounted to a 25-minute career at the Prancing Horse!

2007 Japanese Grand Prix

Last autumn, the wisdom of holding the Japanese GP in October was called into question because of that month's perilous proximity to the country's rainy season, coming as it did just three years after qualifying had been shifted to race morning due to typhoon warnings. Indeed, the 2022 race resulted in utter confusion before confirmation arrived that race winner Max Verstappen was world champion. But such criticism isn't really fair, because Japan is always liable to be hit by sudden, heavy rain, whatever time of year it is.

The country's maiden F1 GP in 1976, of course, was the famous wet race at Fuji won by Mario Andretti for Lotus, and where James Hunt snatched the title from the heroic Niki Lauda. In 2005 at Suzuka, wet weather played havoc with the one-at-a-time qualifying system of the time, resulting in most of the top contenders starting near the back of the grid and one of the greatest grands prix of the 21st century.

Few could claim the same of the 2007 running at Fuji. The circuit, back on the F1 schedule for the first time since 1977, was a shadow of its former self following a massive revamp. And then, for 42 minutes, the field droned around behind the safety car while officials worked out whether it was dry – and safe – enough to let the racers loose.

After 19 laps they finally did so, and poleman Lewis Hamilton went on to take honours in his McLaren-Mercedes from the Renault of Heikki Kovalainen. It looked like a big step towards winning the world title as a rookie, since just two rounds remained...

2009 Malaysian Grand Prix

For the first time since the 1991 Australian GP, half-points were awarded for a race, which in this case ran to just beyond half-distance before being abandoned due to the heavy rain that had hit the Sepang circuit in Kuala Lumpur.

Jenson Button had won the season-opening race in Melbourne at the wheel of his Mercedes-powered Brawn, and claimed pole for round two in Malaysia. He ran third early on after a poor start, but leapfrogged early leader Nico Rosberg's Williams and second-placed Jarno Trulli's Toyota during the first round of pitstops to move in front.

When the rain arrived, the majority of runners headed to the pits for wet-weather tyres. But the water soon dispersed, and intermediates became the rubber of choice. A subsequent sudden downpour resulted in Sebastien Buemi and Sebastian Vettel – both on wets – spinning out and conditions being deemed too dangerous to continue. Button was declared the winner from the BMW Sauber of Nick Heidfeld.

2021 Belgian Grand Prix

The visit to Spa two years ago is a black mark in F1 history, not necessarily because of the torrentially wet conditions, but because of its abandonment after just two laps behind the safety car – ostensibly in order to fulfil obligations to ticket holders for some sort of 'race' to have taken place (*at least they later changed the rules – ed*).

That was a shame, because Saturday's wet qualifying had featured some intriguing and exciting elements, none more so than George Russell stunning everyone by wrestling his Williams-Mercedes onto the front row of the grid alongside the Red Bull-Honda of polesitter Max Verstappen.

That, of course, is how they finished after 3m27.071s of 'racing' behind Bernd Maylander in the safety car. 🍂

RACE CENTRE

BTCC SNETTERTON

Sutton on top before Ingram fights back

The three-time champion was at his brilliant best once again at Snetterton, but the reigning title holder wasn't giving up the fight – despite his sickness

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



motorsport
IMAGES

There is very little, it seems, that can stop Ash Sutton. At Snetterton last Sunday, his exquisite victories in the first two encounters made it four British Touring Car Championship race wins in a row, something that the series' anorak elements pointed out had not been done since Alain Menu in 1997. That was in the era of no option tyres, no reversed grids, no success hybrid or ballast penalties, no turbo boost jiggery-pokery; just pure competition. It takes a special driver and car to smash through the well-intentioned hurdles placed in the way of domination.

Sutton's first win aboard his Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST last weekend in Norfolk came despite running the medium-compound Goodyear against an armada of BMWs and Tom Ingram's Hyundai, all of whom were on the superior soft tyres. When the three-time champion got onto the softs for race two, he simply vanished into the distance. Sutton's fastest lap was 1.895 seconds quicker than that of second-placed Jake Hill's BMW, which was on the medium rubber, and 1.584s faster than anyone else's best.

The only thing that could stop Sutton was the obligation in place for this event, which will be repeated at Croft in the summer, to use all three compounds of Goodyear. So, onto the hard tyre – which was way off the pace – he went in the final race. Yet still he was

fourth. That allowed Ingram, who had bravely gambled on the hard in race two to get the pain out of the way, to steer his Exelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N to his first 2023 victory on the mediums.

Truth be told, those tyre rules – plus some poor starts for Ingram – had perhaps magnified Sutton's advantage over the reigning champion. Their days ran in parallel yet they never had a proper competition since they were on different rubber throughout. Ingram was also feeling dreadful. "I've got a tummy bug or food poisoning – I wasn't sure I would do qualifying," he croaked on Saturday. By Sunday he looked awful and, once the adrenalin had faded, he stood atop the final-race podium amid a biting Norfolk evening wind, family and team members standing by with warming jackets for him once the champagne had been sprayed, then was whisked off to recover and plot how to overcome the pesky Sutton. "They've got to do something," mused someone from a rival team of BTCC organiser TOCA's occasional discretion to make boost tweaks to level the field, "otherwise they might as well give the trophy to Ash now."

But is the prognosis really as gloomy as that for those who demand a high-cholesterol title fight? With everyone on the halfway-house medium tyres in qualifying, Sutton had claimed pole position by 0.342s. That's a strong margin, yet second-placed Ingram was convinced that "we didn't actually show our pace in that.

Ingram beat the Motorbase Fords in the final race at Snetterton...



I lost four tenths in the first corner on a flying lap with a big oversteery thing. We had a big tailwind, it was a bit gusty, and it caught me off guard. I think we could have challenged for pole.” And that was despite Ingram having 2s less hybrid allowance than Sutton, owing to their pre-weekend championship positions.

On those soft tyres, Ingram should have taken the fight to medium-shod Sutton in race one, as long as he could keep the rear-wheel-drive BMWs of Colin Turkington and Jake Hill – both starting from the second row on softs – behind him at the start. He couldn’t. Instead, he made the first of two poor starts and, once he’d also lost out at the Wilson hairpin due to being on the outside line and been shuffled down to sixth, his chance of victory was gone.

The getaways weren’t down to Ingram himself, his engineer Spencer Aldridge explaining that it was due to “a component issue”.

Turkington and Hill ran second and third, but such are the difficulties for rear-wheel-drive cars in heating up their tyres, even on the softs, that Sutton was way up the road after the opening lap. “No one knows what anyone else is doing [at the point when the tyre choice is made],” explained Sutton. “We were banking on a fair few going on the mediums and it turned out that wasn’t the case. So the opening laps I had to drive like qualifying laps.”

Sutton did have a little bit of fortune on his side here in the form of a combative Turkington. Somehow the Northern Irishman had qualified third despite planting his West Surrey Racing-run BMW »

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330e M Sport in the barriers at Coram early in the session when he was one of several to spin off on oil dropped by the Hyundai of Nick Halstead. Remarkably, the damage was only cosmetic. In the first race, he found the rear tyres fading and “I was driving quite an oversteery car”. That meant he was coming under pressure from Hill, with Ingram, who had soon moved up to fourth, in turn closing on the two of them. Finally, on the ninth lap of 12, Hill found a way past on the back straight and around the outside into the esses, despite having two wheels forced onto the grass.

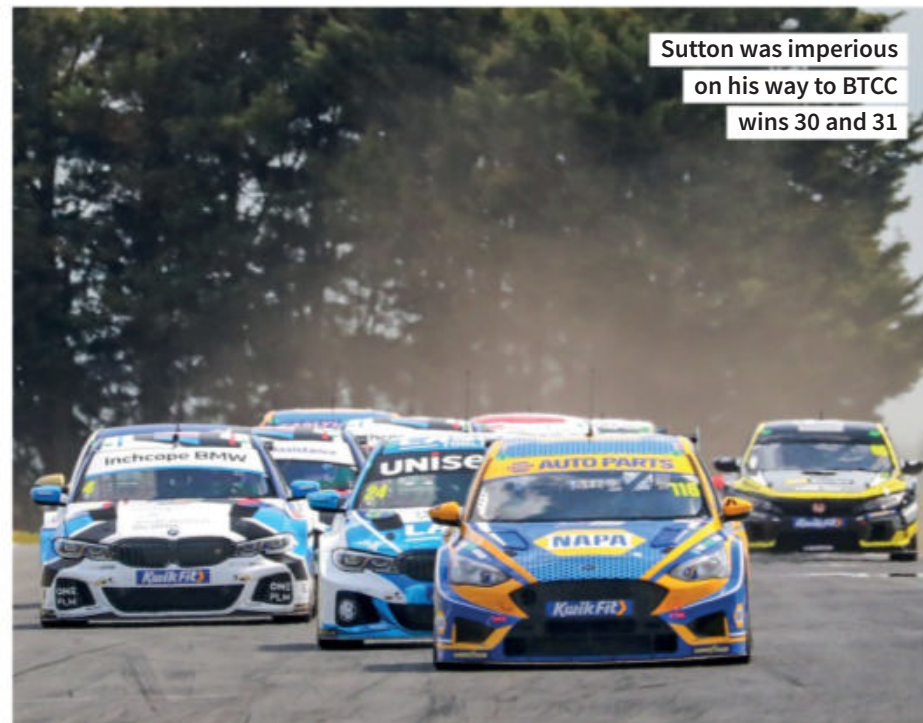
“Whether he saw me late or deliberately put me on the grass I don’t know,” grimaced Hill. “All I look for is a car’s width, and all I got was a quarter to half a car’s width...” Turkington simply said:

“We had the pace to beat Ash and could have won race one; in the second, Tom drove fantastically”

“It looked like his car was in a much better place. It’s important not to fight too hard so we can both get home on the podium.”

The soft tyres were clearly quicker – Ingram’s fastest lap of the race was 0.805s quicker than Sutton’s, and Hill’s was 0.502s better – and they also appeared to hold up longer: Hill slashed the gap to Sutton and it was a nailbiting final lap, but the Ford held on by 0.270s. It was just the BMWs’ early tyre-warm-up pace that had prevented a reversal. “We’re always going to struggle with rear-wheel drive – we’re rubbish on the first two laps!” laughed Hill.

The bulk of the lower half of the field had run on the hard tyres in this race, and this included pre-weekend championship leader Dan Cammish. A qualifying accident that began at the Hamilton infield left-hander and finished at the following right at Oggies had sidelined his Motorbase Ford, and the Yorkshireman held his hands up and blamed himself – plus a big bump on the grass that had exacerbated his barrier-bound trajectory. Cammish climbed through to finish 11th, and set the fastest lap on hards – 2.526s off Ingram’s and 1.721s off Sutton’s best on the mediums. Only 0.047s slower than ‘DamCam’ was the similarly hard-shod Excelr8 Hyundai of Tom Chilton, who lost half a lap at the start with a throttle pot



glitch, and this played its part in what looked a highly risky gamble on the part of team-mate Ingram for race two.

“We had the pace to beat Ash and could have won the race,” explained Aldridge of Ingram’s opening salvo. “We haven’t used the hard tyre for a while [in races] but we’ve run it here [in testing], so we had an idea of the changes we needed to make to maximise it. Tom Chilton had run it in the first race and his pace was good, so we went against the grain and thought we’d try to get the reversed grid.”

While Sutton stormed away in a race of his own, and the medium-tyred Hill and Turkington completed a repeat of the first-race podium, Ingram got home in seventh. “That second race, Tom drove fantastically,” continued Aldridge. As (bad) luck would have it, Sutton drew the number 6 out for the reversed grid, but that merely delayed the inevitable in the finale and made it a better race to watch.

WSR BMW pair Adam Morgan and Stephen Jelley had enjoyed a pair of fifths and sixths respectively in races one and two, so it was Jelley on reversed-grid pole. But the top six on the grid all started the finale on hard tyres with the exception of Dan Rowbottom. The bearded Midlander “didn’t extract the maximum” from his Motorbase Ford on Saturday and had been suffering from a >>

ANOTHER MIXED BAG FOR SPEEDWORKS AND TOYOTA

“If we’re flying anywhere, I don’t want to be on the same plane as him,” joked a Speedworks Motorsport wag of Ricky Collard’s fortune. Arguably, he made his own (bad) luck in being deprived of his win last time out at Brands, but he put the subsequent track-limits furore behind him at Snetterton and should have enjoyed a much better weekend than he had.

First, Collard qualified fifth, his best Saturday performance since he joined the Toyota Corolla squad for 2022. “I was expecting to be fifth last!” he exclaimed. “I was a little bit tired with the head noise with the track limits, and making a conscious effort not to get track limits, and not driving as hard as I can. But they gave us a good car.”

Collard was running along nicely in fifth



place on the medium tyres in race one when a stone pierced the radiator, set off the temperature alarms and forced him to pull over and park the Toyota. Which is where our Speedworks joker came in. From that

point on, his day was ruined.

But then along came team-mate Rory Butcher. He’d enjoyed a stealthy day, harvesting a ninth place on the hard tyres and an eighth on the mediums. Now he was on the softs for the finale, and raced to third and was promoted to the runner-up spot by Dan Cammish’s exclusion.

“I had a feeling in my gut that we needed to go hards in race one,” smiled the Scot. “We had to mull it over but we took the pain, kept it in the mix in race two, and knew most people around us would be on hards in race three. I was on [winner] Ingram’s tail when Dan arrived, and when he passed me I didn’t have much hybrid left. I needed to keep within track limits and brought it home.”



Hill (24) and Turkington (4)
battled to be the best
of the quick BMWs

migraine, but on the advice of Sutton he'd run the hard Goodyears in race one and ended up the top finisher on that compound in seventh. On the softs, he converted that to fourth in race two, hard on Turkington's tail, despite a first-lap whack from Josh Cook after the BTC Racing Honda had sustained a puncture.

Predictably, Rowbottom was into the lead of the finale on the second lap, but had the charging Ingram hard on his heels. "We made a tweak to the car and it didn't really work initially," explained 'Rowbo'. "It was good in the end, but to be fair to Tom I couldn't match his pace." The soft-shod Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla of Rory Butcher went past for second, and soon Cammish – also on softs – was through for third. Cammish then demoted Butcher and was right on Ingram's tail by the finish, thanks in part to the Hyundai locking up at Agostini on the final lap, only for the Ford to be excluded after failing the ride-height test for reasons the Motorbase team was unable to fathom in the immediate aftermath.

The other notable performance came from Cook, who on the soft tyres stormed from 26th following his second-race disaster to a final result of fifth. He picked off the warring – and struggling-on-the-hards – WSR BMWs over the final laps, with Jelley leading the Munich squadron, and Hill and Morgan dropping behind Turkington and Aiden Moffat's BTC Honda thanks to a collision at the Wilson hairpin on the penultimate lap.

Ingram's pace on the medium tyres was 0.698s adrift of what Sutton's best on that compound had been in race one, but on the

proviso that he was battling through to the front while the rubber was at its peak, while Sutton was driving his 'qualifying laps'. In the finale, Sutton followed home inherited podium man Rowbottom on the hards – fourth place looked spectacular on that rubber, but he was only 0.091s quicker than Ingram had been on those tyres in race two. On the softs, the gap was 0.219s in the favour of Sutton (race two) over Ingram (race one). So yes, Sutton and the Ford have the edge, but not by an 'it's all over bar the shouting' margin, especially bearing in mind Snetterton is the longest track in the BTCC.

"He's just gelling with it – we've got it so it does what he wants and we're not changing much," explained Sutton's engineer Antonio Carrozza of the work that went on at Motorbase over the winter to develop the Ford, once the decision had been taken to postpone the intended rear-wheel-drive Audi project. "We're just in a nice place, just doing a quick balance change for sessions. We took all the aspects of greatness and put them all together. We did that just before Media Day and we almost beat the lap record by what would have been seven tenths – and that was at Brands Indy! But we thought it might be perfect conditions, a perfect storm..."

"Ash is in a really happy place with the car at the moment – 12 months ago he despised the thing! When the Audi project was canned it was probably the biggest disappointment for us, but it focuses the mind... But a year of learning what front-wheel drive needs [Carrozza only worked on RWD machines before 2022], a year of Ash learning, and it's dialled in nicely."

For all those lobbying TOCA for boost changes, Carrozza pointed out that Motorbase engine tuner Mountune's focus over the winter had been not on power, but driveability. "It's all in the chassis and minimum corner speed," he added. And his instruction to Sutton to set fastest lap in race two came with the add-on that he could not use his single lap of hybrid allowance. This he achieved, and the time came despite the Ford languishing nearly at the bottom of two of the three speed traps. "Thruxton [scene of the next round] will be interesting," Carrozza smiled. "We were good there last year, and if anything all the areas we've improved will suit us there massively."

That sounds ominous... For Snetterton, what was clear was that the white-walled rubber was far superior. "The soft tyre is such an advantage, it's criminal that it didn't win every race!" declared Aldridge. Arguably, that's down to the brilliance of Sutton, Ingram, their engineers and machinery. 🏆



Stealthy Butcher
finished weekend
with a podium



P62 SUPPORTS REPORT

All the action from the eclectic Snett supports

RESULTS

ROUND 3/10, SNETTERTON (GBR), 21 MAY RACE 1 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST (M)	23m23.332s
2	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (S)	+0.270s
3	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (S)	+3.553s
4	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (S)	+4.541s
5	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (S)	+12.961s
6	Stephen Jelley (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (S)	+13.177s
7	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST (H)	+24.648s
8	Josh Cook (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R (H)	+29.285s
9	Rory Butcher (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+32.283s
10	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (S)	+32.562s
11	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST (H)	+33.619s
12	Ronan Pearson (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (M)	+34.895s
13	Sam Osborne (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST (M)	+34.897s
14	George Gamble (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+40.414s
15	Dan Lloyd (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (H)	+42.828s
16	Bobby Thompson (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (H)	+42.950s
17	Mikey Doble (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (M)	+43.591s
18	Andrew Watson (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (M)	+43.899s
19	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R (H)	+48.238s
20	Dexter Patterson (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (H)	+48.429s
21	Jack Butel (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (H)	+49.702s
22	Will Powell (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R (H)	+57.327s
23	Nicolas Hamilton (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (H)	+57.986s
24	Tom Chilton (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (H)	+1m02.401s
25	Jade Edwards (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon (H)	+1m03.750s
26	Nick Halstead (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (H)	+1m12.115s
R	Ricky Collard (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (M)	4 laps-radiator

Winner’s average speed 91.39mph. Fastest lap Ingram 1m55.090s, 92.86mph.
Tyres: (H) = hard; (M) = medium; (S) = soft

QUALIFYING

1 Sutton 1m54.526s; 2 Ingram 1m54.868s; 3 Turkington 1m54.954s; 4 Hill 1m55.053s; 5 Collard 1m55.322s; 6 Morgan 1m55.438s; 7 Cook 1m55.446s; 8 Butcher 1m55.481s; 9 Rowbottom 1m55.518s; 10 Jelley 1m55.590s; 11 Chilton 1m55.654s; 12 Gamble 1m55.684s; 13 Taylor-Smith 1m56.024s; 14 Pearson 1m56.092s; 15 Lloyd 1m56.141s; 16 Doble 1m56.167s; 17 Osborne 1m56.422s; 18 Thompson 1m56.533s; 19 Watson 1m56.734s; 20 Patterson 1m56.903s; 21 Butel 1m56.916s; 22 Moffat 1m56.963s; 23 Powell 1m59.752s; 24 Cammish no time; 25 Hamilton no time; 26 Halstead no time; 27 Edwards no time.



GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 2 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

1 Sutton (S) 23m28.479s; 2 Hill (M) +3.614s; 3 Turkington (M) +4.370s; 4 Rowbottom (S) +4.653s; 5 Morgan (M) +10.968s; 6 Jelley (M) +14.681s; 7 Ingram (H) +15.769s; 8 Butcher (M) +20.304s; 9 Osborne (S) +20.726s; 10 Lloyd (S) +20.806s; 11 Cammish (M) +22.715s; 12 Taylor-Smith (M) +31.389s; 13 Collard (S) +31.878s; 14 Pearson (S) +32.543s; 15 Chilton (S) +32.851s; 16 Gamble (M) +33.901s; 17 Moffat (M) +34.392s; 18 Watson (S) +34.800s; 19 Doble (S) +35.349s; 20 Thompson (M) +36.828s; 21 Butel (S) +38.203s; 22 Patterson (M) +38.542s; 23 Powell (S) +41.861s; 24 Hamilton (M) +52.186s; 25 Halstead (M) +54.757s; 26 Edwards (S) +55.852s; 27 Cook (M) -1 lap.
Winner’s average speed 91.06mph.
Fastest lap Sutton 1m54.871s, 93.04mph.

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

RACE 3 (11 LAPS – 32.658 MILES)

1 Ingram (M) 21m37.465s; 2 Butcher (S) +5.594s; 3 Rowbottom (M) +6.869s; 4 Sutton (H) +9.428s; 5 Cook (S) +15.122s; 6 Jelley (H) +16.241s; 7 Turkington (H) +16.349s; 8 Moffat (S) +16.993s; 9 Morgan (H) +17.832s; 10 Hill (H) +18.096s; 11 Chilton (M) +18.976s; 12 Thompson (S) +19.364s; 13 Patterson (S) +19.665s; 14 Collard (H) +26.688s; 15 Doble (H) +29.578s; 16 Butel (M) +30.287s; 17 Lloyd (M) +30.601s; 18 Watson (H) +32.242s; 19 Powell (M) +33.785s; 20 Osborne (H) +44.431s; 21 Halstead (S) +1m05.177s; EX Cammish (S) +0.587s; R Hamilton (S) 8 laps-black/orange flag; R Pearson (H) 3 laps-damage, including Vauxhall bumper attached to own; R Taylor-Smith (H) 2 laps-accident damage; R Gamble (S) 0 laps-fuel line; NS Edwards subframe.
Winner’s average speed 90.61mph.
Fastest lap Ingram 1m56.593s, 91.67mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Sutton 135; 2 Ingram 128; 3 Turkington 109; 4 Cammish 98; 5 Hill 98; 6 Rowbottom 69; 7 Morgan 65; 8 Butcher 63; 9 Cook 58; 10 Thompson 52.

NEXT EVENT

THRUXTON 8 JUNE ISSUE

Can anyone stop the Motorbase Fords at the unusual, high-speed Hampshire venue?

Meaty Ferrari spoils the 'Big Four' feast

NURBURGRING 24 HOURS
NURBURGRING (DEU)
20-21 MAY

As grudge-fuelled local derbies go, they don't come much bigger than the Nurburgring 24 Hours (at least in motorsport terms). Germany's 'Big Four' – Audi, BMW, Mercedes and Porsche – relish the annual squabble for bragging rights, and the stakes have only risen in tandem with the speeds in this glorious GT3 era. Except this year the national hegemony came to an abrupt halt, as the Big Four found themselves soundly beaten by a Ferrari that delivered the Prancing Horse its first Nurburgring 24 Hours victory, in the race's 51st edition.

What made it easier for the 230,000 mostly partisan and famously raucous crowd to swallow was that it still counted as a home win. 'Traitorous' local team Frikadelli Racing had betrayed its Porsche traditions by choosing to run the new 296 GT3. But on Sunday afternoon who could begrudge team owner Klaus Abbelen his moment of grail-quest realisation after so many years in its pursuit? The entrepreneur – famed for his tasty meatballs! – was the partner of the late and much-missed Nurburgring icon Sabine Schmitz, who died of cancer in 2021. There was barely a dry eye as he took a champagne soaking with drivers David Pittard, Earl Bamber, Nicky Catsburg and the flamboyantly named Felipe Fernandez Laser.

The Frikadelli Ferrari was the quickest car on the Nordschleife last weekend, even if it only started fourth on a grid headed by Team Bilstein's Mercedes-AMG. Abt

Sportsline's black Lamborghini led the early going, but circuit specialist Pittard soon hit the front – and didn't look back. What really marked the Ferrari out, aside from its speed and a favourable Balance of Performance, was how smoothly it negotiated a race marked by too many GT3 collisions with slower cars. Only a slow puncture in the fifth hour threatened to spoil the Frikadelli aftertaste while Catsburg was at the wheel. But the car only lost roughly a minute and quickly recovered to return to the front.

Running out of sequence with Rowe Racing's #98 BMW M4 meant regular lead changes each hour. But after 20 stops in a remarkably dry race – in

disconcerting contrast to the heartbreaking scenes in northern Italy – the Ferrari had a comfortable lead. Concerns over shock absorber fragility kept the team on tenterhooks, but Pittard kept his head to expertly manage the final hour and beat the Rowe BMW by just 26.911 seconds. It wasn't as close as that sounds.

For added significance, the dry conditions and the circuit's sensible Code 60 system instead of snore-inducing safety cars made this the fastest Nurburgring 24 Hours yet run, the winner and its four closest pursuers managing 162 laps, three more than the previous best. It also marked the first 'foreign' winner since Zakspeed's Chrysler Viper took the spoils in 2002.

GRUPPEC PHOTOGRAPHY



Ferrari became first non-home
N24 winner for two decades



Marciello Mercedes took
pole but fell to third

MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG



Best Audi could only
manage sixth spot

AUDI / FERDI KRÄLING MOTORSPORT-BILD GMBH



The performance and result buffs the already sparkling reputations of Bamber and Catsburg, but Pittard will likely take the most from this landmark. The 31-year-old anchored the team effort, starting and finishing the race in a performance that offers final proof of his pedigree. “It does feel a bit like vindication,” said Pittard, who set out to become a ‘Ring specialist five years ago on the advice of Frank Stippler. “This is my new home race, I live an hour down the road. This is the crown jewel, what everything has led towards.”

Rowe’s quartet also avoided major delay, making up for a lowly start slot caused by Sheldon van der Linde’s qualifying crash at Pflanzgarten. “Just getting through the night was an achievement in itself, given how many accidents there were,” said the South African, who was joined by Marco Wittmann, Dries Vanthoor and Maxime Martin. “Our plan was to get through the night and take the race from there, which is exactly what we did. We knew we didn’t have enough pace to win, but could make up time by getting through traffic cleanly.”

The pole-winning #4 Mercedes anchored by Raffaele Marciello claimed the final podium step, after an at-times fraught battle with its GetSpeed siblings. Adam Christodoulou was frustrated to miss the top three in the red #2 entry, but not as much as Maro Engel, who was nerfed out of the race by a wandering Porsche Cayman. “To the amateurs out there we respect you

TOP SIX RESULTS NURBURGRING 24 HOURS (DEU) (162 LAPS – 2554.6 MILES)			
POS	DRIVERS	CAR	TIME
1	Earl Bamber /Nicky Catsburg /David Pittard /Felipe Fernandez Laser	Ferrari 296 GT3	24h07m08.538s
2	Marco Wittmann /Sheldon van der Linde /Dries Vanthoor /Maxime Martin	BMW M4 GT3	+26.911s
3	Raffaele Marciello /Luca Stolz /Philip Ellis	Mercedes-AMG GT3	+1m44.311s
4	Adam Christodoulou /Maximilian Gotz /Fabian Schiller	Mercedes-AMG GT3	+2m30.811s
5	Dennis Olsen /Matteo Cairolì /Julien Andlauer	Porsche 911 GT3-R	+7m38.378s
6	Christopher Haase /Christopher Mies /Patric Niederhauser	Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	-1 lap

and want you in this race,” he said on social media about what had become a running theme. “But please stick to your line and don’t change unexpectedly or zig-zag.”

Rutronik Racing’s Porsche ended up the best of the 911s in fifth after deflation for more fancied entries. Manthey’s ‘Grello’ car dropped out of contention early on when a puncture sent Kevin Estre into the Tiergarten barriers. Meanwhile, the pair of Falken Tyres Porsches failed to deliver on their pre-race promise. The best of the turquoise-and-blue duo qualified as fastest 911 in sixth and ran as high as fourth, only for Tim Heinemann to spin at Flugplatz in the seventh hour. A late puncture didn’t spoil a consolation top 10 finish for the #44 entry, although it lost ninth late on to the recovering Abt Lamborghini, which had plugged away after a left puncture spoiled its promising start in the second hour.

Audi was never in true contention to

defend its 2022 victory, even if last year’s winner very briefly hit the front on Saturday night. But Frederic Vervisch accumulated more than four minutes of penalties for flag violations, before the #1 R8 was a casualty of spilt oil on the Grand Prix circuit during the night. The #39 Audi Sport Team Land car anchored by Christopher Mies salvaged some pride in sixth.

But the day belonged to Frikadelli and Klaus Abbelen. “We had a really perfect race,” said two-time Le Mans victor Bamber, who has been chasing an N24 win “for nearly 10 years”. “When Klaus first called and said he was going to take a Ferrari to the Nurburgring it was really exciting, especially when he said who the other drivers were. Everyone did an amazing job.”

DAMIEN SMITH

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Lawson stakes F1 claim with second win

SUPER FORMULA
AUTOPOLIS (JPN)
21 MAY
ROUND 3/7

Red Bull junior Liam Lawson boosted his hopes of an eventual Formula 1 promotion with a second Super Formula win in four starts at Autopolis. The talented Kiwi held off a late charge from Ritomo Miyata to secure his latest victory, which will only fuel speculation that the Team Mugen driver could be first in line should Red Bull ultimately dispense with struggling AlphaTauri rookie Nyck de Vries.

Lawson's route to a second win was not straightforward after a poor getaway from second on the grid dropped him to third behind Sena Sakaguchi, who was ideally placed to play the rear gunner role for Inging team-mate and poleman Sho Tsuboi.

At a track notorious for heavy tyre degradation, Lawson was first of the top three to stop on lap 13 of 41, allowing him to undercut Sakaguchi. He then had to deal with slower traffic, but still had the pace to jump Tsuboi when the leader finally pitted on lap 25.

A late safety car was triggered when Sakaguchi and Toshiki Oyu made contact, sending the latter into the barriers. This allowed Suzuka winner Miyata, who had started fourth, into contention as the TOM'S driver was able to complete his stop under caution.



On fresh tyres for the restart, Miyata forced his way by Tsuboi at Turn 1 for second, but there was nothing he could do about Lawson, the only Honda-powered runner in the top five, in the closing stages.

Behind a frustrated Tsuboi, Kenta Yamashita took advantage of the safety car period to finish fourth for Kondo, while Ryo Hirakawa was fifth for Team Impul.

Lawson's win puts him into the lead of the championship by four points ahead of Miyata and 11 over Tsuboi. All three jumped ahead of reigning champion Tomoki Nojiri,

who was forced to miss the race due to a pneumothorax (collapsed lung).

Nojiri's last-minute replacement was Hiroki Otsu, who previously drove for Mugen in 2021 but lost his drive with Dandelion Racing at the end of 2022. A costly crash in qualifying condemned Otsu to a back-of-the-grid start, and from there he was only able to muster 14th.

JAMIE KLEIN

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Tramnitz stuns with double

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
BARCELONA (ESP)
20-21 MAY
ROUND 2/10

Tim Tramnitz leapt to the top of the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine standings after scoring victories in both races in Barcelona.

The German R-ace GP driver thrust his name firmly into title contention with a scintillating display as he registered his first and second successes in the championship with his maiden trips to the podium.

Tramnitz started second to Prema's Andrea Kimi Antonelli in the opening race but a superior getaway enabled him to take the lead into the first corner and control the half-hour contest despite the complication

of an early stoppage after MP Motorsport team-mates Sami Meguetounif and Dilano van 't Hoff collided.

As he had at Imola, Tramnitz started the second race from pole position as he and Antonelli renewed their battle from earlier in the day. Tramnitz's lights-to-flag victory meant Antonelli continued his run of second-place finishes in each race in which he has reached the chequered flag this term. As a result, the 16-year-old sits second in the standings, four points off Tramnitz.

Imola race winner and championship leader heading to Barcelona Martinius Stenshorne endured a difficult weekend, finishing seventh in race one and out of the points in the second encounter.

SAM HALL

Brown closes in as Chevrolets dominate again

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
SYMMONS PLAINS (AUS)
20-21 MAY
ROUND 4/12

Will Brown roared into contention for the 2023 Supercars title with two wins from three races in Tasmania. Erebus continued to be the form team on the tight Symmons Plains layout, with Brown and Brodie Kostecki sharing the three pole positions in their Chevrolets. Brown was on pole for Saturday's first race, which he was able to comfortably convert to victory ahead of Andre Heimgartner and Shane van Gisbergen. Even better for Brown was that series leader Kostecki was hit by Cam Waters at the hairpin on lap three. The contact broke Kostecki's steering arm, a lengthy repair job leaving him 23rd at the finish. Chaz Mostert, another title contender, fared even worse on the same lap, contact from Broc Feeney destroying his steering rack and leaving him out of the race. Kostecki hit back on Sunday morning to grab pole for both remaining races. In



the first of those, he and Brown traded blows, and the lead, in the first stint. That, however, opened the door for Feeney's Triple Eight Camaro to jump them both during the stops to nab victory ahead of Kostecki and Brown. Reigning champion van Gisbergen, another title contender, suffered a blow of his own when he hit the wall on the opening lap after clashing with David Reynolds. The Erebus pair shared the front row for the final race, Brown getting the jump at

the start to set up his second win of the weekend. Kostecki, meanwhile, struggled for pace in his second stint, which allowed Feeney into second, while van Gisbergen – in his still-wounded Red Bull Camaro – finished fourth. Brown's strong weekend means he is now second in the standings, just 87 points behind Kostecki, with Mostert (166 down on Kostecki), van Gisbergen and Feeney next in line. **ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN**



Buhler bounced back from her disappointment to win the third race

Wins shared as Garcia pulls clear

F1 ACADEMY
BARCELONA (ESP)
20-21 MAY
ROUND 3/7

Marta Garcia extended her F1 Academy championship lead despite ending a weekend without a race victory for the first time this season. The Prema Racing-run driver could not add to her haul of three wins at Barcelona but Garcia saw her margin at the top of the table grow as she became the first driver to achieve podiums in all three races across a weekend. The top step was shared by Emely de Heus, Amna Al Qubaisi and Lena Buhler, with the race one and three winners taking their first victories. De Heus conceded after her race-one win

that luck had played a significant part in her success, with Buhler retiring from the lead with three laps to go after suffering a reliability problem. At that point, the Swiss ART driver had enjoyed a comfortable three-second margin. Buhler suffered no such misfortune in the weekend's final action, as she masterfully converted pole position into the win. Al Qubaisi secured her second success of the year in the intervening reversed-grid race to give MP Motorsport its second win of the weekend following de Heus's success. She leads Garcia's chasers, 41 points behind. Buhler is a further 11 back in third. Abbi Pulling continued her recovery from a difficult start to the campaign, two podiums promoting the Briton to fourth in the table. **SAM HALL**

WEEKEND WINNERS

- SUPER FORMULA**
AUTOPOLIS (JPN)
Liam Lawson
Team Mugen (Dallara-Honda)
- FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN**
BARCELONA (ESP)
Race 1 Tim Tramnitz
R-ace GP
Race 2 Tim Tramnitz
R-ace GP
- AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS**
SYMMONS PLAINS (AUS)
Race 1 Will Brown
Erebus Motorsport (Chevy Camaro)
Race 2 Broc Feeney
Triple Eight (Chevrolet Camaro)
Race 3 Will Brown
Erebus Motorsport (Chevy Camaro)

- F1 ACADEMY**
BARCELONA (ESP)
Race 1 Emely de Heus
MP Motorsport
Race 2 Amna Al Qubaisi
MP Motorsport
Race 3 Lena Buhler
ART Grand Prix

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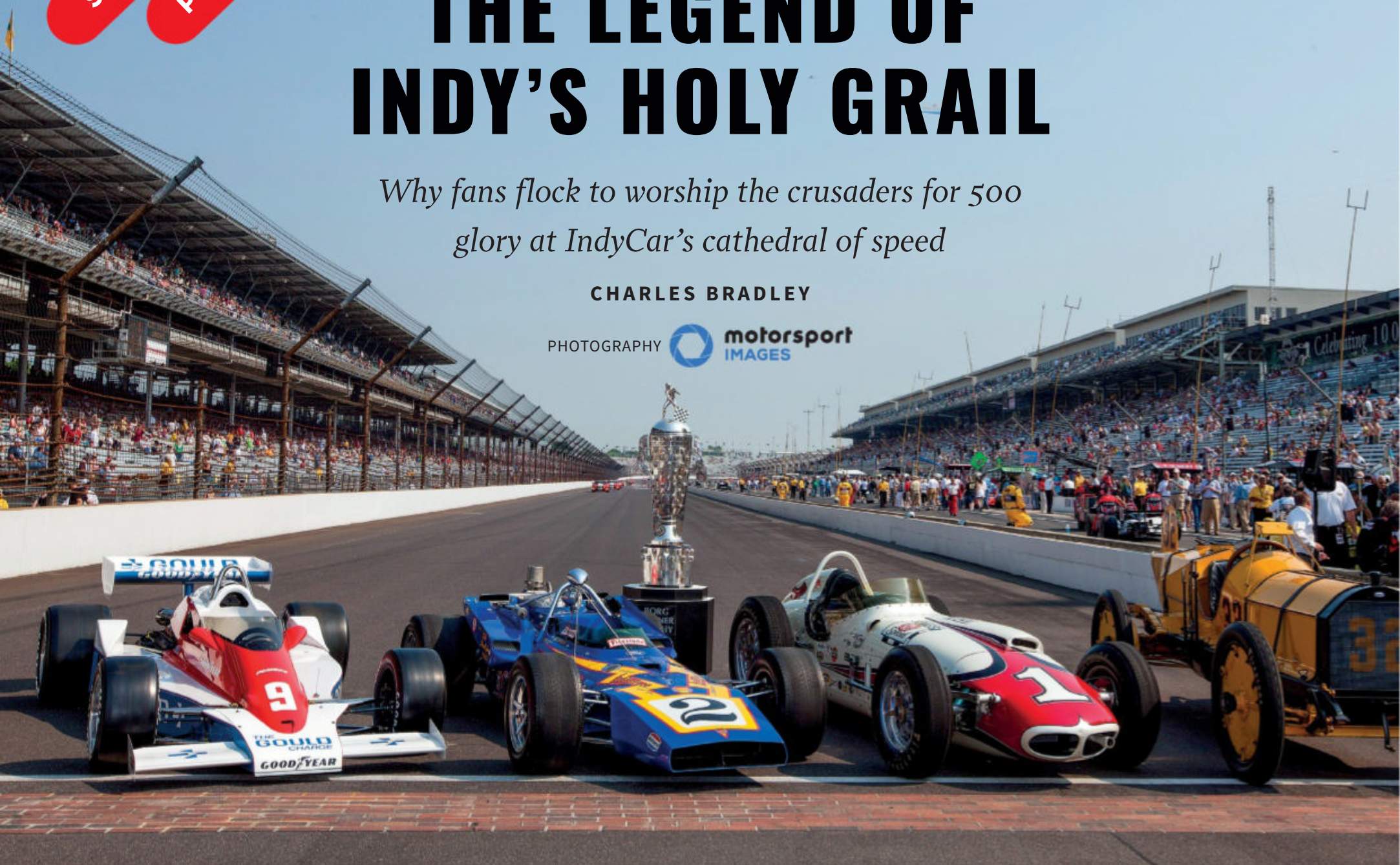
INDIANAPOLIS 500 PREVIEW

THE LEGEND OF INDY'S HOLY GRAIL

*Why fans flock to worship the crusaders for 500
glory at IndyCar's cathedral of speed*

CHARLES BRADLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



It would be a bold claim to suggest that one motor racing event trumps all others, but to witness the start of the Indianapolis 500 from its fabled 'yard of bricks' is like standing next to a swirling tornado.

It's not just the sight of 33 cars rushing along at over 220mph, which is almost overwhelming in itself, but the rush of air and visceral noise that arrives with them — many running three or four wide — comes close to taking your breath away.

Move on to the exit of Turn 1, and it's the change of direction that lowers the jaw. If you blink, you miss it — quite literally. Each car is there, then it's suddenly not, like some trick of the eye. Watch from a distance, however, like from the banking inside Turn 2, and it's another illusion — the cars sweep past with such hypnotic

regularity that it's hard to believe they're going quickly at all.

Turn 3 is a spot where a number of race-deciding passes have occurred across the decades, or collisions in the case of Emerson Fittipaldi and Al Unser Jr in 1989, while Turn 4 will perhaps always be remembered for JR Hildebrand's final-corner crash in 2011 that allowed Dan Wheldon to savour a remarkable victory.

And then it's back to the finish line, where 'Little Al' memorably beat Scott Goodyear by 0.043 seconds in a redemption arc in 1992, to cross the yard of bricks where it all started from. "This race is my life, and it's everything I thought it would be," gushed Unser in Victory Lane. In another photo finish, Ryan Hunter-Reay denied Helio Castroneves by 0.06s in 2014, 0.0035s closer than the margin between Sam Hornish Jr and Marco Andretti in 2006.





Each winner of the Borg-Warner Trophy gets their face added



Corners are identical, although drivers believe each is individual



Last year's victor Marcus Ericsson puckers up

“On the exit of Turn 1 it’s the change of direction that lowers the jaw. If you blink, you miss it – quite literally”

If you examine the facts behind the 2.5-mile oval track’s corners (surely it’s more rectangular than oval... the original plan was for a humungous three-miler!) you’ll see they are geometrically identical, but ask any driver and they’ll swear blind that each turn is entirely individual. On paper, it’s two 1000-metre straights with four 400-metre, nine-degree banked turns, while Turns 1 and 2, plus 3 and 4, are connected by two short chutes of 200 metres each. But this track isn’t driven on paper, it’s all about the hallowed asphalt atop 3.2 million bricks – first laid in the autumn of 1909 – that gave this great track its nickname: The Brickyard.

Its origins are tough. Before the bricks were laid on a loose and slick surface, driver Wilfried Bourque and his mechanic Harry Halcomb died on the first day of automobile racing here in August 1909. No one died on day two, but four more (a driver, his mechanic and two spectators) were slain on the third and final day of a grisly debut weekend.

After initially running 66 races across three American public holiday weekends, track owners focused in on Memorial Day in 1911 for the inaugural Indianapolis 500. An estimated crowd of 80,000 watched Ray Harroun forgo the luxury of a riding

mechanic, going solo and trusting in his newfangled invention of a rear-view mirror. His #32 Marmon Wasp won at an average speed of 74.6mph. The legend was born and has been growing ever since.

Apart from skipping two years for the First World War and four during WW2, the Indy 500 has been a mainstay – and not even the global Covid pandemic could stop it in 2020, although it did sacrifice the Memorial Day date to run in August in front of empty grandstands.

The massive Borg-Warner Trophy was first awarded in 1936, and each year’s winner gets a sculpture of their likeness added. Statistically, it has been dominated by American winners – 74 of them – with Great Britain and Brazil next up with eight each. A quartet of greats have won it four times: AJ Foyt, Al Unser Sr, Rick Mears and Helio Castroneves. Roger Penske is the most-winning team owner, with an amazing 18 victories to his name, with Michael Andretti and Chip Ganassi playing catch-up on five each.

Multi-billionaire Penske now owns the track too, and it’s in better shape than ever. Foyt says: “You couldn’t have had a better man to buy it than Roger, because he knows racing. He knows what it takes.”

This weekend’s race is the 107th running, and 33 cars will take a 200-lap trip for The Greatest Spectacle in Racing. And while that phrase is an IMS trademark, it’s also quite probably a truism. The crowd of somewhere near 300,000 can’t all be wrong, and they continue to fill those rows of huge bleachers to make it the biggest single-day sporting event on the planet, in terms of attendance at least.

One thing is for sure, there is simply nothing else like it. 🏁



SEASON

PREVIEW

THINGS TO WATCH IN THE 107TH INDY 500

CHARLES BRADLEY

NEW AERO PACKAGE, NO DOUBLE POINTS

Although the Dallara chassis remains the same in IndyCar – at 11 years and counting – the series has opened up a raft of aerodynamic options for 2023 to allow the single-spec cars to run better in traffic and improve overtaking chances. To help eradicate their inherent ‘push’ handling characteristic when running behind another car, a new underwing inner bargeboard, the use of road course strakes, and an infill wicker are all available.

“At the Indy 500, drivers in the pack can run up to 10% more downforce than last year,” says Tino Belli, IndyCar’s director of aerodynamic development. Additionally, a new rear-wing pillar specification will allow three degrees more adjustability range for the rear flap, and Belli adds: “With the increased rear-wing range, teams can still try and trim out the rear wing for end-of-race speed if they have worked their way up into the lead group.”

There are also mandatory stability wickers, and new optional flap wickers available to attach to the top surface trailing edge of the underwing. That all

adds up to an expected 250lb of extra downforce.

Arrow McLaren racing director Gavin Ward explains: “It’s going to be a downforce-against-drag trade-off. For instance, the more you load up the rear end of the floor, the more you move the centre of pressure rearwards. And the different rear-wing pillar allows you to go more nose-down on the wing element.”

Penske’s reigning series champion Will Power says he’s felt a big difference in practice: “You feel a lot more stuck, the car feels more comfortable, a lot less edgy and more forgiving.”

Another big change is the ditching for the 500 of double points, which was introduced in 2014 to add more meaning to the round. But IndyCar now admits that the rule “has proven to overly penalise full-time championship teams that have performed poorly in the 500”. Power concurs: “It was unnecessary and just spreads everyone out in the championship.”



Chip Ganassi Racing won last year's Indy 500, but Marcus Ericsson relied on stealth over outright speed as two of his quicker team-mates fell by the wayside.

Scott Dixon (pictured) started on pole for the fifth time in his career but finished 21st, despite leading 95 laps, due to a penalty for speeding in the pitlane that occurred in his final scheduled stop of the day. Dixon admitted he was "heartbroken" by his error: "The car had really good speed, the team did an amazing job on strategy. I just messed up."

Dixon traded the lead early on with team-mate Alex Palou, to save fuel over the opening stint to gain an advantage, but the Spaniard also suffered a pitlane disaster ahead of his second stop of the day when he was forced to take emergency service under caution. The resulting penalty sent him to 32nd place after the restart, yet he battled his way back to finish ninth.

"If something goes wrong, you're done for another year," Palou shrugs. "But I just love driving here, it's a mental game as much as a driving and racing game."

But perhaps the man who hasn't slept easiest of anyone since is Arrow McLaren's Pato O'Ward, who had a great chance to grab the lead on the final lap last year but backed out of it at Turn 1. "He [Ericsson] was gonna put me in the wall if I would have gone for it," he reckoned afterwards. "We had no wicker, less downforce and still not enough speed to get by him, even with a massive run. It's frustrating, it's bittersweet... It definitely stings."

Of his approach to this year, O'Ward says: "There's only one more place we need to gain, and I know how to put us in a position to do it. We just need to try and do that again and take advantage of the opportunities presented to us."

DOUBLE-EDGED STRATEGY BATTLE

IndyCar race-winning driver-turned-star-strategist Bryan Herta has twice won the Indianapolis 500 as a team owner, with Dan Wheldon in 2011 and Alexander Rossi in 2016 (pictured right).

The race often comes down to a split decision – if there's a lot of green running, is your car fast enough to triumph on a six-stop strategy? Or, if there are many yellows, can you get away with five and beat them with a long run at the end?

"The call kind of, to a certain extent, makes itself," says Herta (below), who plots the strategy for Kyle Kirkwood at Andretti Autosport. "We did opposite things in our two wins – with Dan it was a flat-out run while others were saving fuel. With Rossi, we were on the other side of it, saving fuel when other people were flat-out trying to run us down."

"You choose what plays to your strengths. With Dan, the Ganassi cars were going a lap or two longer on fuel economy than we were, so that one seemed obvious that we shouldn't try and get in a common battle with them."

"With Rossi, we had a couple of bad pitstops early. And even though we had a fast car, we were so deep in the field that it was



clear we weren't going to be able to race all the way to the front going flat-out. So that forced us to ask ourselves, 'Can we make one less stop?'

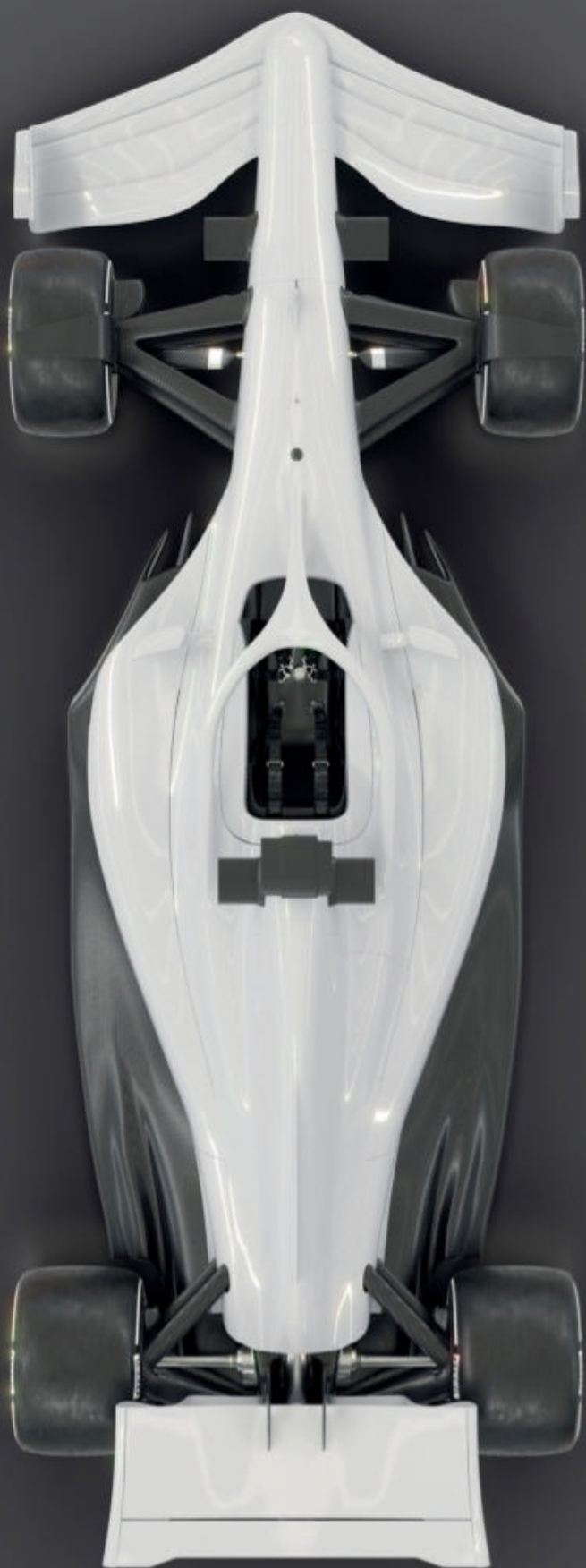
"As the race unfolds, you spend a lot of time planning. But I think it's being willing to adjust and really watch what's happening, understand how the race is unfolding, what your car and your driver is good at that day. I just try and give them a way to play to their strengths, and then hope that it unfolds in the right way for us."

MANDY CURI





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KANAAN'S LAST DANCE, SATO AT GANASSI

This weekend Tony Kanaan brings down the curtain on his IndyCar career, which started way back in the CART days in 1998, with a one-off start for Arrow McLaren (pictured).

The 2013 Indy 500 winner, 2005 polesitter and 2004 series champion can still cut the mustard at this level and proved it by finishing third in last year's 500 with Chip Ganassi Racing, his ninth top-five finish. In total he's won 17 times at this level, and last year's race was supposed to be his last, but the 48-year-old Brazilian explains that he couldn't resist one final offer...

"Zak [Brown, McLaren Racing boss] called and I looked at the results: the two teams that dominated was the one that I was in and the one that was calling me. So you can't refuse that! You think you miss it, then you drive the car again and realise you *really* miss it. It's going to be emotional."

Effectively taking his place in Ganassi's 500 line-up is Takuma Sato, the 2017 and 2020 Indy 500 winner. The 46-year-old Japanese is only racing on the ovals this year, but he has an incredible feel for these tracks, coupled with vast experience and his "no attack, no chance" racing ethos.

Following his near-miss in 2012, when a last-lap clash with Ganassi's Dario Franchitti put him in the Turn 1 wall, he's been a fan favourite at the speedway. Now he'll have Franchitti by his side, as the team's driver advisor.

"I never pictured myself with Chip Ganassi Racing going to the Indy 500 – ever," says Sato. "But it is happening. This is one of the most exciting moments in my career. This organisation is just at another level."

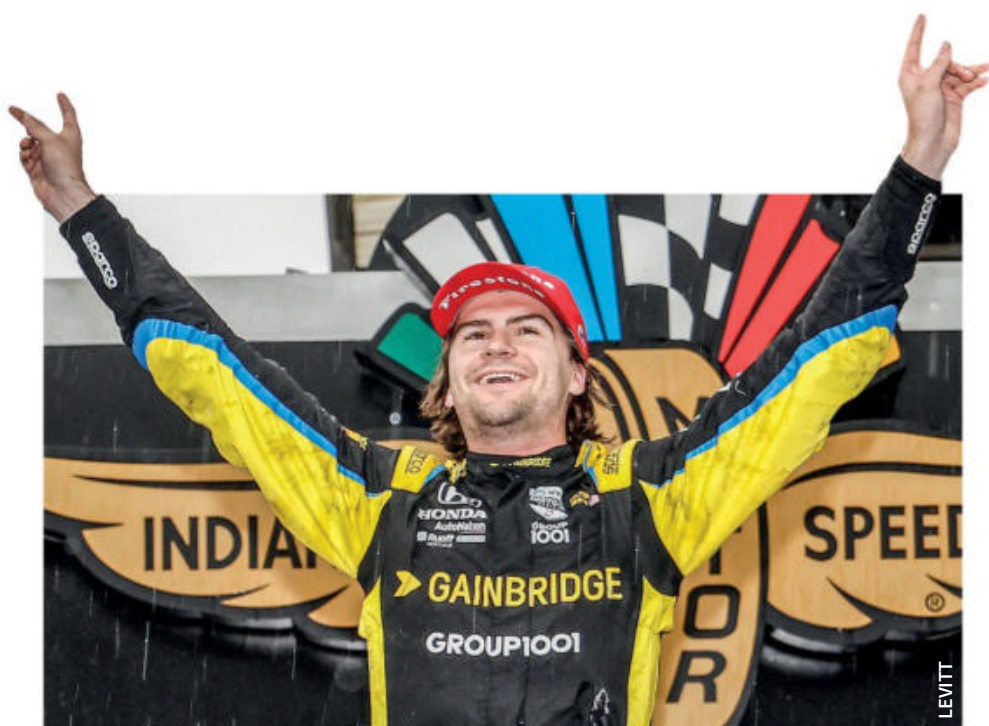


McLAREN'S MEGA TRIPLE CROWN HOMAGE

When it comes to the coolest colour schemes in this year's starting grid, McLaren takes the cake by celebrating its 60th anniversary with three retro liveries, which it's thrown back to its triple crown victories in the Indy 500, Monaco Grand Prix and Le Mans 24 Hours.

Alexander Rossi's #7 is draped in McLaren's traditional papaya and blue to celebrate its 1976 Indy win, when Johnny Rutherford took his second 500 victory in a rain-shortened race aboard a McLaren M16. Felix Rosenqvist's #6 car (pictured right) is a hat tip to the McLaren MP4/2, with which Alain Prost won the 1984 Monaco GP. Pato O'Ward's #5 is back in black, in homage to the 1995 Le Mans win, when the Gordon Murray-designed F1 GTR triumphed in the hands of Yannick Dalmas, JJ Lehto and Masanori Sekiya.

"It's awesome, the best-looking car I've ever driven," says Rosenqvist, who finished fourth in the 500 last year. "It's just peak McLaren, and I feel like the team has some really good momentum here."



CAN HERTA CONQUER THE OVAL AS WELL AS THE ROAD COURSE?

Each IndyCar driver has their own special relationship with Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Andretti Autosport star Colton Herta certainly has a love/hate connection the venue.

Herta scored a brilliant win in horrendous weather conditions at the Indy GP on the road course last year, but this was followed days later by a brutal shunt on the oval in final practice that flipped his car.

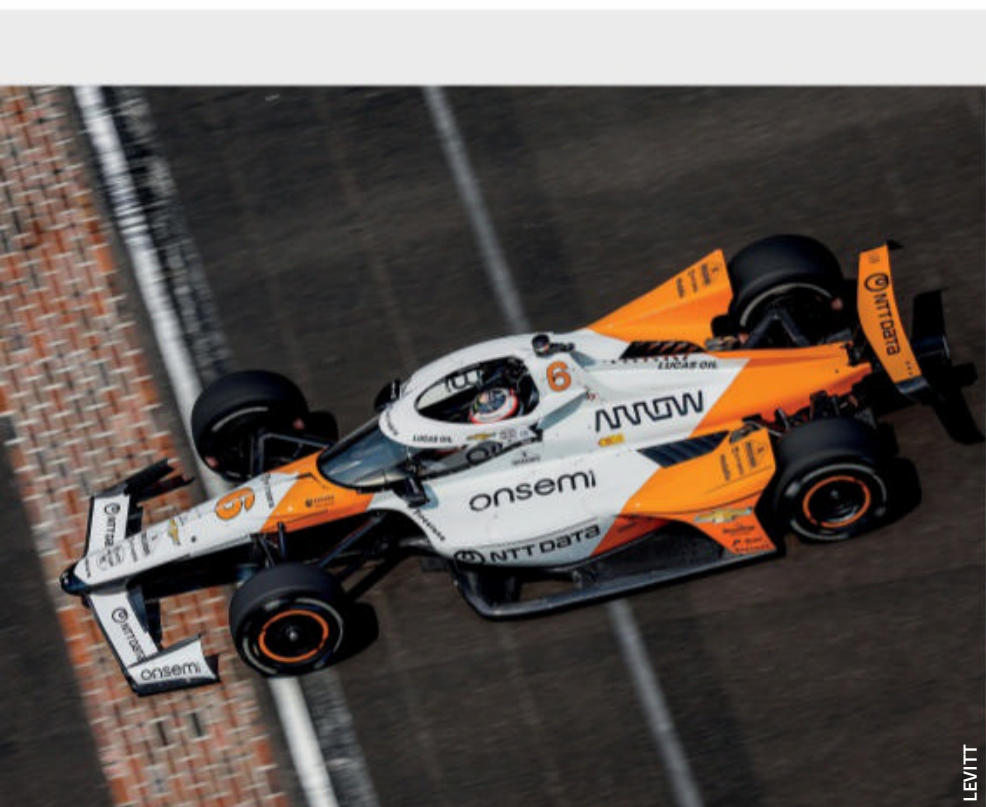
"This race, it's so important," he says. "So much history at the Speedway. I've only won the Grand Prix. I'd love to win at the end of May."

His Indy 500 resumé includes two mechanical failures, an eighth and a 16th-place finish – along with a front-row start in 2021. Does he feel like the Speedway owes him a break? "I sure hope it feels that way," he replies. "It's tough to say that it owes you something, but [the oval] is a place that kind of has eluded us the past few years as far as strong results. I think we've only had one top-10 here."

"We definitely aren't as bad as the results show, but minor tweaks here and there... This place is so difficult, five, six stops, whatever. It's such a long race compared to what we normally have. There's so much more that can go wrong in the track evolution. It's so much bigger than everything else."

His Andretti Autosport team-mate Romain Grosjean will also hope for better fortune than on his debut last year, when he crashed hard at Turn 2. He comes into Indy after a late-race wreck at Texas Motor Speedway, where he registered a 56g impact, but was buoyed by his competitiveness there.

"Texas was an eye-opener for me in terms of what we need from our car to feel good," he says. "We're getting to a good spot for Indy, and I know much more what I want."



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FROM NEIN '17 TO THE 963

Porsche's return to the top flight of sportscar racing after its last withdrawal took just five years, meaning a marque that has won Le Mans 19 times dating back to the 917 is back with a shot at 24 Hours glory

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

When Porsche announced that it was quitting LMP1 at the end of 2017, the first question was obvious: what's going to happen to the World Endurance Championship now? The second was, when are we likely to see the German manufacturer shooting for outright honours at the Le Mans 24 Hours once more? The answer to those questions turned out to be inextricably linked.

The WEC has survived, despite limping on without Porsche and any other serious manufacturer opposition for Toyota through the dying days of P1 and into the Hypercar era. But now, as the championship enters a new age with multiple car makers duking it out at the front of the field, Porsche is there among them with a successor to its line of Le Mans winners, from the 917 through the 956/962 and on to the 919.

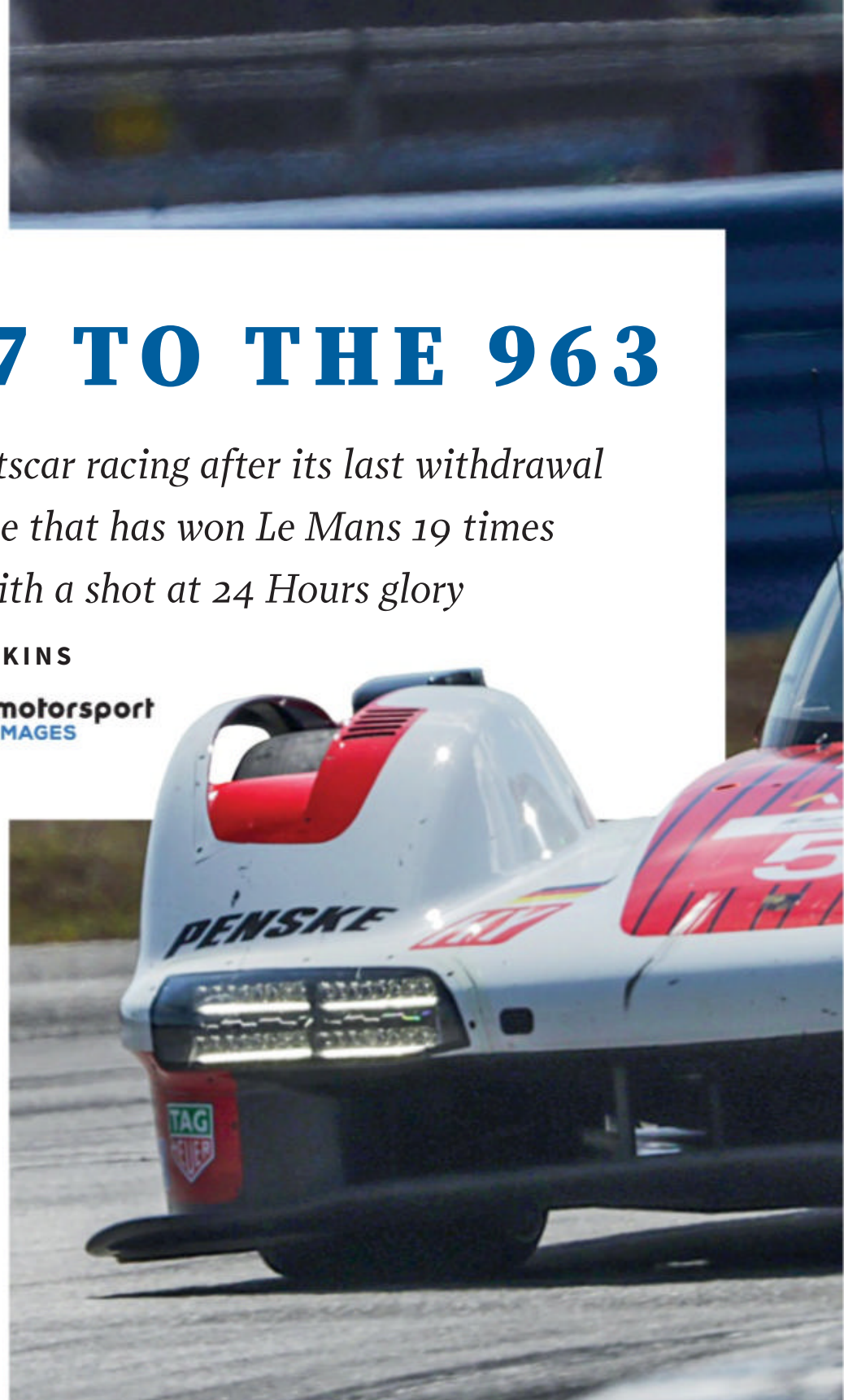
Few were predicting that it would be back so soon when Porsche announced the decision in July 2017 to axe the 919 Hybrid P1 programme after just four years of racing for the twin-hybrid rocketship. The pessimistic prognosis for a marque that went on to complete a hat-trick of hat-tricks in 2015-17 – the WEC drivers' and manufacturers' titles as well the Le Mans crown – was based on Porsche's previous hiatus from the top of the tree in sportscar racing. It stretched all the way from its 16th victory in 1998 to the race debut of the original version of the 919 in 2014. That was an absence that no one would have predicted when Porsche sprung its decision on the world – and some of the drivers it had under contract – at its annual awards night late in 1998.

But the sands of sportscar racing shifted quickly as P1 entered its death throes after Porsche followed sister marque Audi out the door. A successor was required, and quickly found in principle if not in practice. Plans for the original version of the Le Mans Hypercar formula were announced at the race from which it takes its name in June 2018, and a set of rules published the following December. The problem was that there were few if any takers, despite a drive to slash budgets from the reputed €100million-plus being spent by Porsche, Toyota and Audi in the pomp of P1 in the mid-2010s. Even the Japanese manufacturer, a key player in the formulation of the regulations, didn't publicly commit to the new category until June 2019.

By then there had been some more twists and turns on the path to the sportscar nirvana we appear to have reached today. The key fork in the road was the announcement of the LMDh formula on the eve of the Daytona 24 Hours round of the IMSA SportsCar Championship in January 2020. This isn't the place to go through all the zigs and the zags, though it's worth pointing out that Porsche kept a weather eye on the future of top-class sportscar racing through

this time despite heading for Formula E on its P1 withdrawal. It was an observer in the round-table discussions that laid the foundations for LMH and, perhaps more significantly, was part of a push along with Ferrari for a change of direction in mid-2019. Their unsuccessful proposal was dubbed GTE-plus, which as it suggests meant adding power and aero to their existing GT machinery competing in the WEC.

So it shouldn't have been a surprise that, when LMDh was announced as an alternative entree into the WEC, Porsche put its hand up in support, and was the first manufacturer to do so. Central to Porsche's enthusiasm was the ability to race the same car on the world stage and in North America in IMSA, and the costs involved. "The new LMDh category allows us to fight for overall victories with a hybrid system at the Le Mans, Daytona and Sebring classics –





1994 Lateral thinking resulted in Dauer 962LM GT1 car – and win number 13

MAIN IMAGE: JEP

“It shouldn’t have been a surprise that, when LMDh was announced, Porsche put its hand up in support”

without breaking the bank,” said Porsche CEO Oliver Blume on the announcement of the programme.

The stars had aligned for Porsche in a way they never did in the years from 1998 to 2014 – what you might call an interregnum, because the true king of Le Mans was in absentia, from the top category at least. Although it did, of course, maintain a permanent presence in the production ranks with a line of 911s built for the GTS, GT, GT2 and GTE classes. Yet Porsche’s withdrawal after the completion of the single season for the carbon-chassis 911 GT1-98 that triumphed at Le Mans but was trounced by Mercedes in the FIA GT Championship was regarded as nothing but temporary at the time. A Porsche absence from the top class at Le Mans and beyond for one year was one thing, but anything much longer seemed out of character. The Weissach marque had enjoyed – and rarely endured

– a presence at or near the front of the grid almost every year from 1968 and the arrival of the 908, its first contender in the premier category. Projects were hastily rushed through, cars dusted down and rolled out of the museum, the parts bin raided and left-field projects thought up in double-quick time as Porsche went back to the Circuit de la Sarthe year after year seeking outright victory.

That included the 936 Group 6 car, a multiple Le Mans winner largely forgotten because of its place in time sandwiched between the all-time greats that were the 917 and the 956. It was hastily conceived late in 1975 for the following season at a time when Porsche’s motorsport department thought it was concentrating on its new Group 5 935. The car was built in such secrecy that it’s said that Ferry Porsche, son of founder Ferdinand and the ultimate boss of the company at the time, didn’t even know about the development ➤



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of a car that recorded back-to-back victories at Le Mans in its first two campaigns in 1976 and 1977.

Twice the 936s were brought out of mothballs, once in 1979 when petroleum magnate David Thieme paid for a last-minute and ultimately unsuccessful Le Mans campaign, though a Porsche

“He asked who is the biggest and most famous sportscar manufacturer in the world. I said, ‘Porsche, of course’”

privateer in the form of Kremer Racing with perhaps the definitive version of the 935 (the K3) upheld company honour. It happened again in 1981 when new Porsche boss Peter Schutz asked upon taking the helm what was in the pipeline for Le Mans. He wasn’t impressed when he was told about the 924 Carrera GT Turbo programme that had yielded a sixth-place finish the previous year. He wanted to pitch up at the Circuit de la Sarthe with a car that could contend for the overall win. That explained one final – and successful – hurrah for the 936, now powered by a version of the flat-six turbo that Porsche had on the stocks for an abandoned Indycar programme.

The Dauer 962LM Porsche GT1 car that would give Porsche win number 13 at Le Mans in 1994 was also inspired by some aggressive questioning over the winter. Research and development boss Horst Marchart wanted to know how the company was going to beat a racing version of the McLaren F1 in the GT1 class. Famed Porsche engineer Norbert Singer knew he couldn’t do it with the improved version of the 911 Turbo S LM he was planning, so hatched the plan to ‘borrow’ the design of the 962 for the road that maverick team boss Jochen Dauer had been touting around. Marchart’s question was born of some duff information. McLaren was in fact a year away from building the F1 GTR, but the GT1 rules circa 1994 were devised to give the cars a shot at victory. And that’s just what Porsche did with the Dauer.



PORSCHE

Ampferer recalls Carrera GT project taking precedence



1996 WSC95 co-developed with TWR from a 3.5-litre Group C Jag took victory

MURENBELD

There are more examples of such lateral thinking from Porsche. The WSC95 World Sports Car, winner with Joest in 1996-97 and developed in conjunction with TWR Inc in North America, was a cut-and-shut special created out of a 3.5-litre Group C Jaguar XJR-14. The successes of WSC95 paved the way for the abortive LMP2000, which Porsche announced at the same time as it broke the news that it wouldn’t be defending its Le Mans crown in 1999. The inference was that Porsche would be back at Le Mans in 2000, but then-

Porsche motorsport boss Herbert Ampferer insists that it was never certain that the car would race. He recounts two conversations with Porsche president Wendelin Wiedeking, one after Le Mans 1998 and another when the LMP2000 was complete.

“Wiedeking asked me what would it change for the company if we won Le Mans for a 17th time, and I had to reply, ‘Not a lot,’” recalls Ampferer, who was still able to set a project known internally as 9R3 in motion. When the car was complete, his boss posed some more pertinent questions. “He asked who is the biggest and most famous sportscar manufacturer in the world,” explains Ampferer. “I said, ‘Porsche, of course’. So he said, ‘Then prove it. Look, we build a lot >>



1998 Victory for 911 GT1-98 was followed by long absence from top flight

BY THE NUMBERS

PORSCHE AT LE MANS

19 12

Overall victories

1-2 overall finishes

1951

Factory debut

29 18

years on the overall podium

Overall pole positions

of sportscars, but we haven't made a super-sportscar. Instead of going back to Le Mans in 2000, let's work on a project that proves that Porsche is a great manufacturer of super-sportscars."

The result was the Carrera GT, a car that took the 5.5-litre V10 from the LMP2000 as the basis of its engine. More significant for Porsche Motorsport was that it also drew resources away from the racing department. "We started working on the Carrera GT with a big team," recounts Ampferer. "Let's say 50% was recruited from the motorsport department."

Porsche also had needed engineering capacity to develop the new Cayenne SUV, which was the official line on why the LMP2000 never raced – Porsche couldn't lift the lid on its plans for the Carrera GT at the time. That inevitably resulted in a conspiracy theory that still abounds today. The Cayenne was based on a platform shared by the SUVs built by the Volkswagen Group, then more than 10 years away from taking control of Porsche. A deal was cut, goes the theory, between VW boss and Porsche shareholder Ferdinand Piech for the way to be left clear for Audi at Le Mans. Ampferer says he doesn't know if there is any truth to it, but can't be sure of the details of the machinations going on above him in the company.

MAIN PIC: SUTTON

First of a hat-trick of victories in the 24 Hours for the 919 Hybrid in 2015



And so the interregnum continued, although over the years that followed there were hints of it ending. Not least when Porsche pitched up in the American Le Mans Series at the end of 2005 with the RS Spyder LMP2, a car conceived to win races and not just to take class honours. Le Mans wasn't among them, however, but the car with which Penske swept to 11 wins in the ALMS as well as a hat-trick of class titles in 2006-08 didn't prove to be the lead-in to the bigger project that many expected. The team that eventually developed the 919 was all-new, an entirely separate entity within Porsche Motorsport put together for that purpose.

The five years between the end of the career of the 919 and the arrival of a car we know now as the 963 was shorter than expected, and might have been shorter still if the LMDh formula had come on stream in 2022 as originally – though optimistically – envisaged. The opportunity of doing an LMH wasn't really there for Porsche as it was hatching its return. "It was important that if we returned," says Porsche Motorsport boss Thomas Laudenbach, "we needed to be able

"The 963 is already a winner in IMSA, but in the WEC it remains some way down the manufacturer pecking order"

to race in the USA, which at that time wasn't clear."

The potential for an LMH to race in IMSA was in fact far from clear as Porsche was putting together its partners for its current programme. Penske was announced as its team for both the North American series and the WEC in May of 2021, and Multimatic as its

chassis partner – LMDhs are based on one of the next-generation LMP2 chassis from one of four licensed constructors – just weeks later.

Porsche was an early adopter. It was almost certainly the first manufacturer to sign off an LMDh programme, though it was beaten to the punch in terms of an announcement by Audi, even if the VW group project that would have yielded a pair of prototypes only differentiated by their bodywork was firmly led by Porsche. The Audi project, of course, would never see the light of day.

The 963 was the first LMDh to hit the track, in January 2022 and a full six months before any of its rivals. Much of that time was spent doing the heavy lifting on development of the spec hybrid system from Bosch, Williams Advanced Engineering and Xtrac that all cars use. The 12 months between starting testing and racing is longer than the 919 spent on

track before its competition debut. It ran for the first time in the summer of 2013, and its gestation included a major engine redesign. That begs questions about Porsche's travails with the 963. The car is already a winner in IMSA, but in the WEC it remains some way down the manufacturer pecking order as the series heads to Le Mans next month. It was no better than fourth best behind the LMHs from Toyota and Ferrari, and Cadillac's LMDh, over the opening three rounds, despite claiming a podium at the Portimao 6 Hours in April.

What we don't know yet is whether the LMDh will be given a helping hand pre-Le Mans and boost Porsche's bid for Le Mans victory number 20 with an expanded three-car assault and a swanky new colour scheme that tips its hat to the liveries of its past winners. What we probably can say is that if there was no LMDh, there would be no Porsche back racing for outright victory at the 24 Hours. 🏆



Laudenbach: racing in US integral to Porsche return



YOU MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN... The Porsche that nearly won Le Mans in 1980 was really a 936, whatever it said on the entry list. The second-placed machine run by Joest Racing was dubbed the 908/80, but in reality was pure 936. The privateer squad built up its car around a chassis supplied out the back door by the factory courtesy of team owner Reinhold Joest's close relationship with R&D boss Helmuth Bott. He also got works driver Jacky Ickx on loan to drive with him, and almost claimed the win in a year when Porsche didn't have a factory presence in the top class.

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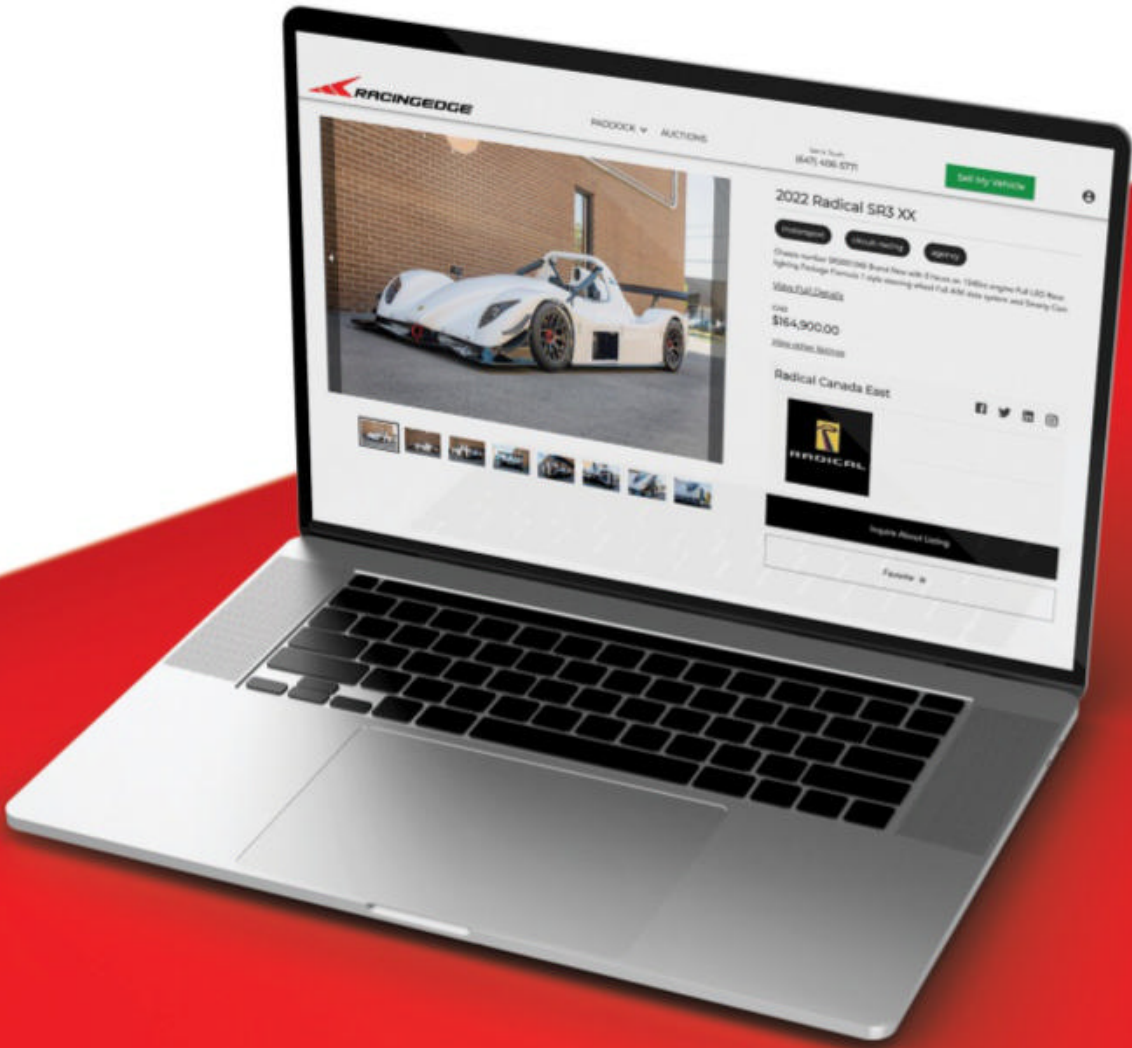


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3 June	Oulton Park	BMW Sommerfest	15/16 July	Cadwell Park	Suzuki Live
3/4 June	Cadwell Park	Classic Racing Motorcycle Championships	22 July	Oulton Park	Tunerfest North
3/4 June	Snetterton	GT Cup Championship	21/22/23 July	Brands Hatch	Bennetts British Superbike Championship
4 June	Brands Hatch	Brands Britannia	29/30 July	Donington Park	Classic Motorcycle Festival
11 June	Brands Hatch	Tunerfest South	28/29/30 July	Oulton Park	Oulton Park Gold Cup
18 June	Cadwell Park	Vintage Motorsport Festival	5/6 August	Cadwell Park	International Sidecar Revival
17/18 June	Brands Hatch	American SpeedFest 10	6 August	Brands Hatch	Mini Festival
17/18 June	Oulton Park	Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship	12/13 August	Donington Park	Convoy in the Park - British Truck Racing
17/18 June	Snetterton	British GT and GB3 Championships	13 August	Brands Hatch	Festival Italia
30 June/1/2 July	Donington Park	Motul FIM Superbike World Championship	13 August	Cadwell Park	Cult Classics
1 July	Oulton Park	Supercar Pageant - featuring GT Cup	19 August	Oulton Park	U.S. AutoShow
1/2 July	Brands Hatch	Super Touring Power	20 August	Donington Park	Tunerfest Midlands
7/8/9 July	Snetterton	Bennetts British Superbike Championship	26/27 August	Donington Park	Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship
8 July	Oulton Park	Autos de France	26/27/28 August	Cadwell Park	Bennetts British Superbike Championship
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New track-limits rule from 1 June

MOTORSPORT UK

Governing body Motorsport UK has confirmed that a controversial stricter definition of a track-limits breach will be implemented across all British car racing events from 1 June.

The change was first proposed in January when a consultation was launched about toughening the regulations surrounding track limits. Instead of the existing rule of an offence being committed if “any wheel of the car goes completely beyond” white lines or the edge of a kerb, it was suggested the definition should change to be “any part of the contact patch of the tyre goes beyond either the outer edge of any kerb or the white line where there is no kerb”.

This has now been approved by the Motorsport UK board and will be effective from next weekend. However, plans to significantly alter the penalty system –

including introducing a one-second time addition for the first offence – have been dropped following the consultation.

Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers is set to write to all race licence holders this week explaining the new rule and the reasoning behind making the change. In his recent column in the organisation’s *Revolution* magazine, Chambers said: “The track limit is there for a very good reason, namely the track licence that is provided by Motorsport UK is done so in the context of considering all of the safety measures in place at a track and, in particular, the run-off areas on any part of the circuit and the physical interventions that are in place to minimise any impact.

“It is therefore imperative that vehicles should be contained within the limits of the track in order to conform to those precise safety measures that have been installed. In addition, the limits of the

track are there to ensure that all the competitors compete by lapping as swiftly as possible on the same pieces of Tarmac. Transgressing beyond the track limits may provide an advantage in speed and lap time.

“The existing rules require that the outer two wheels of the vehicle must not fully transgress beyond the outer edge of the white line or kerb denoting the track limit. The problem with this approach is that it’s very difficult to visually identify when the inner edge of the outer tyre has gone beyond the line and, more fundamentally, the driver is naturally tempted to continue to exceed the limit as the line or kerb is underneath the car. Therefore, the changes to the rules that are being implemented from 1 June will make it simpler for everyone, in that no part of any of the four wheels and tyres of the vehicle may transgress beyond the limit of the track. That then becomes a simpler rule for everybody, whether driving or officiating, to both understand and police.

“On this point of policing, there has been feedback from competitors and officials who argue that it is impossible to deal with multiple transgressions especially when cars are running closely together, and it therefore makes it impossible to impose the penalties in a fair and even-handed manner. Whilst it is true to say that this does present challenges both for the observers and the officials, it does not undermine the principle that we need to have a clear and logical rule that is applied such that when a penalty is applied there can be no argument about what constitutes an infraction.”



➔ P61 OPINION



Jon Fletcher 1938-2023

OBITUARY

One of the most successful club racers of the 1970s and a proud British Racing Drivers' Club member, Jon Fletcher died earlier this month at the age of 84 following a lengthy illness.

Fletcher remains synonymous with his Lotus Elan — originally a Chequered Flag 26R raced for Graham Warner's team by Jackie Stewart and Mike Spence — which he campaigned with extraordinary verve for much of the decade.

His racing career started

in the early 1960s with a self-built Lotus 7, in which he rapidly made a name for himself on the northern scene.

In 1965, he turned to the inaugural British Racing & Sports Car Club's Clubmans series before switching to an ex-Formula Junior Cooper T56 fitted with a Lotus Ford twin-cam engine for Formule Libre.

In 1969, Fletcher took to Formula Ford with a new Merlyn Mk11A in which, due to his circuit knowledge, he memorably overtook future double F1 champion

Emerson Fittipaldi's sister car at Oulton Park's Knickerbrook corner.

The Elan was rendered obsolete in GT competition by rear-engined Lotus 47s, but the model's eligibility for Modified Sports racing from 1970 was something of a godsend.

Fletcher and the Elan won more than 100 races and numerous national and regional titles, either side of a foray into the British Saloon Car Championship with a Chevrolet Camaro Z28, in which he added the 1981 ASCAR crown to his CV.

He ventured to the Spa 1000km, sharing Scot Robin Smith's Chevron B23, and even ran the Elan in the 1978 Silverstone 6 Hours with Barrie Williams. In the mid-1980s, he followed the Special GT trend with an F2 Chevron B35-based 'Lotus Esprit', then raced a production Porsche 911 into the 1990s.

He leaves his wonderfully supportive wife Carole, sons and two further generations of Fletchers to whom Autosport extends its sincere condolences.

MARCUS PYE

MotoGP celebration at Festival of Speed

GOODWOOD

The great and the good from MotoGP will attend this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed, marking the biggest celebration of the championship at the event.

Several former riders as well as current teams will visit the venue between 13-16 July, with many taking part in runs up the famous hillclimb.

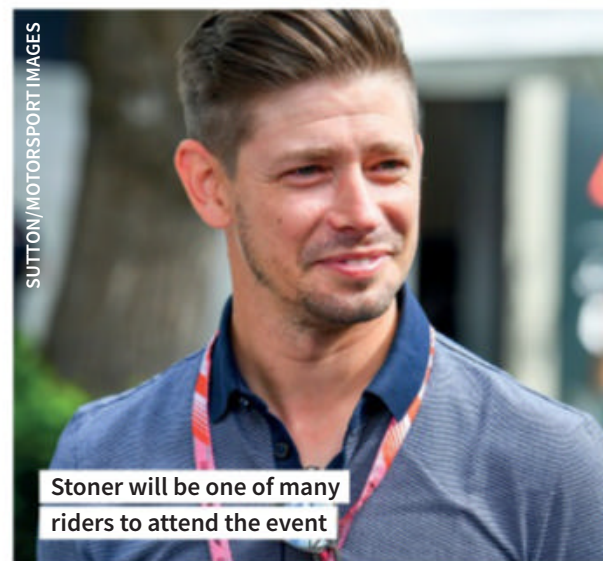
Guests include Alex Criville, Casey Stoner, Freddie Spencer, Giacomo Agostini, Jorge Lorenzo, Kenny Roberts Jr, Kevin Schwantz, Mick Doohan, Randy Mamola and Wayne Gardner — who hold 35 titles

on two wheels between themselves.

Current MotoGP teams including Ducati, KTM and Tech3 will also be in attendance, with Moto2 team GasGas Aspar also due to be there with British rider Jake Dixon.

The Duke of Richmond, founder of the Festival of Speed, said: "I am absolutely thrilled that the Festival of Speed will host its biggest-ever MotoGP celebration this year.

"My thanks to [promoter] Dorna Sports, the teams and riders for including us in their busy schedules — it means so much to everyone at Goodwood and all our fans that they will be here to celebrate with us."



Redline to return to British GT as Orange misses Donington

BRITISH GT

Redline Racing will return to British GT this weekend as the championship embarks on its latest round at Donington Park.

The reigning Silver-Am title-winning team will once again compete in the series, this time with the ex-Shaun Balfe Audi R8 GT3 that won the opening round at Oulton Park last season.

The successful Porsche Carrera Cup GB squad's drivers will be Sacha Kakad and Hugo Cook, both of whom will make their debuts in British GT having being regulars in the GT Cup. They join British Touring Car star Jake Hill and Simon Watts (Century Motorsport) as the two extra crews for the GT3 ranks this weekend.

Missing out on the Donington Park trip will

be Simon Orange who, as co-owner of Sale Sharks, will be at Twickenham for rugby's Gallagher Premiership Grand Final, while Team Brit's GT4 entry will instead focus on the McLaren Trophy. It brings this weekend's British GT grid to 36 cars.

- A Circuit Safari will take place this weekend at Donington, with the lucky participants able to take to the track in a double-decker bus at the same time as the British GT field.

Tickets will be given away in a raffle by the championship, with the experience lasting 15 minutes as the bus takes in a lap of the circuit immediately after warm-up on Sunday morning.

To enter, visit britishgt.com, with the closing date 1700 on Friday (26 May).



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

IN THE HEADLINES

FURTHER EVENT PLANNED

British Formula 4 organisers say that the 2024 schedule released last week, with the series supporting all 10 British Touring Car events, remains very much provisional and they are exploring options to add at least one grand prix circuit to the calendar. This year the series opted to skip the Silverstone National BTCC meeting to instead race on the GP layout alongside the British Endurance category in late June.

OUT WITH WRIST TROUBLE

Argenti British Formula 4 racer Jaden Pariat was forced to miss the two Sunday races at Snetterton after spraining his wrist in Wilson clashes with Virtuosi's Aqil Alibhai and Rodin Carlin's Josh Irfan in the first attempt at Saturday's opener. The Indian was due to start fourth for the reversed-grid race so was disappointed to be advised that he could not participate.

GB4 TO RUN CANCELLED RACE

The GB4 Championship will hold four races at the upcoming Donington Park meeting, one more than is usual. The extra race is the cancelled round from the previous Silverstone meeting, after heavy rain on Saturday forced the day's action to be abandoned. The grid will be based on the fastest qualifying times from Silverstone, meaning KMR Sport driver Tom Mills will start from pole position.

MOVE FROM ELITE TO FOX

Mckenzie Douglass will join Fox Motorsport in the Ginetta Junior Championship for the next round at Donington Park this weekend. The Welsh 16-year-old (below) previously raced with Elite Motorsport in the category this season and currently sits ninth in the standings after two rounds. He will join Harry Moss and Holly Miall at Fox for the remainder of the season.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Winning joy for Nathaniel-James

TYPE R TROPHY

Miles Nathaniel-James hailed his maiden race win "a breakthrough," having driven his Honda Civic EP3 to an accomplished 750 Motor Club Type R Trophy victory at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The 27-year-old kart mechanic from North London tried to get onto the single-seater racing ladder in 2015, competing in Formula Ford when funds allowed, and has worked tirelessly to fulfil his ambition, subsequently competing sporadically in Rotax karting.

"I did a few FF1600 races, mainly in Ireland, because the opportunity for me was there, then contested the 2015 Festival at Brands with Oldfield Motorsport in a Van Diemen RF82," he said. "That was very much in at the

deep end, but was where I wanted to be."

The switch to saloons was not in the original game plan, but came to fruition rapidly when the Civic previously raced by Arron Sharp became available and was acquired from Alfie Jeakins in February.

Nathaniel-James debuted strongly at Croft last month, qualifying sixth in a 32-car field on a circuit he'd not previously seen. Fifth and fourth place finishes left him third in the championship, behind Joe Jessup and Daniel Chapman.

He qualified second to Jeff Humphries at Brands Hatch and finished second to Jessup with fastest lap in the opener. Winning the second leg, with Chapman and Jessup third and fourth, leaves Miles second in the table going to Mallory Park's double-header on 11 June.

MARCUS PYE

TVR racer Davis prepares C3 for Corvette 70th

AMERICAN SPEEDFEST

Successful TVR Tuscan racer Tim Davis is preparing a 1968 Chevrolet Corvette C3 for the US icon's 70th anniversary races this summer.

Sussex-based Davis, nowadays a regular winner in the Classic Sports Car Club's Magnificent Sevens series, will take in the American SpeedFest at Brands Hatch and US AutoShow at Oulton Park, and also has an entry for the Silverstone Festival.

His car was raced in the US from 1973 before Davis acquired it from Corvette specialist Bernie Chodosh three years ago. "The idea was, give it a lick of paint and go and race it," said Davis. "But, when I bought it, I just thought, 'Do you know what? This needs more than that,' and it proceeded into a nut-and-bolt restoration."

Davis has installed the 7.2-litre all-



Davis has installed a 7.2-litre engine into C3

aluminium Donovan smallblock that previously powered Richard Thorpe's TVR Tasmin 'Thorpedo'. The relatively lightweight V8 delivers more than 650bhp and 570lb ft of torque.

"The power-to-weight should be epic, probably more than my Caterham," added

Davis, whose architectural fabrication business has made bespoke parts for the car. "It's too pretty to race really but life's too short. I don't want an ugly race car! I only have to look at it and I smile, let alone drive it."

MARK PAULSON

GT team boss McLoughlin ends 19-year race lay-off

C1 24 HOURS

Greystone GT boss Mark McLoughlin had his first race outing for 19 years when he joined Greystone British GT racer Mark Hopton in the C1 24 Hours at Silverstone last weekend.

"My last race was in the European Clio Cup in 2004, plus a Spanish F3 race in 2003," he said. "My

last full season was in Formula Renault UK [when he was a race winner in 2002], though."

Hopton has guested in the race before with Steve Glynn and John Gladman in the Haz Bin Racing team.

"He was invited again and they had a spare seat, so I said yes," McLoughlin added. "I drove the car for the first time on Friday and



JAMES ROBERTS

Prior to C1 appearance, Greystone boss last raced Clio

it was my first race on the Grand Prix circuit, too."

After a few problems along the way, the quartet

finally took the flag in 28th place, 23 laps down on the leading crews.

PETER SCHERER

ANGELO R. DRIVE

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IN THE HEADLINES

SPECIAL KUMHO BMW RACE

The Kumho BMW championship is due to hold a special Rodger Card memorial race at its next round at Castle Combe on 10 June to honour the memory of the series stalwart, who died in 2015. It is hoped that the contest will become an annual feature of the category's calendar and a special invitation class will be added, open to any BMW, with entries accepted at the discretion of the organisers. A minimum prize fund of £1000 will be split across the classes.

SIMPSON UPGRADES MANTIS

Colin Simpson's Marcos Mantis made its first appearance for many months at Mallory Park last weekend after undergoing upgrades, including to its electrics. The car was the first chassis produced for the late-1990s Mantis Challenge one-make series and was used for testing by the company. It overheated in race one of the Classic Challenge at Mallory, but Simpson later took second.

TUCKER BACK TO WINNING

Formula Ford racer James Tucker made his comeback after over a year away, winning a round of the Super Classic championship at Mallory Park. He was driving his father's Swift SE92 after his own car blew an engine during testing for the Oulton Park opener. He had never driven or sat in the car before steering it to a win on Sunday. Tucker now hopes to contest more series rounds this year.

TUTHILL'S PLAINS VICTORY

The Porsche 911 of Richard Tuthill and Dale Furniss triumphed on the Plains Rally last Saturday as they won the third round of the British Historic Rally Championship. Tuthill had a mighty day-long battle in tough Welsh forests with the Ford Escort Mk2 of Marty McCormack and Barney Mitchell and only sealed victory by going two seconds faster on the final stage after entering the test level. Mini Challenge contenders John Day and Ian Harden emerged unharmed after rolling on the first stage (below).



Warren put his Ginetta experience to good use



Am driver Warren 'in shock' after two outright Cayman wins

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Porsche Sprint Challenge GB Am driver Marc Warren admits winning two of the three Snetterton races outright, on just his second weekend in the category, was a complete surprise.

Warren has enjoyed success in three Ginetta championships over the past three campaigns, winning the Ginetta Racing Drivers Club rookie class when he first entered the sport in 2020, and following that with G40 Cup and GT Academy glory in the subsequent two years. But, upon progressing to the Porsche Cayman category for this year, he did not expect to be fighting for overall honours.

He took a best result of seventh (and second in the Am class) at the Donington

Park opener last month, before qualifying on the front row in Norfolk and winning races two and three from pole.

"I'm a little bit in shock!" Warren admitted. "At the start of the season, we thought if we could aim for an overall podium that would be incredible. To have two race wins at the second weekend is amazing, especially as we haven't had much dry running in the car."

Despite his Snetterton triumphs against more experienced and younger rivals, Warren insists it is correct for him to be considered an Am driver. "I'm 51, I've done three championships and all of them were entry level," he said, adding the experience of racing the G56 GTA on road tyres stood him in good stead for the Cayman switch.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Champion Weller makes Mini return

MINI CHALLENGE

Reigning Mini Challenge champion Sam Weller made a one-off return to the category at Snetterton last weekend, picking up a podium.

Weller won last year's title with an impressively consistent campaign, during which he never finished a race outside of the top six, but has taken on a driver coaching role

with the Hybrid Tune squad for this year.

However, with the team's driver Sam Smith still unable to race following his sizeable crash with Dan Zelos at the Donington Park opener last month, Weller returned in Smith's place.

"We had prepped my car ready for Smithy but unfortunately he didn't pass his medical so I'm standing in

for him, just as a one-off at my home circuit," Weller explained. "It's totally different when you're on the pitwall looking at the times! But it's nice to be back in the car."

Weller qualified fifth for the opener and took a best result of third in the middle contest, although he says he has not been tempted to enter further events this year.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



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Managing a tricky issue

Whether or not you agree with the new track-limits rule, sadly there's no escaping the poor management of its controversial implementation

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Hindsight can be a wonderful thing. And there are certainly some decisions and actions Motorsport UK has taken in recent months surrounding the thorny issue of track limits that, with the benefit of hindsight, it admits could have been handled differently. It is reassuring to hear such honesty from the organisation's CEO Hugh Chambers, even if it does not alter what has gone before. But now there has finally been confirmation that stricter new rules that redefine a track-limits breach as being when any part of the tyre goes beyond the white line or outer edge of a kerb (see p55) will be implemented across UK circuit racing from the start of next month, some fundamental questions must be raised.

Autosport has vociferously argued against the changes (9 February) and, despite attending a meeting with Motorsport UK and other key motorsport figures alongside senior media players last week, remains unconvinced. Not least because of the inescapable difficulty of enforcing the new rule in a way that is fair, accurate and consistent for all.

However, regardless of whether you fervently support or are vehemently opposed to the plans, changing the rules in the middle of the season does not make sense. It would be like the England and Wales Cricket Board deciding to redefine what constitutes a no-ball in cricket in the thick of the County Championship campaign. And when one of the key reasons for implementing

“A lot of anger and confusion has been created – all of which could have been avoided”

the change is to make things more simple, tweaking the playing field in the middle of the year just creates confusion – especially when the community is only being officially informed two weeks before the rewritten rule takes effect. As it is, the absence of any communication from the governing body since the consultation on the proposed changes was launched in January to the present day has left everyone from competitors to clubs in the dark. Some organisers have reported being inundated with queries at the start of each event from drivers uncertain whether the new limits are being applied.

Another problem with changing the rules mid-year is the majority of the training for officials is carried out during the winter break. Instead, a session for clerks and stewards has hurriedly been arranged for this week to inform them about the updated regulations, while it is far less clear what official guidance is being

given to judges of fact – the people ultimately at the heart of the issue as the ones determining who has offended. Again, this is another problem that could have been avoided had the change not been pushed through in the middle of the year. And, if Motorsport UK was so determined to introduce the amended rule immediately, why was the consultation – an important stage in the process that must not be circumnavigated – scheduled to conclude in the middle of February, on the eve of the season? Given track limits is one element of a wider driving standards review that began in late 2021, the timing of the consultation's launch was poor.

Key figures in the British Touring Car Championship decided it made no sense to change mid-season and opted to implement the new rule early from its first event at Donington Park at the end of April. But, taking last weekend's round at Snetterton as an example, things did not always go swimmingly well. Rescinding a track-limits penalty for Porsche Sprint Challenge GB frontrunner Joe Warhurst because the incorrect number was displayed alongside a black-and-white warning flag was not great, while the British Formula 4 grid was amended after the incorrect lap time for Deagen Fairclough was deleted for going beyond the line. And we even heard of one leading driver at the event who had a time erased during qualifying, only for it to become apparent that it was a case of mistaken identity owing to the similarity of the liveries of his team's cars. Errors can happen any time, but they are more likely when new rules mean many more offences will be committed, thereby adding extra workload for the volunteers to manage. And that was at the pinnacle of UK circuit racing, so how is a more humble club event supposed to cope?

Now, for all our criticism, Autosport is not suggesting track limits is an issue that can be simply ignored. There are many legitimate reasons for such rules, to ensure drivers are not gaining an unfair advantage by pushing the boundaries and reducing the risk of stones being dragged onto the track that can cause significant damage being two such examples. But it is a complicated matter and one that has created a lot of anger and confusion already this year – all of which could have been avoided. Instead of riling competitors, clubs and spectators by changing the rules, an education programme could have been rolled out highlighting the importance of track limits and more attention given to the overarching problem of finding the best way to enforce them fairly. And it is equally important to note that Autosport is not just launching a polemic against the governing body, which has introduced some hugely beneficial initiatives in other areas of the sport in recent years, for no reason. We are deeply concerned.

Ultimately, to return to the opening line, Motorsport UK should not be relying on hindsight, instead it should have the foresight to spot the potential problems ahead and negate these, rather than adding to them. Lessons must be learned from this sorry saga. ❄

TOCA SUPPORTS SNETTERTON 20-21 MAY

Zelos wins at local track as Orton hits woe

MINI CHALLENGE

Two JCW champions, a Cooper class title winner and the son of a British Touring Car conqueror put on a champion fight for third in the Mini Challenge finale, which proved to be the highlight of the category's Snetterton weekend.

Graves Motorsport's Nelson King was crowned a JCW winner for the first time after heading Joe Tanner throughout from the partially reversed-grid pole, but all eyes were focused on the battle to complete the podium.

Excelr8's Bradley Gravett initially held the place after pouncing on team-mate Dan Zelos into the Wilson Hairpin on the first lap but Zelos wanted to add to his two wins on home Tarmac earlier in the weekend and challenged into Wilson on lap five. He attempted to brave it around the outside of Gravett at Turn 3 and down into Agostini but, while they squabbled, guesting 2022 champion Sam Weller (see News) dived down the inside and Dominic Wheatley also snuck ahead.

However, Weller's grasp on third proved brief as, two laps later, Wheatley passed him on the inside at Wilson. But



Two wins and a fourth made for a great weekend for Zelos

there was to be no final act as the race was red-flagged with two minutes left on the clock, some two laps after Barry Ward clouted the Coram barriers.

There had not been not quite so much excitement in the opening two bouts as Zelos held a comfortable advantage to defeat Tanner each time. "I really wanted to get that chip off my shoulder of not winning at home," he said, delighted at having a trouble-free weekend. While Zelos won by just under a second in race one, Tanner remained closer second time around, although Zelos ominously still reckoned he

had "another 5% in me, if I needed it".

As Zelos finally scored three strong results in a weekend, it was title rival Will Orton's turn to strike misfortune. The Hybrid Tune driver was demoted by team-mate Tanner at the start of the opener and had to settle for third. He then failed to finish the other two races after his engine overheated following radiator damage and he had similar woe in race three. All that means Zelos now enjoys a 44-point lead as he seeks to claim another championship.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Lay again leads the way with a Radical hat-trick

RADICAL CUP UK

There was no disputing who was the star of Radical Motorsport's first appearance on the British Touring Car support bill, as James Lay triumphed all three times at Snetterton last weekend.

The reigning SR3 champion moved to Doris Motorsport for the Norfolk event and

quickly seemed at home, even if Ben Caisley did pip him to pole by 0.033 seconds.

Caisley sprinted clear from the rolling start but was deemed to have gained too much of an advantage and was handed a 10s penalty. This ultimately proved irrelevant as Lay blasted past at Agostini and 2021 SR1 champion Daryl DeLeon also snuck ahead at Wilson on lap two. The leading trio had

a huge advantage over the rest of the field, meaning Caisley still finished 22s ahead of Jacek Zielonka in fourth, despite the penalty.

Race two proved a little closer, with Caisley challenging Lay into Riches and staying in his rival's wheel-tracks for much of the contest – but he was never quite able to make a move. And Lay completed a dominant hat-trick in the pitstop finale, benefiting from his lack of success penalty time during his stop to win by 28s, clear of a very close fight between Chris Preen and DeLeon. "I went well here last year but I'm in a different car with a new team, which makes it even better," said a delighted Lay.

Things were much tighter in the SR1 class in the opener as Theo Micouris was right on the tail of former British GT racer Tom Wood throughout. He challenged into Oggies on the final tour, tapping the rear of Wood, but it was to no avail. Micouris fought back to head races two and three more comfortably.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



There was no stopping Lay all weekend at Snetterton

Glory for Alibhai as chaos reigns

BRITISH F4

Two red flags, three safety car periods and only just over a dozen racing laps that actually counted meant there was little British Formula 4 action of note at Snetterton. But, from the limited competition there was, it was a good weekend for Dion Gowda as he narrowed the gap to his Rodin Carlin team-mate



Louis Sharp in the standings.

There were two attempts at running the first race before it was ultimately abandoned (it's now slated for Donington Park in August). The first red flag followed five drivers getting into strife and cars littering various parts of the circuit. Then, on the restart, Daniel Guinchard suffered a heavy crash that demolished the barriers at Coram after he careered off with suspension failure.

Race two then featured just five racing laps but there was delight for Virtuosi's Aqil Alibhai as he rose from seventh on the reversed grid to become the sixth different winner from seven races. "It was about keeping my nose clean and not making any mistakes," said the South African, who was among the victims of the race-one drama.

Gowda then led the processional finale throughout to head home Kanato Le despite the Japanese closing when the leader locked up and ran wide at Wilson on the final tour.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Surprise success for Warren

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

The close races at the Donington Park opener had suggested there were plenty of victory candidates in the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB this year. But there was no real hint that Am competitor Marc Warren would be one of them. Yet the Raceway Motorsport driver impressively won two of the three contests in Norfolk.

Warren showed he was in the mix by qualifying on the front row for the opener. But it was not long before he was shuffled back as he ran slightly wide at Riches and then spun at Wilson when battling Steve Roberts. Redline driver Roberts went on to pressurise team-mate

Toby Trice but was unable to find a way through. Joe Warhurst was third on the road but picked up two track-limits penalties (one later rescinded as he did not receive a warning flag) and that promoted Will Jenkins to the podium.

Warren said he "learned so much" in the opener and put that to good use when starting from pole in race two to lead throughout, although a lengthy safety car period did limit Matthew Armstrong's ability to challenge. And Warren was brilliant again in race three to again defy Team Parker racer Armstrong and complete a remarkable event (see News), with points leader Roberts scoring another third.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



RACE RESULTS

MINI CHALLENGE

Race 1 (10 laps) 1 Dan Zelos; 2 Joe Tanner +0.958s; 3 Will Orton; 4 Sam Weller; 5 Bradley Gravett; 6 Oliver Meadows. **Fastest lap** Tanner 2m02.465s (87.27mph). **Pole** Zelos. **Starters** 22.
Race 2 (10 laps) 1 Zelos; 2 Tanner +0.664s; 3 Weller; 4 Nelson King; 5 Gravett; 6 Meadows. **FL** Weller 2m02.588s (87.18mph). **P** Zelos. **S** 22.
Race 3 (7 laps) 1 King; 2 Tanner +0.919s; 3 Dominic Wheatley; 4 Zelos; 5 Meadows; 6 Weller. **FL** Orton 2m03.166s (86.77mph). **P** King. **S** 21.
Points 1 Zelos 376; 2 Orton 332; 3 Tanner 324; 4 Meadows 316; 5 King 279; 6 Wheatley 277.

RADICAL CUP UK

Race 1 (17 laps) 1 James Lay; 2 Daryl DeLeon +8.086s; 3 Ben Caisley; 4 Jacek Zielonka; 5 Chris Preen; 6 Mark Williams. **FL** Lay 1m49.877s (97.27mph). **P** Caisley. **S** 26.
Race 2 (17 laps) 1 Lay; 2 Caisley +1.778s; 3 DeLeon; 4 Preen; 5 Peter Tyler; 6 Haydn Chance. **FL** Lay 1m49.434s (97.66mph). **P** Lay. **S** 25.
Race 3 (15 laps) 1 Lay; 2 Preen +28.330s; 3 DeLeon; 4 Chance; 5 Andy Lowe; 6 Zielonka. **FL** Lay 1m50.378s (96.83mph). **P** Lay. **S** 24.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 Aqil Alibhai; 2 Noah Lisle +0.339s; 3 Patrick Heuzenroeder; 4 Sonny Smith; 5 Jimmy Piszcyk; 6 Will Macintyre. **FL** Lisle 1m49.344s (97.75mph). **P** Douwe Dedecker. **S** 21.
Race 2 (10 laps) 1 Dion Gowda; 2 Kanato Le +0.621s; 3 Louis Sharp; 4 Macintyre; 5 Piszcyk; 6 Aiden Neate. **FL** Lisle 1m48.072s (98.89mph). **P** Gowda. **S** 21.
Points 1 Sharp 103; 2 Gowda 97; 3 Macintyre 83; 4 Le 76; 5 Lisle 72; 6 James Higgins 71.

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Race 1 (11 laps) 1 Toby Trice; 2 Steve Roberts +0.830s; 3 Will Jenkins; 4 Max Coates; 5 Ethan Hammerton; 6 Matthew Armstrong. **FL** Roberts 1m57.212s (91.18mph). **P** Trice. **S** 16.
Race 2 (9 laps) 1 Marc Warren; 2 Armstrong +0.339s; 3 Roberts; 4 Joe Warhurst; 5 Trice; 6 Hammerton. **FL** Coates 1m56.501s (91.74mph). **P** Warren. **S** 17.
Race 3 (11 laps) 1 Warren; 2 Armstrong +0.796s; 3 Roberts; 4 Warhurst; 5 Trice; 6 Robert Cronin. **FL** Trice 1m57.696s (90.81mph). **P** Warren. **S** 16.
Points 1 Roberts 53; 2 Trice (below) 44; 3 Warhurst 35; 4 Armstrong 29; 5 Coates 26; 6 Jenkins 21.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Farmer plants the seeds for success on Formula Vee return



Both Formula Vee wins went the way of Farmer at wheel of GAC

BRANDS HATCH 750MC 20-21 MAY

A double Formula Vee victory for Martin Farmer proved that the triple champion had not lost of his touch after a two-year layoff.

The Torq Racewear boss, who had contested just half a dozen events in his GAC since 2014, needed all his experience to deny 17-year-old Matthew Hyde in Sunday's round, which was the highlight of an epic 22-race 750 Motor Club programme.

Lack of gears in Friday testing could have derailed Farmer's weekend, but James Madden – destined to roll his GAC out

of qualifying – kindly loaned his spare, although a new clutch plate failed necessitating more work. Nonetheless, eight laps was sufficient for Martin to annex pole for Saturday's opener by 0.06 seconds from Craig Bell (AHS Dominator), with the top 10 covered by 0.89s.

The safety car, deployed when Peter Belsey fought his Spyder to a halt with a broken steering arm on the climb to Druids, "threw a spanner in the works" for Farmer, annulling his lead over Tim Probert (Storm), Bell and Elliot Mason in his venerable Sheane. Probert rotated on cold tyres at the green flag, leaving Farmer to stave off Bell, Mason and Hyde for two laps.

Second best qualifying times set Sunday's grid with Bell on pole from Probert, with Matt Harbot (AHS Dominator) and Farmer on row two with Hyde eighth. Re-armed with a new AHS Dominator, former GAC driver Hyde was on superb form. Farmer ousted Probert from the lead into Paddock Hill Bend on lap three of 17 and Hyde weathered an exchange with Mason before finding Farmer's slipstream.

The youngster went ahead with an imperious move round the outside into Paddock, but Farmer countered quickly, as he did when Hyde slipped past again at Graham Hill Bend. After three laps assessing their relative strengths, Farmer repeated his rival's 'high, wide and handsome' pass into Paddock and used his guile thereafter. "I've been racing long enough to know where to put the car," said Farmer, who won by 0.1s from Hyde, with Probert third.

With erstwhile points leader Vaughn Jones sixth on Saturday and excluded for not heeding flag signals after leaving his Storm's nose in the track at Surtees on Sunday, kart graduate Hyde underlined his title aspirations by outscoring his full-season rivals.

Talented youngsters also shone in the season's second frenetic 116 Trophy contest. Will Abraham (20) and Yorkshireman Mack Priestwood (18) dodged 38 rivals for 90 minutes, beating Louis Woodward as



A brace of F1000 wins handed Gadd the lead in the standings



Dwane won the second Clio Sport contest



Polley's Honda was the car to beat in Hot Hatch



Abraham held off a charging field to win 116 Trophy

soloists filled the top five places. Abraham and triple Polaris British SXS off-road champion Priestwood drove with great maturity and tactical awareness in constant traffic as all but three teams finished.

A lap down, Freddie Tatham, Pete Brand and Paul Wighton/Lewis Wighton-Turner completed the top six, ahead of Silverstone victor Matthew Highcock, who served his 30s winner's penalty. Peripatetic pro mentor Nigel Greensall set fastest lap in jostling David Hudson's car back to 15th. Woodward, in one of four BMW 120i saloons, had little difficulty in winning the two sprint races.

A third place, followed by two superb wins (Saturday's from eighth on a partially reversed-grid), propelled Tom Gadd into a 10-point lead over Dan Gore in the F1000 table. Top qualifier Gore won race one by half a second from Mittell Cars team-mate Matt Higginson. Gore finished sixth after a spin at Paddock later in the day, when FVee champion Craig Pollard and Higginson chased Team Sellars Racing's Gadd home.

Defending champion Rob Welham, winner of the second stanza of Silverstone's twin-legged championship opener, arrived with a slender advantage over Gore and Gadd, but a bent valve in race one put him out of that and the afternoon's sequel.

Frazer Corbyn's Jedi team changed Welham's engine for Sunday's round, in which he finished sixth from the back. Third behind Gadd and Gore on a cooler

morning, Higginson erased James McLachlan's nine-year-old lap record, his 44.67s (97.35mph) mark quicker than the best set in British F4 a fortnight earlier!

Honda Civic EP3 star Ryan Polley extended his Hot Hatch run to four wins, shading Dan Silvester's more accelerative EK2. Mathew Mandipira and Joel Arguelles (Renault Clio 197s), Callum Perfect (BMW 318ti) and Martyn Paget (Citroen Saxo) shared the class wins.

Established frontrunner Joe Jessup and series rookie Miles Nathaniel-James prevailed in the Type R Trophy bouts. In Clio Sport, Jason Pelosi and Jack Dwane made it four winners from four rounds in the 197 class, each pursued by Ben Swift.

Classic Stock Hatch king Stewart Place won in his Peugeot 205 GTI on Saturday. The 75kg success ballast imposed for Sunday was too much to keep ahead of fellow Peugeot driver Chris Dear. Behind James Haslehurst (205), Finn Groom and Pete Morgan (Ford Fiesta XR2s) and Ben Bateman (Vauxhall Nova GTE) ganged-up on Martin Cayzer (XR2i) on day two, only Bateman making a move stick for fourth.

The 750 Formula races rewarded drivers of eponymous bolides. Driving his Climax-engined V2, 1979 Euroseries Formula Ford 1600 champion John Village read traffic better than Tim Sage (1000cc Mallock U2-Ford) among the Historics.

When Sage retired from race two after

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA VEE

Races 1 & 2 Martin Farmer (GAC)

116 TROPHY

Will Abraham

116 SPRINT & 120 COUPE CUP

Races 1 & 2 Louis Woodward (120i)

F1000

Race 1 Dan Gore

Races 2 & 3 Tom Gadd

HOT HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Ryan Polley
(Honda Civic EP3 Type R)

TYPE R TROPHY

Race 1 Joe Jessup

Race 2 Miles Nathaniel-James

CLIO SPORT

Race 1 Jason Pelosi (197)

Race 2 Jack Dwane (197)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Race 1 Stewart Place (Peugeot 205 GTI)

Race 2 Chris Dear (Peugeot 205 GTI)

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA

Races 1 & 2 John Village (Village V2)

750 FORMULA

Races 1 & 2 Bill Cowley (Cowley MkIV, below)

TOYOTA MR2

Race 1 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

Race 2 Graham Malings (Roadster)



For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

Village's gear lever pulled out, Ben Myall (Gerrell) and the supercharged Austin 7s of Tim Roebuck and Simon Gallon moved up.

With 10 titles between them, Bill Cowley, Peter Bove (Darvi 88P) and Mark Glover (Racekits Falcon) disputed the 'contemporary' rounds, Cowley triumphing in the MkIV built by his grandad 50+ years ago.

Shaun Traynor beat Graham Malings in both MR2 races on-the-road, but was disqualified from the latter for not having a cover over his Roadster's fuel tank and pump. Billy Boggis snatched Mk2 class honours by 0.03s from Dan Silvester in race one, but Silvester finished 0.16s ahead later.

MARCUS PYE

Lower and Chiddicks duel for top spot

CROFT
BARC
20-21 MAY

Charlie Lower and Freddie Chiddicks put on a trio of thrilling battles as the Caterham 270R Championship showcased the power of the tow on the long straights of Croft.

The stage was set in qualifying, as Lower bested his rival by just 0.017 seconds and the action didn't cease throughout the three 20-minute races.

In the opener, it was advantage Lower as he outdragged Chiddicks down the start/finish straight and into the right-hander of Clervaux. The latter was denied the chance of returning the favour as he got caught behind a backmarker on the final lap.

Race two provided more back-and-forth action, with the pair trading places almost every lap as each took advantage of the tow down the long back straight. Despite the tussling, Lower once again saw the chequered flag first.

The last race of the weekend finally gave Chiddicks his break. Later on the brakes into Tower, Chiddicks kept his nerve and staunchly defended into Lower's preferred overtaking spot at the Complex to take the flag just two tenths ahead.

Lower admitted after that his strategy throughout the weekend had been to attack in the final sector. "During testing, I worked with the team to purposely develop the car to be strongest in the final sector," he said. "That meant I struggled coming out of the



Chiddicks chases
Lower as both took to the
front in Caterham 270Rs

MICK WALKER

Chicane and towards Tower, and in that last race I just lost the tow."

Jack Sales took a hat-trick of Caterham 310R wins, but didn't make it easy for himself. Starting fifth for the opening race, he picked his way up the order to deprive Lars Hoffmann of victory in superb late-braking fashion at Tower.

Race two was a lights-to-flag win from pole, but race three was another scrap as he had to fight back from fifth after a poor opening couple of laps to win again.

No one could stop Lewis Thompson from continuing his 100% start to the Seven Championship UK season as he took all three wins. Despite a last race dice with Stephen Lyall on a rapidly deteriorating set of slicks, Thompson proved too strong on the brakes as he took a fifth consecutive victory.

Ending up in a farmer's field proved to be the key to Ben Timmons' double in Caterham Roadsport. Having practiced how late he could brake into Tower during testing – and going beyond the limit – a missed gear coming out of the Hairpin

meant he had to put his practice into action as he snatched race-one glory from Toby Ballard. The second was won at a canter as he benefited from a squabbling pack behind to finish ahead by 8s.

A suspected turbo failure denied Simon Vercoe a brace in the combined Production GTI/Z Cars field. In the opener, the Golf racer put on a superlative performance to comfortably win from Simon Hill, who had his hands full battling James Colbourne.

Vercoe was on course to take the second too, having regained the lead from Hill in a tense scrap at the front, but his race went up in a cloud of smoke with two laps to go as his VW's turbo gave way. Victory instead went to Ryan Sayer, who benefited from Hill running wide and onto the grass at the exit of the Hairpin to power himself in front.

Double Z Cars champion Edd Giddings pipped Matthew Dance to both BMW wins on the championship's first appearance in North Yorkshire.

Brothers Jamie and Craig Blake shared the spoils in the Scottish Mini Cooper Cup as the pair battled out at the front of the



Scottish Mini Cooper
Cup visited Croft as the
Blake brothers dominated

MICK WALKER

WEEKEND WINNERS

CROFT

CATERHAM SEVEN 270R

Races 1 & 2 Charlie Lower

Race 3 Freddie Chiddicks

CATERHAM SEVEN 310R

Races 1, 2 & 3 Jack Sales

CATERHAM SEVEN CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1, 2 & 3 Lewis Thompson

CATERHAM ROADSPORT

Races 1 & 2 Ben Timmons

Z CARS/PRODUCTION GTI

Race 1 Simon Vercoe (VW Golf)

Race 2 Ryan Sayer (VW Golf)

SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP

Race 1 Jamie Blake (Cooper S)

Race 2 Craig Blake (Cooper S)

CATERHAM ACADEMY

White Daniel Neale

Green Jonathan Emery

PEMBREY

BRITISH TRUCK RACING

Races 1, 2 & 3 Ryan Smith (Daimler Freightliner)

Race 4 Jock Borthwick (MAN TGX)

Race 5 Michael Oliver (MAN TGX)

JUNIOR SALOON CARS

Races 1 & 2 Daire Flock

Race 3 Oskar Dix

2CV/MINI ENDURANCE

Baycon Racing with Liqui Moly

(Sandro and Luca Proietti)

2CV CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Nick Crispin

Race 2 Kris Tovey

TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB

Race 1 Lee Currie (Renault Clio)

Race 2 Adam Croft (Peugeot 205 GTI)

WELSH SPORTS & SALOON CARS

Race 1 Wayne Spiller (Mazda RX-8)

Race 2 Damian Longotano (Westfield SE)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Cooper S class. Jamie sealed race one, while a better run through Clervaux on the opening lap allowed Craig to take the second.

Cooper Class victory was taken by Oly Mortimer in Saturday's race, before Jason Ballantyne took an unlikely win in the second. He took advantage of a last-lap collision between leading pair Mortimer and Ian Munro to sweep into first, capping a remarkable charge from the back row of the grid.

Caterham Academy wins went the way of Daniel Neale and Jonathan Emery.

JOE HUDSON

Smith scores a hat-trick as British Trucks thrill crowd

PEMBREY

BARC

20-21 MAY

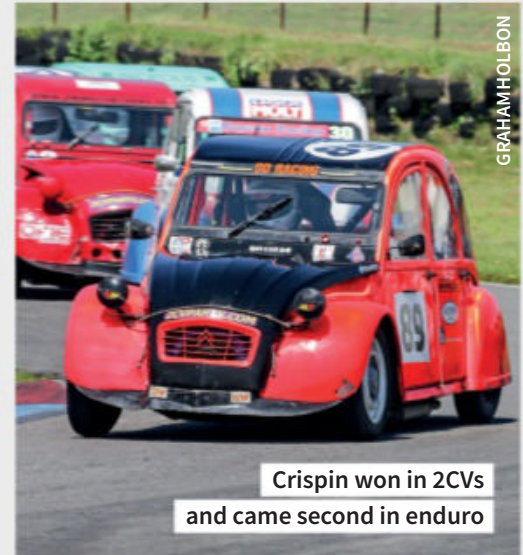
Ryan Smith tallied another hat-trick of race wins in the British Truck Racing Championship, but the reigning seven-time champion could do nothing to stop Jock Borthwick and Michael Oliver from also opening their accounts for the year.

Taking centre stage at the British Automobile Racing Club's Convoy Cymru meeting, the heavyweight behemoths delivered five action-packed contests at the Welsh venue. After starring at Brands Hatch, Smith proved to be the driver to beat during Saturday's running as he snared an impressive pole position and then backed up his pace with a pair of perfect race wins.

Returning to action on Sunday, the Daimler Freightliner racer produced a superlative charge from eighth to victory lane in race three, before damage and mechanical issues scuppered his chances in races four and five – which were expertly won by Borthwick and Oliver.

In Division 2, the battle for supremacy towards the top of the standings continued as Adam Bint, Paul Rivett and John Powell shared class spoils – with Bint and Rivett tallying a brace of victories apiece.

Oskar Dix maintained his strong start to the season in the Junior Saloon Car Championship as he extended his lead in the points with a victory in race three. Daire Flock – who remains second overall – had been the driver to beat with



Crispin won in 2CVs
and came second in enduro

two wins to his name before a non-finish halted his charge.

One of the closest finishes over the course of the weekend came in the 2CV/Mini Endurance bout. After 67 laps of the picturesque Welsh track, just under half a second separated winners Sandro and Luca Proietti from the duo of Pete Sparrow and Nick Crispin.

Despite losing out in the endurance encounter, Crispin did have his moment on the top step of the rostrum as he scored victory in one of two Classic 2CV sprint races. Kris Tovey, who was one of the leading lights at the season-opener, also starred and claimed a win.

Rounding out the action were two races from the Track Attack Race Club – won by Lee Currie (Renault Clio) and Adam Croft (Peugeot 205) – and two Welsh Sports & Saloons contests, where Wayne Spiller (Mazda RX-8) and Damian Longotano's Westfield triumphed.

CHRIS ASHBY



Reigning Truck champion
Smith was once again
class of the field

Ames (l) and Tucker took a win apiece after close scraps



Tucker and Ames Super FF1600 battle pick of the Mallory races

MALLORY PARK
CMMC
20-21 MAY

Super Classic Formula Ford provided the most exciting lead battles during last weekend's Mallory Park meeting, courtesy of two scraps between Alex Ames (Van Diemen) and James Tucker (Swift).

Tucker prevailed in the opener after making his decisive move at the hairpin late on and stayed at the front of a slipstreaming pack, which also included Morgan Dempsey, to secure the win. Ames then outsmarted his two rivals with a late move in race two. He had tried it a few laps earlier but executed it on the last one, waiting for Tucker to brake and slow the group, then going around the outside into the hairpin, keeping ahead at the line by 0.127 seconds.

The first Silhouette race was red-flagged when Colin Smith's Ginetta blew an engine and crashed. Smith had led for most of the 12 laps, but a surge from Ian Hales's Tigra just as Smith's car started to slow put Hales in front, with Paul Knight's Tigra following him through past Keith White's BMW Z4. Hales was declared the winner, and Knight quickly overcame a reversed grid in race two to earn his first Silhouette victory.

The Classic Challenge looked like a walkover for Eike Wellhausen's Lister

Knobbly, but he faced a threat from the Ford Mustang of Rupert West initially. West was running strongly until he spun at Gerards and recovered to fourth. Wellhausen had a shaky start in the sequel and dropped to 12th, but he was back in front fairly soon to claim another win, ahead of West.

Matty Cobb ran away with both Northern Saloon & Sportscar races in his Beetle prototype, but there were compelling fightbacks in both races. Second-placed Paul Rankin lost power temporarily in his Westfield in the opener, dropping to sixth, but he was able to recover to second. It was Colin Simpson's turn in race two; he did not finish first time around, due to his Marcos Mantis overheating, but he scythed through the pack from the rear to take second.

The Mini Challenge Clubsport featured Open class driver Stephen Berry winning race one after deftly steering his unusual Mini Coupe to the front from his class's midfield starting spot. Poleman Zac Blackwell upped his game later and held off Berry quite comfortably.

There were more comebacks in Super Saloons. Although Rod Birley kept his race-one lead until the end, his fellow BMW frontrunner Ronan Bradley clipped a barrier on the first lap and dropped to the back. He battled up to fourth, behind Steve Rothery's Peugeot 308. Rothery started last after a

pipe came loose, but climbed to third.

A smaller comeback was needed for Dale Gent in the first Pickup Trucks race, held on the oval circuit. He had started fourth after a spin in qualifying, but soon hit the front. Reece Jones snatched second on the final lap. Allen Cooper was awarded the race-two spoils after Jones was penalised for a jumped start, but Jones claimed the final win for himself, pulling away from Gent in the closing quarter of the race.

Chris Bassett's Peugeot took both Tin Tops victories. The second race was red-flagged after Neal Gardiner (Honda Civic) crashed at the hairpin, creating a delay. The second Super Saloons race was cancelled.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER

WEEKEND WINNERS

SUPER CLASSIC PRE-'99 FORMULA FORD

Race 1 James Tucker (Swift SE92)

Race 2 Alex Ames (Van Diemen RF90)

INTERMARQUE SILHOUETTES

Race 1 Ian Hales (Vauxhall Tigra)

Race 2 Paul Knight (Vauxhall Tigra)

CMMC CLASSIC CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Eike Wellhausen (Lister Knobbly)

NORTHERN SALOON & SPORTSCARS

Races 1 & 2 Matty Cobb (VW Beetle)

MINI CHALLENGE CLUBSPORT

Race 1 Stephen Berry (Cooper S)

Race 2 Zac Blackwell (Cooper S)

CMMCS SUPER SALOONS

Rod Birley (BMW M3 E36)

PICKUP TRUCK RACING

Race 1 Dale Gent

Race 2 Allen Cooper

Race 3 Reece Jones

CMMCS TIN TOPS

Races 1 & 2 Chris Bassett (Peugeot 306 GTI)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com





Trojon wins the C1 24 Hours war

SILVERSTONE
BRSCC C1 24 HOURS
19-21 MAY

This year's C1 24-hour race at Silverstone went down to the wire, with three crews battling for the victory spoils.

Emax Motorsport's Jake and James Little, with Max Finn and Stuart Ratcliff, JWB's Matt Wilson, Tony Prendergast, Phil House and Nick Beaumont and Trojon Motorsport's Jonathan and Austin Munday, with Chris Freeman, Charlie Bingham and Adam Willis, all had spells at the front.

Bingham had relinquished the lead to take on fuel and tyres with 15 minutes left on the clock, and was a minute and a half down on Jake Little, with Beaumont third.

Little needed to pit for a splash and dash, too, and came in with just 13 minutes to go. He just held onto the lead but soon had Bingham on his tail, going side-by-side through Brooklands three laps from home, before the Trojon C1 led out of Luffield.

Into The Loop for the penultimate time, Little dived down the inside, but there was contact and Bingham spun. Little was given a three-minute penalty, relegating him to fourth, handing the victory back to the Trojon quintet and promoting AB Motorsport's Oliver Allwood, Stuart Symonds and Philip Ingram, behind JWB.

Alastair Kellett headed a huge field of Fiestas to take a double win. In race one, a safety car period wiped out his advantage over Zachary Lucas and Albert Webster. It was Webster that grabbed second, with Lucas squeezed out from the green flag, leaving Spencer Stevenson third. Virtually all of race two was behind the safety car.

It was honours even in the Zeo Prototype Series between Mike Jenvey's Jenvey Gunn and Jonathan Mitchell's Revolution. The Pragas of Ruben Stanislaus and Rodolfo Gonzalez joined Jenvey on the race-one podium. In the second race, Mitchell was in charge from the opening lap.

PETER SCHERER

WEEKEND WINNERS

SILVERSTONE

C1 ENDURANCE SERIES

Trojon Motorsport (Chris Freeman/Jonathan Munday/Austin Munday/Adam Willis/Charlie Bingham)

FIESTA ST240 & ST150 CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Alastair Kellett (ST240)

ZEO SPORTS PROTOTYPE

Race 1 Mike Jenvey (Jenvey Gunn)

Race 2 Jonathan Mitchell (Revolution)

SUPERSPORT ENDURANCE CUP

Leon Bidgway (Lotus Exige)

ANGLESEY

CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPE

Races 1, 2, 3 & 4 James Clarke (Phantom PR22)

PORSCHE CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Harry Mailer (Cayman)

PORSCHE BOXSTER CUP

Races 1 & 2 Jonathan Lovell

MIATA TROPHY

Race 1 Declan Lee (Mk3)

Race 2 John Langridge (Mk3)

TRACKDAY TROPHY

Paul McHugh/William Heslop (Honda Civic)

TRACKDAY CHAMPIONSHIP

Mick Presland (Lotus Elise S2)

PORSCHE OPEN CUP

Races 1 & 2 Archie Hamilton (991)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Clarke's Phantom keeps the opposition at bay

ANGLESEY
MSVR
20-21 MAY

James Clarke set a blistering pace during the Clubmans Sports Prototype races at Anglesey under blue skies and uninterrupted sun on the category's first visit to the circuit in five years.

Clarke achieved the perfect score of pole, four race wins and a new lap record in the 'works' Phantom PR22. He was pursued in each race by the similar car of Cody Tree who, despite his best effort and set-up changes, could not keep him in sight. Tom Bellamy's GEM and Steve Collier (Vision V89) spent the weekend locked in combat for the final podium position, but Collier could never find a chink in Bellamy's armour.

In the CSP2 class, Clarke's stablemate



Mathieu Gauthier-Thornton was almost as dominant, taking pole and all four wins but runner-up Will Freeman, driving his father's unique Ardmore, nicked the final fastest lap, continuing his fine form from Silverstone as a complete novice.

Tom Muirhead starred in CSPB, taking three wins, but blotted his copybook in

race three by spinning twice, allowing Pippa Tanner-Wood through to victory.

In the Porsche Club Championship, Henry Mailer took a brace of wins in his Cayman, the first race having been red-flagged after an oil slick coated the track, needing an urgent clean-up.

PETE RICHINGS

FINISHING STRAIGHT



Kreis (11) led the 1925 Italian Grand Prix and set fastest lap before retiring

KREIS DOCUMENT COLLECTION

The ‘strangest death’ in racing examined



BOOK REVIEW
**THE LAST LAP:
THE MYSTERIOUS
DEMISE OF PETE
KREIS AT THE
INDIANAPOLIS 500**
William Walker
RRP £25

The 107th running of the Indianapolis 500 takes place this weekend, with the previous editions of the great race providing plenty of memorable moments. But for all the thrills, there have also been numerous low points and many lives lost at the venue.

One of those is Peter Kreis, who along with riding mechanic Robert Hahn was killed in practice for the 1934 edition. Kreis's demise was dubbed the “strangest death in all racing history” – the premise being that there was no mechanical fault with the car and no attempt to prevent a crash, the implication being that it was suicide.

It's a story that would have gone down merely as folklore were it not for Kreis's cousin, William Walker, who as a child and later through life was fascinated by the story – not least because of a huge tombstone that was built to commemorate Kreis's death, featuring the Indianapolis circuit and the driver on his ‘last lap’.

Thus, a 292-page book has been

released by Octane Press that leads up to the fateful day in 1934, via Kreis's racing exploits and the circumstances that may have led to a possible suicide. Walker offers his own verdict on the true cause of Kreis's death, but unsurprisingly the evidence is far from conclusive, with each reader left to make up their own mind about the true nature of the accident.

The story isn't just about Kreis's racing activity either, but his upbringing, love interests and wider family dynamic including the relationship with his father, two older brothers and the family business.

While a generally interesting and certainly at times a tragic read, it does also become slightly frustrating in places – especially for those with more than a passing interest in motorsport. Describing Ayrton Senna's Williams FW16 as a “roadster” and Stirling Moss as a “Formula 1 champion” makes the skin crawl, and it's clear there's only a very basic understanding and knowledge of motorsport outside of America.

There's also no escaping the fact that generally Walker believes that Kreis's driving ability was far beyond that which he actually demonstrated. Without doubt he had a flair for speed, being good enough to lead and set fastest lap in the 1925 Italian Grand Prix at Monza before a mechanical failure forced him out. He finished third at the same venue two years later and showed good pace occasionally on home soil, but suggestions that he was a match for leading drivers of the day are hard to take seriously.

He's described as an “acknowledged master” of the board race tracks that were a common theme throughout the period, yet Kreis never won a race on them, or for that matter any race during his career. His official racing record is listed as 29 starts, as well as standing in as a relief driver on four occasions, with a best result a second-place finish in 1926. Not only that but



Mystery shrouds the cause of Kreis's death

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

the American was in competitive machinery during the early part of his career, including Duesenbergs and Millers, though in fairness he did take the former to an impressive eighth-place finish on his Indy 500 debut.

The fabled event became his primary focus – competing outright on six occasions and twice as a relief – to the extent that he looked to compete solely in that race between 1928 and 1934, often after prowling Gasoline Alley in the hope of finding a free ride and dismissing the notion of becoming a gentleman driver.

His racing career wasn't without its share of bad luck either, which included coming down with influenza ahead of the 1926 running of the Indy 500, with his ride taken by rookie Frank Lockhart, who went on to win. But following that, Walker commits to dubbing the young American as Kreis's rival whenever he's mentioned, when the two in reality were never in the same league.

This certainly isn't a book for every motorsport fan, but there's enough here to keep readers engaged and to shed light on an interesting man and even more on an unusual death.

STEFAN MACKLEY



MAX KREIS

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Monaco Grand Prix
F1 World Championship
Round 6/22
Monte Carlo, Monaco
28 May

TV Live
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355
TV Highlights
Channel 4, Sun 1830,
Sky Sports F1, Sun 2100

Indianapolis 500
IndyCar Series
Round 6/17
Indianapolis, USA
28 May

TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1730

Formula 2
Round 5/13
Monte Carlo, Monaco
27-28 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sat 1310, Sun 0835

Formula 3
Round 3/9
Monte Carlo, Monaco
27-28 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sat 0955, Sun 0655

Porsche Supercup
Round 1/7
Monte Carlo, Monaco
27-28 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1050

DTM
Round 1/8
Oschersleben, Germany
27-28 May

TV Live Viaplay, Sat 1215,
Sun 1215

International GT Open
Round 2/7
Spa, Belgium
27-28 May
TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Sat 1045,
Sun 1130, Sun 1240

TCR World Tour
Round 2/9
Spa, Belgium
27-28 May

Euroformula Open
Round 2/8
Spa, Belgium
27-28 May
TV Live on
Motorsport.tv, Sat 1120,
Sat 1515, Sun 0810, Sun 1420

NASCAR Cup
Round 14/36
Charlotte, USA
28 May
TV Live Viaplay, Sun 2230

NASCAR Xfinity
Round 12/33
Charlotte, USA
27 May
TV Live Viaplay, Sat 1730

NASCAR Truck Series
Round 11/23
Charlotte, USA
27 May
TV Live Viaplay, Sat 0100

UK MOTORSPORT

Donington Park BRSCC
27-28 May

British GT, GB4, Ginetta
Championship, Ginetta
Academy, Ginetta Junior
TV Live
via britishgt.com

Oulton Park BARC
27 May
BEC, Britcar Trophy
TV Live via barc.net

Kirkistown 500MRCI
27 May
Fiestas/Minis, NI FF1600,
NI Se7ens, Roadsports/
Globals, Saloons/GTs/
Mazdas, Scottish Fiesta ST,
Superkarts

Silverstone HSCC
27-28 May

70s Roadsports/Historic
Roadsports/Historic Touring
Cars, Aurora Trophy/Classic
F3, Classic FF1600, CSCC
(Classic K, Swinging 60s),
Griffiths Haig Trophy, Guards
Trophy/Thundersports,
Historic F2, Historic
FF1600, Monoposto

Brands Hatch MSVR
27-28 May
Gerry Marshall Trophy,
Masters (F1 Cars, Endurance
Legends, Gentleman Drivers,
GT Trophy, Pre-66 Touring
Cars, Sports Car Legends)

Snetterton BRSCC
27-28 May
500 Owners, Audi TT Cup,

BMW Compact Cup,
Clubsport Trophy, Evolution
Trophy, Fun Cup, MG Metro
Cup, National FF1600

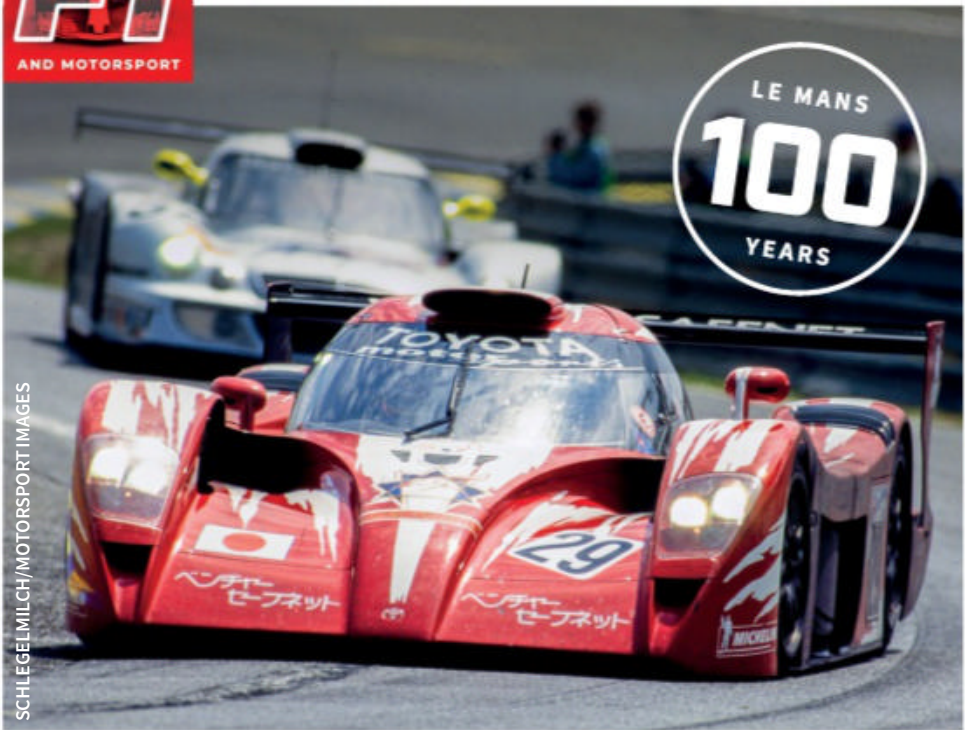
Jim Clark Rally
British Rally Championship
Round 2/7
Duns, Scotland
26-27 May

**FIA European
Drag Racing**
Santa Pod, England
26-29 May

**British Hillclimb
Championship**
Round 4/14
Gurston Down, England
27-28 May



autosport.com/podcast



Top 10 sportscars that didn't win Le Mans

In the latest of our Top 10 podcast series building up to the centenary edition of the Le Mans 24 Hours, host Martyn Lee is joined by Kevin Turner and Gary Watkins to rank the best machines that *didn't* win.

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





FROM THE ARCHIVE

Dick Seaman (Alfa Romeo 8C-35) proceeds at pace past the abandoned MG Magnette K3 of Reg Parnell (#6) and Alta of Philip Jucker (#4) during the 1936 Donington Grand Prix at

Donington Park. Rising star Seaman had been enlisted by Swiss gentleman driver Hans Ruesch to share his ex-Scuderia Ferrari car in the 3 October event. Seaman's class was obvious,

although Ruesch was no slouch either, their combined efforts resulting in a three-minute margin of victory after almost four and a half hours of racing. From 22 starters, just six cars were classified at the finish.



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SCHLEGELMILCH/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

The unmistakable rumble of the Sauber-Mercedes C9's V8 was the soundtrack to a breakthrough in Kenneth Acheson's racing career. Two wins in the 1989 world sportscar championship and second at the Le Mans 24 Hours marked a remarkable return to the international racing scene for the Northern Irishman, who'd had to put his name back on the map in Japan after struggles with desperately uncompetitive Formula 1 machinery.

Acheson points out that the honour bestowed by Autosport readers in voting the C9 as the Racing Car of the Year in 1989 must make it special, and he's not wrong. Narrowly pipped to the 1988 crown, it was only once beaten in 1989 and Jean-Louis Schlesser defeated Acheson's regular co-driver Mauro Baldi to the crown.

Acheson regarded the C9 as "a pleasure to drive" but had to wait several months after Sauber's 11th-hour Le Mans withdrawal in 1988 to make his bow at Fuji. Acheson did enough to be asked back for 1989 and produced the race of his life at Suzuka, driving solo against Schlesser and Baldi from 30th to lead before team orders were imposed.

Wins came at Brands Hatch and Spa, and the title went down to the wire in Mexico, where an unfortunate crash trying to stay ahead of Schlesser's team-mate Jochen Mass decided the championship. "I had a really good weekend other than that!" he chuckles.



McKLEIN

"That whole year was great," adds Acheson. "Dave Price ran that car, I got on well with Mauro [Baldi], the team was just an incredibly nice place to be where they were competitive and very good at what they did."

"In my mind it was [Baldi's] car – he started the races and my job was to fill in the gaps. Whenever I was needed to make a difference, I think I was always able to do that. But certainly I was never somebody who would go and use up too much fuel, I was always sensible with fuel."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it's Suzuka 1989 that Acheson picks as his personal C9 highlight: "The two wins are nice to have, but finishing second at Suzuka was probably to me personally as good. My overriding memory is just I was bloody lucky to be able to drive it and to be able to drive in that team."

JAMES NEWBOLD

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Monaco, Indy and Le Mans special

WE REPORT ON TWO AND PREVIEW THE OTHER CLASSIC!



DUNBAR/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

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