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1 JUNE 2023

TRIPLE CROWN SPECIAL

Magic Max masters Monaco

Alonso, rain and collisions not
enough to stop Red Bull ace

'I clipped the walls
a few times but
that's Monaco'

MAX VERSTAPPEN

PLUS

Newgarden wins dramatic

Indy 500 in last-lap shootout

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Two classic races at either end of the speed spectrum

Two of motorsport's true classics provided plenty of drama last weekend, albeit very different kinds, and two brilliant winners.

For perhaps the first time this year, Max Verstappen and Red Bull faced a strong challenge from another team. Ferrari wasn't as quick as hoped around Monaco, but Fernando Alonso and Aston Martin were. With one sector to go of his final qualifying lap, Verstappen looked vulnerable, but a superb, wall-skimming run through the tight final corners denied Alonso pole by 0.084 seconds.

As Jake Boxall-Legge shows on page 16, Verstappen never really looked like losing, but Alonso and the tricky late conditions made the Dutchman work harder than he's been used to in the RB19. With one of Red Bull's trickiest weekends out of the way, the possibility of the team winning every Formula 1 race in 2023 seems that little bit higher.

Far less predictable was the Indianapolis 500. McLaren duo Felix Rosenqvist and Pato O'Ward *could* have won and Marcus Ericsson probably thinks he *should* have won, but it was Josef Newgarden who drank the milk after starting his Penske machine down in 17th. It wasn't a race without controversy (see p14 and p32), but the most remarkable thing was that Kyle Kirkwood's errant wheel found a high-speed route to *not* hit one of the 300,000 or so spectators...

This week we also preview another great motorsport event in our Le Mans 24 Hours guide. Roll on 10-11 June!



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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NEXT WEEK
8 JUNE

F1, WRC and BTCC action
A bumper issue of reports,
plus Ferrari's rich history
at Le Mans

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Red Bull Content Pool

PIT & PADDOCK

- 4 Le Mans: hydrogen top class by 2030
- 6 Williams to 'rebuild from foundations'
- 8 Tincknell secures Porsche LMDh seat
- 10 Merhi replaces Rowland at Mahindra
- 11 Spanish Grand Prix preview
- 13 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
- 14 Opinion: Charles Bradley
- 15 Feedback: your letters

RACE CENTRE

- 16 Monaco GP report and analysis
- 32 Newgarden wins controversial Indy 500
- 38 World of Sport: Formula 2; F3; DTM;
TCR World Tour; Porsche Supercup;
International GT Open

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 51 British GT Team Abba hits out at SRO
- 52 McGaughay makes race return
- 54 Drag record for Wallace; Ericsson wins
- 57 Opinion: Stefan Mackley
- 58 National reports: Donington Park;
Kirkistown; Silverstone; Brands Hatch;
Snetterton; Oulton Park; Jim Clark Rally

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 70 What's on this week
- 72 From the archive: 1955 Dutch GP
- 74 My favourite track: Tanner Foust

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

- 68 Special deals for Autosport

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LE MANS SUPPLEMENT

Our free 52-page supplement is your guide to the great race, with lots of interviews, plus we explain how it began and pick out things to look forward to at the 91st edition.

PIT + PADDOCK

Le Mans plots hydrogen top class by 2030

LE MANS 24 HOURS

A vision for all cars competing for overall victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours to be fuelled by hydrogen has been outlined by race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest. Club president Pierre Fillon wants it to happen by 2030, he told the world last weekend.

Fillon outlined a road map to introduce the alternative fuel at Le Mans and in the World Endurance Championship between 2026 and the start of the new decade during an appearance in Japan ahead of the Fuji 24 Hours in which Toyota competed with a hydrogen-powered Corolla. He made two key announcements on the new hydrogen class the ACO has been planning since 2018.

The introduction of a category, which is intended to create machinery capable of winning overall from the outset, has been pushed back by a year for a second time and is now set for a 2026 debut. He also confirmed that combustion-engined cars using hydrogen will be allowed to compete alongside the zero-emissions fuel cell machinery for which the class was originally envisaged.

"In 2026, we will have a hydrogen category at Le Mans at the same level as Hypercar," said Fillon. "At Le Mans it's important that we allow manufacturers to test different technologies: it has been the case for 100 years and we want to continue to do that. The idea is to introduce H2 progressively after 2026, and the idea in 2030 is to have 100% of the top category with hydrogen."

Fillon revealed to Autosport last year a desire to increase the remit of the hydrogen class to incorporate internal combustion engines and not just fuel cells, which produce electric power via the chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen. "The fuel cell was initially chosen for its potential, which is still relevant," he said.



"Today, the hydrogen internal combustion engine is also presented as a possibility for manufacturers. We are officially announcing that both technologies, fuel cell and hydrogen internal combustion engine, will be accepted and authorised for manufacturers wishing to enter the 24 Hours in the hydrogen category."

Fillon added that the Balance of Performance would be used to create a level playing field between the different technologies in use in the hydrogen class and Hypercar from 2026.

There was no comment on whether the hydrogen category will remain a one-make chassis formula. The original plan was that manufacturers taking part would only produce the fuel cell, with the chassis provided by a joint venture between Red Bull Advanced Technologies and French constructor ORECA.

Koji Sato, president of reigning WEC champion Toyota, reacted enthusiastically to the announcement from the ACO. "Today's announcement is a very significant one, and we are very positive about it," he said. "We're not ready to make any specific announcements of our own today, but I hope that in the near future we can make a good announcement with smiles on our faces."

Toyota has been racing a car known as the Corolla H2 Concept since 2021. A new version of the car introduced for this year is the first to run with the fuel stored in liquid rather than gaseous form.

The ACO has been experimenting with fuel cell technology in a joint venture with the Franco-Swiss GreenGT organisation under the MissionH24 banner. The second iteration of its prototype took part in the Road to Le Mans support race at the 24 Hours last year.

GARY WATKINS





Vasseur was Hamilton's team boss during F3/GP2 title seasons in 2005 and 2006

FERRARI/GP2 SERIES MEDIA SERVICE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Hamilton to Ferrari rumours get quashed

FORMULA 1

Lewis Hamilton has been joined by his Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff and Ferrari Formula 1 chief Fred Vasseur in rubbishing claims that the seven-time world champion has ever been in advanced talks to sign with the Italian squad for 2024.

Hamilton's current Silver Arrows contract is due to expire at the end of this season. In lieu of headlines from a cancelled Emilia Romagna Grand Prix,

spurious stories emerged that Hamilton was weighing up an offer from Maranello. That's despite him saying a new Mercedes deal was imminent and that he wanted to emulate Sir Stirling Moss by staying on as a marque ambassador until his dying day.

Vasseur quashed any rumours by saying: "We are not sending an offer to Lewis Hamilton. We didn't do it. We didn't have discussions. I think every single team on the grid would like to

have Hamilton at one stage; it would be bullshit to not say something like this."

Wolff acknowledged that the reports might have plausibly been drummed up to help Hamilton command a higher salary, but said: "I was never a millimetre in doubt that there was any discussion. Someone just felt to place that maybe in a way to play a role in what seemed to be negotiation. But it is not negotiation.

"[The story] did well – the

avalanche of headlines it created. There's nothing behind that.

How it is at the moment with us, we're in a super-happy position with Lewis. There weren't any stumbling blocks in the contract negotiations. We have a pact and we've had that since many, many years that we wouldn't talk to any other driver before we have taken a decision to stay together or not." He added that Hamilton had a contract extension ready "sitting on the table".

MATT KEW

RED BULL DECIDES NOT TO SELL ITS ALPHATAURI SQUAD

FORMULA 1

There are no plans to sell the AlphaTauri Formula 1 team, but its presence in the UK is to be expanded. Helmut Marko, motorsport advisor to team owner Red Bull, has finally shut down speculation and explained that the Faenza base will remain the main hub of the operation while the stature of its Bicester outpost, home to the aerodynamic division, will increase.

"The decision has been made," said the Austrian. "AlphaTauri will remain fully owned by Red Bull and will continue to be run as a junior team. The cooperation with Red Bull Racing will be closer, also in terms of cost cap and synergies."

Rumours concerning the future of the team, with a possible buyout seen as an easier way for a new entrant



such as Andretti to enter F1, had been exacerbated by ninth-placed AlphaTauri's poor form of the ground effect era. Its security was also questioned in the wake of the death last year of Red Bull co-founder Dietrich Mateschitz. New company CEO Oliver Mintzlaff was reportedly unhappy with the team's performance and the failure

to increase the brand identity of AlphaTauri via F1's popularity.

Driver Yuki Tsunoda reckoned: "The engineers and mechanics now can focus completely on the racing... It's the right decision for Red Bull because, with Toro Rosso, they have history. It's sad that you can just cancel those things."

CHRISTIAN NIMMERVOLL & MATT KEW

Williams to get ground-up rebuild

FORMULA 1

Williams boss James Vowles reckons that the team's championship-winning legacy and the deep pockets of its owner will attract high-calibre recruits as it is rebuilt "from the foundations". With the Grove squad tethered to the bottom end of the standings since 2018, former Mercedes chief strategist Vowles has been tasked with populating its depleted technical department as part of a "ground-up" development plan.

"[We're] clear on where we're going," said Vowles (right). "We're in a good state in terms of getting what we need in terms of technical structure in place. There's reorganisation going on all the time behind the scenes and pressure points really trying

to squeeze the team and understand where we have strengths and weaknesses."

Thanks to the funds of American investment firm Dorilton Capital, which bought Williams in 2020, Vowles has no fears that the lowly results of recent times might put off class-leading engineers from joining.

"The main thing is this: we're in a position that we can break what we have in existence, and rebuild it from the foundations, ground-up, into a solid mechanism," he said. "We have finance, we have investment that's available to us. We have the willingness and desire to even compromise this year and next as needed and as required in order to make sure that we make the jump back forward of the field."

"That's a tougher decision



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GALLOWAY

if you're racing for fifth or sixth in the championship but much easier when you're Williams. Then you have the legacy. It doesn't take long to

walk around and look at all the championship cars to realise the legacy this team comes with."

MATT KEW

Honda U-turn too late for Red Bull plans

FORMULA 1

Red Bull would never have created its own Formula 1 engine programme had its management known that Honda would return to the championship in time for the new power unit regulations coming into effect for 2026. This claim from team principal Christian Horner follows news that Honda will return as a works supplier to Aston Martin, reversing its decision that F1 is no longer incompatible with a push to electrify its road car range.

The Japanese manufacturer quit F1 at the end of 2020, just in time to watch its rebadged engines propel Max Verstappen to back-to-back drivers' titles and help Red Bull to the 2022 constructors' crown. The split also prompted the team to create its own Powertrains division, which helped absorb staff who would otherwise have been lost to cost cap restrictions. But Horner reckons the engine programme would



HONE

never have been given the green light had Honda intimated an intention to return.

"We've outgrown being a customer," said Horner. "For us to have the power unit on-site, integrated fully with the chassis and the synergies that creates with engine and chassis engineers next to each other, for the long term, the advantages are significant. We wouldn't have made that jump had it not been for Honda's withdrawal."

"In many respects, we should be grateful for them giving us that push to create our own engine facility. Would we have made the same decision knowing what Honda's

decision is today? Absolutely not. But we made it and we're committed to it."

Red Bull and Honda did re-enter talks in late 2022 over a possible collaboration for the 2026 engine rules, which ditch the complex and expensive Motor Generator Unit – Heat. Their discussions focused primarily on the hybrid components of the engine. But Horner cited "too many compromises probably from both sides" for the breakdown in negotiations, before Red Bull used its New York City launch of the RB19 to reveal a primarily commercial deal with Ford.

MATT KEW



INDY 500 The hugely popular Tony Kanaan finally bowed out of his glittering IndyCar career last Sunday with 16th place in the Indianapolis 500 on a one-off ride with the Chevrolet-powered Arrow McLaren team. The 48-year-old Brazilian, winner of the IndyCar title in 2004 and the 500 in 2013, vowed that this really is the end after a host of almost-retirements in the past. After qualifying on the third row, his race featured a dramatic pass of Scott McLaughlin with two wheels on the grass on the run to Turn 3, and in the final-lap restart he found himself battling his great pal and rival of almost three decades Helio Castroneves, something he said meant “I was crying in my helmet”. “We go out in style – mission accomplished,” Kanaan added. **Photos by Motorsport Images**

Qatar chief says track upgrade makes race an F1 ‘World Cup’

FORMULA 1

The Losail circuit has unveiled a major upgrade programme ahead of October’s Qatar Grand Prix. Organisers now reckon that the event will become the country’s annual ‘FIFA World Cup’ of Formula 1. After stepping in to host a round during a COVID-hit 2021, the country signed a 10-year deal with F1, but 2022 was skipped to avoid a clash with the football finals.

Despite noise of a switch to a Doha street circuit, the championship is set to remain at Losail for some time since the small pit garages built for MotoGP and the temporary team hospitality units have been replaced by a new pit and paddock complex.

“The World Cup was finished already in 2022,” said Amro Al-Hamad, CEO of the Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation and the Losail circuit. “We are the new World Cup for the next 10 years. We’ve collected a lot of lessons learned during the World Cup... Everybody now is very eager to share their experiences with us to make sure that we deliver an even higher calibre event than the World Cup was.”

As part of the development work, a new race control and media centre have been constructed. Grandstand capacity has been upped to 52,500 while the track has been resurfaced. But the actual layout has been left alone.

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Tincknell to race Porsche hypercar

 Tincknell celebrates
 2021 Petit Le Mans win

WEC

Two-time Le Mans 24 Hours class winner Harry Tincknell will return to the prototype ranks in the German Proton team's Porsche 963 LMDh in the World Endurance Championship. The Briton has been named in the car for its debut at Monza in July and will drive for the remainder of season.

Tincknell is moving over from Proton's GTE Am squad with which he first raced at Le Mans in 2021 and contested the full WEC last year. He will join Porsche factory driver Gianmaria Bruni, who was announced in the LMDh when the WEC entry was published in January. No third name has so far been revealed, though it appears that Proton

could run a two-driver line-up.

"This has been a bit of an open secret, but I'm excited to get back in a prototype for a proper programme," said Tincknell, whose previous start in a sports-racer came in an LMP2 ORECA-Gibson 07 run by PR1/Mathiasen at the 2022 Daytona 24 Hours. "It's what I've been dreaming of since I stepped out of the Mazda after winning Petit Le Mans at the end of 2021."

The victory in the Road Atlanta 10-hour race was the last of six victories scored by Tincknell across a four-year stint with Mazda in the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

"It will be good to drive with Gimmi [Bruni]," continued Tincknell. "I remember

when I started racing with Ford in the WEC [during a stint spanning the 2016 to 2018-19 seasons] he was at Ferrari and the standard-bearer in GTE Pro and now I'm racing with him. We're both pumped up to get going."

The #99 Proton 963 will take the place of the #88 Porsche 911 RSR that Tincknell has raced in the opening three rounds on the entry for the Monza 6 Hours on 9 July. Mathias Beche comes into the Prema team's #63 LMP2 ORECA alongside Daniil Kvyat and Doriane Pin in place of Lamborghini factory driver Mirko Bortolotti, who will be racing on the Monza weekend at the Norisring DTM round for SSR Performance.

GARY WATKINS

Villeneuve replaced in Vanwall Le Mans squad

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Jacques Villeneuve, the 1997 Formula 1 world champion, has been replaced in the Vanwall Racing Le Mans Hypercar line-up for this month's Le Mans 24 Hours, with 2021 Sebring 12 Hours winner Tristan Vautier brought in to take the French-Canadian's seat for the double-points round of the World Endurance Championship.

Team boss Colin Kolles explained that the decision to bring in Frenchman Vautier

alongside Tom Dillmann and Esteban Guerrieri aboard the solo Vanwall-Gibson 680 was twofold: "He had not enough mileage and he has become a father again. The scheduled date was during Le Mans, but the baby came early."

Villeneuve has had limited seat time aboard a car he tested only once prior to the season's start. His daughter was born last Friday after the announcement of Vautier.

Kolles stated that Villeneuve remains scheduled to return to

the team for the Monza WEC round at the start of July. "At the moment, yes [he will drive in Monza], but it depends on the situation after Le Mans," he said.

Villeneuve drove one day of a three-day test when Vanwall tested at Monza together with Ferrari and Porsche early last month. Kolles explained that there could be further testing before Monza for his big-name driver to get more seat time, depending on the outcome of Le Mans.

GARY WATKINS



IN THE HEADLINES

SCHEIDER BACK IN WRX

Two-time DTM champion Timo Scheider is back in the World Rallycross Championship for 2023 following a one-year absence. The 44-year-old German has returned to the Munnich Motorsport stable with which he has spent most of his rallycross career to drive a SEAT Ibiza RX1e. This is Scheider's first taste of the electric era of WRX, although he is a regular in Extreme E.

WILLIAMS MAN TO HYUNDAI

Ex-Williams Formula 1 technical director Francois-Xavier Demaison has returned to his roots in the World Rally Championship with a move to Hyundai. The Frenchman will work closely with WRC programme manager Christian Loriaux in developing the i20 N Rally1 car, and have a strong involvement throughout the marque's motorsport efforts. Demaison played a key role in Volkswagen's WRC domination from 2013-16, and joined Williams to work with former VW sporting boss Jost Capito before both stepped down late last year.

MIYATA'S TOYOTA WEC ROLE

Super Formula frontrunner Ritomo Miyata has been recruited to Toyota's World Endurance Championship squad. A Toyota-contracted driver since 2016, the 23-year-old (below) has joined what is being called the WEC Challenge Scheme that will include simulator and other development duties. He is the latest Japanese driver to be groomed for a full-time seat in the WEC squad after Ryo Hirakawa, who joined the race squad last year, Yuji Kunimoto and Kenta Yamashita.



YUKIOYOSHIMI/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Scott-Watson (right) with
Clark and McBain at
Charterhall in 1958

Ian Scott-Watson 1930-2023

OBITUARY

Ian Scott-Watson, who died last Wednesday at the age of 93, will be best remembered as the man who encouraged, mentored and managed the early racing career of his fellow Borders farmer Jim Clark. A competitor himself, he soon came to realise that his close friend had a rare talent to drive very fast.

With other members of the Scottish Borders farming communities, Scott-Watson founded Ecurie Agricole, which evolved into the Border Reivers team, the members of which pooled their resources to provide first a Jaguar D-type, then a Lister-Jaguar and later an Aston Martin DBR1/300 with which Clark made a lasting impression on all those who saw him in action.

Another of Scott-Watson's cars was a Lotus Elite of which he took delivery in December 1958 in time for Clark to challenge Lotus founder – and no mean racing driver – Colin Chapman's similar car in a race at Brands Hatch on Boxing

Day. After leading most of the way, Clark tripped over a backmarker at Druids on the last lap and Chapman nipped past to win. The Lotus chief was impressed and, little more than 12 months later, Clark was a member of Team Lotus and on his way to becoming a double world champion, hailed as one of the greatest drivers of all time.

When the airfield track at Charterhall ran into difficulties in the 1960s, Scott-Watson, Jock McBain, John Romanes and others were instrumental in developing the Ingliston race circuit at the Royal Highland Showground, near Edinburgh. With a lap distance of 1.03 miles, it may not have been the longest track in the British Isles, but it kept an active venue alive in Scotland until Knockhill came along.

Although a farmer by inheritance, Scott-Watson's ambition was to be an architect, and he founded the Border Design Centre that won the prestigious *Daily Telegraph* Housing Design Award for traditional houses in 2000.

IAN TITCHMARSH

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BLANEY ADDS TO PENSKE'S WINNING JOY

NASCAR CUP

Ryan Blaney handed team owner Roger Penske another milestone victory to follow last Sunday's Indy 500 success by claiming the rain-delayed Coca-Cola 600 NASCAR Cup Series round on Monday night at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

In a race marred by 16 cautions, Blaney got away on the final restart with 20 of 400 laps remaining and held off William Byron by 0.663 seconds. Blaney's Ford and Byron's Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet had traded the lead multiple times during the race, with Byron having the advantage of the #1 pitstall, which repeatedly gave him the lead off pitroad. Blaney ended up leading the most laps (163), including the final 26.

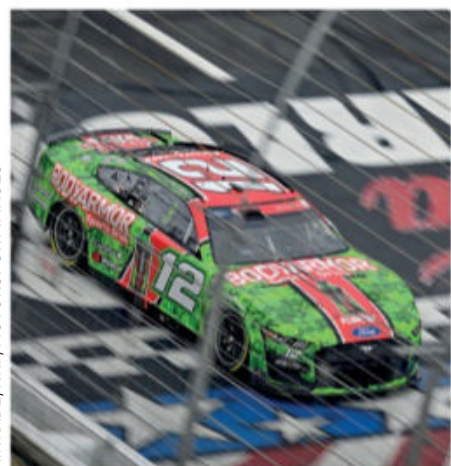
The win is the first in a points-paying race for Blaney since his August 2021 victory at Daytona, although he did win last year's non-points All-Star Race at Texas Motor Speedway. It was also Penske's first Memorial Day weekend Indy 500/ Coca-Cola 600 double.

"Obviously, Memorial Day weekend means a lot, growing up here watching dad [NASCAR veteran Dave Blaney] run this race for a long time," said the victor (below). "It's so cool just to be a part of it, let alone win it."

Martin Truex Jr finished third in his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, while Bubba Wallace rallied to fourth ahead of his 23XI Racing Toyota team-mate Tyler Reddick.

Kyle Busch, Ricky Stenhouse Jr, Chris Buescher, Austin Dillon and Zane Smith completed the top 10.

JIM UTTER



KINRADE/NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



INDY 500 IndyCar veteran Graham Rahal replaced Stefan Wilson in last Sunday's Indy 500 after the Briton, who had comfortably made the grid, fractured a vertebra in the Monday practice session six days before the race when he smashed into the Turn 1 wall in a collision with Katherine Legge. Rahal had been the only one of the 34 contenders to fail to qualify, but transferred from the family Rahal Letterman Lanigan team to Wilson's Dreyer & Reinbold seat. Rahal finished 22nd after starting late due to a battery issue. **Photo by Farmer/Motorsport Images**

Merhi replaces Rowland in FE



FORMULA E

Roberto Merhi has replaced Oliver Rowland at the Mahindra Formula E squad for this weekend's round in Jakarta.

The Spanish ex-Formula 1 driver has stepped in after the Briton (above) and the Mahindra team came to a "mutual agreement" that means he will miss the remaining seven races this season. Rowland registered just two points finishes in 2023, his second campaign with the squad. He has been a full-time FE racer since late 2018, with one race win to his credit.

Merhi, who participated in the Berlin Rookie Test with Mahindra earlier this year, said: "I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity and I'm determined to make the most of it. Formula E is very different to any of the other series I've raced in, so the learning curve will be steep. But I feel ready, excited and up for the challenge."

The team has yet to confirm whether Merhi will compete in the remaining races this season. Indian Jehan Daruvala is Mahindra's official reserve driver, but the Jakarta round clashes with his Formula 2 commitments at Barcelona.

Another newcomer for the Indonesian double-header is David Beckmann, who is standing in for Andre Lotterer in the Andretti Porsche line-up. The German has acted as Andretti's reserve driver for the past two seasons and was always expected to fill in for Lotterer, who will be with Porsche's LMDh team in preparation for the Le Mans 24 Hours, a race he has won three times.

"Formula E is an incredibly competitive championship, and I'm excited to showcase my capabilities in this unique racing series," said ex-F3/GP3 race winner Beckmann, who drove for the factory Porsche FE team in the Berlin Rookie Test.

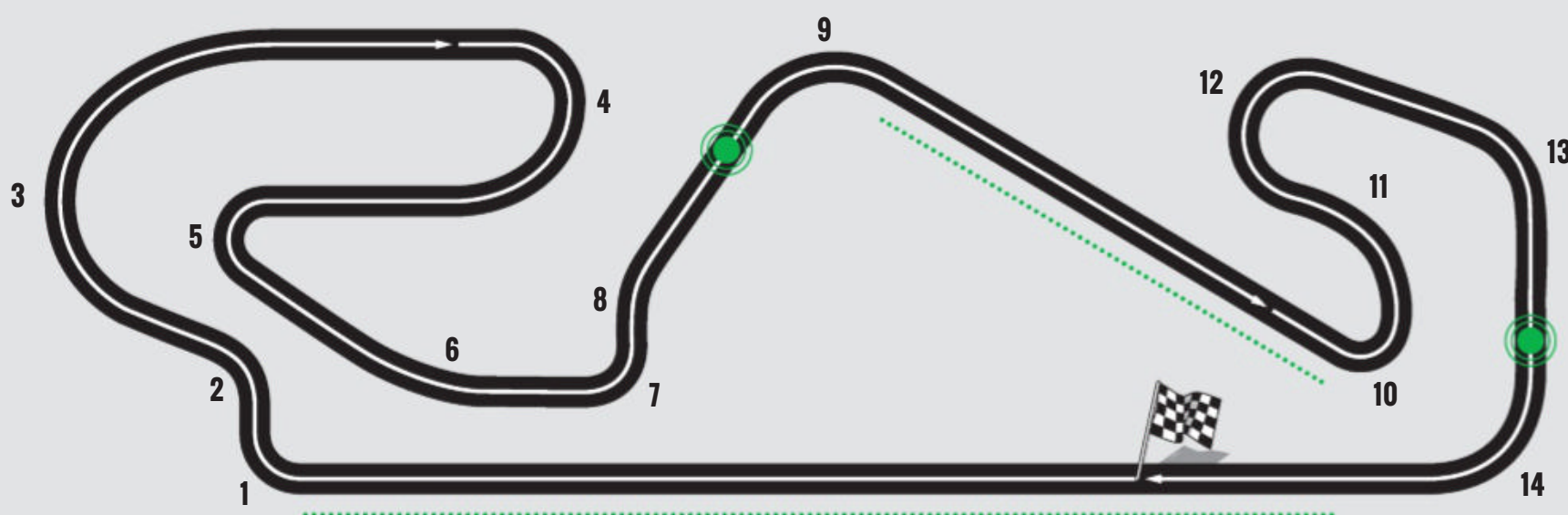
STEFAN MACKLEY

F1 SPANISH GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Barcelona
Length 2.894 miles
Number of laps 66

DRS detection
 DRS zone



UK START TIMES

Friday 2 June

FP1 1230 FP2 1600

Saturday 3 June

FP3 1130

QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 4 June

RACE 1400

CATCH THE RACE LIVE

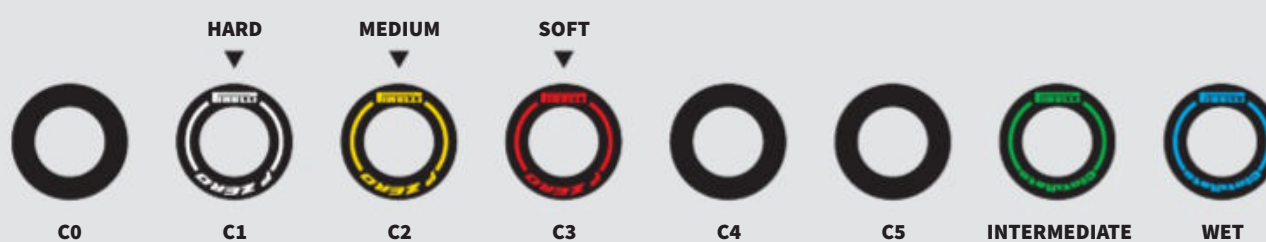
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CHANNEL 4 1830

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	144
2	Perez	105
3	Alonso	93
4	Hamilton	69
5	Russell	50

Constructors

1	Red Bull	249
2	Aston Martin	120
3	Mercedes	119
4	Ferrari	90
5	Alpine	35



BARCELONA STATS

Previous winners

2022	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2021	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2020	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2013	Fernando Alonso	Ferrari

2022 POLE POSITION

Charles Leclerc
 1m18.750s

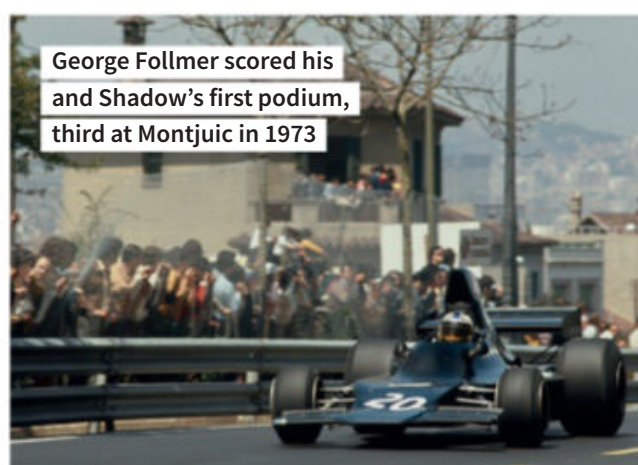
POLE LAP RECORD

Valtteri Bottas
 1m15.406s (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD

Max Verstappen
 1m18.149s (2021)

* track layout has
 changed for 2023



Laps led

Michael Schumacher	411
Lewis Hamilton	317
Mika Hakkinen	185
Fernando Alonso	149
Kimi Raikkonen	137
Max Verstappen	117
Nigel Mansell	111
Sebastian Vettel	77
Nico Rosberg	76
Jacques Villeneuve	73

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The true value of Monaco

The street circuit's long-debated suitability for modern grand prix racing can be forgotten during the eye-popping spectacle of qualifying

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The shock as he crossed the line came first. In a split second it turned to elation — an upset really was on. Finally, it was euphoria — cheering, fist-clenching delight. Esteban Ocon was leading a 2023 Formula 1 Q3 in an Alpine and in with a chance of pole. It was nothing like we've seen so far this season.

Sure, Fernando Alonso launching past Sergio Perez off the line in Jeddah and the two Mercedes drivers doing likewise to Max Verstappen in Australia was a nice surprise for the neutral. But this was surely tempered by the knowledge that Red Bull's impressive top speed would have its drivers back to their rightful — thanks to being the class of the 2023 field — places soon enough. This time, though, Red Bull was in a bind for the first time this year, its forecasted season clean sweep in real jeopardy. All thanks to the unique power of Monaco pole.

Perez had wiped himself out of contention with a Q1 crash at Ste Devote, unable to live with the slightly loose rear end the RB19 required to be at its quickest through the right-hander and then punch on up the hill through Beau Rivage. And, in Q3, Verstappen had continued his perplexing habit of producing an underwhelming opening run, which left him vulnerable to any crashes from rivals preventing further improvements, *a la* Miami.

But Verstappen wasn't done — and nor were Charles Leclerc or Alonso. It was all spellbinding, captivating, hyperbolic stuff.

“What about changing the layout, heading further into the city, to create overtaking spots?”

For Verstappen this was as he roared to a third 2023 pole even after thwacking the pitwall in a desperate run to the line. These are feelings that had been missing from F1 this year so far surely for all bar partisan Red Bull fans.

And it was all being showcased rather gloriously. Monaco has its ongoing issues with hosting a top-drawer global level sporting event — fans paying large for tickets don't have much of a view from the few grandstands and hillside gatherings, the paddock is too cramped and *everything* is too pricey.

But this time, the TV production of the Automobile Club de Monaco was not in charge of the images being beamed around the world. Now, the promoter's in-house team was in charge of camera positioning and style around the 2.1-mile track. The results were impressive. Tweaked camera placings, particularly around the

Swimming Pool complex, seemed to show how quickly the cars were being chucked between the barriers even more than usual, paired with some classic shots. The gradient of the full climb from Ste Devote to Massenet was shown better this time, as well as the bumpy, narrow challenge of traversing Casino Square at full chat.

The helicopter shots of the Monaco GP were the true success. These showed better than anything how the track is threaded like an exquisite, needlessly expensive ribbon around the tight streets, shops, bars and apartments. Added in was the scale of modern cars — long known to be too wide and long to be good for overtaking here. But now it can be seen exactly how tricky it is to hustle a beast more akin to pleasure cruiser size than a beefed-up go-kart around Monaco without touching the unyielding steel limits.

On Saturday afternoon, the drivers' eye visor cams revealed again how little the aces can see of this track as they take what Alonso called “an uncomfortable level of risk” to seal glory. “When there were talks that maybe Monaco was not on the calendar for the future — it doesn't sound right,” Alonso added. “It has to be, always.”

That is the first takeaway from last weekend's superb Monaco qualifying. It's such a demonstration of how good these drivers are. Alonso was referring to the threat of Monaco falling off the F1 calendar during its latest contract negotiations. But there are annual calls for the event to be dropped by those who cannot bear a processional Sunday. Sometimes that just happens. And there are north of 20 other races to enjoy overtaking — even if, yes, this is harder than in 2022, thanks in part to the cars' floor edges being raised to eliminate porpoising.

Monaco is an epic test of driver skill. They love it and F1 fans should all embrace the result of a dull race as the price worth paying for the Monaco qualifying magic. Perhaps there are changes worth considering if we must. An option that has been floated in these pages before would be to make qualifying the top points-paying event at Monaco and not even bother with a race. That's rather extreme and also does away with the added endurance challenge of surviving 78 laps between the walls on race day. But what about changing the layout — heading further into the city, which is ever expanding on land dredged from the Mediterranean — to create overtaking spots? It was mooted again last weekend, by Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. That approach would appear to somewhat satisfy the two sides of what is a tedious yearly debate.

But the fact that we're celebrating a qualifying session reveals a far bigger problem. With one team winning everything, on course to produce the most dominant campaign in F1 history and with few other chances apparent for it to be stopped in 2023, the championship has quite the competition spectacle problem. ❧

➔ P16 MONACO REPORT



Why the Indy 500 wasn't fixed

Conspiracy theories about the outcome of IndyCar's blue-riband race are plainly ludicrous – and fly in the face of what makes Roger Penske tick

CHARLES BRADLEY

In a land that's spawned perhaps more than its fair share of conspiracy theories – take your pick from JFK, the moon landings, 9/11 and what Donald Trump's hair is made from – last Sunday's Indianapolis 500 produced a new one: it was 'fixed' to allow track and series owner Roger Penske's driver Josef Newgarden to win.

To countenance that belief, you'd have to completely discredit why Penske is in this sport and what the multi-billionaire gets out of it. He first came to the Indy 500 as a fan with his father in 1951, and saw Lee Wallard lead 159 of the 200 laps to win by almost two minutes. And he came to the 107th edition, 72 years later, to see a good and fair race as he did then (although the winning margin was a tad closer).

Sure, Penske wears a lot of hats – \$3.1 billion can buy you a lot of them – and he freely admits: "I took my track owner hat off and became a car owner there the last lap."

But he stood down from his passion for calling strategy on the pitbox to avoid a conflict of interest, separating himself from any competitive contact with his team or officials. TV showed where he was in those closing laps, stood atop his Pagoda building with the best view in the house, along with his son Greg and right-hand man Bud Denker.

To suggest he instructed race control to allow his car to win... that's just nuts. He carries a huge amount of heft in IndyCar circles, more than anyone else, but I simply don't believe that would ever happen. And why would he want it to? I know he's set a target of 20 Borg-Warner trophies for his team, but not at all costs. He gets a buzz out of beating his old friend Chip Ganassi, but by fair means and not foul.

"I had nothing to do with it, obviously," he affirmed of the final red flag/restart decision. "We have a group that is certainly the officials of the track, and to me, we've said this before, we want to see a chequered flag, not a yellow flag [to end the race]."

It's a mantra that IndyCar has stuck to for a while now, following in NASCAR's footsteps without going as far as the 'overtime' you get in stock car racing. And Penske wants it, because he wants to see a good race with an exciting finish, and what we got is exactly as prescribed – as IndyCar explained:

- IndyCar does everything it can to finish under green flag conditions but only to the prescribed race distance.
- IndyCar's rules provide options to achieve this goal, which is repeatedly communicated to competitors prior to every event.
- Each red flag was issued to provide the opportunity for a green flag finish, and to give the AMR IndyCar safety team time to properly return the track to racing conditions.

The only thing that bugged me about that last red flag was the time that it took to throw it. After the previous wreck involving Pato O'Ward, Simon Pagenaud and Agustin Canapino, it took less than a minute for race control to hit the red button. But for the final shunt, as cars came to the green with four laps

"Human beings, not machines, doing their best to perform their duties under pressure"

to go, for some reason it took twice as long.

That meant there was only time for the cars to complete one flying lap to complete the race, coming straight from the pitlane to do so and deleting the usual requirement for a proper warm-up lap. That's the only similarity that I see here to the infamous 2021 Abu Dhabi GP Formula 1 decider, where race director Michael Masi played fast and loose with the lapped cars rule to get a final lap in.

I did have visions of the cars piling into Turn 1 at 220mph on worn and cold tyres that lacked requisite pressure, pounding into the wall one by one, but fortunately it was all good and we got a clean and exciting last lap. Afterwards, the defeated Marcus Ericsson complained that it was "unfair and dangerous". The latter was disproved (thank goodness) and as for the former, well, he's got quite the vested interest there...

Imagine if the roles had been reversed... They so nearly were, since Ericsson only took the lead from Newgarden at the final yellow, so you could argue that if he hadn't done that by a tiny margin – again, judged by race control on the evidence of timing loops – then it would have been a complete switch of how the last lap would have played out. Would it have been a fix then?

As with most conspiracy theories, they depend on a highly sophisticated web of Machiavellian forces at play to make them work. Although I've not been in IndyCar race control myself, I've seen at first-hand how it works in the Daytona 24 Hours – it's a couple of experienced guys making the calls on the fly as they see them, based on information they're receiving from all around the venue. Human beings, not machines, doing their best to perform their duties under the pressure of running a race watched by over 300,000 in person at Indianapolis and millions on TV around the world. It's as simple as that. 🏁

➔ **P32 INDY 500 REPORT**

YOUR SAY

Please let's make sure we make scrutineering better and not get into the world of 'the database says no'

GRAHAM RIDGWAY

Scrutineering under scrutiny

It was interesting to read about the changes and improvements to scrutineering and 'the database', which overall is a really good thing (Club Autosport, 18 May). My general experience is that scrutineering is a pretty random, hit-and-miss affair.

My plea, though, especially with a database, is not to screw it up (to use the vernacular). The very thought of a national database (being in the trade, as it were) is fraught with pain. Just one example: how do you identify a car and make sure you are talking about the same one each time?

The photo in the article is beautifully ironic, that's me in the stripy jumper next to the Reynard #88 arguing the toss with a scrutineer about Hans/tether/helmet compatibility! At the time I always took the published compatibility chart to each scrutineering to try and save the 'yes it is, no it isn't' debate that we seemed to have every time.

So please let's make sure we make scrutineering better and not get into the world of 'the database says no'.

And finally, thanks to all the scrutineers for their efforts, even if we've not seen eye to eye every time over the years!

Graham Ridgway

By email

Pau Grand Prix isn't so grand

A single sentence gives the result of the Pau Grand Prix run as a round of the French F4 Championship (Pit+Paddock, 18 May). What a sad loss of status for this historic race at an iconic venue.

The track winds its way round the beautiful and challenging streets of Pau in the foothills of the Pyrenees and has a history as long and for some years as storied as Monte Carlo. In the 1930s the track was visited by the mighty Silver Arrows. And into the 1960s it was a non-championship Formula 1 race won no fewer than four times by Jim Clark [strictly speaking, two of Clark's Pau Grand Prix victories were in F2 machinery, but your point, like Clark's wins record, still stands – ed]. It then became a blue riband round of the Formula 2 and 3000 championships with famous winners like Jacques Laffite and Juan Pablo Montoya.

As recently as five years ago it was a prestigious European



Formula 3 race but since that championship was hoovered up by the tedious assimilation of top single-seater series into the F1 support card, Pau has struggled to find a race worthy of its prestigious past.

While F1 and its support card prosper, historic races like this have been stripped of their status. Better to call time and cherish its history than see it devalued by being run for a junior category like Formula 4. Such is progress.

Stephen Chipping

By email

Turning the tide?

Stefano Domenicali asking Formula 1 drivers to not be selfish is rather reminiscent of the story of King Cnut versus the tide.

Graeme Innes-Johnstone

Elland


Have your say, get in touch


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RACE CENTRE

With race win number 39, Verstappen has beaten Vettel's tally at Red Bull

#MONACO GP

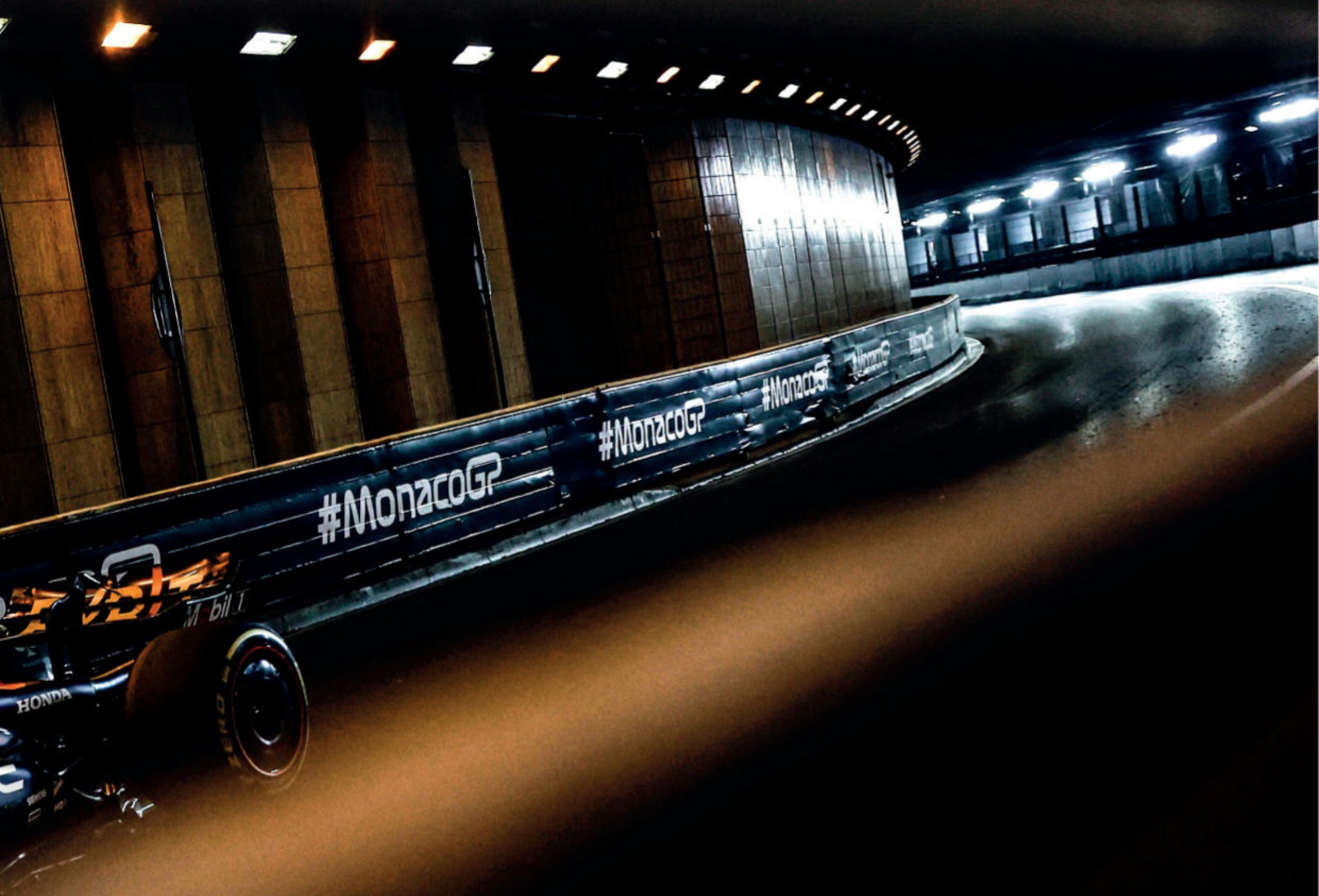
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FORMULA 1

VERSTAPPEN RISES ABOVE THE MONACO CHALLENGES

The tight confines, Fernando Alonso and the weather all threatened, but Red Bull's reigning world champion proved masterful once again

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY



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IMAGES

Alonso said pre-race that an immediate lunge for the lead was unlikely – and so it proved



For me it was very clear that the track, on that lap we stopped, was completely dry, apart from Turn 7 and 8,” Fernando Alonso reflected, discussing his call to pit for medium tyres at the end of lap 54 of an unusual Monaco Grand Prix. He’d discussed the weather forecast with his Aston Martin engineers, and the conclusion was that incoming rainfall would amount to nothing more than “a small shower”. Expecting it to pass, the team stuck to its guns with its medium-hard tyre strategy, and Alonso was expecting a few laps of clinging on at the Fairmont Hairpin and Portier before the rain subsided.

Then the heavens creaked open a little more. More of the circuit was awash, and Alonso was forced into quickly conceding defeat by collecting the intermediate tyre on the next lap, following race leader Max Verstappen into the pits and emerging over 20 seconds behind.

The race had been a tepid affair until that point, and the battle for victory was all but over as Verstappen coaxed his medium compound tyres far beyond any expected drop-off in performance. Alonso, furnished with hard tyres as he and Aston Martin opted to take the opposite strategy to the Red Bull ace, had put his chips on the mediums falling off sooner over the course of the 78-lap race.

Instead, the hards proved slightly susceptible to graining, particularly on the rear-left corner. The medium compound was not immune to this, and Verstappen had to go through his own graining phase, but proved more consistent in keeping tyre temperature within the correct window. Starting on the hards also made it much more difficult for Alonso to draw alongside Verstappen into the first corner, with Aston Martin’s strategists hoping to play the long game and benefit from the softer tyre once fuel loads had burned off.

Regardless, it was a proactive strategy that Alonso lauded among the post-race media obligations. It placed Red Bull on the defensive and forced Verstappen into going long on the medium compound to mitigate the damage that could be done with the hard-medium offset on lower fuel loads.

Alonso had admitted on the previous day that mounting an

overtaking move into Ste Devote would be unlikely anyway, particularly since the Red Bull RB19’s leisurely approach to starts earlier in the year had been dialled out. He settled in behind the Dutchman, making sure to cover off any possibility of a fast-starting Esteban Ocon attempting a charge down the inside.

Although DRS is largely ineffective in Monaco, owing to the short start/finish stretch, Verstappen made certain to build up more than a second’s gap in the first trio of laps to counter any possible threat from Alonso, and continued to extract more pace from his softer tyres to continue his breakaway in earnest. It became apparent that the harder tyres were suffering more, even by the 10th lap, and Alonso was given the green light to use up more of the rubber at the front to protect the

“IT WAS DRY AROUND 99% OF THE TRACK. SO I STOPPED FOR DRIES, AS THE FORECAST WAS A SMALL SHOWER”

rears. Tyres then worried Alonso, who broadcasted his fears that he may have a front-right puncture, but was given the all-clear from his race engineer. Verstappen’s lead continued to blossom into something bordering on the unassailable. By the end of the 20th lap, the championship leader was 8.5s up the road; five laps later, it had swelled to an 11.8s advantage.

Verstappen was having his own tyre concerns, however, and reported that the front-left wasn’t looking “pretty” as he continued to press on in his opening stint. Traffic was beginning to loom large in his eyeline, appearing to resemble the loosely managed congestion outside of the circuit that required a robust approach to navigate. Luckily, his team-mate Sergio Perez was among them to grease the wheels, with the Mexican enduring a torrid day in Monaco a year after his win. He let Verstappen go free, but the traffic allowed Alonso to close up since he had yet to reach the procession.



By the time Alonso caught the tailback, the lead had slipped to just 5.6s, but it was now the Spaniard's turn to clear the backmarkers and Verstappen had eventually broken through. He managed to get through with a modicum of greater fortune, getting to within about nine seconds of Verstappen once he had progressed beyond the hurdles.

Rain, however, entered the thoughts of the race engineers, and after half-distance dark clouds began to suffuse the formerly azure skies. It became a question of when, not if, the rain would begin to fall, and this forced those yet to stop into hanging on and waiting it out until inclement weather had sufficiently affected the field of play. The Verstappen-Alonso dyad remained relatively static at the front, save for a few fluctuations either side of the nine-second mark, until the 50th lap when the first peppering of precipitation began.

Verstappen's engineer Gianpiero Lambiase told his driver to expect "drops of rain in Turns 6 to 8", while George Russell encountered "spitting in Turn 3". It remained uncertain at this juncture whether conditions would deteriorate and necessitate a swap to intermediate tyres, but the intensity of the downpour swiftly tempted some of the backmarkers to make an exploratory switch to the green-walled Pirellis. This prompted the discussions on the pitwall between Alonso and his team, and enough of the circuit was dry in the Oviedo-born driver's opinion to persist with the planned strategy on lap 54. Speaking after the race, he felt that it was still the right call with the information available.

"It was completely dry around 99% of the track," he recalled. "So I stopped for dries, as the weather forecast was a small shower. We had a lot of margin behind us to put on the dry tyres and, if necessary, the inters. Maybe it was extra safe, I don't know. But in that minute and a half that it took to go through Turns 5, 6, 7 and 8, it changed completely. It was very wet when I got to those corners..."

Hardly dressed for the conditions after being caught out by the rain, Alonso had to stop again. Verstappen held on through the deluge to make his own swap to intermediates on the following tour, and Alonso followed him in to ditch his lap-old mediums. The odds were now considerably stacked in Verstappen's favour, barring any misfortune across the 23 remaining laps. »

QUALIFYING



"I knew going into the last sector I was down on [Fernando Alonso]," Max Verstappen recalled after qualifying. "I had to push flat-out, risk everything to get back the lap time..."

On the exit of Tabac, Verstappen was two tenths of a second down on Alonso's provisional pole time. The Spaniard's lap had prematurely sent the Aston Martin garage into raptures, but Verstappen had one final card left to play as he charged through the final corners around the Monaco harbour. Nailing his lines through the Swimming Pool and Rascasse corners, Verstappen even made contact with the wall as he sailed through Antony Noghes to complete his lap. In that sector, he'd recovered the arrears and crossed the line with extra change to sink Alonso's hopes of a first pole since 2012 by just 0.084s.

Q3 had been breathless. Verstappen had set the initial benchmark to get a time on the board, but it was quickly surpassed by Alonso and the Ferrari duo as they elected to take more risks in the initial forays on the track. As a harbinger of things to come, Verstappen's next effort was short of Alonso's in the opening pair of sectors, but he overturned the initial advantage by half a tenth to lead the crop ahead of the second batch of runs.

Esteban Ocon, enjoying the balance of his Alpine A523 on fresh tyres, then fired his way to the top of the times. Charles Leclerc was next to occupy the much-coveted provisional pole but was then beaten by Alonso's 1m11.449s, as the two-time champion hoped to live up to Aston Martin's billing as one of the favourites around the Monte Carlo circuit. But Verstappen still had one more lap to complete. The two-tenths deficit flashed up on his steering wheel, but it was less of a concern given Red Bull's prowess in the final part of the lap. So it came to pass: Verstappen collected a 1m11.365s to cap off a thrilling qualifying session.

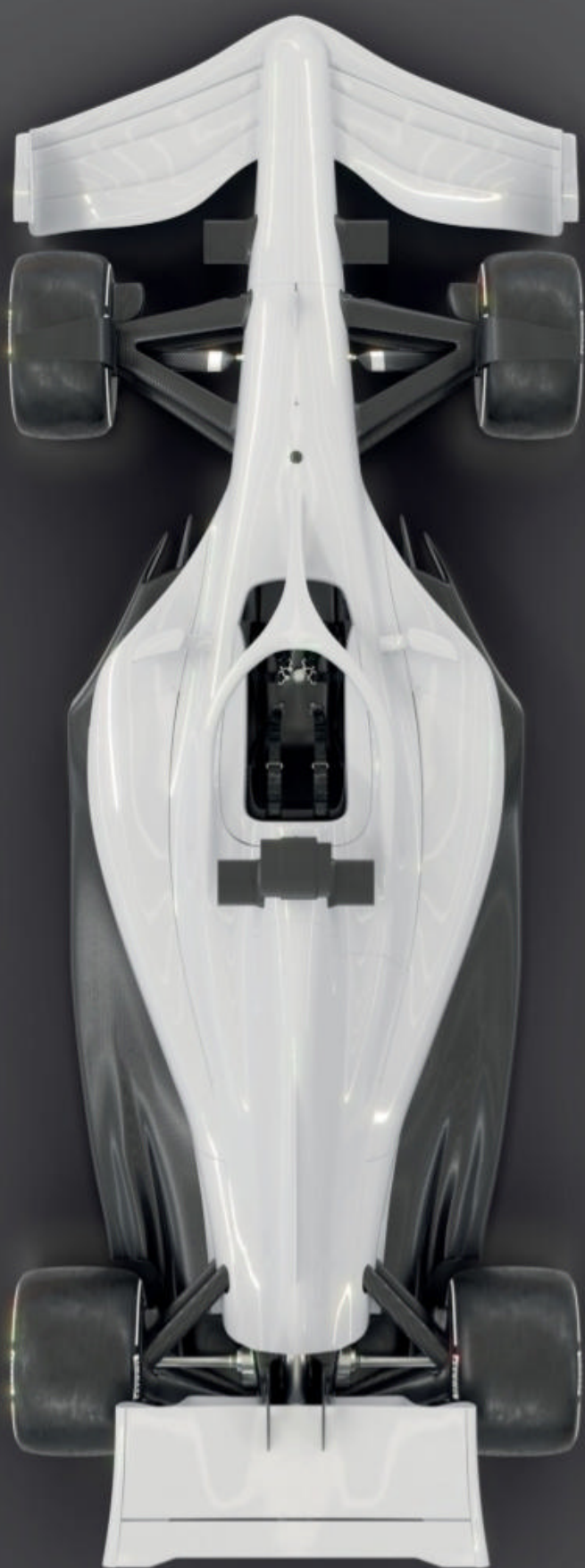
"I think even if it feels very close to pole position, we have to be happy," Alonso sanguinely stated once the drivers had got their breaths back. The third-placed Leclerc was less content with Ferrari's performance, and even more so once he'd copped a penalty for blocking Lando Norris in the tunnel in Q3. This promoted Ocon, who had been quietly impressive throughout the Friday and Saturday sessions, to third.

Red Bull's day was hardly clean, however, when Sergio Perez severely dented his own hopes with a crash at Sainte Devote in Q1. His side of the garage, socket wrenches in hand, was forced to prepare for a start from last as the other side celebrated a famous pole position.

"RED BULL'S DAY WAS HARDLY CLEAN, HOWEVER, WHEN PEREZ DENTED HIS OWN HOPES WITH A CRASH IN Q1"



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It could be viewed that Aston Martin's initial pit call killed off any hopes of allowing Alonso to break the Red Bull monopoly over race victories, but this is not only a gross oversimplification of events, but it detracts from Verstappen's own stunning efforts in extending his medium-tyre stint. Ultimately, there were very few options that could offer Alonso a lifeline.

Had Aston held out for one more lap, Alonso would have stopped at the same time as Verstappen and at most preserved the status quo. The engineers dressed in British Racing Green, however, had detected that Alonso's tyre temperatures were dropping to a point where the hard tyres were becoming ever more perilous to hustle around the rapidly dampening circuit. Hanging on for another tour of the track would have expanded the deficit to Verstappen, which had already grown to 13.3s as the initial drizzle began to harm the precariously balanced hard-tyre temperatures.

The projections on the Aston Martin pitwall were that, in taking the intermediate tyres a lap earlier, Alonso would have potentially lost a hatful of positions had the rain persisted at its earlier rate. It's true that the intermediates are malleable on a drying track, as the grooves wear down to form pseudo-slicks, but this is only viable when most of the cars are on a similar compound. On a barely wet track, they simply burn up and leave a driver vulnerable to those persisting with slick tyres. It was a leap of faith that the team felt it didn't need to take.

Aston Martin team principal Mike Krack expanded on those estimates, where the indication was that the hot temperatures on the French Riviera would help the circuit to clean up quickly once the rain had subsided. "Honestly, we thought we could go to the end with the mediums because it will dry quickly," the Luxembourger added. "But



An on-form Ocon ably
parried every attempt
by Sainz to get past



Alonso had to return to the pits after just one lap to swap his mediums for inters

“I THINK I HAD LANDO IN MY GEARBOX AS WELL SO AT ONE POINT I WAS LIKE, ‘WELL, I DO NEED TO SPEED UP A BIT’”

then we misjudged a bit that it was raining because in this part of the track where we are standing it took very long before it started to rain. And also this area, it rained the least. So probably that was a bit a misjudgement, because we thought also that the inters would wear down massively in this part of the track.

“At the end of the day, it was a conscious decision to go on the mediums. And we saw then a lap later that it was not going to work.”

Once Verstappen and Alonso had completed their stops and run through their out-laps, the difference between the two sat at around 23s. But this swiftly began to dwindle, dropping by nearly 5s over the next five laps, fuelling hopes among the F1 neutrals that Alonso could cross the Rubicon and stage an unlikely comeback. Not so; this was simply a case of Verstappen trying not to take too many risks amid the conditions. After all, he could afford to lend Alonso a few seconds while he ensured that his intermediate tyres were warm enough for the job.

Verstappen admitted that, with the recently lapped Lando Norris behind him knocking on the door, he was inspired to pick up the pace a little bit more. Balancing risk versus reward was vital and, despite a few hairy moments, he felt secure enough to pick up the pace. “It was just that I had a big lead and I didn’t want to risk trying to be the same pace or faster and then end up in the wall,” he said. “You have to be a little bit more careful. It’s just about not taking too much risk but at the same time, of course not driving too slowly.

“I think I had Lando in my gearbox as well so at one point, I was like, ‘Well, I do need to speed up a bit.’ But yeah, it’s not a comfortable situation to be in, and it’s like that to run here in the wet. I had to change a few things on the steering wheel as well to just give me a bit of a better balance, and that definitely helped as well.”

There was a moment where, without a quick jolt of opposite lock, Verstappen could have lodged his car in the barrier at Portier as the slippery track surface briefly loosened the reins. He explained later that light contact at a couple of points with the wall reminded him to tighten up his driving, rather than easing off, to ensure that he could keep temperature in his tyres when the conditions were at their wettest.

After those initial laps where the interval came down, Verstappen’s renewed push ensured that he could rebuild and stabilise the gap at around 20s. Over the remaining 15 laps, as the rain eventually stopped and a drying line began to form, he kept up the pace and turned the >>

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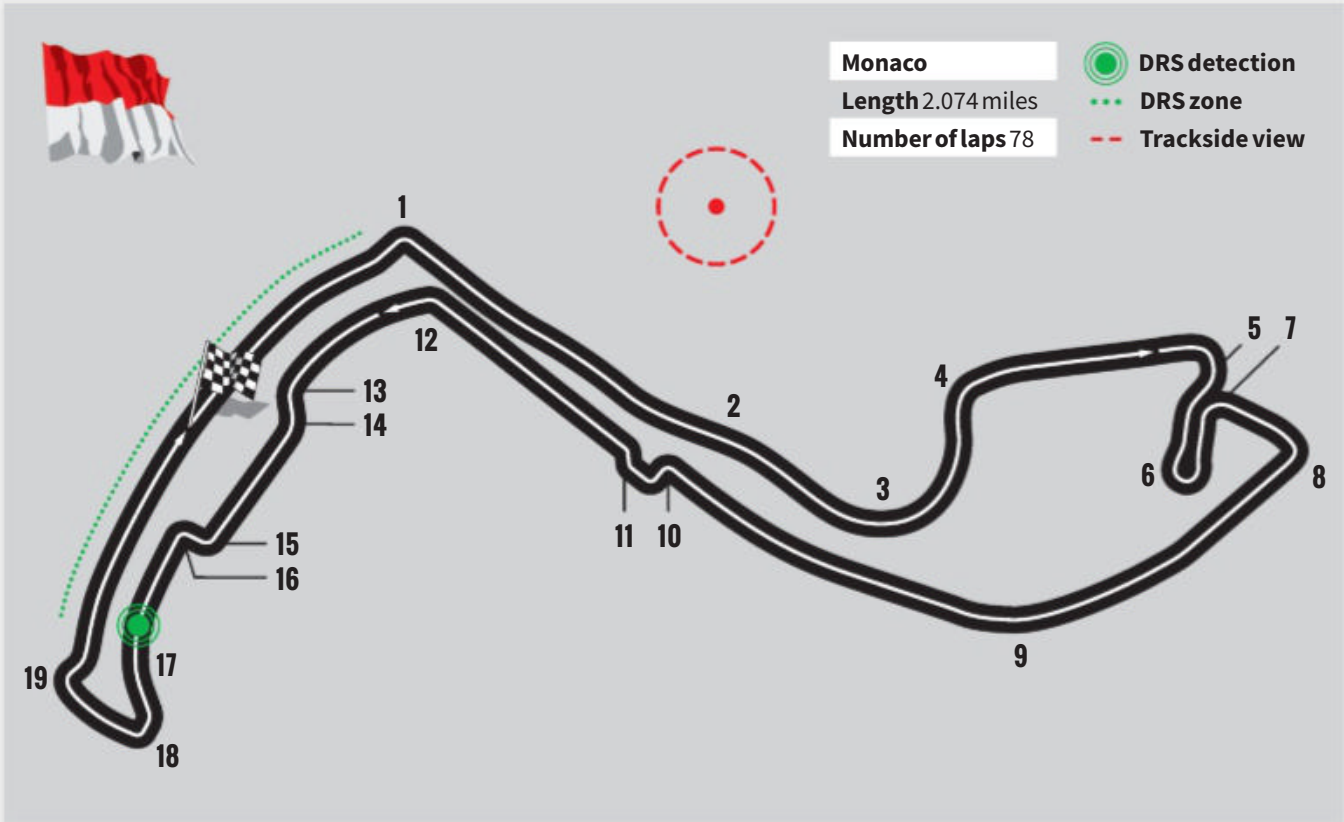
TRACKSIDE VIEW

The trigger finger tickles the downshift pedal, bringing the car into fourth gear. Turn left and hit the accelerator on the way out of Tabac, carry as much speed as you dare into the first Piscine chicane as you work your way up to sixth gear. A cigarette paper barely separates the car from the inside wall at the third-gear second chicane overlooking the harbour, as the car is then faced with a short blast of full throttle before almost full lock is applied for the challenge of the Rascasse.

That's the way the 20 Formula 1 cars foxtrot through the final corners of the Monaco circuit, suffused by bright sunshine radiating from the French Riviera's azure skies.

It's glorious to watch, and everyone attacks the array of tight corners with gusto. Even Valtteri Bottas, with a slow Mercedes ahead of him, is unfazed by the traffic and launches his assault on the Swimming Pool section of the course. Esteemed *GP Racing* editor Stuart Codling is tasked with leading Autosport to Monaco's holy grail: the Fairmont Hairpin. Venturing forth from Tabac, we wander along the harbour and briefly park up at the Nouvelle Chicane to watch the cars fire out of the tunnel and slam on the anchors.

There's a clear difference in aggression between many of the drivers. Carlos Sainz and Nico Hulkenberg nibble at the kerb



“IT’S GLORIOUS TO WATCH, AND EVERYONE ATTACKS THE ARRAY OF CORNERS WITH GUSTO”

and fleetingly ride the corner on three wheels, while the McLaren duo takes a wider berth when the reliveried MCL36 comes to play. Home favourite Charles Leclerc, however, makes an inexplicable wrong turn and cuts the corner having carried too much speed into the second-gear left-right hurdle. Before we pack up and head to the tunnel, Bottas

attempts to tame the chicane with little fear. His Alfa Romeo, however, bucks under him like a startled steed and the Finn is forced to corral his car into complying with his demands.

The walk through the tunnel is punctuated by periodic ear-covering as the cars flash past. It's muggy, and the low light exposes the sparks kicked up by 20 chariots scraping along the ground. Then there's a pause in the ear-splitting drive-bys; Hulkenberg took his Nouvelle Chicane aggression too far and clipped the inside wall, and the resulting debris forces a brief red flag to proceedings.

This allows us time to reposition and make our way through one of the many rabbit warrens of Monaco. Tunnels, stairs and elevators carry us to the other side of the track – and, after a walk through narrow footpaths, we're finally able to watch the dying moments of the session from the hairpin. The drivers skate down the hill from Mirabeau and jab on the brakes, George Russell accosted by Oscar Piastri in his wake as they wind full lock into the steering rack. It's a phenomenal sight to conclude our search for Monaco's jewel in the crown.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





Ocon provides a fresh face on the podium alongside 2023 regulars Alonso and Verstappen

wick up to an extent that Alonso simply could not cope with. The gap therefore grew to around 28s, with Alonso perhaps more concerned with bringing the car home rather than trying to overcome the rapidly decreasing odds.

Amid the changing conditions, Verstappen's drive was exquisite barring the handful of wall-tickling excursions that could have derailed his victory charge with an iota of added momentum. And sure, the result was one that has become all too familiar in 2023, but the injection of rain was a nonetheless welcome addition to a race that threatened to fizzle out with little fanfare had it remained dry. With his 39th win in a Red Bull, Verstappen ominously surpassed four-time champion Sebastian Vettel's tally from his stint with the Milton Keynes squad.

The chaos could also not jeopardise Ocon's phenomenal efforts in converting third on the grid into his third F1 podium, under overwhelming pressure from a pre-rain battle with Carlos Sainz and enduring a post-rain, two-pronged attack from Mercedes. Sainz's multiple bids to leapfrog the Frenchman throughout the first half of the race bordered from the clumsy to the bizarre, particularly as Ferrari attempted to goad Ocon into making a premature pitstop with at least two dummy pitcalls. Ocon fell for neither "box to overtake Ocon" message from Sainz's engineer Riccardo Adami, and nor did he yield on-track despite the Spaniard's efforts to try to prise an opening.

"CLEARLY THE CAR FELT MORE ALIVE AND I HAD A LOT MORE CONFIDENCE IN IT TO START THE WEEKEND"



Struggling on mediums, Sainz slid off into the Mirabeau escape road

On the brink of the race's metamorphosis from dry into wet, Sainz picked out his best chance and tried to stalk the Alpine heading out of the tunnel. He attempted to make a move at the Nouvelle Chicane, but Ocon easily held the corner and Sainz was forced to take to the escape road. Their fight ended when the Ferrari squad decided to delay their pitstops until lap 55. Charles Leclerc nipped past Sainz on their way to the pits as the Spaniard briefly slid down the Mirabeau escape road, and got first service at their double-stack stop to pull the Madrid-born driver out of the ring for third.

The Mercedes duo, through their properly executed double-stack on lap 54, undercut the Ferraris as a result. Ocon was in touching distance, and both Lewis Hamilton and George Russell soon wound the Normandy native in as they hoped to celebrate the success of the W14's new upgrades with a podium. But Russell was hamstrung by a five-second penalty for rejoining the circuit unsafely — the reverse from his slip at Mirabeau in the wet had taken him into the path of the hapless Perez.

Angling for a podium, Russell politely asked Mercedes if the team could switch he and Hamilton around to cover off the 5s loss. But with Leclerc some way off the pair, Mercedes was happy to retain the order and allow Hamilton the chance to attack Ocon. But every time Hamilton drew closer, Ocon threw enough of a defensive shape to make Hamilton take to the wetter off-line section.

The pressure eventually relented, and Ocon chalked up his third F1 podium in the round closest to a home race now that the French GP sits on hiatus. Following reports of discord in the Alpine ranks, Ocon's podium could not have come at a better time, but any bellwether of progress after a less-than-stellar start to 2023 will have to wait until this weekend at Barcelona.

"Clearly the car felt more alive and I had a lot more confidence in it to start the weekend," he said. "We did bring some updates that were supposed to be quite small but everything we had went in the right direction today. I definitely felt good and I hope that this is the start of something, but I think we need to keep our feet to the ground, see where we are next weekend. Barcelona will be a good test."

Those hoping for the last vestiges of a title battle in 2023 to emerge had pinned their hopes on two elements: inclement weather and a charge from Alonso. But neither element yielded the requisite threat to Verstappen over the Monaco GP, even if both looked threatening over various points of the race. And if those conditions can't stop Verstappen from continuing his roll-over of the field this season, is there anything else that can? ❧

NEXT F1 REPORT

SPANISH GRAND PRIX
8 JUNE ISSUE

PLENTY OF DRAMA BUT NO POINT FOR HAAS

“The race was lost in qualifying, and we knew that if something special doesn’t happen, we cannot get into the points.”

Gunther Steiner and his Haas team understood that they would have to try a gamble or two to make progress from Kevin Magnussen starting 17th and Nico Hulkenberg 18th, and indeed the duo were rarely far from the action across the race.

On lap one, after jumping his team-mate and Valtteri Bottas, Hulkenberg barged past Logan Sargeant to claim 16th at Mirabeau, but was later penalised with a five-second penalty. This was served at his lap-54 stop for intermediate tyres, just as the rain came after he had largely been running back in 16th. But the FIA found Hulkenberg not to have been stationary for long enough before being serviced, and so he was given a 10s addition (after he stopped again for wets on lap 59) to his race time that dropped him behind Sergio Perez and into 17th.

Magnussen made a clean pass on Sargeant at Mirabeau to rise to 15th early on, after which he was involved in a scrap with Lance Stroll and Perez – the Red Bull tagged him at the chicane. But it was in the rain that Magnussen came to prominence as he stayed out the longest before pitting for full wets. The initial gamble backfired when he hit the wall at Rascasse and needed a new front wing before being pulled from the action six laps from home.



Perez apologises to his team for terrible weekend

Sergio Perez had to front up and own his awful Monaco weekend, the 2022 victor ending up 16th and shipping 25 points to Red Bull team-mate Max Verstappen in the title standings.

It all started going wrong in qualifying, when Perez smashed the left side of his RB19 into the Ste Devote exit barriers as it “caught me by surprise, just getting that rear out of shape, especially really late into the corner”.

“It’s a way of how we were trying to get the lap time out of it,” Perez added, after getting shuffled down to last in Q1 and on the grid. “But I just went over the limit and I became a passenger. There was nothing else I could do.”

In the race, Perez enacted Red Bull’s only strategic option of stopping immediately to fit the hard tyres and then unleashing his pace in clear air towards the back to such an extent that team boss Christian Horner

claimed he “actually got back within a pit window of [third-placed] Esteban Ocon”. But then Perez got trapped behind the yet-to-stop tail-end pack and entered a new period of misery.

Shortly after being lapped by Verstappen approaching half distance, he clashed with Lance Stroll at the chicane in a move that was never on, with the Aston on the inside having let the leader through. Two laps later, still yet to let the Aston Martin back past, he clipped Kevin Magnussen’s Haas as they accelerated from the chicane and needed a new front wing. Such was the state of his race that, in the rain, Perez stopped three further times, twice for intermediates and once for full wets, to see if it was worth Verstappen trying those compounds.

Perez was only boosted to 16th by Nico Hulkenberg’s penalty, got lapped twice and concluded to his team at the chequered flag: “Sorry guys, it was all my fault.”

“LAUGH OR CRY. MIGHT AS WELL LAUGH!”

Lance Stroll, after enduring a dismal race featuring multiple clashes battling over 15th place for much of proceedings before retiring on lap 54.



Q&A

PIERRE GASLY
ALPINE DRIVER**How are you feeling after finishing seventh behind Charles Leclerc?**

I'm really happy for the team, it's a fantastic weekend for us with a podium, also congratulations to Esteban [Ocon]. On my race, I'm disappointed and confused because when we're running P3 [Gasly ran long on hards as others pitted ahead] and I'm going green and we know the rain is coming, I was in the perfect position to just stay long. I called on the radio I wanted to stay long and benefit from the conditions. Then we boxed and two laps later the rain came. We need to review



why we boxed because there was P3 and P4 on the table for the team and it would have been a couple more points.

What was the racing like in the rain?

It was exciting. A couple of big moments, the grip was extremely low. Poor visibility, blue flags need to go between cars and debris here and there. The paint, a couple of pedestrian crossings were horrendous, so even in fifth gear you had wheelspin up the hill. It was very tricky but reminded me of last year at the start of the race. It was fun.

Did it ever feel dangerous?

I think there was one lap where

coming down to Turn 5 [Mirabeau] it was like, 'Something bad is going to happen.' It was depending on the part of the track, some areas were drying, and had dry patches, and some others were very wet.

How are you looking forward to the next race in Spain?

From two races ago in Baku where it was terrible, to two races after having our best weekend [in a row] I think it's quite a lot of things. There are equations we've got to answer but the car has evolved quite a lot. We have brought new parts to the package and it clearly seems to bring a lot of performance. So, that's positive and I'm looking forward for next week.

**NORRIS AND PIASTRI CHARGE IN WET FOR McLAREN**

McLaren ended up with a double-points finish from what was a high-profile event for the team, with both Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri passing AlphaTauri's Yuki Tsunoda late on.

Some of the focus on McLaren centred on its livery paying homage to its Indianapolis 500, Monaco GP and Le Mans 'triple crown' successes. Add to that, the team had to work hard to fix Norris's left-front suspension to get him out in Q3 after a late Q2 wall strike.

He finished 10th there and headed Piastri on the grid. McLaren split its strategies, with Norris starting on the medium tyres and Piastri the hards as they chased Tsunoda through the long dry period and the start of the wet. Norris reckoned he lost "about 20 seconds of race time" pitting a few laps before the rain fell, which was because McLaren was expecting the precipitation to be light and new hards would be enough. When this was proved otherwise, he had to stop again and fell behind Piastri.

Norris caught and passed his team-mate with a neat dive at Rascasse. Then in the closing stages, with Tsunoda struggling with intermittently fully working brakes (an issue that eventually had him off at Mirabeau and tumbling to 15th), the McLarens jumped ahead with outside-line DRS-assisted passes into Ste Devote on successive laps.

**Bold Alfa Romeo misses out as climb up the order falls short**

Alfa Romeo made a series of decisive calls in a bid to climb from lowly starting spots, which came off, but not enough for the team to score points.

Valtteri Bottas led the line after starting 15th, with the Finn gaining a spot thanks to Lance Stroll's lap-one clashes. From there he chased Nyck de Vries in 13th and that looked set to be as high as the Alfa could

climb. But being the first of the drivers to stop for intermediates gained Bottas time and a spot, further boosted to 11th by Yuki Tsunoda's Mirabeau off. That also handed a position to Zhou Guanyu late on, after he had stopped to switch softs for hards on lap one and followed Perez for much of the race. Coming in one lap after his team-mate for inters also helped his rise from 19th to 13th.



THE RACER

Pit talk from the HRDC



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DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA

LONG-AWAITED 'B' MERC BREAKS COVER

The anticipation that surrounded Mercedes' wide-ranging updates for the Monaco Grand Prix was palpable, and the team was strong-armed into trialling them for the first time in the principality following Imola's cancellation.

The egregiously named 'zero-pod' sidepods were discarded following a year and a half of trying to make them work, and instead the squad opted for a design more in line with that used by many other teams on the grid.

The pre-event technical notes provided by Mercedes explained that the new design offered more overall downforce, with flow cleaned up towards the rear wing. Discussing the previous design, trackside engineering manager Andrew Shovlin explained that although it had offered promises of progression, the team had to admit defeat at some point: "For us it was just that that was where we saw the most opportunity and we went down that route. There were elements of it that were useful, but you can't fully understand the benefits of another concept unless you put it on the tunnel and you work on it for months. It was just that sort of acceptance that we've had a good go at this concept. It's good in a sense that we've taken that pain [of switching] now and

the benefits of what we've done well, that's going to come more in the future."

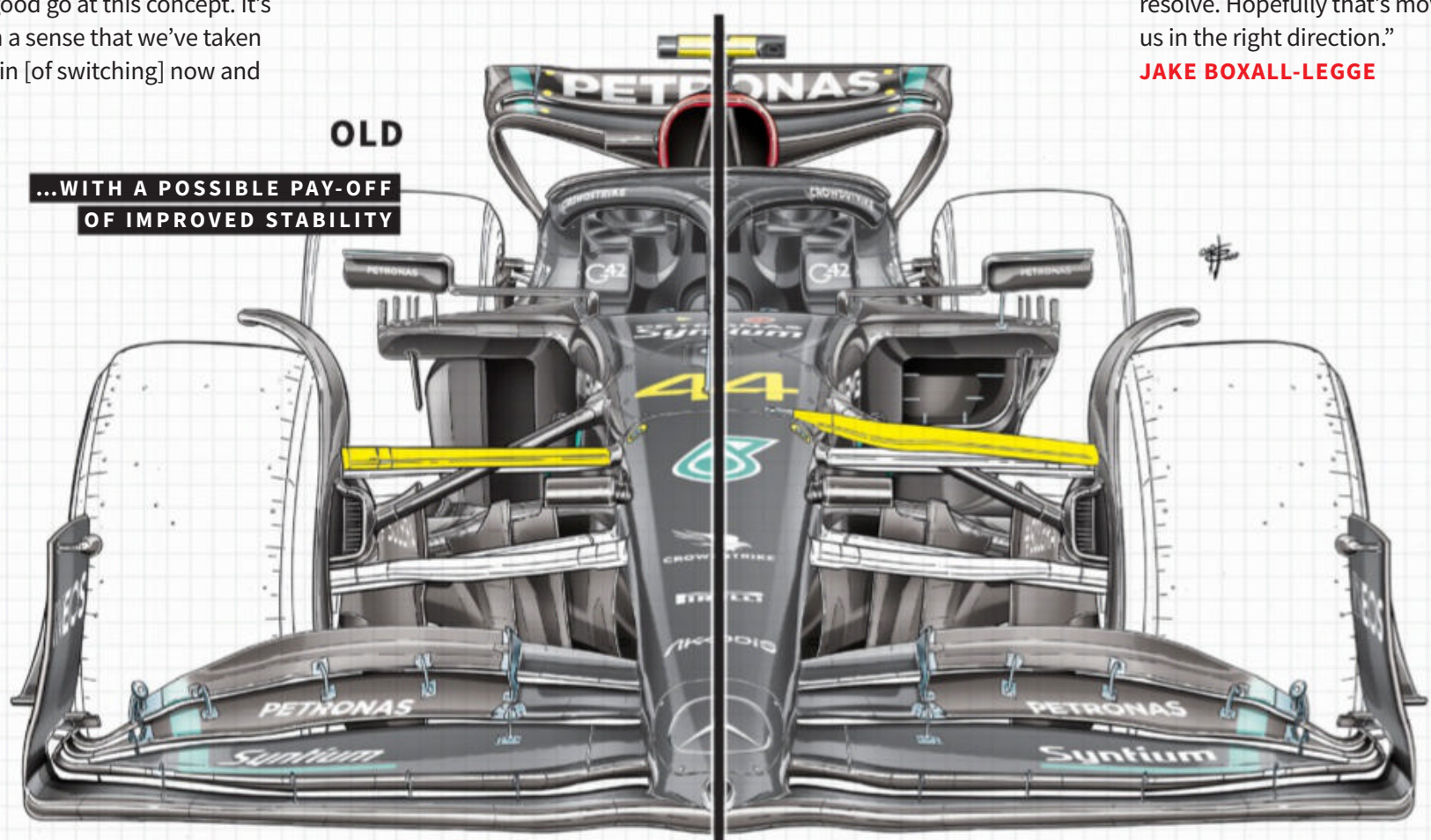
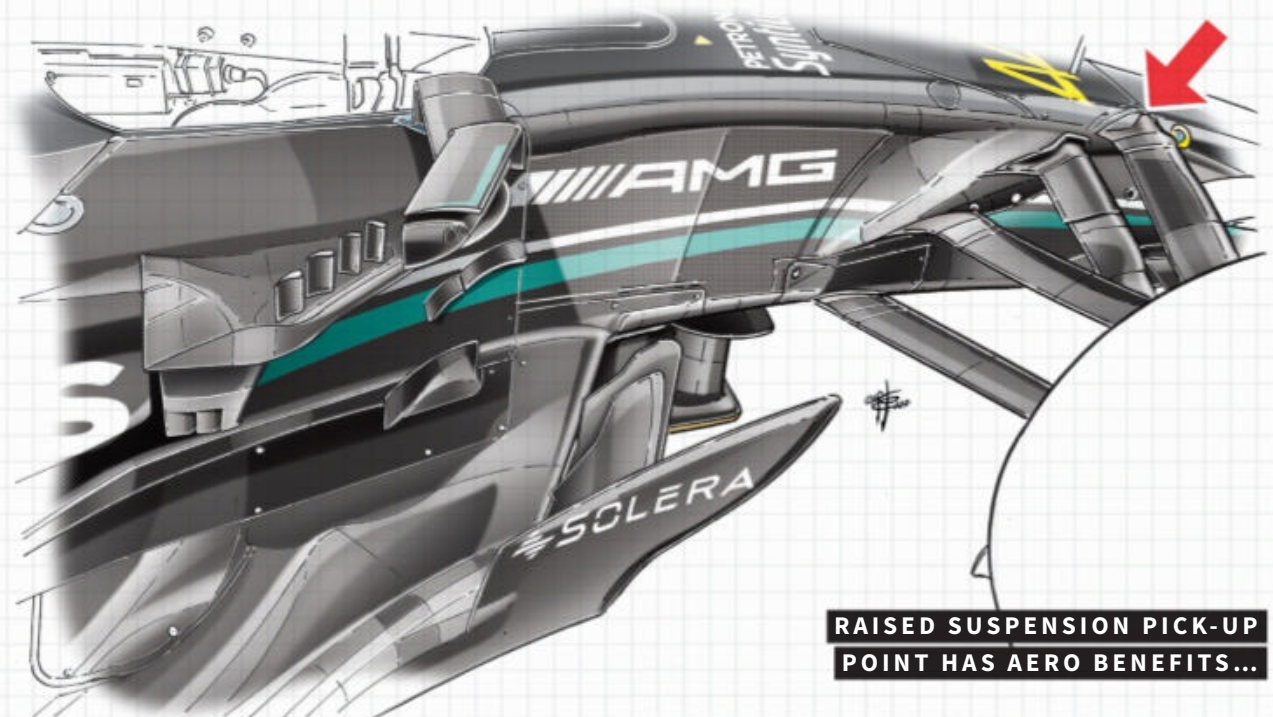
The W14 also features a revised suspension arrangement, where the pick-up point attached to the chassis has been raised. Although this will confer an aerodynamic benefit, and the pre-event update notes stated that it "results in improved positioning of wishbone wake, which in turn improves onset

flow into the sidepod improving cooling performance", there's a possibility that the revised position of the front upper wishbone leg can help the team more easily achieve a more stable platform for the floor.

The positioning and inclination of the wishbones can offer, if correctly laid out and depending on the centre of gravity, anti-dive qualities that can ensure that the underbody aerodynamics work

consistently. "It is a case of trying to play with those geometries on the aero platform to try and get a bit more stability in the car," Shovlin explained. "It's probably given us more freedom because the issue that we always had prior to that was getting good front end when you needed it at the apex, good entry, stability when you're hard on the brakes and turning in. That compromise was always something that we couldn't resolve. Hopefully that's moved us in the right direction."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



20 Perez #11
1m13.850s

18 Hulkenberg #27
1m13.279s

16 Sargeant #2
1m13.113s

14 Stroll #18
1m12.623s

12 de Vries #21
1m12.428s

19 Zhou #24
1m13.523s

17 Magnussen #20
1m13.270s

15 Bottas #77
1m12.625s

13 Albon #23
1m12.527s

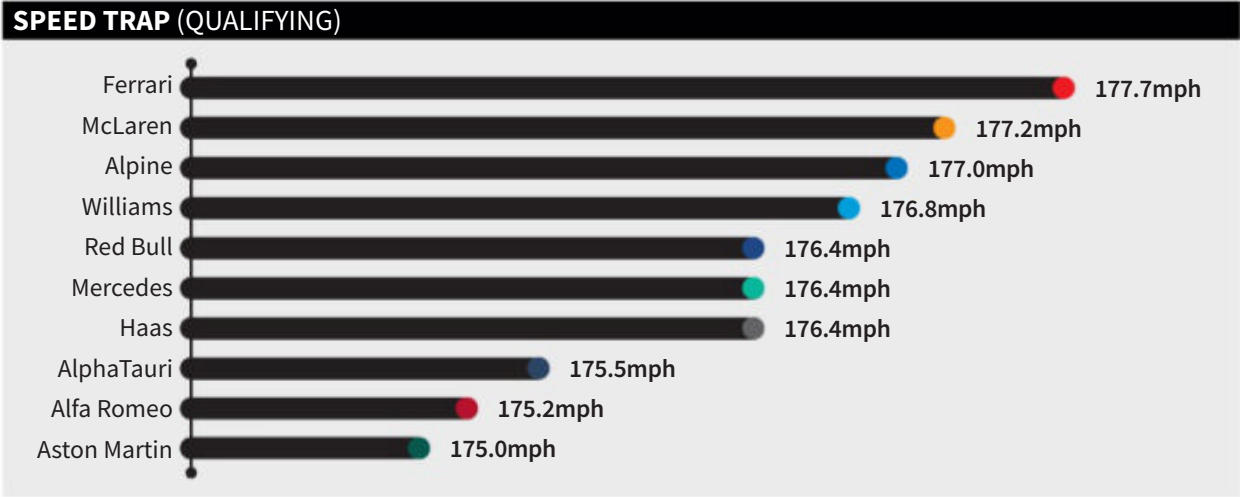
11 Piastri #81
1m12.395s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sainz	1m13.372s	1	Verstappen	1m12.462s	1	Verstappen	1m12.776s
2	Alonso	1m13.710s	2	Leclerc	1m12.527s	2	Perez	1m12.849s
3	Hamilton	1m14.035s	3	Sainz	1m12.569s	3	Stroll	1m12.942s
4	Perez	1m14.038s	4	Alonso	1m12.682s	4	Sainz	1m13.261s
5	Leclerc	1m14.093s	5	Norris	1m12.906s	5	Norris	1m13.396s
6	Verstappen	1m14.244s	6	Hamilton	1m12.960s	6	Gasly	1m13.453s
7	Norris	1m14.467s	7	Perez	1m12.991s	7	Leclerc	1m13.475s
8	Ocon	1m14.585s	8	Bottas	1m13.050s	8	Hamilton	1m13.486s
9	Stroll	1m14.653s	9	Gasly	1m13.089s	9	Ocon	1m13.496s
10	Albon	1m14.666s	10	Ocon	1m13.162s	10	Bottas	1m13.521s
11	Bottas	1m14.718s	11	Stroll	1m13.185s	11	Russell	1m13.590s
12	Magnussen	1m14.725s	12	Russell	1m13.191s	12	Magnussen	1m13.624s
13	Tsunoda	1m14.820s	13	Zhou	1m13.354s	13	Hulkenberg	1m13.650s
14	Gasly	1m14.866s	14	Magnussen	1m13.457s	14	Alonso	1m13.697s
15	Russell	1m15.066s	15	Hulkenberg	1m13.520s	15	Tsunoda	1m13.738s
16	de Vries	1m15.083s	16	Tsunoda	1m13.641s	16	Zhou	1m13.772s
17	Piastri	1m15.192s	17	de Vries	1m13.663s	17	Sargeant	1m13.851s
18	Sargeant	1m15.557s	18	Piastri	1m13.673s	18	Albon	1m13.930s
19	Zhou	1m15.684s	19	Albon	1m14.217s	19	Piastri	1m13.998s
20	Hulkenberg	1m15.785s	20	Sargeant	1m14.238s	20	de Vries	1m14.187s

WEATHER Clear, air 26-29C track 44-47C

WEATHER Clear, air 29-31C track 39-43C

WEATHER Clear, air 28-29C track 43-46C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m12.386s	1	Verstappen	1m11.908s	1	Verstappen	1m11.365s
2	Tsunoda	1m12.642s	2	Leclerc	1m12.103s	2	Alonso	1m11.449s
3	Albon	1m12.706s	3	Alonso	1m12.107s	3	Leclerc	1m11.471s
4	Sainz	1m12.717s	4	Russell	1m12.151s	4	Ocon	1m11.553s
5	Stroll	1m12.722s	5	Hamilton	1m12.156s	5	Sainz	1m11.630s
6	Russell	1m12.769s	6	Gasly	1m12.169s	6	Hamilton	1m11.725s
7	Hamilton	1m12.872s	7	Sainz	1m12.210s	7	Gasly	1m11.933s
8	Norris	1m12.877s	8	Ocon	1m12.248s	8	Russell	1m11.964s
9	Alonso	1m12.886s	9	Tsunoda	1m12.249s	9	Tsunoda	1m12.082s
10	Leclerc	1m12.912s	10	Norris	1m12.377s	10	Norris	1m12.254s
11	Ocon	1m12.967s	11	Piastri	1m12.395s			
12	Piastri	1m13.006s	12	de Vries	1m12.428s			
13	Gasly	1m13.033s	13	Albon	1m12.527s			
14	Bottas	1m13.038s	14	Stroll	1m12.623s			
15	de Vries	1m13.054s	15	Bottas	1m12.625s			
16	Sargeant	1m13.113s						
17	Magnussen	1m13.270s						
18	Hulkenberg	1m13.279s						
19	Zhou	1m13.523s						
20	Perez	1m13.850s						

WEATHER Clear, air 25-28C track 41-48C

NEXT RACE

4 JUNE

SPANISH GP

Barcelona

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	144	1	1
2 Perez	105	1	1
3 Alonso	93	2	2
4 Hamilton	69	2	3
5 Russell	50	4	2
6 Sainz	48	4	3
7 Leclerc	42	3	1
8 Stroll	27	4	6
9 Ocon	21	3	4
10 Gasly	14	7	5
11 Norris	12	6	7
12 Hulkenberg	6	7	10
13 Piastri	5	8	9
14 Bottas	4	8	10
15 Zhou	2	9	12
16 Tsunoda	2	10	8
17 Magnussen	2	10	4
18 Albon	1	10	8
19 de Vries	0	12	12
20 Sargeant	0	12	15

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS
1 Red Bull	249
2 Aston Martin	120
3 Mercedes	119
4 Ferrari	90
5 Alpine	35
6 McLaren	17
7 Haas	8
8 Alfa Romeo	6
9 AlphaTauri	2
10 Williams	1

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	4	1	Perez
Leclerc	4	2	Sainz
Hamilton	2	4	Russell
Gasly	2	4	Ocon
Norris	5	1	Piastri
Zhou	2	4	Bottas
Alonso	6	0	Stroll
Magnussen	2	4	Hulkenberg
de Vries	1	5	Tsunoda
Sargeant	0	6	Albon

Events removed when one driver in a team could not record a representative time for reasons outside their control. Excludes sprint qualifying/shootout

WINS		POLE POSITIONS	
Verstappen	4	Verstappen	3
Perez	2	Perez	2
		Leclerc	1

FASTEST LAPS		Pole scores taken based on qualifying results, not the result of any sprint races or qualifying
Verstappen	2	
Hamilton	1	
Perez	1	
Russell	1	
Zhou	1	

STARTING GRID



RESULTS ROUND 6/22 (78 LAPS - 161.73 MILES)					
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	1h48m51.980s	78	Mn, In
2	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+27.921s		Hu, Mn, In
3	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+36.990s		Mn, Hn, In
4	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+39.062s		Mn, Hn, In
5	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+56.284s		Hn, In
6	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+1m01.890s		Hn, Mn, In
7	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m02.362s		Hn, Mn, In
8	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+1m03.391s		Hn, Mn, In
9	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+4.061s		Mn, Hn, In
10	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+13.959s		Hn, In
11	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+28.963s		Hn, In
12	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+57.317s		Mn, In
13	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+1m11.852s		Sn, Hn, In
14	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+1m19.210s		Mn, Hn, In
15	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	-2 laps/+7.545s		Mn, In
16	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	-2 laps/+49.024s		Mn, Hn, Mu, In, Wn, In
17	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-2 laps/+58.506s		Mn, Hn, In, Wn
18	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps/+1m17.983s		Mn, Hn, Sn, In
19	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	70 laps-withdrew		Hn, Wn
R	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	53 laps-accident damage		Hu, In

FASTEST LAPS				
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Hamilton	1m15.650s	-	33
2	Leclerc	1m15.773s	+0.123s	46
3	Gasly	1m15.831s	+0.181s	49
4	Perez	1m16.269s	+0.619s	5
5	Sainz	1m16.449s	+0.799s	43
6	Ocon	1m16.528s	+0.878s	41
7	Verstappen	1m16.604s	+0.954s	23
8	Albon	1m16.672s	+1.022s	24
9	Alonso	1m16.674s	+1.024s	43
10	Russell	1m16.798s	+1.148s	48
11	Zhou	1m16.926s	+1.276s	5
12	Hulkenberg	1m16.991s	+1.341s	6
13	Sargeant	1m17.302s	+1.652s	32
14	Piastri	1m17.513s	+1.863s	47
15	de Vries	1m17.561s	+1.911s	43
16	Tsunoda	1m17.680s	+2.030s	36
17	Stroll	1m17.769s	+2.119s	18
18	Bottas	1m17.824s	+2.174s	19
19	Norris	1m17.844s	+2.194s	46
20	Magnussen	1m18.351s	+2.701s	41

WEATHER Cloudy, damp, wet, then drying, air 23-28C track 27-41C
WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 89.137mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 98.673mph

TYRES

KEY: H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft I - Intermediate W - Wet n - New set u - Used set

HARD

MEDIUM

SOFT

C0

C1

C2

C3

C4

C5

INTERMEDIATE

WET

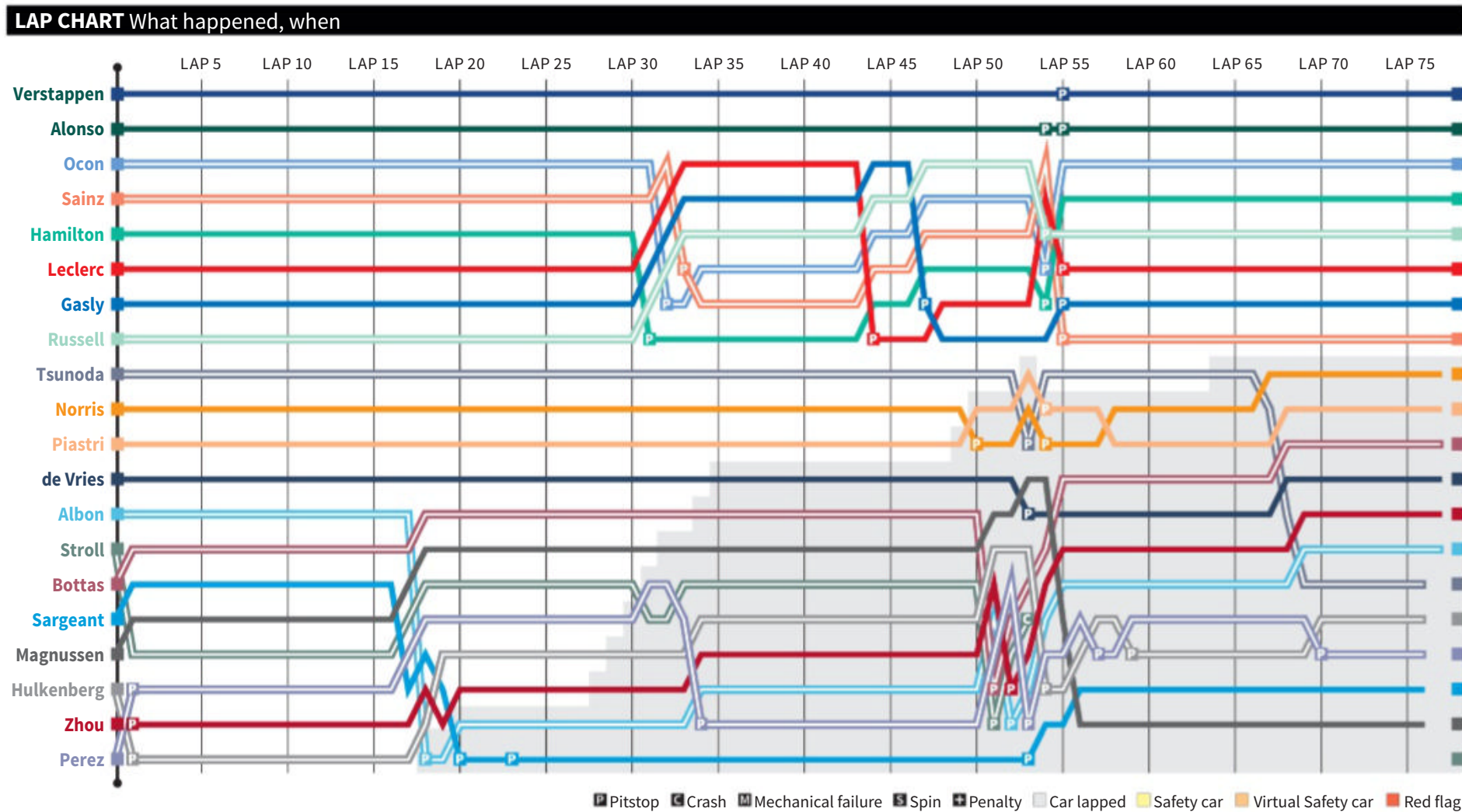
RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES
LECLERC Three-place penalty for impeding Norris

RACE PENALTIES
SARGEANT Five-second penalty for speeding in the pitlane
RUSSELL 5s penalty and

two licence points for rejoining the track unsafely
HULKENBERG 5s penalty and two licence points for causing a collision, then 10s penalty for failing to serve penalty during a pitstop

STAT
23
Verstappen scored his 23rd F1 pole, stopping Alonso doing so instead by 0.084s!

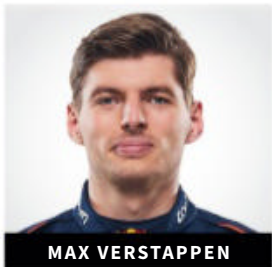


MONACO GRAND PRIX DRIVER RATINGS

The podium finishers scooped up the most points on a difficult Sunday in Monaco, while Sergio Perez and Lance Stroll failed to impress

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

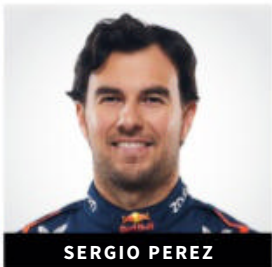
RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

9 Responded to Aston's contra-strategy perfectly, managing his medium tyres through the graining phase to extend his stint. This built flexibility into his race, and he could compete with Alonso's more durable compound. Only a few scratches picked up in the wet took shine off.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **20th** - Result **16th**

2 A display of pure putrefaction. Made ground against Zhou and Hulkenberg at first-lap stop, but was way too clumsy in battle with lower midfield. Hit Magnussen to break front wing, got bullied by Stroll, and ended up becoming a guinea pig for Red Bull in the changing conditions.

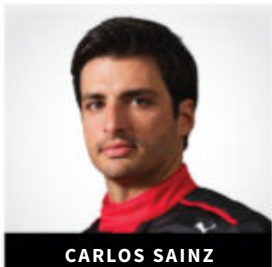
FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **6th** — Result **6th**

6 Race was compromised by three-place grid drop, and pitting a lap later than the Mercedes duo cost track position. Couldn't keep within five seconds of Russell in wet weather to move up the order. Opportunistic move on Sainz on in-lap earned him earlier pit service for inters.



CARLOS SAINZ

Started **4th** — Result **8th**

5 Gave Ocon a stern challenge in the first 50 laps but was batted away each time. Slid off at Mirabeau while struggling on medium tyres, shipping positions to Hamilton and Leclerc, and had further grief after getting second service in Ferrari double-stack pit for intermediates.

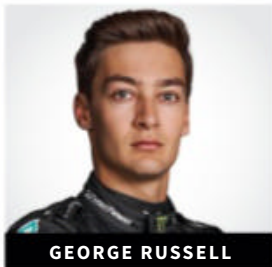
MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **5th** — Result **4th**

8 Benefited from a well-timed, well-executed Mercedes double-stack to overcut the Ferraris, and put Ocon's podium spot under pressure. Dry pace was strong and, although an undercut attempt to clear Sainz failed, Hamilton matched his pace either side of their initial stops.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **8th** — Result **5th**

5 Would have scored well for improving on his starting position, but the Mirabeau slip on his intermediate out-lap cost him third place. This let Ocon and Hamilton past, and it got worse when he rejoined unsafely in front of Perez to earn a five-second penalty. He did well to cover that off and keep fifth.

ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **7th** — Result **7th**

7 Quietly impressive, fending off Russell in the opening phases in an Alpine with strong pace. Aggrieved not to have been left out on track in anticipation of rain while running third, but defended well from Sainz in the wet. Caught Leclerc by the end, getting to within half a second.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started **3rd** — Result **3rd**

9 Soaked up serious pressure from traditionally faster cars to set up a deserved first podium since 2021. Warded off Sainz until the red car fell out of the DRS zone, but perhaps had a greater challenge from Hamilton, who he also parried away in the wet despite initial speed on inters.

McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **10th** — Result **9th**

7 Sat in formation after the start, but could not match Tsunoda ahead. Ill-timed pitstop put him on back foot for wet-weather stops, but had strong pace on inters. Launched a respectful pass on Piastri, then followed Verstappen (a lap ahead) to catch and clear Tsunoda.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **11th** - Result **10th**

6 Not bad for a first wet-weather experience in F1. Ahead of team-mate Norris by intermediate pitstops having not stopped under dry conditions, but lack of confidence slowed him in the wet. Sat in Verstappen's wake to learn the basics, then copied Norris's move past Tsunoda at Ste Devote.

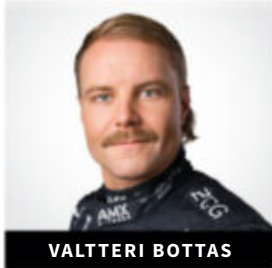
ALFA ROMEO



ZHOU GUANYU

Started **19th** Result **13th**

5 Disappointing qualifying led to soft-tyre gamble at the start, but he dumped them after a lap in favour of a long hard-tyre stint. Then he sat behind Perez and picked up positions when others pitted. Early stop for inters helped leapfrog less proactive rivals, resulting in a clean race to 13th.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **15th** - Result **11th**

5 The early call for intermediates nearly paid off, with his stop coming at the end of lap 51. He had used the best of the inters by the time the rain intensified, but nonetheless had track position as the slick runners faltered. An otherwise quiet race ended on the cusp of the points.



ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **2nd** — Result **2nd**

9 Felt he had little chance of beating Verstappen, but threw everything he could at it. Tyre offset largely culpable for growing gap during the dry phase, and artificially extended by medium tyre call before switch to inters. Sporadic slow laps in the wet let Verstappen off the hook.



LANCE STROLL

Started **14th** — Result **R**

2 Early efforts to make up ground from 14th led to contact with Albon. Initially battled well with Magnussen but could not avoid contact with the Haas driver. Initial speed in wet led to overconfidence, a wall-bang and then an off. Retired after two further brushes with walls.

HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started **17th** - Result **19th**

4 Defended well against Stroll and Perez during the dry running, and was an outside bet for points when the rain came. Haas chose not to pit him until very late, and then he was in a world of trouble on the hard tyre. A few offs and wall-bothering antics then prompted an early bath.



NICO HULKENBERG

Started **18th** - Result **17th**

4 Raced well in spurts, particularly his move on Zhou, but penalties cost him. Copped a five-second one for his two-footed tackle on Sargeant at the start, though it wasn't his fault that he had to serve a second. Then Haas decided to try the wet tyre out for size, which further compromised his day.

ALPHATAURI



NYCK DE VRIES

Started **12th** - Result **12th**

6 Shrugged off recent stories about his future in F1 and enjoyed a relatively clean race. Locked into 12th throughout the opening 52 laps, de Vries made a slightly early switch to inters, but Bottas's earlier stop cost one spot. Was rarely challenged, but gets credit for response to criticism.

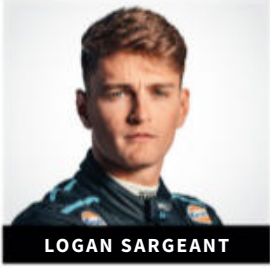


YUKI TSUNODA

Started **9th** — Result **15th**

4 The first half of his race was good, as he kept the McLarens at bay. Picked up the pace when Norris inched closer, but it all fell apart in the wet. Braking seemed to be a struggle, and Tsunoda "felt like a passenger" as Norris and Piastri breezed past. Then frustration won out as he dropped like a rock.

WILLIAMS



LOGAN SARGEANT

Started **16th** - Result **18th**

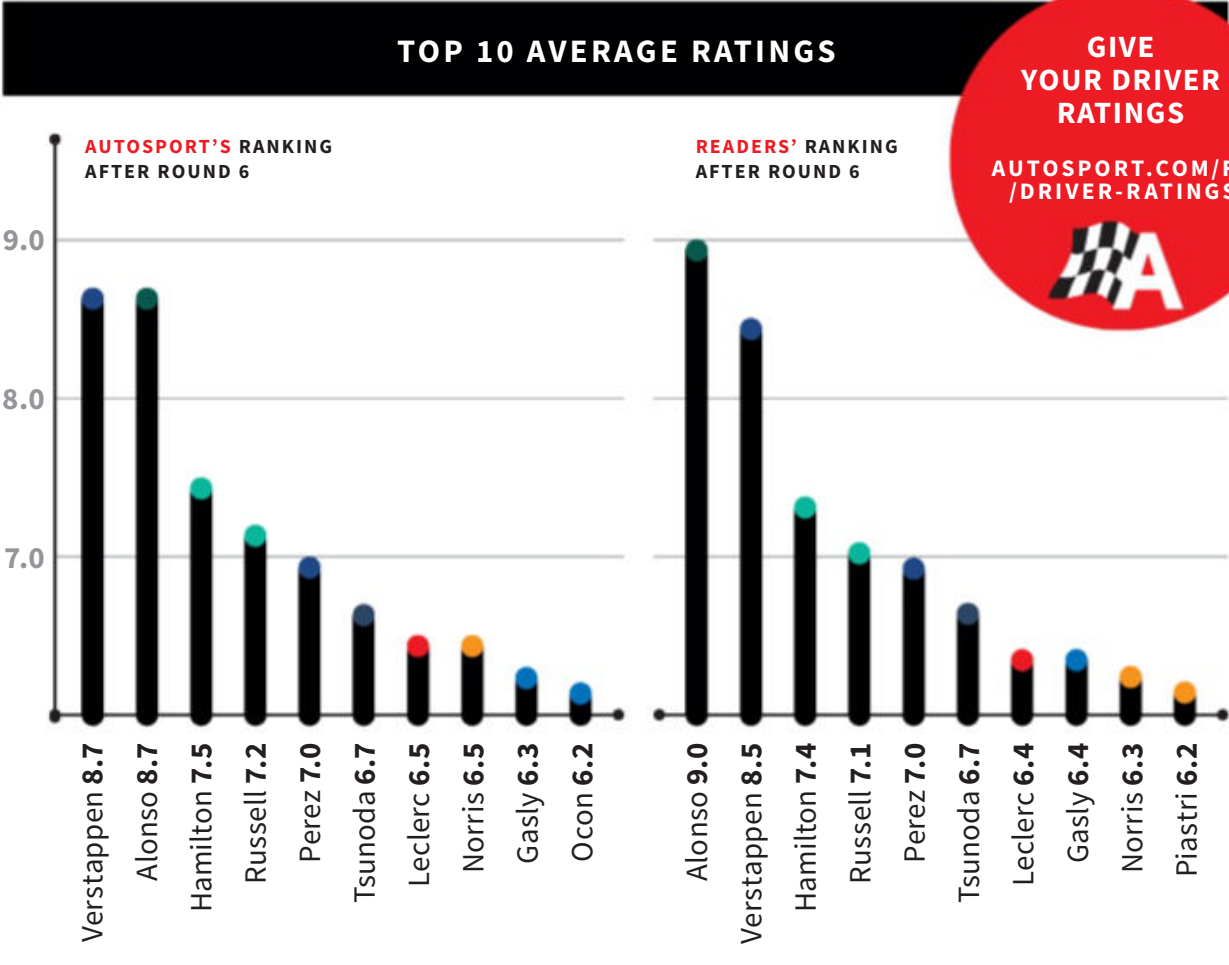
3 Lacked pace throughout as he contended with both Monaco and a wet race for the first time in F1. Had his tribulations in the downpour, notably sliding into the wall at the Fairmont Hairpin. He also got a penalty for speeding in the pits. A sitting duck for those with experience and better machinery.



ALEX ALBON

Started **13th** - Result **14th**

4 Probably did as well as expected given that Monaco doesn't quite suit the Williams, and early travails in the dry with tyre wear made him easy meat. Kept pace with Zhou during the wet phase, but started to lose ground as the circuit dried up. Speeding penalty knocks a point off the par score.



Newgarden saves his best 'til last

America's premier 500-mile open-wheel race was decided on the final lap in a controversial finish that last year's winner said shouldn't have been allowed

CHARLES BRADLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

For the majority of the 107th running of the Indianapolis 500, the race lived up to its grand billing as 'The Greatest Spectacle in Racing'. Run at a searingly fast pace, and with just a couple of minor shunts to disrupt its flow, it became bogged down by a sequence of late-race, multi-car accidents and a trio of red flags. Its denouement was the Indy 2.5, a final-lap shootout straight out of the pits for a NASCAR-style green-white-chequered finish. Josef Newgarden mastered this, passing last year's winner Marcus Ericsson to claim his maiden 500 win, and team owner Roger Penske's record-extending 19th.

Newgarden started the day 17th on the grid, admitting that his team had "fallen short" and "not done a good enough job" in qualifying. "Indy is not easy," he'd mused. "I don't care how many Indy 500s you have, what team you are, there are no guarantees when you show up here. For whatever reason this cruel mistress, she's just tricking us."

Newgarden made solid progress early on, nudging into the top 10 as early as one-quarter distance. Drivers bemoaned the latest aero package on the Dallara DW12s, which had extra downforce that appeared to be doing the opposite of what was intended in terms of improving overtaking opportunities. But Newgarden ignored that,

"The crowd held its breath as Kirkwood's spinning wheel flew over their heads..."

getting passes done when he had to. He also benefited from some pitstop perfection by his well-drilled crew.

In the second half of the race, the 32-year-old involved himself in the conversation over the leading positions. Remember, at this point the race was cracking along at a fair old rate — on course to be one of the least-interrupted editions in its long history. The first yellow was for the elaborately named rookie Sting Ray Robb, who got onto the marbles in a turf war with Graham Rahal at Turn 1 on lap 92 and came off second best. "I need to pay more attention to the stereotypes of this series," he complained, refusing to call Rahal by his name. "It was just way too aggressive of a move."

The second caution, on the stroke of three-quarter race distance, was for Romain Grosjean. He'd earlier been speared in the pits by Andretti Autosport team-mate Colton Herta in an intra-team shemuzzle, and then the Turn 2 barrier lured him into its grasp »



Newgarden
pipped Ericsson
by 0.0974s in
controversial
one-lap shootout





just like it had 12 months ago.

By this point, Chip Ganassi Racing's Ericsson and Penske's Newgarden looked to be the strongest horses in the field, though there were still some other pre-race favourites that they'd have to conquer. Polesitter Alex Palou and Rinus (van Kalmthout) VeeKay had delayed themselves in the pits when VeeKay half-spun and clattered Palou into the wall, breaking his front wing. "I was next to Alex when I got wheelspin," rued VeeKay. "I lost the car and hit him. I think I just used too many revs. You don't want to hit anyone so it's just unfortunate."

The other front-row starter, Arrow McLaren racer Felix Rosenqvist, was right in the hunt towards the end. His team-mate Pato O'Ward was also a contender, albeit hamstrung on strategy by a fuel filler that refused to give him a full tank.

But this wasn't to be McLaren's day, in spite of its cool triple

crown throwback liveries. Rosenqvist was the first to depart, admitting that he misjudged the wake off Newgarden's car as he was passed by the Penske driver at Turn 1 with 17 laps to go.

Rosenqvist's 1984 Monaco GP colour scheme had a very un-Alain Prost-like trip into the wall on the corner exit. What's worse, as he tried to scrub off speed to a place of safety, something broke as he hit the apron entering Turn 2, and he spun back on to the track with the pack approaching at over 200mph.

Cars took avoiding action in all directions, but Kyle Kirkwood clipped Rosenqvist with his left-rear wheel, which was catapulted over the catchfencing and towards a grandstand. The crowd held its breath — a portion were compelled to collectively duck — as the spinning wheel flew over their heads... and hit a building before landing on a fortunately unoccupied Chevy parked between the stands. Tragedy averted, but that was a close one.





Kirkwood went on a wild ride, slamming into the Turn 2 wall and flipping over. He slid upside down for what must have seemed like an eternity. “Being up in the fence is never a good thing in an IndyCar,” he deadpanned. “The scary part was seeing the sparks and just being stuck at that point.”

With so little time left in the race and a mountain of debris to clear, the red flag was flown for the first time. But not the last...

It's at this point where the race turned sour. Maybe it was the long wait on pitlane for the restart, but drivers appeared to get suddenly agitated and overamped their moves from this point. It all got very messy. The signs were there when O'Ward, whose pit strategy was saved by the yellow for Grosjean, brought the field to green impossibly slowly through Turn 4 and then jumped ahead – only to be greeted by an extension of the caution and a warning not to do it again.

The reason for him trying this on became clear at the restart proper, when first Ericsson popped out of his draft and then Newgarden swept ahead of both of them on the charge to Turn 1. O'Ward decided to retaliate on Ericsson with a late move on the inside of Turn 3, with echoes of their confrontation on the last lap of the 500 last year at Turn 1. On that occasion, O'Ward backed out of his big run, allowing Ericsson to win, and you felt that had been playing on his mind for the past 12 months.

This time, he kept it lit, only attempting to back out as Ericsson squeezed him towards the turf at the apex. “I got on to the apron to give him room and I got squeezed,” said a bitter O'Ward, who brushed against Ericsson and then spun hard into the fence. “There were seven laps to go and I was going for it. I was way too nice. I'll make sure that he comes with me next time. Yeah, I won't forget that one.”

Adding insult to non-injury, Scott McLaughlin rammed Simon Pagenaud into a spin, and Agustin Canapino spun into the wall. The Argentinian's brakeless car then collected the stricken O'Ward.

The race was red-flagged again to clear up this mess. At the

“Drivers appeared to get suddenly agitated and overamped their moves”

restart, it seemed that we would have a four-lap sprint to the finish, but the outbreak of craziness was underlined by a wreck on the start/finish straight before the yard of bricks – it involved Ed Carpenter, Rahal, Christian Lundgaard, Marco Andretti and Benjamin Pedersen – bringing out the caution yet again.

It was at this point when Ericsson was so angered by what Race Control decided. IndyCar had the chance to red flag the race before they drove past the wreckage, and it looked for a moment like we had a repeat winner on our hands, with Ericsson leading the pack. But IndyCar only threw the red after dithering – which meant the race would be decided over a single lap, without the flexibility to add in even a warm-up lap out of the pits.

“We've never done a restart straight out of the pits,” Ericsson railed afterwards. “It was an unfair and dangerous end to the race. I don't think there were enough laps left to do what we did. I don't think it's safe to go out of the pits on cold tyres for a restart when half the field is trying to get out on track as we come to green. I don't think that's a fair or right way to end a race. I don't agree with it. I think it should have finished under yellow.”

Of course, his opinion could have been tainted by what happened next. Coming to the green/white flag as the leader, Ericsson was always going to be vulnerable to attack, and he did his utmost to catch Newgarden napping by hitting the gas earlier than he was expecting in Turn 3.

That kept him out of reach through Turns 1 and 2, but Newgarden picked up his draft and built some incredible momentum. As Ericsson swerved low out of Turn 2 to defend, it was already too >>



late. Newgarden motored past on his outside along the backstretch, leaning hard on his Chevrolet horsepower.

Now it was Ericsson's turn to catch the draft through Turns 3 and 4, which led Newgarden to perform a huge weave towards the pitlane entry as he exited the final corner – way below the white line – to starve Ericsson of his hole in the air.

Ericsson was gaining, gaining, gaining... but the yard of bricks arrived too soon and he missed out by 0.0974 seconds. It was Newgarden's turn to taste the milk for the first time in 12 attempts. His winning margin was the fourth-closest in the race's history.

"I wasn't looking to take anyone else out of the race, but I was going to put my car on the line to win," said Newgarden, who celebrated by rushing into the grandstand at the finish line. "I was either going to win the race or I'd end up in the wall. I was here to win. So I just did everything I could at the end there."

Best of the rest was Santino Ferrucci, who threatened on several occasions to give AJ Foyt another victory at the track that made the legend's name. He was in the hunt all day, and conjured another Houdini-style escape to add to his showreel when he missed Rosenqvist's spin by inches.

"All three of us could have won it at any point in time," reckoned Ferrucci. "It's bittersweet. We ran out front all day long. It's definitely one of the more difficult races that I've ever run, and we

"I was either going to win the race or end up in the wall. I was here to win"

knew that we had a really good car. When you finish third, knowing that you led into [Turn] 1 with three or four to go, it's tough. But at the end of the day, I'm really happy with the way that things played out. This place does pick you as a winner."

Palou rebounded even more impressively than he did last year to finish fourth, ahead of McLaren's top finisher Alexander Rossi and the third Ganassi car home, that of Scott Dixon.

"He bumped me and it took me out of the fight for the win," said Palou of VeeKay (of whom he sarcastically sneered "absolute legend" over the radio in the immediate aftermath). "I was really disappointed for one lap but I switched my mind to getting the most out of the day. We were very unlucky and I know he didn't do it on purpose. We kept going and made a huge comeback, and we snatched another top five for the team."

Rossi, who won the 100th running here in 2016, believed that this was a big opportunity missed for McLaren: "Today was just so disappointing. We're only coming away with a fifth, but we were in a position, at one point, where it looked like the race was in our hands. But through all of those restarts, red flags, and, to my mind, stupidity, it kind of got away from us. It sucks."

After a bold start, Dixon was blighted by a huge tyre vibration in his opening stint that sent him to the rear of the field inside the first 30 laps. "It was kind of a frustrating day," the six-time series champion sighed. "That first set of tyres just went out of balance so badly. The car got massively loose, and we adjusted for that. But it also made the car a bit weird with a clutch alarm that we had to figure out."

Two-time winner Takuma Sato made it four Ganassi runners in the top seven places, finishing ahead of local hero Conor Daly (Ed Carpenter Racing) and the rebounding Herta and VeeKay, who at least had the decency to apologise to Palou for ruining his chances. ❧



NEXT REPORT

DETROIT
8 JUNE ISSUE

THE CAPTAIN GETS A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Roger Penske watched his 19th Indianapolis 500 victory unfold beneath him from his vantage point high atop the Pagoda pit building that towers over the track he owns.

Penske bought 'The Brickyard' in November 2019, and did so as that year's winning Indy 500 team owner, but Simon Pagnaud's victory that May was the boss's most recent until now. Penske takes his stewardship of IMS seriously but admitted to swapping hats as Josef Newgarden swept to victory in the 107th edition.

"I took my track owner hat off and became a car owner there on the last lap," said Penske. "But Tim [Cindric, Team Penske president] had it under control. I listened to the radio all day long, and, quite honestly, to get up there and work our way through the day was amazing.

"With the red flags and everything, it could have been anybody's race. But I think Newgarden showed what he's really made of today. He was, I think, confident – yet cautious there at the end. And when it was time to go, he made it happen."

It took a lot for Penske, who first attended this race with his father in 1951, to put down his headphones from calling strategy from the pitbox. "I had to step away," he admitted. "I loved being on the box, running one of these cars here every year. But I was up at the top there. I had my scoreboard where I could see what was going on, and to see Josef down by the finish line as number one was pretty important.

"We really worked on our cars for the race. We were disappointed in qualifying, but you could see when it was time to go, we were there. Credit to Tim, Ilmor [which builds the Chevrolet engines] and the guys."

Cindric added: "2019 was the last time we had won and somebody else owned the place then. I apologise it's taken four years to get us back up there at the end of the race. Josef has shown throughout his career that he's a championship-calibre driver, and he's wanted [to win at] this place so bad that it was going to be checkers or wreckers there at the end."



Newgarden joined
the fans to celebrate
long-awaited triumph

RESULTS ROUND 6/17, INDIANAPOLIS 500 (USA), 28 MAY (200 LAPS – 500 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME	GRID
1	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	2h58m21.9611s	17
2	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+0.0974s	10
3	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+0.5273s	4
4	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+0.7638s	1
5	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+0.9934s	7
6	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+1.4316s	6
7	Takuma Sato (JPN)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+1.5770s	8
8	Conor Daly (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.8855s	16
9	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	+2.2248s	21
10	Rinus van Kalmthout (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+3.2648s	2
11	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+3.4223s	18
12	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+4.0470s	27
13	Devlin DeFrancesco (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+4.7432s	25
14	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+5.0045s	14
15	Helio Castroneves (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+5.4631s	20
16	Tony Kanaan (BRA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+5.7158s	9
17	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport with Marco & Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	+8.9800s	24
18	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap	32
19	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps	30
20	Ed Carpenter (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	197 laps-accident	13
21	Benjamin Pedersen (DNK)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	196 laps-accident	11
22	Graham Rahal (USA)	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-5 laps	33
23	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	-5 laps	12
24	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	192 laps-accident	5
25	Simon Pagnaud (FRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	192 laps-accident	22
26	Agustin Canapino (ARG)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	192 laps-accident	26
27	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	183 laps-accident	3
28	Kyle Kirkwood (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	183 laps-accident	15
29	David Malukas (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with HMD / Dallara-Honda	160 laps-accident	23
30	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	149 laps-accident	19
31	Sting Ray Robb (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR / Dallara-Honda	90 laps-accident	31
32	RC Enerson (USA)	Abel Motorsports / Dallara-Chevrolet	75 laps-drivetrain	28
33	Katherine Legge (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	41 laps-accident damage/susp	29

Winner's average speed 168.193mph. **Fastest lap** Malukas 39.8193s, 226.021mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Palou 219; 2 Ericsson 199; 3 O'Ward 185; 4 Newgarden 182; 5 Dixon 162; 6 McLaughlin 149; 7 Rossi 145; 8 Grosjean 139; 9 Power 131; 10 Herta 130.

Vesti leads Martins and
Pourchaire in feature race

Great Dane Vesti holds off the French bulldogs

FORMULA 2
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
27-28 MAY
ROUND 5/13

Frederik Vesti took the lead in his Formula 2 title tussle with Theo Pourchaire in Monaco, with a dominant feature race win moving him five points ahead in the standings. Prema's Mercedes F1 protege survived a rolling restart after Jack Doohan's fiery crash had caused a red flag to take his second win of 2023.

Vesti claimed a crucial pole by lapping just 0.052 seconds clear of ART Grand Prix starlet Pourchaire in their qualifying group, but it was the Frenchman's compatriot and team-mate Victor Martins who took the other front-row slot after topping the other split. Poleman Vesti led from the off, and Martins had to chop across into Ste Devote to defend second from Pourchaire

and the Invicta Virtuosi car of Doohan.

By the end of lap five, Vesti had built a 1s gap to Martins, with another 2.6s between the two Frenchmen. By one-third distance, the Dane led by 3s, with a further 4.9s between Martins and Pourchaire.

Doohan was still running fourth when he clipped the wall at the swimming pool and, with a damaged front wing, he spun heavily into the barriers at Massenet half a lap later. The rear end of the Australian's car burst into flames, and the chasing Zane Maloney had a near-miss as the Rodin Carlin-run Red Bull Junior took evasive action.

The leading runners had not yet pitted and took the opportunity to duck in for new tyres. Despite Pourchaire's car falling off the jacks as ART double-stacked its duo, the order remained the same at the front. While Vesti re-established his advantage, Martins was hit with a drive-through penalty for failing to slow for yellow flags – he only just avoided marshals attending the Doohan

crash. This dropped him to eighth, and moved Pourchaire up to second and Maloney to third. Richard Verschoor (Van Amersfoort Racing) headed Dennis Hauger (MP Motorsport) for fourth – Hauger had started 17th but lucked in with the timing of the safety car since he had not yet pitted. Another to benefit was Trident's Roman Stanek, who climbed from 22nd on the grid to finish seventh behind Campos Racing's Kush Maini.

DAMS driver Ayumu Iwasa, 10th on Sunday, took a dominant third win of the season in Saturday's sprint race. The Japanese lined up second on the reversed grid behind fellow Red Bull junior Isack Hadjar (Hitech) and held his place.

Chaos erupted on the first lap at the Nouvelle Chicane, with Maini tipped into a spin, and Arthur Leclerc, Hauger, Roy Nissany and Ralph Boschung all caught up in an incident that blocked the track. At the restart, Hadjar suddenly slowed with a puncture and headed for the pits.

Iwasa now built a substantial advantage over Jehan Daruvala's MP Motorsport machine, before racing was again neutralised on lap 22 of 30 after Amaury Cordeel found the wall at Mirabeau thanks to contact with Juan Manuel Correa.

When the green flew with six laps remaining, Iwasa made a great restart to immediately put three seconds between himself and Daruvala, who had been alerted to a puncture warning light and backed off to hold second. Jak Crawford finished third for Hitech after winning a lengthy battle with Verschoor. Behind Maloney, Doohan and Martins, Pourchaire beat Vesti to eighth.

MEGAN WHITE



Sprint winner Iwasa
rounds the hairpin

DUTCH PHOTOAGENCY/REDBULL CONTENT POOL

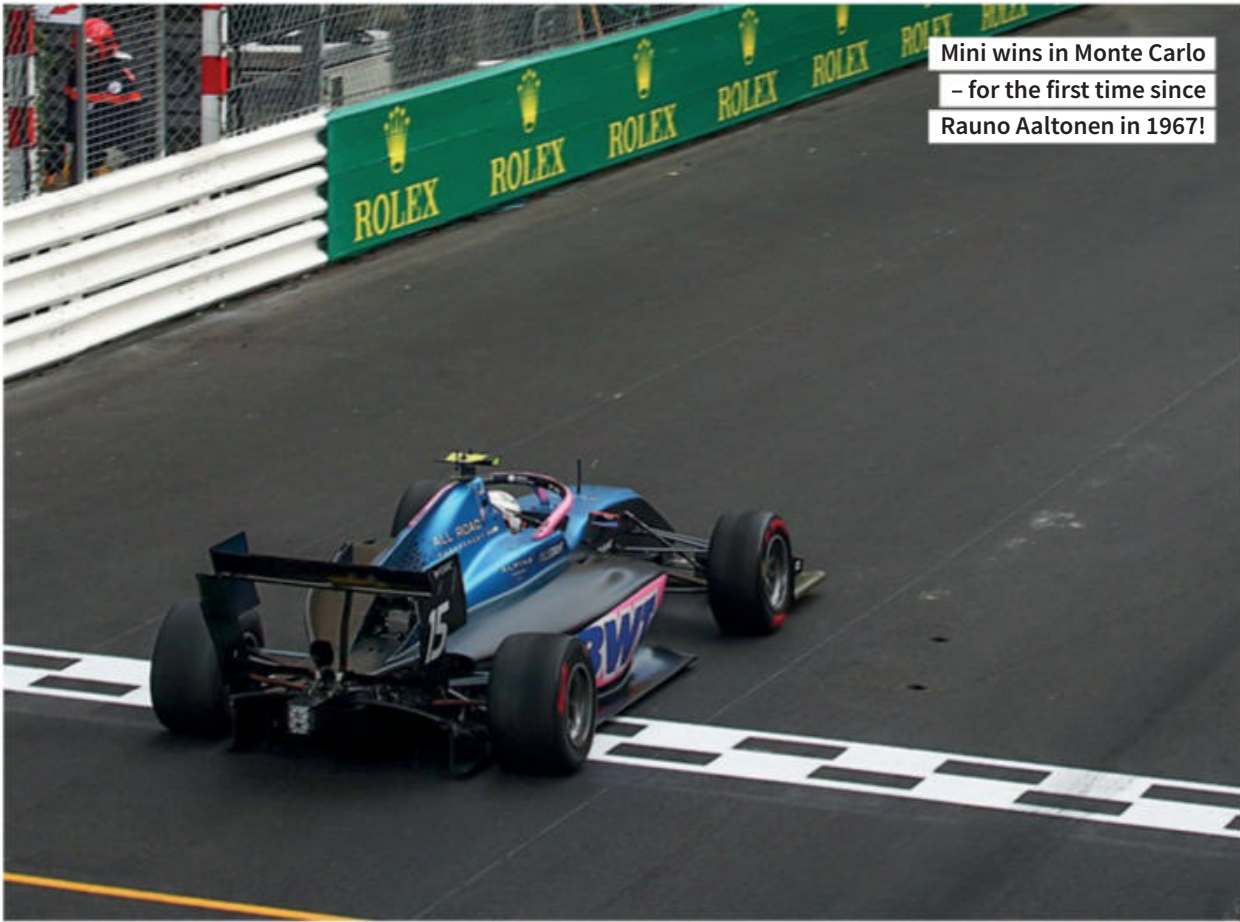
Mini beats Beganovic on Monte streets

FORMULA 3
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
27-28 MAY
ROUND 3/9

Gabriele Mini faced off against his ex-Formula Regional foe Dino Beganovic in the Monaco F3 feature race, with the two in a class of their own before the Sicilian emerged victorious for his maiden series win. Hitech's Alpine F1 protege, who finished as runner-up to Prema-run Ferrari junior Beganovic in the Regional rankings, took a lights-to-flag win as the series returned to the principality for the first time since 2012 under its previous GP3 guise.

While Mini absolutely smashed the opposition in his qualifying group for pole, Beganovic edged out the impressive Luke Browning by just 0.003 seconds on his side of the entry split to take the other spot on the front row. Mini led from the start, via an early safety car deployed after Ido Cohen crashed his Rodin Carlin car at Tabac.

With Mini quickly establishing a 1s lead over Beganovic, there was a bigger gap back to the second Prema car of Mercedes



Mini wins in Monte Carlo
– for the first time since
Rauno Aaltonen in 1967!

PORTLOCK/FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED VIA GETTY IMAGES

F1-backed Paul Aron. Browning ran fourth in his Hitech car, while in his wake there was a terrific tussle for fifth as Caio Collet fended off Sebastian Montoya.

Hitech driver Montoya got alongside the Van Amersfoort Racing car of Collet into Ste Devote on lap 18 and, as they then headed up the hill, the pair made contact. Montoya suffered a broken front wing and Collet sustained a puncture, forcing him to park in the escape road at Mirabeau.

Mini and Beganovic continued to break away at the front, with a 7s gap between them and the third-place fight of Aron and Browning with five laps remaining. Although Beganovic halved the gap to Mini in the late stages, he was unable to get close enough to pass. Similarly, Aron held off 2022 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Browning. Trident's series leader Gabriel Bortoleto held off Franco Colapinto for sixth, and was promoted to fifth when Taylor Barnard was given a 10s penalty for gaining an advantage by short-cutting Ste Devote on the first lap.

Pepe Marti had taken his second win of the season in the Saturday sprint race in

a lights-to-flag masterclass. The Campos Racing driver started on reversed-grid pole, and led away ahead of the Trident car of Leonardo Fornaroli. Behind them, Gregoire Saucy (ART Grand Prix) nabbed third from Barnard (Jenzer Motorsport) around the outside of Ste Devote.

Further back, contact tipped Jonny Edgar into the wall, with his MP Motorsport team-mate Mari Boya also caught up in the melee and sustaining race-ending damage.

When racing resumed after the safety car, Barnard lost another spot to Colapinto, who audaciously launched his VAR car up the inside of the Fairmont hairpin for fourth.

The gap grew ever wider at the front as the race wore on, with Spaniard Marti winning by over 8s, while Fornaroli fell into Saucy's clutches, although there was a lock-up for the Swiss in the closing stages. Colapinto headed Barnard and Bortoleto for fourth, with Montoya close behind the Brazilian and Browning eighth.

Despite his best efforts, Mini couldn't pierce Aron's defences and settled for 11th ahead of Beganovic.

MEGAN WHITE

WEEKEND WINNERS



CAREZZEVOLI/FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED VIA GETTY IMAGES

FORMULA 2
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
Race 1 Ayumu Iwasa
DAMS
Race 2 Frederik Vesti
Prema Racing

FORMULA 3
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
Race 1 Pepe Marti
Campos Racing
Race 2 Gabriele Mini (above)
Hitech Grand Prix



For full results visit motorsportstats.com



Marti leads as Fornaroli
and Saucy give vain chase

CAREZZEVOLI/FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED VIA GETTY IMAGES

Perera and Engelhart on top as new era starts

DTM

OSCHERSLEBEN (DEU)

27-28 MAY

ROUND 1/8

Franck Perera and Christian Engelhart became first-time race winners in the DTM as a new era of the series began under the aegis of the ADAC at Oschersleben last weekend.

Both Perera and Engelhart had already made one-off substitute DTM outings last year, but this is the first full season in the series for both. With some major changes over the winter – including the ownership of the DTM itself – and the return of a track that last featured on the calendar in 2015, Perera and Engelhart tore up the formbook.

It was factory Lamborghini driver Perera who drew first blood in Saturday's opening race, converting pole position into a fine four-second victory for SSR Performance. It was a textbook drive from the 39-year-old Frenchman, who made a clean start and then set about building a gap at the front. Given his position, Perera had no reason to be aggressive in the pitstop phase and, although it did briefly bring him under pressure from the Toksport WRT Porsche of two-time DTM Trophy champion Tim Heinemann, he was able to pull away again to take what was in the end a comfortable win.

It was also a landmark result for Lamborghini, which finally clinched its first victory in the DTM after coming so close on many occasions last year with



Engelhart beat Heinemann
as Porsche blitzed Sunday

Mirko Bortolotti. The Italian actually shadowed Perera for the first stint and had looked set to make it a 1-2 finish for SSR Performance and Lamborghini, but he slipped down the order during the pitstops and eventually slumped to eighth.

That elevated Heinemann to second, the 25-year-old impressing on his debut with a charging drive from seventh on the grid. Jack Aitken was another rookie to finish on the podium, the Briton recovering from a difficult opening salvo of laps after starting from the front row to take third at the finish in his Emil Frey Racing Ferrari.

Sunday's race was less straightforward, although for the longest time it appeared that it would be another win from pole. Factory Porsche man Thomas Preining had survived two separate safety car periods with a faultless drive to lead into the final 10 minutes of the race, with the margin over his nearest rival well over three seconds. But a few laps after the final safety car period ended, race control penalised him for a

pitstop infringement with a long-lap penalty, leaving his Manthey EMA car a disappointing third.

Fellow works Porsche driver Engelhart was able to take full advantage of Preining's penalty to take an unlikely victory, after jumping from sixth to second by pitting late for fresh tyres. Heinemann completed a Toksport WRT 1-2 to take the championship lead, while Dennis Olsen finished fourth behind his team-mate Preining in a remarkable Porsche 1-2-3-4.

Rene Rast finished fifth on Saturday in his maiden DTM outing with BMW, but was forced out of Sunday's race with a loose rear tyre. His Schubert Motorsport team-mate Sheldon van der Linde endured a tough start to his title defence, with 11th in Sunday's race his best result. Mercedes struggled for pace too, with only Jusuf Owega and Lucas Auer able to break inside the top 10.

RACHIT THUKRAL



Season begins with
Perera's Lambo in front



Ehrlacher leads
Girolami and
Pauwels during
Saturday race

Ehrlacher finds the missing Lynk

TCR WORLD TOUR
SPA (BEL)
27-28 MAY
ROUND 2/9

Lynk & Co star Yann Ehrlacher took pole and a win at Spa to reignite his title challenge after a tough start at the opening round in Portugal in April.

The qualifying session ended with drama, when the Audis of John Filippi and Tom Coronel came up to the Hyundais of Norbert Michelisz and Mikel Azcona at the Bus Stop chicane, just as the two Hyundais were setting up for their fast lap. Filippi and Coronel were baulked into the final corner, with the Dutchman then opting for a second fast run. He set the quickest first sector and tried to go around the outside of Azcona at Les Combes when they made light contact.

Coronel was consigned to seventh on the grid, while Azcona was unable to set a competitive lap and qualified 11th, before he was given a three-place grid penalty.



Filippi gained first
win at this level

Ehrlacher claimed pole by 0.3 seconds over team-mate Ma Qing Hua, with Nestor Girolami the only other driver within a second in his ALM Motorsport Honda.

Ehrlacher had a good start, while Ma stalled and was lucky to be avoided by the field. The safety car was called on lap two, after Dusan Borkovic's Hyundai and Peugeot driver Ben Bargwanna became entangled at La Source. Borkovic also clipped the out-of-position Azcona (ahead of him) into a spin. Azcona would continue but finish outside of the points.

After the restart, Ehrlacher controlled the race to take his first win of the year, maintaining a safe distance to Girolami, who scored the new Honda Civic's first podium.

Santiago Urrutia, in one of the sister Lynk & Cos to Ehrlacher, passed the Audi of Kobe Pauwels at Les Combes for third after the restart. Pauwels fought to keep back team-mate Coronel until the final lap. Coronel, who isn't competing in the full season, then pulled over and allowed his works Audi stablemates Rob Huff and Frederic Vervisch through, with the wily veteran negotiating a test in a GT3 Audi over the radio with his team manager for the favour.

Filippi started from pole for Sunday's reversed-grid race, with the privateer Audi of Felipe Fernandez alongside, but Michelisz got the jump on the Spaniard from third at the start and Coronel, starting fourth, passed Fernandez at Les Combes on the opening lap. Filippi would go on to take his first world touring car win unchallenged, with Michelisz's success-ballasted Hyundai able to keep within the Corsican's slipstream to also hold Coronel's Audi at bay.

Huff had started fifth and looked set to gain ground in the standings, but a broken

damper on the opening lap forced the Briton to drive a defensive race, with most of the action centred on how well he managed to fight with limited braking power. Huff just managed to hold on to 10th at the finish, keeping back the two Audis of British privateers Lewis Brown and Isaac Smith.

Michelisz's second place and eighth in race one keeps the Hungarian in the lead of the standings, three ahead of the fast-closing Ehrlacher, who was fifth in the second race behind Urrutia.

NEIL HUDSON

WEEKEND WINNERS

DTM

OSCHERSLEBEN (DEU)

Race 1 Franck Perera
SSR Performance (Lamborghini
Huracan GT3 Evo2)

Race 2 Christian Engelhart
Toksport WRT (Porsche 911 GT3-R)

TCR WORLD TOUR

SPA (BEL)

Race 1 Yann Ehrlacher
Cyan Racing (Lynk & Co 03 FL TCR)

Race 2 John Filippi
Comtoyou Racing (Audi RS3 LMS II TCR)

EUROFORMULA OPEN

SPA (BEL)

Race 1 Noel Leon
Motopark (Dallara-Spiess)

Race 2 Bryce Aron
Motopark (Dallara-Spiess)

Race 3 Cian Shields
Motopark (Dallara-Spiess)

EUROCUP-3

MOTORLAND ARAGON (ESP)

Races 1 & 2 Esteban Masson
Campos Racing



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King claims throne in the principality

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
28 MAY
ROUND 1/7

Harry King started his Porsche Supercup campaign in sublime fashion by securing his maiden victory at the Monaco Grand Prix. The Briton lined his Lechner Racing car up second on the grid but was able to take advantage of a botched start from polewinning two-time champion Larry ten Voorde to make his move instantly. Although he appeared to lack the outright pace of Team GP Elite driver ten Voorde – the gap rarely extended beyond one second – King held his nerve and positioned his car impeccably to deny the Dutchman a glimpse across the 17-lap distance. Bastian Buus completed the top three, joining Lechner team-mate King on the podium after absorbing constant pressure from Loek Hartog, who secured fastest lap. The race ended under safety car



King gets the jump from ten Voorde and Buus

conditions following a 13th-lap crash for Jukka Honkavuori at the exit of Casino Square. The Finn carried too much speed and struck the barriers, and the car leaked fluid across the track. Behind Dorian Boccolacci and Morris Schuring, Huub van Eijndhoven was the best-placed rookie in seventh. The list of non-finishers included three-time MotoGP champion Jorge Lorenzo, who lined up for the second time following his cameo appearance last year at

Imola. Having joked in the lead-up to the event that he had “prepared for this race by playing video games”, Lorenzo was soon left looking for the restart button after being unable to avoid contact with Alessandro Ghiretti, who had spun on lap three. After a steady start by the 27-car field, several incidents unfolded on that third tour, with Leon Koehler, Keagan Masters and Roar Lindland joining Ghiretti and Lorenzo (24th in qualifying) as DNFs. **SAM HALL**



McLaren wins by a Fagg paper

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
SPA (BEL)
28 MAY
ROUND 2/7

Charlie Fagg hung on in a thrilling finish to take victory for himself and Sam De Haan by just 0.067 seconds in the International GT Open series’ endurance fixture. The British pair’s Optimum Motorsport McLaren 720S GT3 beat the fast-closing Eastalent Racing Team Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II of Christopher Haase despite Fagg struggling with fading tyres. Simon Reicher led the early stages in the Eastalent Audi before Diego Menchaca moved his Motopark Mercedes

in front at La Source on the eighth lap, while De Haan held third spot. The first driver changes took place during a spate of safety car outings, and it was Eddie Cheever who led the next stint in his AF Corse Ferrari. Following the final round of stops, Richard Lietz held the advantage in the Lionspeed Porsche before mechanical woes struck. Going into the final laps it was Fagg in front from Martin Kodric (Bonaldi Motorsport Lamborghini). Haase then passed the Croatian and attacked Fagg. Third went to Menchaca and Marcos Siebert. Kodric (sharing with Sandro Mur) fell to sixth and a puncture dropped Cheever out of contention.

WEEKEND WINNERS

- PORSCHE SUPERCUP**
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
Harry King (below)
Lechner Racing
- INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN**
SPA (BEL)
Charlie Fagg/Sam De Haan
Optimum Motorsport (McLaren 720S GT3)
- NASCAR TRUCK SERIES**
CHARLOTTE (USA)
Ben Rhodes
ThorSport Racing (Ford F-150)



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The successful candidate will have high quality academic credentials in a relevant Science/Engineering discipline. Having experience in a similar engineering role in high-level motorsport or tyre industry is preferred. Relevant academic research will be a distinct advantage. As a minimum, familiarity with the latest rubber friction research is essential. Experience in friction testing (planning, execution, and data analysis) would be a distinct advantage. Experience in application of rubber friction theory in a tyre modelling context would be a distinct advantage. Expertise in MATLAB is essential.

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Haas F1 Team

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- Provide periodic support from our Race Support Room aiding the trackside engineers in extracting of the maximum performance from our race cars.
- Assist with the development of Hardware in the Loop models and test solutions for our SECU based embedded software.
- Follow all safety regulations in all venues.
- Other duties as assigned by the Head of Control Systems or their designee.

Education and Work Experience:

- GCSE, High School diploma or equivalent required.
- Further education including University Degree desired. 5 years of work experience, 2 of which must be in a professional motorsports environment or other industry.

Specialized Knowledge and Skills:

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- Communication, ability to work under pressure, self-motivation, time management, conflict resolution, adaptability, willingness to learn, etc.

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SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST
Hyundai Motorsport

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- Measure the success of each social media campaign and ensure continuous reporting on all social media topics
- Engage campaigns with industry professionals and influencers via social media in order to position our channels as a successful and engaging platform within the social media
- Stay up to date with the latest social media best practices and technologies
- Demonstrate your project management skills and collaboration with internal, and external social media partners
- Manage our digital asset archive

Qualifications

- Minimum 3 years of experience as a Social Media Specialist or similar role
- Proven knowledge of building and creating engaging social media posts and campaigns
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- Maintaining our event spares package.
- Creating post event reports to provide feedback to our engineering team.

Who We're Looking For

- We're looking for a self-motivated team player with a positive and enthusiastic attitude.
- You should be educated to technician level and have a thorough understanding of automotive electrical systems.
- You should pride yourself on your attention to detail, and be capable of delivering a high standard of performance and quality whilst working to strict deadlines in a time-sensitive environment.
- You should have excellent communication skills, and a keen eye for problem solving and implementing solutions with an analytical approach.
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- Refinement of design to final CAD assemblies, component design and associated detailed drawings
- Releasing of parts and assembly structures onto specific Bill of Materials
- Ensuring Bill of Materials is accurate and up to date
- Understanding the commercial impact of design on stock and future Bill of Materials costs
- Liaison with other departments and suppliers to achieve project goals

Who we are looking for...

Our ideal candidate will have previous experience in the design of high-performance components, preferably within the motorsport industry. You will be proficient in 3D CAD solid modelling, ideally with surface design experience, and have a good understanding of complete vehicle architecture. You will also be comfortable with the use of engineering mathematics and logical thinking when evaluating different design solutions.

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- Support trackside tyre performance engineering with test program planning and analysis.
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- Responsible for the tyre moment/force/thermal model used on the driver in the loop simulator and offline simulation tools.
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You'll have:

- A good Vehicle Dynamics knowledge and background is essential.
- Trackside experience in a high-level motorsport series will be beneficial.
- Tyre modelling experience is desirable (Matlab / Simulink).
- Experience of Vehicle dynamics modelling (Matlab / Simulink / SimPack / Dymola, Adams etc).
- Experience in the development of tyre thermo-mechanical models, higher fidelity models (brush model...etc) physical models or FE models would be a distinct advantage.
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Education and experience:

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- Dye Penetrant Inspection
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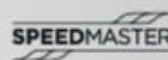
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SRO refutes Abba's BoP accusation

BRITISH GT

British GT Championship organiser SRO has refuted allegations made by Team Abba Racing over what the squad claims to be “a penalty against driver ability” following recent Balance of Performance changes.

The family-run team, which operates a Mercedes-AMG GT3 for team owner Richard Neary and his son Sam, took to social media ahead of last weekend's round at Donington Park to criticise the latest BoP application.

This centred around 15kg of weight being added to the team's Mercedes, which is a pre-Evo model – unlike many Mercedes GT3s on the grid, which did not carry the extra ballast.

“Team Abba Racing believes this to be

a penalty against driver ability and not the car,” read the statement. “It further believes it confirms that its drivers, Richard and Sam Neary, continue to aggravate some with their strong driver pace in what is an older specification car.

“The team is astonished by this decision and has lobbied since Monday for it to be reversed; earlier this week team principal Richard Neary advised SRO of its intention to appeal. SRO has now changed the championship's sporting and technical regulations yesterday [Friday] in relation to regulation 9.1.6 preventing such an appeal.”

It had also “asked for some evidence to substantiate this decision, but nothing has been forthcoming” and that it “will no longer be able to compete on a level playing field with its peers”.

The statement also suggested that SRO was “believed to be uncomfortable” with the team's pole position at the previous Silverstone round, despite the grid being determined by Free Practice 2 times after qualifying was abandoned due to bad weather.

Neary Sr retired the car in the opening hour at Donington after suffering brake problems, with suggestions that the team might look to buy an upgrade kit.

In response to the allegations, SRO released a statement refuting the claims. “SRO Motorsports Group would not publicly comment on a team's Balance of Performance complaints,” it read. “These are exclusively discussed between SRO's technical department and

the GT3 manufacturers.

“However, in this instance, it is important to address some of the inaccuracies in Team Abba Racing's statement.

“SRO's GT Bureau reserves the right to apply separate BoP criteria to pre-Evo and Evo specification cars. Post-event data analysis after the first two rounds showed a delta between both models which had to be corrected for round three [Donington Park].

“Contrary to Team Abba Racing's statement, it is categorically false that the team's Silverstone pole position impacted its Donington BoP. Qualifying's cancellation meant grid order was based on Free Practice 2 times rather than truly representative laps set by all entries.

“British GT's sporting regulations were re-written over the winter with input from Motorsport UK. The regulations have been subject to more than one clarification since publication to ensure they fall in line wherever possible with SRO's worldwide regulations.

“BoP is the cornerstone of GT racing's global success and is not appealable in any other SRO series around the world.

“Finally, BoP is never, as incorrectly stated by Team Abba Racing, based on driver ability. Instead, it accounts for many factors, such as each car's inherent strengths and weaknesses as well as a circuit's particular characteristics. Applying a BoP based on driver ability would be especially detrimental to a predominantly Pro-Am championship like British GT.”

STEFAN MACKLEY



McGaughay ends 29-year layoff in Swift

HISTORICS

Scottish veteran Jim McGaughay broke a 29-year layoff at Silverstone last weekend when he contested the Aurora/Geoff Lees Trophy as an invitee aboard one of the David Bruns-designed Formula Atlantic Swift DB4s, the first of the Californian-built cars seen on track in the UK.

Renowned for his Special GT prowess in the Renault 5 Turbo-BMW and Lancia Rallye 037 and subsequent Thundersports/Interserie exploits, Forth Electrical Services stalwart McGaughay last raced a Ralt-VW RT31 in ARP F3 in 1994.

Enthused by a couple of Scottish speed events last season in the Ralt, McGaughay decided the time was right to return to racing. He duly acquired the early Toyota-engined DB4, chassis 787 in its Dean Hall Canadian Airlines/Graeme Lawrence Autosport 1989 New Zealand GP livery, from Andy Higgins in NZ.

"It's great to be back and in a fantastic car – I'm loving it," said McGaughay, who finished sixth and fifth overall. He intends to compete in the remaining Aurora/GLT events at Donington Park, Brands Hatch and Croft.

He was far from the only addition to



Best result of fifth for McGaughay in Aurora Trophy

MICK WALKER

the Aurora grid, with kart racer Ross Allen also among those joining the fray when he was invited to race the Formula 2 March 762 owned by engineer Keith Bisp. Allen, who last raced a car when competing in a Radical in 2010, won the second race. "The hardest thing is getting used to the gearbox," he said. "At the moment, it's a one-off and there was a lot of pressure not to damage it."

Former Caterham and current Chevron

B8 racer Christian Pittard was another driver making his single-seater debut at Silverstone when he raced the ex-Ross Maxwell Chevron B28 F5000.

The car had not run for around a decade but continues to be looked after by Luke Stephens. "I bought it two years ago and this is the first time I've used it," said Pittard, who took two podiums. "It's more fun to drive and less intimidating than it looks."

MARCUS PYE & PAUL LAWRENCE

Large Mini 7 Club grids set for Thruxton BTCC

MINI 7 RACING CLUB

Sixty classic Minis are due to take to the Thruxton track this weekend when the Mini 7 Racing Club makes its latest appearance at a British Touring Car event.

Separate grids are due to be run for the club's Se7en and Miglia categories as the cars make their first appearance at a BTCC fixture since a Brands Hatch outing in 2020. They produced thrilling racing in Kent on that occasion, as well as entertaining Thruxton BTCC crowds in 2019.

"We're very excited – we've got 60 cars across the

two grids, 28 for the Miglias and 32 for the Se7ens, so that should be spectacular," said the club's commercial director Colin Peacock. "For us, it's very flattering to be asked [to appear alongside the BTCC]. It's something that sparks the imagination of our members, who love the idea of being in front of a huge crowd. It may also help in building people's awareness of this being a way to go motor racing."

Peacock added that the Hampshire speedbowl is a great venue for the Minis to put on a show. "It's one of those circuits where you're



Over 30 Mini Se7ens are entered for Hampshire

RICHARD STYLES

literally just drifting from the exit of the complex all the way back to the chicane," he said. "You definitely don't want to be leading onto the last lap – there can be a train of eight cars and the person in eighth could win.

"It's a really great track for us because of the slipstreaming and, for the next round, we're off to Zandvoort, so it's a real treat for us this summer with the Mini Festival as well."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

IN THE HEADLINES

ANGLISS TO GINETTA GT

Blake Angliss will make his debut in the Ginetta GT Championship at Silverstone this weekend during the G Fest event. Angliss, who has raced in the GT4 Supercup and GT5 Challenge, has spent the season coaching his sister Brea in Ginetta Junior, and both will race at the same meeting for the first time with Breakell Racing.

OLDER LOTUS AT BRANDS

While most of the cars that appeared at the Masters Historic meeting at Brands Hatch last weekend dated from the 1960s-2010s, one entrant appeared with a car from the late 1950s. American Dave Porter brought his 1959 Lotus XV to compete in the Gentlemen Drivers event. Damage sustained in the race thwarted his progress, and he could only finish 24th.

A BUSY WEEKEND FOR PARKIN

It was a busy weekend for Scott Parkin at Snetterton, as he contested five races over three categories. He started with an outing as part of the Axiometrics Fun Cup crew, but suffered clutch failure after a promising start. He also made his Audi TT Cup Racing debut, taking a fifth and two second places, before changing the tyres on the Audi to take third in the Clubsport Trophy.

ANOTHER BUSY WEEKEND

It was also a busy event for John Spiers and Nigel Greensall at Brands Hatch last weekend as the duo teamed up for five of the 11 races held at the Masters Historic meeting. Not only did the pair manage to achieve an impressive strike rate of four podiums, but two of those included overall wins: in the Gentlemen Drivers race in their TVR Griffith 200 and the Gerry Marshall Trophy encounter at the wheel of their Ford Capri Hermetite (below).



GT4 results provisional amid Raceway's black-flag appeal

BRITISH GT

The GT4 results from the Silverstone and Donington Park British GT Championship rounds remain provisional following an appeal by Raceway Motorsport.

The team's Ginetta G56 driven by Freddie Tomlinson and Stuart Middleton was initially disqualified from the Silverstone race in early May after Middleton drove through a red light at the end of the pitlane during the second hour.

The team was originally handed a lengthy stop/go penalty. This was not served during the race, meaning the car was black-flagged and disqualified from the final result after finishing first on the road. The penalty was suspended pending

a post-race investigation, before it was reinstated.

The sport's governing body, Motorsport UK, confirmed last Thursday that an appeal had been lodged and will be heard at a specially arranged National Court inquiry hearing next Monday (5 June).

The appeal means that the Silverstone result remains provisional, which in turn meant no pitstop time penalties could be applied for the latest round last weekend at Donington. These will be added pending the outcome of the appeal, and it likely means that Silverstone winners Jack Brown and Charles Clark will lose their Donington victory once the success penalties are applied.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Hill misses out on BMW GT3 debut

BRITISH GT

British Touring Car star Jake Hill was unable to compete in last weekend's British GT Championship round at Donington Park with Century Motorsport due to "reasons beyond" the team's control.

Hill was due to share Century's second BMW M4 GT3 with Simon Watts, with the championship confirming the line-up ahead of the

Donington event. But on the Thursday before the race, Century took to social media to say that the car slated for Hill and Watts had become unavailable.

"It's just one of those things," team boss Nathan Freke told Autosport. "I tried to move heaven and earth to get another car."

Hill and Watts were also planning to contest the series finale in October at the same

circuit with Century. "That would be nice but it's out of our hands – it's up to Simon and Jake," added Freke. "It's not been our finest hour. It's the first time in 27 years it's happened, so it's been a bit of an experience."

A planned additional entry by Redline Racing for Sacha Kakad and Hugo Cook in the ex-Shaun Balfe Audi R8 GT3 also failed to materialise.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Ericsson wins as Wallace stars at Santa Pod

DRAG RACING

Unbeatable Swede Jan Ericsson launched his bid for a third consecutive FIA European Drag Racing Championship last weekend by winning the opening round at Santa Pod.

Ericsson almost 'ran the table' – pole (5.769s), low elapsed time of the event (5.743s), and victory. Only top speed, snatched fractionally by Michel Tooren at 250.85mph, eluded him. Yet his Pro Modified win was never a foregone conclusion, and the event's real star was Britain's Bobby Wallace.

At September's European Finals, Wallace fought through to his first FIA final, losing there to Ericsson. The story was replayed here, but with stellar accomplishments on the way for Wallace. The opening round pitched him against multiple British champion Andy Robinson and the heir apparent dispatched the veteran ruler.

Wallace's second-round encounter with David Vegter produced the match of the day. The Dutchman was swifter on the clock –



5.775s/249.19mph – but Wallace was sharper off the line. His 5.837s elapsed time was a new British best and carried him across the finish just inches ahead of Vegter. It was the quickest side-by-side Pro Mod match yet seen in Europe, and Wallace's terminal speed of 248.08mph was the continent's fastest by an unblown engine. Wallace received a semi-final walkover when Estonian Andres Arnover could not repair in time and so progressed to the final.

Ericsson deviated from searing, 5.7s/250mph pace only in his semi-final, when a strolling 5.8s/249mph earned the win after opponent Bruno Bader strayed off course and smacked the wall. Ericsson's

triumphant, final-round 5.743s/250.61mph, as Wallace slowed to a 6.4s/181mph defeat, emphasised the fearsome, high-pressure consistency that makes him so formidable.

Eleven of the 17 entrants achieved career-best figures. In the British Drag Racing Championship, which ran concurrently with this FIA opener, Wallace holds a commanding lead after two rounds.

Elsewhere in the programme, Top Fuel Dragster records tumbled. Finland's Ida Zetterstrom clocked the quickest, fastest run yet seen in Europe at 3.773s/321.01mph in the semi-final before beating Swede Susanne Callin in the final.

ROBIN JACKSON

MotoFest Coventry set to return this weekend



MOTOFEST COVENTRY

MotoFest Coventry is set to run in full for the first time in four years this weekend, after the 2022 event was cancelled at short notice following the death of the Queen.

Competitive motorsport is due to return to the

city's streets with two British Automobile Racing Club Speed Championship rounds planned, while the British Autotest Championship will also form part of the event.

A number of special parades and displays are scheduled, including a dedicated supercar

paddock, while several special Jaguars will take to the roads of the manufacturer's home city. Among these are due to be the D-type that set fastest lap in the 1956 Le Mans 24 Hours, and Tom Walkinshaw's 1984 European Touring Car title-winning XJS.

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Mixed fortunes for Moran at Gurston Down

BRITISH HILLCLIMB

Scott Moran won twice as the British Hillclimb Championship took in a Gurston Down quadruple header last weekend.

Moran was the man to beat on the high-speed Wiltshire hill, and could have won three or even four of the top-12 run-offs had he not hit problems on Saturday. A gear selection issue on the opening run-off left Moran third as Wallace Menzies and Alex Summers topped the times.

Worse was to come when a fuel leak developed on the Gould GR59 of Graham Wynn, who shares the car with Moran, which put them out for the rest of Saturday. They worked into the evening, taking the engine out to solve the problem.

In Saturday's second run-off, Summers took his first win of 2023 with a tremendous 25.67s in the DJ



Moran bounced back from car woes to win twice

STEPHEN LISTER

Firestorm to put himself back at the top of the pack after a disastrous weekend at Harewood. Moran was back on form on Sunday and won twice, but it was desperately close and Menzies and Summers were a fraction of a second away. In the weekend's final run-off, the three cars were covered by just 0.07s.

Others to shine included Matthew Ryder, Sean Gould and Dave Uren, while Will Hall ran fourth in the opening run-off but was then put out for the weekend by a fuel problem. The season resumes this weekend at Shelsley Walsh with Menzies at the head of the points, but Moran and Summers are on the attack.

PAUL LAWRENCE

Australian Hyper Racer X1 makes UK debut at Silverstone

MONOPOSTO

The first Australian-built Hyper Racer X1 in the UK made its Monoposto debut at Silverstone last weekend, running in the top third of the 45-car field in the hands of open-wheel newcomer Ollie Hulme.

With two short wet tests under his belt, car agent Hulme began to learn both the 1340cc Suzuki-engined machine and the Grand Prix circuit in qualifying, starting 15th for Saturday's race, within 0.4 seconds of Moto 1400 class leader Jason Timms's Dallara-Hayabusa F301.

Despite running experimentally with a home-market aero package, the distinctive machine – brainchild of father-and-son racers Jon and Dean Crooke – looked planted in the corners.

"We are over-winged and the gearing is too long – I couldn't pull sixth on the Hangar Straight – but I ticked boxes by being flat through Copse and into Becketts," said Hulme, who ran inside the top 12, before "a silly spin on cold rear tyres" after the safety car.

"The car has so much potential. The guys at the factory could not be more helpful. They are already developing smaller wings to meet UK regulations. I'm looking forward to developing the Hyper Racer over this year and hopefully selling some."

The Nick and Peter Pap-developed Spartan sportscar, which Hulme's Le Mans Coupes concern is also importing from Australia, is generating interest, too.

MARCUS PYE



Hulme wasn't far off the Moto 1400 class pace

MICK WALKER

IN THE HEADLINES

STAR JAGUAR FOR AUCTION

The SS100 Jaguar that took victory in the 1937 RAC Rally in the hands of Jack Harrop has gone up for auction. The car, road-registered 'CVU 2', made its competitive debut on the 1937 Monte Carlo Rally, before Harrop took it to victory two months later on the RAC. It will be auctioned by H&H Classics at IWM Duxford on the 14 June with an estimated value of £380,000 to £450,000.

IMP BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The 60th anniversary of the popular Hillman Imp's creation will be celebrated at Castle Combe's Rallyday next month. The Imp Club will occupy a large area of the main paddock with various examples of the rear-engined car, including road and rally models, that will take to the Combe circuit for a parade display on 1 July.

SMITH DEBUTS MARCH

Race engineer Tom Smith gave his March 74B a shakedown run at Silverstone in the Aurora Trophy last weekend as the car raced for the first time since 1978. "It came in a box the size of the tub," Smith said after it returned from North America as a rebuild project. He was inspired to find the car after racing Richard Evans's March 742 at Oulton Park several years ago. "I bought this project a week later," he added. An engine issue curtailed Smith's running, but not before showing impressive early pace.

MURPHY'S CROSSLE WINS

Two class wins in the Aurora Trophy races at Silverstone marked an impressive Formula 5000 debut for John Murphy in his 1968 Crossle-Chevrolet 15F (below), restored by the marque enthusiast in association with John Brown. One of two supplied to US agent Roger Barr – now a familiar face on TV's *Chasing Classic Cars* series – for Formula A, chassis 2 is a sister to the third example raced in contemporary European F5000 by deep sea diver Fred Saunders with Rover V8 power.



MICK WALKER



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Bringing fans closer to the action

British GT's Circuit Safari initiative once again proved a hit at Donington Park last weekend, providing spectators with a unique view

STEFAN MACKLEY

“And, if you look to your right, you’ll see a GT3 car in its natural environment”. OK, so no one actually said that to this writer’s knowledge, but it certainly wouldn’t have been an out of place statement at Donington Park last weekend.

The reason being that the British GT Championship had put on a Circuit Safari, whereby a Routemaster double-decker bus took some lucky passengers, including myself, around the circuit while GT3 and GT4 cars circulated at a reduced pace. It’s a popular concept in Japan, allowing fans to get a different perspective and a greater sensation of speed than from the side of the track, and which has actually taken place once before in the UK – also on the British GT bill at Silverstone back in 2017.

Fans were given the chance to win a place on the bus in a raffle held before the fourth round of the championship and, shortly after British GT’s warm-up session, the Routemaster headed out for two laps of the Donington circuit along with the grid. From a personal point of view, it was quite a surreal experience. More importantly, though, it was well-received by the fans on the bus and indeed by many around the circuit who had stayed trackside on Sunday morning to take pictures and videos of the unusual sight. Anything that can be done to bring the cars and drivers closer to the fans can only be a positive, and ideas such as this should be embraced across all platforms of motorsport.

“Opportunities like this can spark a lifelong passion for the sport in young fans”



DAVID LORD PHOTOGRAPHY

“More fan engagement is a good thing,” said British GT driver and team owner Martin Plowman. “I think the more we can do to get fan participation, it’s only going to increase the number of fans. In America, for example, it’s all about the fans.”

Plowman knows more than most about the appeal of US racing and what it has to offer fans, having competed in the 2014 Indianapolis 500. Aptly, this year’s edition of the fabled race took place on the same weekend, showcasing other concepts that UK motorsport could explore in the future. This ranged from the usual driver autograph sessions, already a staple of many UK motorsport events, to the perhaps over-the-top driver introductions ahead of the big race that F1 was criticised for in Miami.

But there are other aspects that are more exclusive to Indy, such as the Pitstop Challenge. Incredibly, it has been held almost every year since 1977, and allows pitcrews to compete with each other in a knockout-style tournament to change their car’s tyres as quickly as possible. Fans can get almost within touching distance of the machines as they line the pitwall, and it’s a great example of something that in principle may be a simple idea, yet is an incredibly successful and immersive one. Two-wheeled events such as the Isle of Man TT and World Superbikes also allow fans to form a guard of honour after the races, applauding their favourite riders as they head to the podium.

While I’m not suggesting that British GT or other UK championships immediately take up these ideas, it shows there are initiatives out there that can further boost fan engagement. British GT, for example, already has a free grid walk, allowing people to step onto the track ahead of the main spectacle of the weekend, get close to the cars and take in the atmosphere.

Opportunities like this are savoured the most by young fans and can spark a lifelong passion for the sport. As the drive for increased safety rightly continues, it does mean that spectators are pushed further away from the edge of track or have their views obscured by higher and more dense catch fencing, meaning chances like these are even more treasured.

Understandably, safety is why it took British GT organiser SRO a long time to get the Circuit Safari approved and signed off by the sport’s governing body, Motorsport UK, so it certainly wasn’t the work of a moment. As with anything, it’s all about time and money, meaning it might not become a tradition just yet. There’s also the slight inconvenience for teams and drivers. Yes, it’s only 15 minutes of track ‘action’, but it still requires the teams to have the cars ready to run and, although highly unlikely, potentially putting them at risk of damage just hours before the main priority of the weekend.

Whichever way you look at it, though, the more motorsport can give back to the fans the better. Greater opportunities for them to get closer to the cars and their heroes cannot be a bad thing. 🍀

Pitstop woes hand 2 Seas duo second win

**DONINGTON PARK
BRITISH GT
27-28 MAY**

Jonny Adam and James Cottingham became the first pairing to claim two wins in British GT this season, their success allowing them to regain the lead in the championship as just 12 points cover the top four crews.

The 2 Seas Motorsport entry never dropped out of contention during the two-hour contest at Donington Park, sailing through to another victory as other leading protagonists made mistakes either out on track or in the pits.

Initially Cottingham lost ground on the opening lap as an attempted move around the outside of polesitter Shaun Balfe into Redgate allowed Andrew Howard's Beechdean Aston Martin Vantage to get a better exit, with Lucky Khera's Race Lab McLaren 720S Evo almost demoting Cottingham's Mercedes-AMG further.

Navigating GT4 traffic soon became an issue for the leaders, with Howard taking the opportunity to move into the lead at



Balfe's expense into the Fogarty Esses after just nine laps. The two-time British GT champion soon began to pull clear as Cottingham took a further 14 laps to force his way into second, while Balfe began a downward spiral through the pack.

A gap of more than four seconds between the leading pair soon began to reduce approaching the end of the first hour, and eventually they found themselves nose-to-tail with Morgan Tillbrook's Enduro Motorsport McLaren in tow after a

remarkable rise from ninth. Any space remaining between the leaders soon evaporated as a safety car was deployed just before the hour mark after Mike Price's Mercedes crashed and rolled onto the barriers exiting McLeans.

The subsequent recovery of Price – who was taken to the medical centre for precautionary checks – the retrieval of his Greystone GT machine and repair to the barrier all led to a caution period lasting in excess of 30 minutes.

With the pack together as the GT3 pit window opened, it came down to a race between the pitcrews, all three leading cars without any compensation penalties from the previous Silverstone round. But, while Adam rejoined at the head of the pack, there was a 7s delay for the Beechdean machine, Howard admitting that he'd made a mistake reattaching the safety net after team-mate Ross Gunn had jumped in the car.

The error dropped them to fourth, but worse was to befall the Enduro McLaren



Adam (l) celebrates with Cottingham



Balfe took pole but slipped back in race

PROVISIONAL VICTORY FOR BROWN/CLARK

Jack Brown and Charles Clark provisionally claimed victory in GT4 at Donington Park, the pair's second success of the season pending following an appeal by Raceway Motorsport from the previous British GT round (see News).

The Optimum Motorsport crew's yet-to-be confirmed victory came after Clark grabbed the lead approaching the final 20 minutes, getting the better of Tom Wrigley into McLeans. The duo, who also won last time out at Silverstone, had to give best to the DTO Motorsport McLaren Artura of Josh Rowledge/Aston Millar and Raceway Motorsport Ginetta G56 of Freddie Tomlinson/Stuart Middleton in qualifying

and could only manage third.

But Brown was able to closely shadow the leading pair during his first stint, with Tomlinson having got the jump on Rowledge at the start after his radio cut out just as he rounded the final turn and the unsighted green lights went out.

The young Ginetta driver put up an impressive defensive display for the opening stint, rebuffing Rowledge on numerous occasions and surviving heavy contact with the Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini of Mark Sansom into Redgate.

Rowledge's pressure eventually told, though, with the DTO driver getting the position on the inside into Goddards before eking out a small

lead while Brown moved into second at Redgate several tours later.

With the field brought together by the caution for Mike Price's accident, and having to serve less time due to being a Pro-Am pairing, Ian Gough handed the Racelab McLaren over to Wrigley at the head of the pack having been in seventh prior to the stops.

Millar rejoined second and was arguably in prime position for the win, but his McLaren suffered a complete loss of power behind the safety car, coming to a stop at the top of the Craner Curves. It allowed Clarke a free run at Wrigley once racing resumed as the front two



as Marcus Clutton, in for Tillbrook, found he had no throttle when leaving the pits and was forced to perform a master reset, relegating him to eighth.

Once racing resumed, with fewer than 25 minutes left, Adam remained in control throughout, taking his British GT win tally to 18 and is now just one behind the outright record currently held by Phil Keen. “The championship is coming alive,” said Adam, who initially had been due to miss the Silverstone round last month, before the European Le Mans Series event at Imola was called off.

The new championship leader’s closest challengers were Euan Hankey and Khera, the pair rewarded for staying out of trouble with the latter pitting from fourth having moved ahead of Darren Leung’s Century Motorsport BMW M4 and Balfe in his stint.

Potentially the most surprising result was that of reigning champion Ian Loggie and co-driver Jules Gounon, the second 2 Seas Motorsport pairing completing the podium

despite struggling for pace all weekend.

After starting seventh, Loggie noticeably dropped back from the cars ahead as he fought with a general lack of power. Having found a little more pace as the Mercedes’ fuel load lightened, he too demoted Balfe for sixth before the safety car negated any gap to the head of the field. A clean pitstop ensured the pair took their second podium of the season, and now trail their 2 Seas team-mates by 7.5 points.

Behind, it was a case of what might have been for Howard and Gunn, the Aston duo benefiting from the newly laid surface at the Donington Park circuit, which lowered lap times by more than two seconds.

Fifth was a strong result for the BMW of Leung and Dan Harper, who came into the weekend as championship leaders having won last time out at Silverstone. Serving a 20s compensation penalty dropped Harper down to seventh after the pitstops, but he immediately moved into sixth with a hard but fair pass on Martin Plowman’s McLaren into Redgate.

And he gained another position with a move on Chris Froggatt, the Sky Tempesta Racing McLaren driver and team-mate Kevin Tse finishing sixth, while Sandy Mitchell was unable to make ground from seventh after Balfe’s unexplained and significant drop in pace.

Clutton’s day went from bad to worse after the pitstop mishap, a collision with Plowman’s Paddock machine exiting the Melbourne Hairpin pitching the Enduro car heavily into the concrete barriers. They joined the RAM Racing Mercedes of John Ferguson and Raffaele Marciello on the sidelines, after the former hopped the Fogarty Esses chicane on lap three and cracked the sump.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Relive this race at Motorsport.tv

RACE RESULTS

GT3

(74 laps) 1 James Cottingham/Jonny Adam (Mercedes-AMG); 2 Lucky Khera/Euan Hankey (McLaren 720S Evo) +0.865s; 3 Ian Loggie/Jules Gounon (Mercedes); 4 Andrew Howard/Ross Gunn (Aston Martin Vantage); 5 Darren Leung/Dan Harper (BMW M4); 6 Kevin Tse/Chris Froggatt (McLaren). **Fastest lap** Hankey 1m24.977s (105.37mph). **Pole** Shaun Balfe/Sandy Mitchell (Lamborghini Huracan Evo). **Starters** 18.

Points 1 Cottingham/Adam 76; 2= Leung/Harper 68.5; 2= Loggie/Gounon 68.5; 4 Howard/Gunn 64; 5 John Ferguson/Raffaele Marciello (Mercedes) 43; 6 Balfe/Mitchell 42.

GT4

(70 laps) 1 Jack Brown/Charles Clark (McLaren Artura, below); 2 Ian Gough/Tom Wrigley (McLaren) +11.677s; 3 Carl Cavers/Lewis Plato (BMW M4); 4 Harry George/Darren Burke (McLaren); 5 Michael Johnston/Chris Salkeld (BMW); 6 Matt Cowley/Erik Evans (Ford Mustang). **FL** Clark 1m32.863s (96.42mph). **P** Josh Rowledge/Aston Millar (McLaren). **S** 15.



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

pulled clear of a tremendous scrap for third.

Middleton, in for Tomlinson, was forced to continue his stablemate’s defensive driving as Lewis Plato challenged for the final podium position. A better run out of Coppice eventually gave the Century BMW racer the position before the Fogarty Esses, with Darren Burke – sharing the Enduro McLaren with Harry George – also demoting Middleton a further position in the final five minutes. However, the Ginetta driver’s race came to an end on the penultimate lap at the Melbourne Hairpin with damaged suspension, but was still classified ninth.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Another Slater hat-trick denied by penalty

DONINGTON PARK
BRSCC
27-28 MAY

For the second event in a row, it was only track-limits offences that deprived Freddie Slater of a clean sweep of Ginetta Junior victories.

He slipped from pole to fourth in last weekend's thrilling opening race, the first for the category on the Donington Park Grand Prix circuit, before fighting back to win on the road.

But the five-second track-limits penalty dropped him to fifth, giving Hugo Schwarze a maiden victory after he battled through the field from being eighth at the end of lap one. Alisha Palmowski had earlier passed Slater for the lead into the Melbourne Hairpin and she made it an Elite Motorsport 1-2.

Slater made no mistakes on Sunday, leading both races from start to finish, to make it seven wins from nine races to date with R Racing. Team-mate Luca Hopkinson kept Charlie Hart at bay for second in race two, but Hart was set for second in the final race before a 5s track-limits penalty dropped him behind Mikey Porter and Schwarze.

The inaugural season of the Ginetta GT Championship continues to belong to Wolf Motorsport's Luke Reade. He comfortably led every lap of the first two races to make it six wins in a row to start the season. However, a suspected driveshaft failure on the grid for race three abruptly ended his perfect run.

That opened the door for a new victor and four drivers battled it out for the honours. Carl Garnett and Callum Davies led at points before Conner



Garlick rose to the fore, fending off late pressure from Colin White, who made a welcome return to the Ginetta podium twice over the weekend.

Ravi Ramyeed was the class of the Ginetta GT Academy field, even if a trip across the grass at the Old Hairpin cost him the race-one win to Nick White. He drove faultlessly on Sunday, though, to lead both races throughout and displace White at the top of the standings, despite the latter extending his 100% podium record for the season so far.

Tom Mills increased his GB4 Championship lead to 86 points after a dominant weekend. A lights-to-flag win in the rescheduled Silverstone race set the tone for the KMR Sport driver, who then replicated that performance in the opening 'Donington' bout.

A jumped start for Ruhaan Alva in

the third race meant Mills was briefly headed, but he was back in front on lap two and made it three wins in a row. Chances of a clean sweep were slim with the reversed-grid finale, though he made good progress from 13th to fourth.

Colin Queen tailed him in the opener but a track-limits penalty dropped him behind Cooper Webster, who went on to finish second in all four races. Liam McNeilly was the star in the reversed-grid encounter as he rose from eighth to the win in his Fox Motorsport machine, while Aditya Kulkarni picked up a maiden podium in third.

SIMON PAICE

WEEKEND WINNERS

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 Hugo Schwarze
Races 2 & 3 Freddie Slater

GINETTA GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1 & 2 Luke Reade
Race 3 Conner Garlick

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

Race 1 Nick White
Races 2 & 3 Ravi Ramyeed

GB4

Races 1, 2 & 3 Tom Mills
Race 4 Liam McNeilly

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com





GARY CRAIG

Gray and Hendry share spoils as Scottish Fiestas entertain in NI

KIRKISTOWN
500MRCI
27 MAY

A packed programme, majoring on tin-tops, kept Kirkistown’s crowds entertained last weekend, with the Scottish Ford Fiesta ST brigade leading the charge.

In both the championship’s races, a battling trio comprising Steven Gray, Gerry Hendry and Broddy Orr broke free of the pursuing pack. They finished in that order in the opener, although all three had a chance to shine in the process.

The same trio repeated their success in race two, but this time it was Hendry who led across the line from Orr – who set fastest lap on both occasions – and Gray.

In the concurrent NI Fiestas, Megan Campbell and Michael Graham were locked in wheel-to-wheel combat both times, Megan winning race one by 0.017 seconds, before Graham later reversed the order.

Mini Coopers and Mazda MX-5s were

next to perform, but the Minis started with a bang and a red flag after a torpedo attack by Wayne Owens on Mark Stewart and Jack Conachy left all three sidelined, and Owens disqualified.

Kian O’Brien roared on to score the first of two wins at the restart. Behind, the Gilmore brothers completed the rest of the podium, Craig ahead of Darren, while the repaired Conachy got ahead of them on their second appearance. The Mazdas produced slightly less drama, and another double for David Cousins, who had to work hard to keep Francis Allen and Rob Kennedy at bay all the way to the flag both times.

In fact, double victories were the order of the day. Paul Parr’s SEAT Leon took Saloon honours twice from the similar car of Gareth Blaine, as Adrian McNally in yet another Leon completed the race-one podium. He failed to finish race two, though, leaving the place to David McMinn’s unusual diesel-powered SEAT Ibiza.

Reigning Formula Ford 1600 champion David McCullough romped to victory in both contests ahead of a very small field, initially headed in race one by Alan Davidson’s Mondiale and by Trevor Delaney’s Van Diemen in the sequel.

Roadsports/Ni Sevens produced a brace of double winners, too. Steven Larkham lowered his own class lap record on the way to defeating his Uncle Jim in their all-Radical battle. Among the one-litre Ni Sevens, Graham Moore reigned supreme in his self-built GMS ahead of Mark Francis’ Locost.

The Legends produced the only triple winner of the day in Peter Barrable, whose chrome yellow machine appeared to have the legs of the rest. Behind him, though,



GARY CRAIG

McCullough won twice
against a depleted NI
Formula Ford grid

Gray (r) and
Hendry (l) both won
in the Scottish Fiestas
at Kirkistown

WEEKEND WINNERS

SMRC FIESTA ST

Race 1 Steven Gray

Race 2 Gerry Hendry

MINI COOPER/MAZDA MX-5

Races 1 & 2 David Cousins (MX-5)

LIBRE SALOONS/GTS

Races 1 & 2 Paul Parr (SEAT Leon)

NI FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 David McCullough
(Van Diemen RF00)

ROADSPORTS/NI SEVENS

Races 1 & 2 Steven Larkham (Radical PR06)

LEGENDS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Peter Barrable (below)



GARY CRAIG

For full results visit: speedhive.mylaps.com

there was plenty going on.

David Yamamoto and Derek Hogan led the pursuers in race one. Race two, however, provided rather more drama, with Hogan, Keith Rabbitt and Anthony Malone sidelined after a second-lap incident at Fishermans that brought out the red flags. At the restart, Barrable again charged away to finish well clear of Willie Lawrence and Scott Jackson, while in the third, slightly longer race, Jackson and Yamamoto completed the podium party.

RICHARD YOUNG



Smith was a double winner at Silverstone in his ex-Cheever March-BMW 782

Stowe pass propels Smith to F2 double

SILVERSTONE
HSCC
27-28 MAY

From 1949 to 2004, the BRDC's International Trophy race at Silverstone was an overlapping feast of non-championship Formula 1 and European F2, superseded by F3000 from 1985. In the venue's 75th anniversary year, the Historic Sports Car Club's retrospective showcased its Historic F2 championship, recapturing two-litre F2's colourful circus of driving talent, open chassis design and raucous engines.

Warwickshire's Andy Smith – who snared pole with a searing 1m54.505s

(114.42mph) shot – emerged victorious in the ex-Eddie Cheever March-BMW 782 debuted last year.

Four of Robin Herd's finest machines, created in nearby Bicester, graced the 20-strong grid. Although Hockenheim podium-toppers Thomas Amweg (Ralt RT1) and Wolfgang Kaufmann (782) did not travel from Europe, Smith and Matthew Wrigley (Toleman March-Hart 782) relived the late 1970s era brilliantly. In a breathtaking but impromptu move, Smith passed Wrigley round the outside at Stowe in Saturday's race, which was cautioned when Martin Wood (78B/782) launched off Mike Bletsoe-Brown's Chevron B27 at Abbey

on lap one. Marc Mercer (Ralt RT1) and Mark Charteris (March 742) led the chase.

Smith won more easily on Sunday, when Mercer and Charteris' retirements promoted Brian Morris (ex-Piercarlo Ghinzani 782) and Greg Audi (RT1) to third and fourth, the Lebanese under pressure from Scot David Thorburn (762). March pilots Keith White (76B) and Tim Jacobsen (74B) won the FAtlantic divisions, but Ewan Bason (ex-James Hunt 712) and German Oliver Mathai (ex-Winkelmann Racing/Max Mosley Lotus 59B) shared 1600cc F2 spoils.

The Aurora Trophy added F5000s and later FAtlantics, plus Classic F3s, among them a 1977 Chevron B38 raced by 1983 International Trophy winner Beppe Gabbiani. Rory Smith's Ralt-BDA RT4 and Christian Pittard's VDS Chevron-Chevrolet B28 scrapping highlighted the genius of Ron Tauranac and Derek Bennett, whose tubular Brabham BT5 and stunning Chevron B6/B8/B16s of the 1960s had shone in Saturday's Guards Trophy race.

Smith won the opener from Pittard and Jade gearbox kart ace Ross Allen, promoted to Keith Bisp's ex-Alex Ribeiro March 762, with the Chevrons of Mike Bainbridge (B29) and Bletsoe-Brown fourth and fifth. Scot Jim McGaughay's first race since 1994 netted sixth in his ex-Dean Hall FAtlantic Swift-Toyota DB4. Scot Stephen Barlow (Ralt-Alfa Romeo RT3) claimed CF3 gold.

Allen overpowered Smith to win on



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICK WALKER



Sunday, with Pittard third. McGaughay improved to fifth behind Bainbridge, while Bletsoe-Brown – having substituted an ex-Team Gunston B27 for his regular ex-Bob Marsland version overnight – was sixth. Richard Cooke (March 793) netted CF3 plaudits after Barlow spun out.

Evoking memories of the epic Formula Ford slipstreamers of yore, the Classic (pre-1982) pack opened proceedings. Rick Morris led to Stowe where Simon Toyne's Lola T200 dived ahead and points leader Joe Ahrens (Royale RP26) followed suit. Morris and Ahrens traded positions with Ben Tinkler (Van Diemen RF80) until the final lap, when Joe and Rick clashed at the Loop. Tinkler and Andy Gosling (RF79) dashed past as they recovered.

Three abreast into Copse from Sunday's start, Tinkler, Ahrens and Morris set the pace. Rick, who famously beat Ayrton Senna here in 1981, wriggled ahead and at 75 needed his guile to shade Tinkler by 0.055 seconds. Ahrens retired, leaving Gosling third, clear of Oliver Chapman, from 19th, and Calvin Bainbridge in Lolas.

Saturday's Historic FF1600 round was brewing well, with Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20A), Benn Simms (Jomo), Linton Stutely (Royale RP3), Sam Mitchell (Merlyn) and Toyne split by 0.795s when the chequer was flown prematurely with the curfew approaching. Sunday's sequel was a walkover for Grant once Simms'

engine went sick. Young Spencer Shinner just denied Saturday dropout Matt Wrigley second in a Merlyn podium lockout.

Steve Nuttall (Chevron B8) dominated the Guards/Thundersports hour, outrunning Ross Hyett in one of four B16s obliged to remain stationary for an extra minute at the stops. Leaving 1.85s early attracted a penalty that dropped Hyett to fourth behind Rob Tusting/Neil Fowler (Lenham P69) and Christian Pittard (B8). A mighty Lotus Elan GT scrap featured Horatio Fitz-Simon spinning into Club – endeavouring to repass Trevor Welsh's Lola T492 – while fighting with Will Schryver and Eddie Powell, but he regained the advantage with a few laps to spare.

Morgan +8s filled the top five places in the combined Historic Road Sports and Historic Touring Car race. HRS contender Will Plant won by a distance from Robin Pearce, but Andrew Wenman beat Antony Ross (TVR 3000M) by 0.414s in the 70s set. Mark Watts' Ford Mustang ruled the Touring Car roost.

Richard Wilson in his magnificently lithe Maserati 250S outhandled Martin Hunt's boldly conducted HWM-Jaguar in Sunday's Griffiths Haig Trophy races, with Chris Keen's Kurtis-Chevy 500S third both times.

A huge Monoposto field was derailed by safety car interludes on both days. Tony Bishop (ex-Kamui Kobayashi F3 Dallara-Mercedes) was 25s clear on Saturday, but

WEEKEND WINNERS

HISTORIC F2

Races 1 & 2 Andy Smith (March-BMW 782)

AURORA TROPHY/CLASSIC F3

Race 1 Rory Smith (Ralt-BDA RT4)

Race 2 Ross Allen (March-BMW 762)

CLASSIC FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Simon Toyne (Lola T200)

Race 2 Rick Morris (Royale RP29)

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD

Races 1 & 2 Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20A)

THUNDERSPORTS/GUARDS TROPHY

Steve Nuttall (Chevron-BMW B8)

70s ROAD SPORTS/HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS/HISTORIC TOURING CARS

William Plant (Morgan +8)

GRIFFITHS HAIG TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Richard Wilson (Maserati 250S)

MONOPOSTO

Races 1 & 2 Karl O'Brien
(Dallara-Mugen Honda F307)

CSCC CLASSIC K

Horatio Fitz-Simon (Lotus Elan 26R)

CSCC SWINGING SIXTIES

Horatio Fitz-Simon (Lotus Elan 26R)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

the reprieved Karl O'Brien unseated him into Stowe in a single-lap dash to the chequer. Irishman O'Brien doubled up, heading a Dallara quintet embroiling Jason Timms' 1400cc Suzuki Hayabusa-powered F301. New Yorker James Clennell pipped Matty Haughton – fourth on Saturday – as Wellingborough-built Jedis topped the Moto 1000 brigade, pursued by Irish teenager Codey Keogh (Leystone).

Once Mark Halstead's Elan had fallen, Horatio Fitz-Simon easily won the Classic Sports Car Club Classic K race, his Elan downing three TVR Griffiths and the Marcos of Allen Tice/Chris Conoley. Best of the tiddlers was Luke Wos, who hurled his Turner to seventh overall, chased by Brian Lambert's Ginetta G4.

Fitz-Simon followed a similar blueprint in the 52-car Swinging Sixties finale, which lost Halstead's G4 twin-cam to a first-corner clash with Jon Wolfe's TVR Tuscan, an incident for which Halstead's licence was endorsed. Wolfe made up 30s during the pitstops, but Fitz-Simon reeled him in and, after several dramatic exchanges, triumphed by 1.438s. Harassed by Steve Hodges (Lotus 7 S2), Ray Barrow (Chevrolet Camaro) held on for third place.

MARCUS PYE

Honours even between Lotus and Williams

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR MASTERS HISTORIC
27-28 MAY

Victory honours in last Sunday's pair of Masters Racing Legends events at Brands Hatch were shared between Mark Hazell in his Williams FWo7B and the Lotus 77 of Nick Padmore as the series featuring 1966-85 Formula 1 cars thrilled the large crowd with two highly entertaining races.

Hazell came under huge pressure from multiple category champion Padmore and Jamie Constable's Tyrrell 011B in a memorable lead battle in the opener, but eyes were also concentrated on the McLaren MP4/1 of Steve Hartley, who was charging through from the back of the 17-car grid after missing qualifying. A succession of rapid laps brought Hartley close to the leaders, but it counted for little when he spun and clipped the Sheene barrier.

"I just ran out of talent," Hartley said. "I was pushing hard to catch up, but I flat-spotted a tyre and the rear of the car just got away from me." The incident was enough to bring the race to an early end, with Hazell declared a delighted winner.

Padmore was in determined mood in the opening moments of the partially reversed-grid second race. After diving inside Constable at Graham Hill Bend, he also usurped the Tyrrell 011 of Ken Tyrrell to run second behind Hartley by the end of the opening lap. Constable's chances of another podium finish vanished with a spin on the first tour, before Hartley struck trouble again at Sheene, opening the opportunity for Padmore to win from Tyrrell and Hazell.

The TVR Griffith of John Davison, the similar car of John Spiers and Nigel Greensall, plus the Lotus Elan 26R of Giles Dawson emerged as the key players in Saturday's Gentlemen Drivers event.



Spiers gave his all to force Davison into an error in an exciting lead tussle in the opening laps before the mandatory stops and a lengthy caution period to clear Harry Barton's TVR, which was resting up against the pitwall with a broken wheel, turned the race. A subsequent trip through the Paddock gravel left Davison dragging a cooling duct, forcing him to make an unscheduled second stop. Dawson initially assumed the lead, only to be decisively passed at Surtees by Greensall moments after an additional safety-car period had concluded.

Spiers and Greensall inherited the victory spoils in the Gerry Marshall Trophy in their battle-scarred Ford Capri Hermetite after leader Fred Shepherd went off at Paddock on the last lap in his Ford Mustang. Jim Morris and Mat Jackson brought their VW Golf GTI home second ahead of the Chevrolet Camaro of John and Jack Young.

The first Masters Sports Car Legends event proved to be an attritional affair, with only six cars completing the full distance.

Chris Beighton looked all set to claim a dominant win in his Lola T70 Mk3B until he picked up a puncture seven laps from home. Nick Sleep and Alex Montgomery (Lola T70 Mk3) came through to claim the win ahead of Jason Wright's similar car and the Chevron B19 of Robert Shaw.

The high retirement rate meant a depleted grid for race two, but Beighton was able to make up for the previous day's frustration by taking the win after storming through from seventh to the lead by lap four. A wheel issue with their McLaren M1B stifled the efforts of Spiers and Greensall in race one, but they were able to claim the runner-up spot in the sequel after Greensall passed Wright at Stirlings on the penultimate tour.

After lapping at an average speed of over 112mph in qualifying, Steve Brooks dominated Sunday's opening Endurance Legends race in his Peugeot 90X, despite gearbox issues. Former F3 Cup racer Stuart Wiltshire brought his similar car home second, while third was taken by the Ligier JSP3 of Marcus Jewell/Ben Clucas after the third Peugeot of Richard Meins was involved in an incident at Paddock. With neither Brooks nor Meins able to participate in race two, Wiltshire cantered to victory.

Craig Wilkins claimed a double success aboard his Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo in a pair of GT Trophy races that showcased just nine starters. Jason McNulty led the early stages of the contest aboard his similar car after getting ahead of poleman Neil Glover's Lamborghini at Westfield on lap one, only to be usurped by Wilkins during the stops. McNulty was second again in race two after a pitlane start, as Wilkins won by over half a minute.

MARK LIBBETER



Eventual winner Spiers puts
 Davison under pressure in
 Gentlemen Drivers race

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: GARY HAWKINS



Hazell guided his Williams to defeat Padmore's Lotus in Historic Formula 1 opener

WEEKEND WINNERS

MASTERS RACING LEGENDS FOR 1966-85 F1 CARS

Race 1 Mark Hazell (Williams FW07B)
Race 2 Nick Padmore (Lotus 77)

GENTLEMEN DRIVERS

John Spiers/Nigel Greensall (TVR Griffith 200)

GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY

John Spiers/Nigel Greensall (Ford Capri Hermetite)

MASTERS SPORTS CAR LEGENDS

Race 1 Nick Sleep/Alex Montgomery (Lola T70 Mk3)
Race 2 Chris Beighton (Lola T70 Mk3B, below)

MASTERS ENDURANCE LEGENDS

Race 1 Steve Brooks (Peugeot 90X)
Race 2 Stuart Wiltshire (Peugeot 90X)

MASTERS GT TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Craig Wilkins (Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo Evo)

MASTERS PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

Sam Tordoff (Ford Falcon Sprint)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

TORDOFF'S FALCON SOARS TO VICTORY OVER TIN-TOP STARS

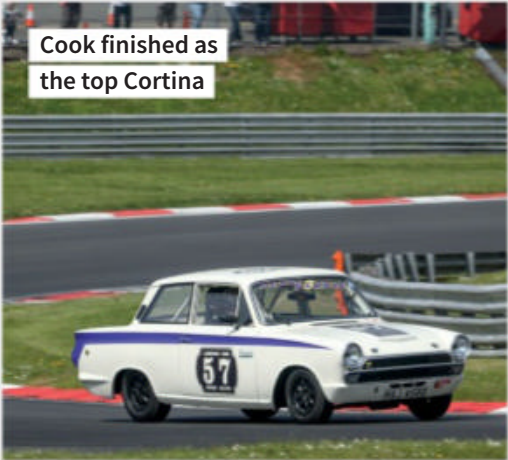
One year after driving his eye-catching Ford Falcon Sprint to Masters Pre-'66 Touring Car glory at Brands Hatch in 2022, Sam Tordoff repeated the achievement last weekend, scoring a dominant win in a race that attracted an array of famous names and a host of storied cars among its impressive 40 entrants.

With touring car legends Steve Soper (sharing a Ford Mustang with Henry Mann) and Matt Neal (teaming up with son Henry in a Ford Lotus Cortina) entered alongside other recent tin-top stars including Tordoff himself and Jeff Smith, plus the addition of current ace Josh Cook and 1990 Formula Ford Festival winner Dave Coyne, the grid did not lack driving talent.

Come qualifying, it was 2016 BTCC runner-up Tordoff who set the pace ahead of the Mustang shared between John Spiers and Nigel Greensall. As for Cook, he would line up third as he prepared for a solo drive in Mike Gardiner's Ford Lotus Cortina, with Soper starting fourth.

The need to serve an 'elite driver' penalty during the compulsory pitstops looked set to make Tordoff's bid for victory harder, but he duly led the field away off the line. Cook, who would also have to serve the same penalty, made a blistering start to move into second as the whole field made its way through Paddock without incident. Tordoff built up a sizeable advantage in the early stages, leaving Cook to battle for second with the Mustang of Michael Whitaker Jr, but not before Soper's race had come to an end in the Clearways gravel on the third lap.

Once the pitstop window opened, Tordoff was one of the first to dive in and his enforced lengthy stop elevated Whitaker into the lead. By lap 20 of 33, Tordoff had overcome the time lost and reclaimed the lead at Paddock. He would



Cook finished as the top Cortina

not be headed thereafter, but he admitted that he still had to be wary of any potential problems in the closing stages. "I had to manage the tyres and the brakes towards the end," Tordoff said. "The left rear of the car really takes a beating around here so, in the end, it was just about not doing anything that could destroy the tyres."

Whitaker brought his Mustang home second, rueing an earlier excursion that had "effectively given him a penalty" in his battle with Tordoff. "I thought about challenging Sam but, after the mistake, I thought it was better to settle for second," he added.

Behind the top two, Cook eventually had to give best to the Spiers/Greensall Mustang for third, but he was still the first Cortina driver home ahead of the similar car of former Renault UK Clio Cup racer David Dickenson. "Not many things top driving a Lotus Cortina around the Brands Grand Prix circuit," Cook exclaimed.

It was a sentiment shared by fellow Cortina pilot Michael Cullen, whose race-long battle with the similar cars of Ambrogio Perfetti and Patrick Shovlin provided plenty of entertainment for the spectators, while Smith took the class honours for the Mini competitors.

MARK LIBBETER



The huge Pre-'66 Touring Car field was headed by Tordoff



RICHARD STYLES

Olympian takes Fun Cup gold after close finish

SNETTERTON
BRSCC
27-28 MAY

After four hours of Fun Cup action, it all came down to a three-way battle between reigning champion GCI, multiple title winner UVio/Hofmann's and Team Olympian at Snetterton last weekend.

At half-distance, Riley Phillips led for Olympian, from UVio's Scott Fitzgerald and GCI's Ian Wood, with Scott Parkin in fourth for Axiometrics. It was the same trio at the top into the final hour, with Fitzgerald heading Wood and Olympian's Kristian Rose but, with Axiometrics out with clutch failure, Colin Kingsnorth was into fourth for Team Viking/Ursus Capital.

It was the final stop that proved critical, with Fabio Randaccio out in front for UVio/Hofmann's, from GCI's Craig Butterworth, with Phillips closing in for Team Olympian. Phillips was into second through Agostini six laps from home, and just 0.465 seconds

off the lead. Then, a lap later, he grabbed the place out of Williams – "I completely locked up," said Randaccio.

Phillips therefore took the flag just over 2s clear to claim Olympian spoils with Rose and Chris Dovell. "I knew we might be able to do it, but I expected more of a fight – they made mistakes and we capitalised," said Phillips. Butterworth snatched a late second when Randaccio locked up again into Nelson, while Mark Holme brought Viking/Ursus home in fourth, from MJ Tec's Scott Jeffs and PLR's Neil Plimmer.

Chris Middlehurst was the man to beat in the first of the National Formula Ford races. He led fellow Van Diemen pilots Lucas Romanek and Morgan Quinn into Riches from the start but, by the end of the opening lap, Jordan Kelly was into second from Romanek and Quinn.

Kelly's Van Diemen had the lead into Riches on lap four of eight, but Middlehurst soon took it back, before Kelly made another attempt. "I tried to go around the

outside and ran out of track," he said. Romanek therefore reclaimed second and, with Quinn spinning out too, Brandon McCaughan was third. Nolan Allaer's Ray broke the Van Diemen dominance in fourth.

Romanek nosed ahead of Middlehurst into Riches at the start of race two, before Middlehurst moved in front to head Romanek, McCaughan and Allaer. When McCaughan and Allaer clashed at Wilson, Kelly was into third and then, as Middlehurst exited Hamilton for the final time, he suddenly slowed. "I thought it might have been fuel, as it just died on me, but it was the coil," he said.

Romanek briefly held the lead, but Kelly charged ahead into Brundle to seal the win. Elliott Budzinski closed in on the last lap, and the top three were separated by less than 0.4 seconds at the flag.

Romanek led from Agostini on lap two in the finale, and broke clear to secure victory as the rest fought over second. Budzinski won that skirmish, with Middlehurst third.

There was little to split Ross Makar and Carl Swift in the first Audi TT Cup outing. But their duel allowed Ryan Edgcumbe to close, in turn enabling Makar to make a late but decisive break. Edgcumbe snatched second a lap from home. Swift was a close third, well clear of Harry Yardley-Rose.

Yardley-Rose led from lights to flag in race two, with Swift losing his early second place to Paul Maguire. But, through Hamilton with a lap to go, Swift reclaimed the spot, while Scott Parkin went through Riches for the final time alongside Maguire, before claiming third as his rival ran wide. Swift was then penalised for track-limits abuses, dropping him to third.

Yardley-Rose led race three initially, but



RICHARD STYLES

WEEKEND WINNERS

SNETTERTON

FUN CUP

Team Olympian
(Chris Dovell/Kristian Rose/Riley Phillips)

NATIONAL FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10)

Race 2 Jordan Kelly (Van Diemen RF06)

Race 3 Lucas Romanek (Van Diemen JL13)

AUDI TT CUP

Race 1 Ross Makar

Race 2 Harry Yardley-Rose

Race 3 Carl Swift

BMW COMPACT CUP

Races 1 & 2 Ian Howes

Race 3 Gareth Claydon

MG METRO CUP

Race 1 Jon Moore

Race 2 Rhys Claydon

EVOLUTION TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Nick Gwinnett (Renault Clio 172)

500 OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Turner (Cooper Mk9)

CLUBSPORT TROPHY

Lloyd Chafer (BMW M3)

OULTON PARK

BRITISH ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Peter Erceg/Andrew Bentley (Audi R8 GT3)

BRITCAR TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Maurizio Sciglio (Ginetta G56 GTA)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Swift was ahead into Riches, with Parkin and Maguire soon following. As the lead pair held station, Yardley-Rose retook third.

Ian Howes headed the restarted BMW Compact Cup opener from lights out, with Matt Millson in second exiting Hamilton. The lead margin closed briefly, before Millson's hold on second came under threat. He just resisted Gareth Claydon, Dale Wherton and Rudi Macmillan at the flag.

It was the same top four for most of race two. Howes once more had the decisive edge, while Millson and Claydon held station behind. But Macmillan managed to oust Wherton from fourth on the last tour. Claydon then broke the Howes dominance in race three after a race-long duel with Macmillan, as Howes watched from third.

Jon Moore came out on top of a terrific duel with Rhys Claydon in the first Metro Cup race, while third-placed Mike Williams had a fourth-lap excursion, promoting Ben Williams. Claydon dominated race two, with Matthew Simpson heading Ben and Mike Williams as they ran line astern.

PETER SCHERER

Audi crew on top as British Endurance heads to Oulton



Erceg and Bentley proved unstoppable in three-hour race

OULTON PARK BARC 27 MAY

The rolling parkland of Oulton Park with its cool, shading trees was the perfect location for Saturday's British Automobile Racing Club meeting. On a day blessed by unceasing sunshine, qualifying gave two teams more time to enjoy this than they wished, with the Ferrari 458 Challenge of Chris Goddard and Charlie Hand rolling, while Simon Clark's Porsche 997 Carrera S also hit strife.

The main event was the British Endurance Championship's three-hour race and, despite just 15 cars being entered, the quality of the machinery was exceptional. The purposeful Audi GT3 of Peter Erceg and Andrew Bentley took pole, with the Porsche 991 Cup of Brad Thurston and Daryl DeLeon alongside for the rolling start. Glebs Stepanovs' outlandish Aston Martin Vulcan was on the following row.

Bobby Trundley capitalised on a lightning start from fifth on the

grid in his McLaren 570S GT4 to climb to third, but the Team Brit campaign faded and the crew eventually finished seventh. Series leaders Ashley Woodman and Martin Byford had a day to forget, with their Cupra Leon Competicion TCR starting from the pitlane only to return there repeatedly during the race. A 10th-place finish, 18 laps down, reflected their determination in the face of adversity.

Right from the start, it was Erceg and Bentley's race to lose, with the Vulcan and 991 duelling for second until the Porsche's contest came apart after its final stop, with only 24 minutes left to run. To add insult to injury, a stop/go penalty led to the resurgent Mercedes GT4 of Chris Jones and Matt George sweeping past to claim third. The dominant Audi could not be denied and was two laps clear of the Vulcan at the flag.

Two 50-minute races for the Britcar Trophy machines bookended the central feature, with the morning outing the more entertaining. The Ginetta G56s were in control as Maurizio Sciglio led home Marco Anastasi, followed by the shared car of Neil Wallace and Ian Astley, in both the morning and afternoon.

The Clio class delivered its fair share of internal squabbles to entertain the crowd. Callum Noble's climb from last at the start of the second outing to sixth at the flag in his BMW M3 E46 added to the excitement.

STEPHEN MOSLEY



Sciglio headed the G56 ranks in Britcar Trophy

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The WRC2 driver defeated Cronin by almost half a minute on the Jim Clark Rally

Flying Frenchman Fourmaux makes it two BRC wins in a row

JIM CLARK RALLY
BRC
26-27 MAY

M-Sport Ford WRC2 factory pilot Adrien Fourmaux is not often out of the driver's seat of late, and that was highlighted by a sensational performance on the second round of the British Rally Championship, the Jim Clark Rally, last weekend.

The unforgiving closed roads in the Scottish Borders provided a dramatic backdrop for the first asphalt encounter of the season and, while the mileage was low, the pace out front was blistering. Just 66 competitive miles spread over two days were on offer, and it was Fourmaux and co-driver Alex Coria who threaded their Ford Fiesta Rally2 through the Friday night stages with the ultimate precision, ending

the opening leg a whopping 28 seconds ahead of the chasing pack.

That lead was more than enough to enable the Frenchman to relax over Saturday's six tests and cruise to his second BRC win of the season. "The car has been in a good position all weekend," said Fourmaux. "So yes, we can be very happy. We really enjoyed the rally. It was really technical and slippery in places. We had a really good day yesterday and then we could just enjoy the stages today. I am really enjoying [the BRC]. It is very different being on the gravel and then the Tarmac. And it's interesting."

Interesting for Fourmaux, frustrating for Keith Cronin, who was bridesmaid yet again. The Irishman was struggling to get back into the groove on the sealed surfaces in his Volkswagen Polo R5, and had barely warmed up by the time the rally was over. Second place was some consolation for a solid drive.

The battle for the final BRC podium position was less clear cut, and James Williams had bragging rights on Friday night. But after a solid start in the daylight of Saturday, Williams left the road before service, putting his Fiesta out on the spot. The same misery befell Elliot Payne just a few miles later on the same stage, leaving Callum Black to step up to the plate and secure his first BRC podium since 2014.

Stephen Petch was learning his new Skoda Fabia on asphalt and aiming to stay out of trouble during the weekend, and that proved a wise choice. Sitting tight netted



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP

BRC RALLY RESULTS

1 Adrien Fourmaux/Alexandre Coria (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 2 Keith Cronin/Mikie Galvin (VW Polo R5) +29s; 3 Callum Black/Jack Morton (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 4 Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson (Skoda Fabia Rally 2 Evo); 5 Kyle White/Sean Topping (Peugeot 208 Rally4); 6 Hugh Brunton/Drew Sturrock (Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo). **JBRC** White/Topping (below).



For full results visit:
britishrallychampionship.co.uk

him fourth as Hugh Brunton beached his Fabia on the final loop of the day.

The Junior entry list was a little slim. But what it lacked in numbers, it made up for in quality. The McRae name once again graced the BRC thanks to youngster Max, son of 1995 British champion Alister, joining the ranks for the rally. But unless you were stationed near the start of the opening stage, you wouldn't have seen him. McRae was forced to retire his Opel Corsa Rally4 with transmission woes on the opener, stopping just yards away from fellow Junior BRC contender Kyle McBride, who had rolled his Ford Fiesta Rally4.

That drama left Kyle White to claim his second Junior win of the season, with a measured drive in his Peugeot 208 Rally4. He and Sean Topping still had to deal with a turbo issue, but they managed their lead to make it two from two this year.

MATT COTTON

FINISHING STRAIGHT



ISLE OF MAN TT



ISLE OF MAN TT

any officially sanctioned world championship calendar. Those who race do so of their own free will, knowing full well what the consequences are — though all measures are taken to make the event as safe as humanly possible — and everyone who's part of it has a mutual understanding.

Therefore, the TT provides the key ingredient to a successful documentary. *DTS's* manufactured drama stands out like a sore thumb with each season, but there is nothing false about the TT's series *No Room For Error* — an appropriately titled, four-part series that is available on TT+ and ITVX for UK viewers.

It's not the first attempt at a TT documentary. In 2011, *Closer to the Edge* gave the TT a real boost in following thanks to its nationwide cinema release and the exposure it gave to the human side of the TT. The Dunlop family-focused *Road* took that to a new level, and it's a must-watch for all racing fans — albeit a harrowing couple of hours.

No Room For Error focuses on the 2022 TT and picks out numerous figures to follow. Big names such as John McGuinness, Peter Hickman, Dean Harrison and Michael Dunlop are present, as are your up-and-comers including Davey Todd, all the way to the privateer newcomers on the island.

Through this, it offers a glimpse of the highs of winning for the big boys, to the high of simply finishing for the privateers, and *No Room For Error* doesn't shy away from the lows either. In 2022, six competitors died as a result of accidents.

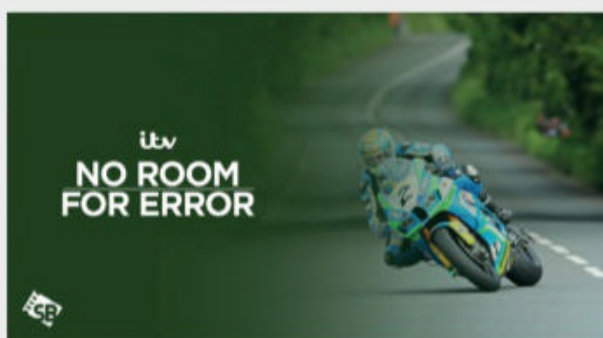
While the filmmakers' broaching of the subject of death could have perhaps been slightly stronger, especially when speaking to the riders who have their families around them, the mental anguish of the inherent selfishness of road racing is laid bare, particularly through 23-time winner McGuinness.

But while *No Room For Error* doesn't hide from the sadness, neither does it lose sight of the good side. The camaraderie of TT riders is like nothing in motorsport, so the need for manufactured rivalry to engage an audience is absent.

No Room For Error is arguably the best TT documentary to showcase the human side of the event and that makes it a must-watch.

LEWIS DUNCAN

The human side of road racing's greatest event



DOCUMENTARY NO ROOM FOR ERROR

Ever since Netflix's *Drive to Survive* redefined what a sporting docuseries should be, everyone has been getting in on the act — some more questionably than others.

MotoGP's failed Amazon title *Unlimited* made sense, even if its promotion led to the series reaching absolutely nobody. IndyCar's *100 days to the Indianapolis 500* hype-series makes sense from the point of view that it's one of American motorsport's biggest events. Yet Australian Supercars, Formula 2 and Formula 3 having their own efforts didn't make much sense given the dwindling returns.

So, the market is oversaturated with motorsport docuseries, all hoping to carve out a piece of the pie that *DTS* has so successfully baked over the past five years or so.

But it was no surprise back in the winter of 2022 when organisers of the Isle of Man TT revealed plans for their own docuseries to air on their TT+ OTT platform. If there is one area of motorsport that can justify getting in on the act, it's road racing.

You fall into one of two categories. Road racing is in your blood and it's the best thing you've ever witnessed, or it's nothing but death races that should have been consigned to the history books.

No event typifies this more than the TT. First run in 1907, it's the oldest of the prestigious events that take place across May and June, including the Monaco Grand Prix, the Indy 500 and the Le Mans 24 Hours. And it continues to both delight and horrify the masses in equal measure.

It's arguably the most misunderstood of motorsport events. The reservations about safety are valid, but the beauty of the TT is that it does not form part of

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Spanish Grand Prix
F1 World Championship
Round 7/22
Barcelona, Spain
4 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355
TV Highlights Sky Sports F1, Sun 1900, Channel 4, Sun 1830

Rally Sardinia
World Rally Championship
Round 6/13
Sardinia, Italy
1-4 June
TV Live BT Sport 1, Thu 1700, BT Sport 2, Sat 0700, Sat 1400, Sun 0700, Sun 1100
TV Highlights BT Sport 3, Fri 2100, BT Sport 1, Sat 2330, BT Sport 3, Sun 2200, Red Bull TV, Fri 2100, Sat 2100, Sun 2100

IndyCar Series
Round 7/16
Detroit, USA
4 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 2000

Formula E
Round 8/11
Jakarta, Indonesia
3-4 June
TV Live Channel 4, Sat 0830, Eurosport 2, Sat 0830, Sun 0830, Channel 4 Sport

YouTube, Sun 0830

Formula 2
Round 6/13
Barcelona, Spain
3-4 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 1310, Sun 1020

Formula 3
Round 4/9
Barcelona, Spain
3-4 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 0925, Sun 0850

Indy NXT
Round 4/12
Detroit, USA
3-4 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 1700, Sun 1745

Super GT
Round 3/8
Suzuka, Japan
4 June
Livestream via motorsport.tv, Sat 0600, Sun 0400

GT World Challenge Endurance Cup
Round 2/5
Paul Ricard, France
4 June
Livestream via motorsport.tv, Sat 1000, Sun 1630

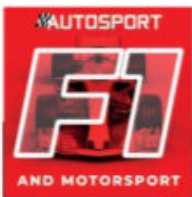
GT4 European Series
Round 2/7

Paul Ricard, France
3-4 June

NASCAR Cup Series
Round 15/36
St Louis, USA
4 June
TV Live Viaplay, Sun

NASCAR Xfinity Series
Round 13/33
Portland, USA
3 June
TV Live Viaplay, Sat 2100

World Rallycross
Round 1/8
Montalegre, Portugal
3-4 June



DUNBAR/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix review
Max Verstappen maintained the Red Bull domination with an imperious victory at the Monaco Grand Prix, keeping clear of Fernando Alonso and navigating a late downpour. Podcast host Martyn Lee is joined by Matt Kew and Stuart Codling, who were both in Monte Carlo to witness the action, to analyse how the Monaco GP was won.

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

TV Live BT Sport 3, Sun 1500

UK MOTORSPORT
Thruxton BARC
3-4 June
BTCC, British F4, Mini Challenge Trophy, Mini Miglia, Mini Se7en, Porsche Carrera Cup
TV Live ITV4, Sun 1115

Silverstone BARC
1-4 June
Ginetta Academy, Ginetta Championship, Ginetta Junior

Oulton Park 750MC
3 June
Alfa Romeos, BMW Car Club, Club Enduro, Sport Specials, Sports 1000

Spa
3-4 June
GB3, Caterham Graduates (Sigma 135, Sigma 150, Sigmax)
Livestream via gb3-3.net

Zandvoort BARC
3-4 June
Caterhams (270R, 310R, Roadsport, Seven UK)

Snetterton MSVR
3-4 June
Bell Sport Challenge, Clubmans Sports Prototypes,

Focus Cup, GT Cup, Lotus Cup

Brands Hatch CSCC
3-4 June
Future Classics, Magnificent Sevens, Modern Classics, New Millennium, Open Series, Slicks Series, Special Saloons and Modsports, Swinging 60s, Tin Tops, Turbo Tin Tops

Anglesey BARC
3-4 June
CNC Heads Sports & Saloons, JSCC, Hyundai Coupe Cup, Superkarts, Track Attack

Knockhill KMSC
3-4 June
DDMC Northern Saloons/ Sportscars, Modsports, Scottish C1 Cup, Scottish Legends, Scottish Classic Sports/Saloons, Super Lap Scotland

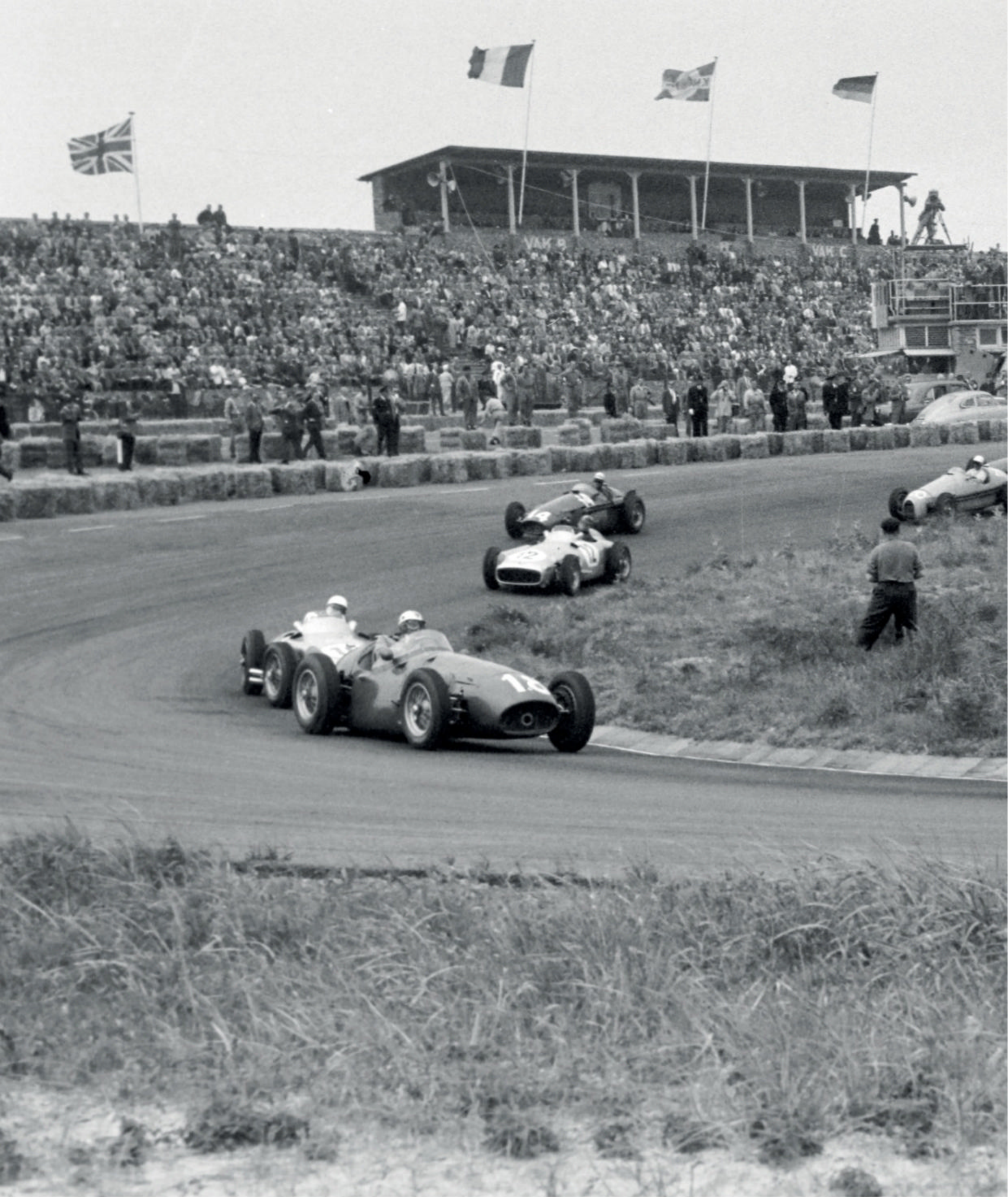
British Hillclimb Championship
Round 5/14
Shelsley Walsh
3-4 June

British Rallycross Championship
Round 2/6
Mondello Park
3-4 June



Spanish Grand Prix

ETHERINGTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



FROM THE ARCHIVE

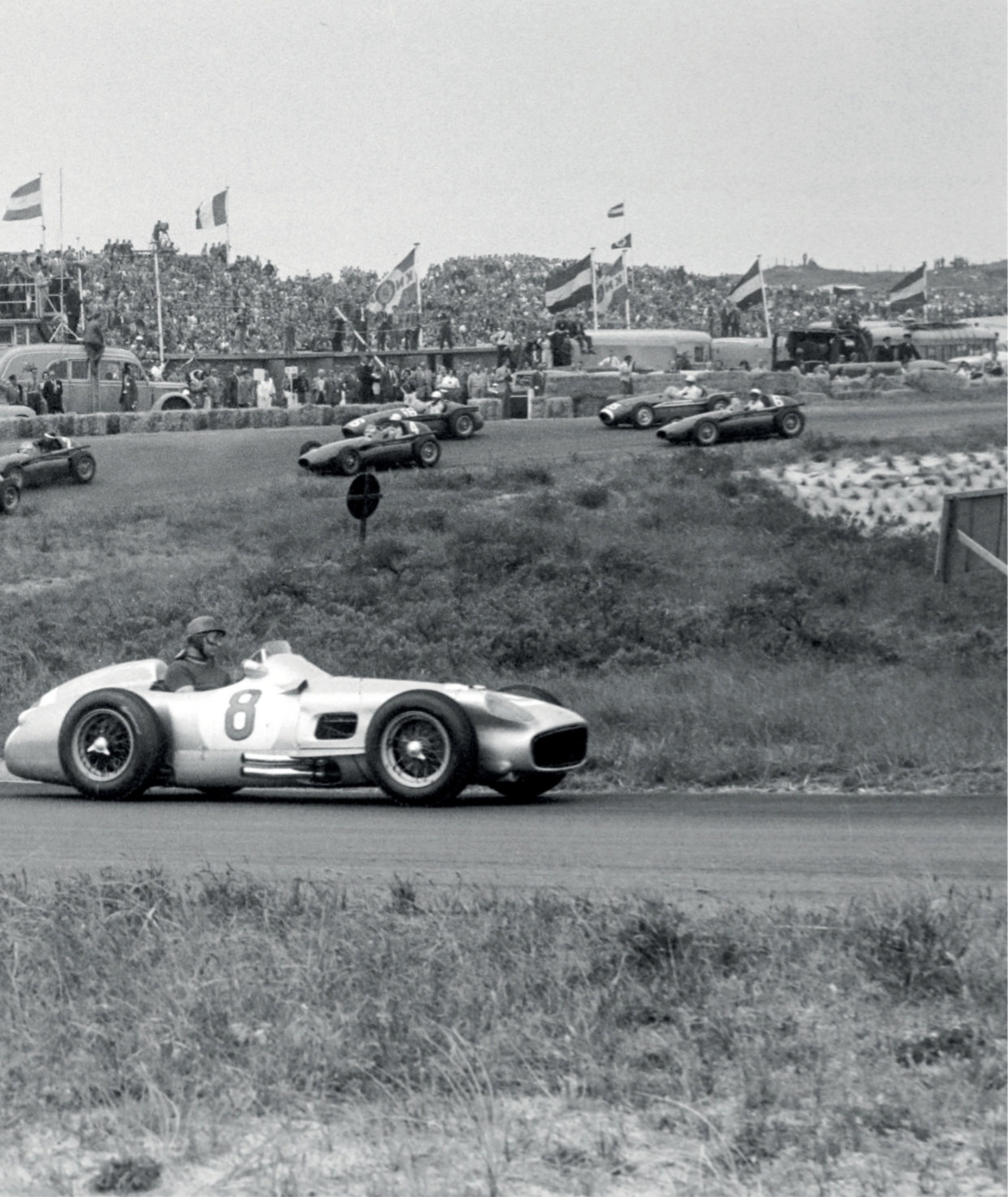
Polestarter Juan Manuel Fangio (Mercedes W196) takes immediate control of the 1955 Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort, pursued by Luigi Musso (Maserati 250F), who had

deposed Fangio's team-mates Stirling Moss and Karl Kling off the line. It didn't take very long for Moss to regain second place, after which the Mercedes pair held formation to the finish, but Musso's pace and

persistence meant that he was still considered a threat, keeping up the pressure until a late-race spin. Fangio and Moss crossed the line 0.3 seconds apart after 100 laps, with Musso almost a minute behind.



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Antofagasta

With a long and wide-ranging CV in off-road racing and other disciplines, Tanner Foust has experienced many interesting tracks during his highly decorated motorsport career. From drifting to hillclimbing, rallycross and Extreme E, the American has seen it all. And it's his passion for rallycross that shines through the most when talking about his favourite track.

Foust says his "favouritism depends on results", citing the Nitro Rallycross venue in Utah as one of the most fun to drive due to "a huge three-storey gap jump and big banked turns", but admits he has enjoyed more success elsewhere.

It's Antofagasta, a track from his first season in Extreme E last year, that Foust has the fondest memories of. Based in a remote mining area in Chile's Atacama desert, the Copper X-Prix's sandy and rocky layout – which was fast, wide and included some spectacular jumps – was not only a unique driving challenge but also provided plenty of overtaking opportunities.

"It's like rallycross on steroids," he says.



"It's kind of inflated – giant machines and super-long [compared to] a rallycross track. Big, rolling jumps, a consistent surface and very wide."

The event itself proved bittersweet for Foust and his McLaren driving partner Emma Gilmore. After winning the aptly named 'Crazy Race' to progress to the Grand Final, the duo went on to take an on-the-road victory before two time penalties for dropped flags demoted them to fifth. Nonetheless, the quality of the racing is what stood out to Foust.

"I do like rallycross tracks that are wide, that favour racing and side-by-side passing," he explains. "You could have three, four cars wide sliding into a corner and not risk that only one is going to come out the other side. The racing was good with everybody, it was close door to door, very high speed in sections. It sort of checked all the boxes for me and I think it put on a great show."

"Hopefully when we go back to Chile we will have a track similar to that, where we really can drive a little more rallycross-style."

STEVE WHITFIELD



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Autosport, ISSN number 0269946X, is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, The Power House, Isleworth, TW7 6QG, United Kingdom. Air freight and mailing in the USA by World Container Inc., 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. Subscription records maintained at Autosport Media UK Ltd, The Power House, Isleworth, TW7 6QG. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Autosport, Air Business Ltd, c/o World Container Inc., 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.

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Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000.
Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 28 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV13 3XT.
ISSN 0269-946X. Autosport is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, The Power House, Isleworth, London, TW7 6QG

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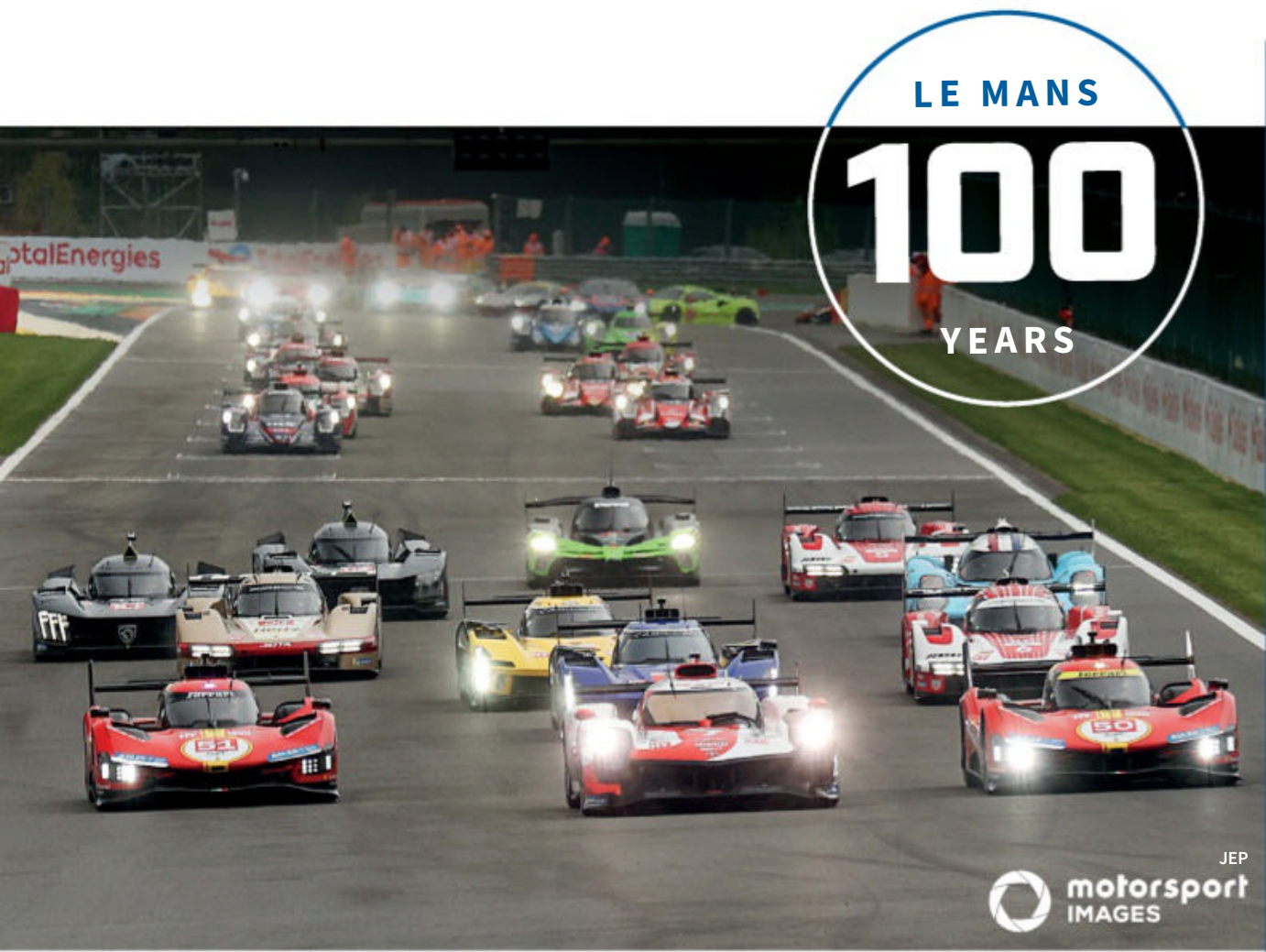
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Not only is the Le Mans 24 Hours celebrating its 100th birthday, but it also boasts the greatest entry in the top category for many years.

The headline attraction for the 91st running of the event is the return of Ferrari in the leading class. The 499P certainly looks the part and has shown promise in its first races in the World Endurance Championship. Gary Watkins takes a look at the legendary Italian team’s chances of toppling favourite Toyota, as well as those of Porsche, Cadillac, Peugeot, Glickenhaus and Vanwall, in our lead piece on page 4.

The LMH-LMDh era has also set the scene for a new generation of privateers to battle the factories for outright success. Jota, with backing from Hertz and a customer Porsche 963, is the first to take

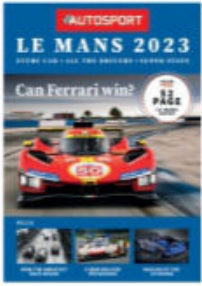
on the challenge. The key figures explain how the project came together on p10.

The presence of a special NASCAR (p20) should bring some added spice to the Hypercar, LMP2 and GTE Am runners, all of which we cover in our traditional team-by-team guide (p27).

It’s a great pleasure to have former Autosport Editor and official Le Mans author Quentin Spurring explain the origins of the great race (p38), while we also pick out some of our favourite records and stats from the history of the 24 Hours on p48.



Kevin Turner
**KEVIN
TURNER**
EDITOR



COVER IMAGES
Ferrari; Motorsport Images;
JEP/Motorsport Images;
Chris Graythen/Getty Images

4	THE BIG PLAYERS Can Ferrari et al stop Toyota? Who will be on top as manufacturer influx kicks off new golden era?
10	RETURN OF THE PRIVATEER Jota’s new model for the top class How the LMP2 frontrunner has made the step up to Hypercar with Hertz
14	READY TO MAKE HISTORY Meet this year’s five women racers We speak to Doriane Pin, Lilou Wadoux and the Iron Dames
20	NASCAR AT LE MANS 2023’s innovation machine The story behind – and challenges of – getting a Next Gen ready for 24 hours
27	TEAM BY TEAM Spotlight on all the entries Our guide to the cars and drivers that will tackle the 91st Le Mans 24 Hours
38	HOW IT ALL BEGAN The origins of the 24 Hours How Le Mans became the greatest race before it was even a <i>race</i>
44	TRACK MAP, STANDINGS AND THE CENTENARY Essential info The legendary track, championship tables and Le Mans celebrations
48	STATISTICS AND RECORDS Le Mans big numbers Fastest, longest, oldest, youngest and more records from the first century
50	ENTRY LIST AND TIMETABLE All the cars and drivers Car number, driver, team and class information for every 2023 entry

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The 499P's aero efficiency and strength in high-speed sectors will play to its advantage

HYPERCAR

LMP2

GTE AM

CAN FERRARI BEAT TOYOTA?

The Italian squad downplays its chances on its return to the Le Mans top class – and bookies would agree. But Toyota's hegemony cannot last forever

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



motorsport
IMAGES





Ferrari arrives at the Le Mans 24 Hours with its 499P after an impressive start to its return to the pinnacle of sportscar racing. It has been on the podium every time so far in the maiden campaign of its new Le Mans Hypercar. There was that shock first-time-out pole at Sebring back in March, and a scintillating charge from a lap down to continue the run of silverware last time out at Spa in April. But there's a problem for anyone who has maybe started thinking about a victory for the Italian manufacturer as it ends its 50-year factory absence from the prototype ranks at the French enduro. And it goes by the name of Toyota.

The 499P is firmly established as number two in the Hypercar pecking order as sportscar racing's new era gets going in earnest with the arrival of new manufacturers in the World Endurance Championship. It's just ahead of the Cadillac V-Series.R LMDh and some way clear of Porsche's 963 LMDh and the Peugeot 9X8. But anyone dreaming of a glorious Le Mans comeback for a marque looking to add to its tally of nine overall victories needs to look at the gap to the Toyota GR010 HYBRID over the first leg of the 2023 WEC. The Japanese manufacturer enjoyed a two-lap advantage over the eight hours of the Sebring 1000 Miles in March, then one lap after six hours of racing at the Portimao 6 Hours in mid-April, and a minute or so at the Spa 6 Hours at the end of that month.

Ferrari and the AF Corse team aren't playing down the task at hand in trying to beat the incumbent king of Le Mans and the WEC with an unbeaten sequence of victories stretching back to 2018 to its name. Toyota is described by Antonello Coletta, boss of sportscar racing at Maranello, as "the reference". He's bang on the money, of course, because in the GR010 Toyota has the proven car, with two wins at Le Mans and two WEC title doubles under its belt.

The top brass within the Ferrari sportscar operation – Coletta, technical director Ferdinando Cannizzo and others – repeatedly use the word 'humility' when talking about their aspirations for the 499P. They did so before the WEC season started and they are doing so again in the build-up to the 24 Hours on 10-11 June. It's almost as if it is written large on some kind of company crib sheet.



Prototype returnee Porsche taking time to find its feet

But it would be foolish of Ferrari or any other newcomer to the Hypercar class to make bold statements about scooping the jewel in the crown of sportscar racing at the first time of asking with a new car in the face of opposition from Toyota.

"It is clear we are very proud of this project, that it is part of our history, of our brand," says Coletta. "But we are approaching this championship with maximum humility. We arrived on the race track in July last year and we are at the very beginning in this category."

Ferrari knows it is still in the learning phase with the 499P developed in-house at its Attivita Sportive GT department and powered by a three-litre, 120-degree, twin-turbo V6, even with the intensive test programme that followed the roll-out. The completed car hit the track – at Fiorano, of course, like all new Ferraris – on 6 July last year. A total of 24,000km (1500 miles) were completed in advance of the Prologue WEC pre-season test at Sebring the weekend ahead of the race, and significantly a second chassis was up and running early in the development



Ferrari has already proved itself as best of the rest in the Hypercar pecking order



Toyota's winning pedigree renders it a hard target



Calado is buoyed by gains shown last time out at Spa

programme as Ferrari sought to dovetail performance testing with the all-important reliability work.

That said, the focus was very much on reliability through a test programme that took place in Europe save for a pair of two-day tests at Sebring in January and February. “We were rushing a bit in the six or seven months of testing that led us from the shakedown to the first race because we were looking for reliability mainly,” says Ferrari performance engineer Mauro Barbieri. “In terms of set-up and optimisation we didn’t push that much.”

“We’re approaching this championship with maximum humility. We are at the very beginning in this category”

Cannizzo describes reliability as “the first target” and Ferrari looks to have achieved it. The two cars have five finishes from six starts so far. The sole retirement came at Spa when Antonio Fuoco crashed the #50 car he shares with Miguel Molina and Nicklas Nielsen on cold tyres after a pitstop. The only significant technical issue came with the front-axle brake-by-wire system at Algarve. Even then, Alessandro Pier Guidi used his renowned technical skills to nurse the #51 car he shares with long-time GTE Pro team-mate James Calado and Antonio Giovinazzi to the chequered flag in sixth place.

Cannizzo expresses satisfaction with the way Ferrari was able to overcome that problem: “We were able to react in the race and manage the car in the proper way. What I am happy about is the reaction we have to problems and making sure they don’t happen again.”

He concedes, however, that Ferrari is still learning about the potential weaknesses of the 499P, just as it is learning how to extract the maximum performance from the car. Testing, of course, is undertaken in isolation by a manufacturer: its car or cars are ▶

normally on track alone. The circuit never fully rubbers in, doesn't evolve in the same way as it would over a race weekend. That means key lessons on tyre usage could only start to be learned by Ferrari when it arrived at Sebring, as race and test team manager Giuliano Salvi points out. "We were developing the car alone in development phase," he says. "That means you don't have a reference and we couldn't understand if we were in the right window."

It should also be pointed out that the lessons that needed to be learned about tyre degradation for this year were exaggerated by the ban on tyre warmers in place for the first three races of the season, though it has been temporarily lifted for Le Mans after rulemakers the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest came in for fierce criticism in the wake of a series of high-profile crashes.

Salvi concedes that Ferrari probably put too much emphasis on tyre warm-up as it developed the 499P. It was an inevitable consequence of undertaking the lion's share of the testing during winter. "We put a lot of focus on that aspect," he says. "We started

testing in July, but I would say until October it was like bench testing, working on systems and controls. By the time we started having a proper racing car, it was already winter time."

It probably goes a long way towards explaining Fuoco's pole position at Sebring, and also his pace over the opening lap of the race: he pulled eight tenths in that single tour on the chasing Toyota after the lights went out.

Ferrari swung the other way second time out in Portugal. "We tried the opposite approach in Portimao to have flat degradation," explains Salvi. "At Sebring we were probably not nursing the tyres enough, at Portimao we probably could have pushed more. In hindsight, we probably went too far the other way."

The story illustrates the steepness of the learning curve Ferrari is on as it strives to get the most out of its four-wheel-drive LMH hybrid and close the gap on Toyota. "Every time we put the car on the track we are learning something," confirms Salvi.

Making judgements on the third event of the 2023 WEC campaign isn't easy given the topsy-turvy nature of the race: it started in light rain and was interrupted by four safety cars and three Full Course Yellows. Two conclusions that bode well for Le Mans could be reached, however. Ferrari's speed in sectors one and two at Spa – which include the drag from La Source all the way up to Les Combes and then the run from Stavelot back to the pits – is significant. There is no better representation of the Circuit de la Sarthe at Le Mans on the WEC schedule. Remember back in the pomp of LMP1, manufacturers would often choose to run a mix of aero specifications at Spa in preparation for Le Mans.



Fuoco (inset) celebrates remarkable pole position straight out of the blocks at Sebring





Miguel Molina, Antonio Fuoco and Nicklas Nielsen on Sebring podium

When Toyota did just that in 2017, it was the low-drag Le Mans-spec car that turned out to be quickest, even if it didn't end up winning the race.

"It seems we are good in the high-speed sections," says Calado after grabbing a first podium for the #51 car on the final lap of the race. "And we know Le Mans is pretty high speed."

Just as important was his pace over a double stint on a set of Michelins, believed to have been the medium-compound slick, as he charged down Frederic Makowiecki's Porsche. Ferrari set the 499Ps up for the second half of the race and was quicker than Toyota over the final three hours. That doesn't necessarily mean it had the quicker car, however. Toyota won the race in the opening exchanges by opting to start the GR010s on slick tyres when the majority of its rivals, Ferrari included, went for wets. It had the race in the bag by the time #51 was coming back into play.

The decision to start on wets was a conservative call on Ferrari's part as once again it looked to put miles on its cars. Together with the problems of getting the slicks onto which they subsequently changed up to temperature — note the set-up focus on the latter stages of the race when the forecast was for it to be dry — it dropped both 499Ps a lap off the lead early in the second hour. But there were also a couple of delays for the third-placed car: it twice had to make so-called emergency pitstops when the pits were closed, one to replace a damaged rim, the other for a splash of fuel.

"Without all the little things that went wrong, maybe we could have given Toyota a fight," says Calado. "The positive thing as well as the podium was that we were a lot closer to their pace."

Ferrari reckoned the safety cars didn't help its cause at Spa, though the gap between Calado and Kamui Kobayashi in the winning Toyota at the finish would surely have been much bigger without them. But it offered a taste of what could happen at Le Mans. New safety car rules for this year will close up the field. Under the old procedure whereby the field would line up behind three safety cars on the 8.47-mile lap, now there will be just one, and with the cars arranged in classes. A three-minute lead, just less than one full lap, can now be wiped out at a stroke.

Ferrari might get some help in its quest for a 10th outright Le Mans victory from the safety car, but it won't receive a break under the Balance of Performance. A new system was introduced for this year that is based on simulation rather than lap time performance

in the races as in the past. The Hypercar BoP has been set in stone for the first four rounds of the WEC up to and including Le Mans in a move designed to ensure there can be no sandbagging: hiding performance to get a favourable BoP for the race that really matters. There is or was scope for a change, but only in the balance between the LMHs and LMDh rear-axle hybrids.

Whether that change had to come after the first two races and ahead of Spa or can happen simply after two races — Porsche Motorsport boss Thomas Laudenbach has argued that a pre-Le Mans revision would still be after two races — isn't known for sure because the document that governs the BoP isn't in the public domain. Toyota argues that the chance for a change has been and gone.

This new-look BoP is pertinent when assessing the chances of Ferrari or anyone else beating Toyota to the victory in this centenary edition of Le Mans. More than 500,000 simulations were carried out by the WEC rulemakers and IMSA, and the BoP table published ahead of the start of the season reflects the potential of the cars in the Hypercar field.

It stands to reason that Toyota has come closest to its potential.

“Without all the little things that went wrong, maybe we could have given Toyota a fight”

It is the only one of the five major manufacturers with multiple seasons under the belt of its Hypercar contender and has been allowed to undertake two significant evolutions of its LMH ahead of the 2022 and 2023 campaigns. It has, if you like, fine-tuned its product. Performance developments under the rules in the two routes into the Hypercar category are limited over the lifecycle of a car and have to be applied for to the FIA Endurance Committee. The principle is that they will only be allowed to overcome a known performance deficit.

That Toyota, the marque that has pretty much dominated the class so far, was allowed to undertake a further upgrade for this season isn't without controversy. Peugeot has expressed what might be described as muted criticism of the move — comment and criticism of the BoP is expressly banned in the WEC sporting regulations.

"The original idea was that a car would be homologated, frozen and then adjusted with the BoP without new developments coming every year," says Peugeot Sport technical director Olivier Jansonnie. "That is not the trend right now. What is sure is that if you are allowed to have more and more new homologations, the whole BoP process becomes more difficult."

Pascal Vasselon, technical director of Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe, doesn't see it like that. "What has happened this year was a kind of reset of the situation," he argues. "Many people were coming with new cars. We could argue that our car has been developed in 2018 for different regulations [the original LMH rules before LMDh was conceived] and that we somehow needed a reset."

So, the target for Ferrari has to be to squeeze the maximum out of the 499P, to achieve the potential that the rulemakers' simulations have calculated it has. The question is whether that was achievable in the break between Spa and Le Mans, which kicks off this weekend with the official Test Day on Sunday.

"I don't know if it is possible to close the gap in just one month," says Pier Guidi. "It's quite complex, it's performance and it's degradation. But we know the aero efficiency of our car is good and top speed helps at Le Mans. We should not forget that it is less than one year since we put the car on the ground and we are already best of the rest. We can be happy with that, but I won't be really happy until we can beat Toyota. Realistically we are looking at a podium, but you never know." 🇫🇷

HYPERCAR LMP2 GTE AM

PRIVATEER JOTA'S HIRE HOPES

Will the golden Hertz livery adorning the British team's Porsche 963 become a new Le Mans icon? There's winning pedigree within the team to complement a gamechanging commercial deal

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Jota's Porsche could herald the start of a new golden era for customer racing at the top level

Porsche customer racing cars have a habit of becoming known by their sponsors. The ultimate example is the 'New Man car', Joest's 956 Group C machine that did the double at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1984-85. Richard Lloyd's 'Canon car', a 956 that was a race winner in the old world sportscar championship and the more obscure 'Tic-Tac car', a 962C entered by Jochen Dauer, are others. The hope for the British Jota team is that its new World Endurance Championship contender from the German manufacturer will come to be described in the same way – simply as the 'Hertz car'.

That was part of reigning World Endurance Championship LMP2 title winner Jota's pitch in its bid to lure the US-headquartered car hire giant into what is a highly significant deal. Not only has it allowed one of the most successful teams in LMP2 in the WEC to make the graduation to the Hypercar class for 2023 with the first customer Porsche 963 LMDh to race in the series, but it points to a rosy future for top-line sportscar racing. The WEC has, since its rebirth in 2012, been largely devoid of commercial sponsorship deals. The privateers taking on the factories up to now have been funded by the patronage of wealthy individuals.

The deal that brought the Jota 963 onto the grid at the Spa WEC round at the end of April with Antonio Felix da Costa, Will Stevens and Yifei Ye has been put down to the "hard work and tenacity" of David Clark. Those are the words of Jota founder Sam Hignett, who is co-director of the team with Clark. Clark explains that he looked to America when seeking the backing for the Hypercar programme.

"Who's putting money into sport right now? It's American companies," says Clark, a British Formula 3 team owner in the late 1970s, sales manager and competition manager on the McLaren F1 programme in the 1990s and a well-known dealer in classic and historic racing cars. "I thought, who is going to invest in us? And then I started looking around."

That led to an approach to the private equity groups that had rescued Hertz from administration, known as Chapter 11 in the USA, in May 2021. They included Knighthead Capital Management, which is also an investor in California-based Singer Vehicle Design. The company founded by singer-songwriter Rob Dickinson – hence the name – reimagines old Porsche 911s, brings them up to modern specifications and is another partner in the Jota project: it was responsible for the simple but striking livery of the team's Porsche. "I sowed this little seed of an idea with Tom Wagner [boss of Knighthead] and one day he rang me up and said, 'I like it.'"

"Being able to call the car the 'Hertz car' is an important part of the deal, that's what we sold to them," adds Hignett. "I don't think there's another Hypercar that will be known in the same way."

The WEC is the right place for Jota's new sponsor and its distinctive livery in what it calls 'Hertz Racing Gold'. It represents not so much a product as an ethos or mentality.

"The WEC offers an interesting option for us," says company CEO Stephen Scherr. "Technology is being pressed hard here in



"Being able to call the Porsche the 'Hertz car' is an important part of the deal, that's what we sold to them"

the WEC; they are minded to be innovative and so are we. Putting ourselves on Team Jota with what we think is going to be a very iconic car seemed very obvious to me."

Clark and Hignett explain that they had to get creative to fund their aspirations to move up to Hypercar. It was time to put the business model they have pursued in LMP2 with programmes funded by wealthy or well-backed drivers – the likes of Simon Dolan, Roman Rusinov and David Cheng – on the back burner.

"We're over that, it was time to move on," says Clark. "We're going into the top class and have three paid drivers. That's how you've got to do it at the level we're moving into."

Jota has been a participant in the top class at Le Mans and its associate series before, both under its own name and as a service provider. It's where it started out when it entered what was then known as the Le Mans Endurance Series in 2004 before making its debut in the 24 Hours the following year. It fielded a Zytek o4S built to the LMP675 rules in LMP1 for two seasons, ran an updated version of that car for the works Zytek team in 2006 and then a Lola-Judd Bo7/10 P1 under the Charouz banner over the following two seasons, taking a top-10 finish in the first of those two years in 2007.

The team was also on course to re-enter P1 in its own right with the Aston Martin AMR-One in 2012. A multi-year programme funded by British amateur Dolan started in 2010 with the British manufacturer's GT4-spec Vantage and took in the Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT2 the following year. The next step had to be aborted when the AMR-One project was abandoned, and Jota instead started what turned out to be a long and successful foray in LMP2.

But the ambition to return to the top class never went away.

"We've always been looking, keeping our eyes open and talking to manufacturers," says Hignett. "We wanted to work with a factory rather than remaining a customer team."

"There wasn't a privateer-friendly rulebook in the P1 days. The budgets were crazy and if you were a customer you never knew what the manufacturer who'd sold you the car was going to turn up with at the next race. It would have been impossible for a team like us to compete at that level."

That changed with the advent of a category in Hypercar where development is strictly limited. A car is homologated at the beginning of its life cycle with little scope for performance modifications thereafter. ▶



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"We really do believe it is going to be a level playing field between us and the factory Porsches," says Hignett. "A lot of the walls to entering the top class have been knocked down by the new rules, particularly LMDh. We know we're getting equal equipment."

Hignett describes Porsche as "the best option" for Jota when it came to getting its hands on a Hypercar contender, though he adds that Ferrari's 499P would have been "the ultimate". The German manufacturer committed to selling cars to customers from the get-go, which was key for Jota.

"We wanted to be an early adopter, to get in at the beginning," he says. "That served us well in P2."

Jota was among the first wave of ORECA customers to get its hands on one of the new 05 coupes, which came on stream in 2016 and shared its monocoque with the 07 built to the next-generation P2 rules that kicked off the following year. Under the G-Drive Racing banner, the team secured a run of three late-season victories, two with Stevens at the wheel of the car.

"It was bloody hard in the beginning, but the knowledge we gained proved invaluable," continues Hignett. "It definitely set us up for when the 07 arrived the following year."

The Porsche deal hasn't gone quite according to plan, however. Production delays meant Jota's 963 wasn't delivered until the third week of April, which forced it to run a second LMP2 ORECA-Gibson 07 in the colours of its new sponsor at the opening two WEC rounds. It then went into the Spa round at the end of April with the Porsche after only the briefest of shakedowns. But it was important to begin racing as soon as possible, insists Hignett.

"We knew Spa was going to be painful and Le Mans isn't going to be easy, but it was important to get out there racing," he explains. "You could decide to wait until you think you are ready, and before you know it it's 2024. We've got a massive commercial partner and have to get out, but we're also gaining experience. We'll be the most experienced Hypercar privateer next year."

Jota is confident it will be able to compete with the factory Porsche Penske Motorsport squad, probably not straight out of the box, but certainly in the fullness of time. It believes it has a



"You don't necessarily have to be the fastest car. It will be all about staying on the lead lap. Then you never know"

driver roster to match anyone else in class. "The driver line-ups in Hypercar are insane, but we believe we stack up on that front," says Hignett. "We've ranked the best drivers in LMP2 over the past three years, and we've got three of the top five in our car."

Hignett suggests it might be a "year too early" for Jota to have a shot at a top result at Le Mans, particularly given Porsche's travails in the WEC so far this year, but he's not ruling anything out.

"The new safety car rules mean you don't necessarily have to be the fastest car," he says. "It will be all about staying on the lead lap, and then you never know." 🇫🇷

FROM FARMYARD TO CHEQUERED FLAG

They call themselves the "boys from the farmyard", a moniker that hints at the humble roots of a team based in a series of buildings on a farm owned by Jota boss Sam Hignett's family in Kent. It took its first steps in endurance racing with his co-founder's company car.

John Stack, an amateur racer, estate agent and former showjumper, linked up with Hignett in 2000. A campaign at the Spa and Nurburgring 24-hour tin-top enduros with a Honda Integra R built up from his road car was a precursor of a move into the Renault Clio V6 one-make series in Europe the following year. That was followed by a move

into sportscar racing 12 months later with a Pilbeam-Nissan MP84 SR2 car in the FIA Sportscar Championship.

The Zytek followed in 2004, but it was the return to that marque's fold in

LMP2 in 2012 that kickstarted a phenomenal run of success at Le Mans and beyond. Jota notched up a first class victory at the French enduro in 2014 with the long-serving Zytek Z11SN chassis,

dubbed 'Mighty #38' after the race number that the team's Porsche now carries.

The same car, renamed a Gibson 015S and run under the G-Drive Racing banner, won the European

Le Mans Series during a highly successful 2016 in which Jota took three victories on its graduation to the WEC.

Jota's tally of Le Mans P2 wins now stands at three: it took second overall and very nearly won the race outright in 2017 racing as Jackie Chan DC Racing (left), then added another victory last year as Antonio Felix da Costa, Will Stevens and Roberto Gonzalez swept to the WEC title. There have been a further seven podiums at the French enduro, 2018 proving the only year it failed to finish in the top three in class since its first win. But the team still got two cars home in the top 10!



HYPERCAR LMP2 GTE AM

MEET THE LATEST WOMEN TAKING ON LE MANS

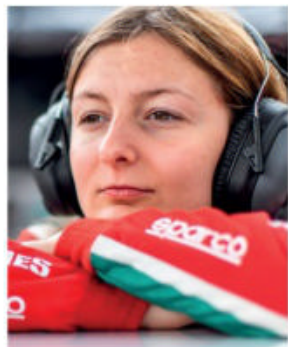
Three cars will feature female drivers in their line-ups at the 24 Hours. Here are their stories

JAMES NEWBOLD



Iron Dames trio and Doriane Pin (in Prema red) should all be in contention at Le Mans

ANDREA LORENZINA



DORIANE PIN

Team/car: #63 Prema ORECA-Gibson 07

Age: 19

Le Mans starts: 0

Best Le Mans finish: N/A

Such has been the meteoric trajectory of Doriane Pin's racing career that even she admits to being taken by surprise.

"Four years ago, I'd just won the French championship in go-karts, so I didn't expect that I would be in P2 in the World Endurance Championship!" she says. "So yes, it's quite fast... I'm living my dream because this season is the goal that I had in mind."

A Sebring podium on her LMP2 debut with Prema was quite the introduction to prototypes for the reigning Ferrari Challenge Europe champion. But big jumps have been something of a theme for Pin, who went from racing Renault Clios in her first season of cars to a Ferrari 488 GT3 upon joining the Iron Dames fold for 2021 – aged just 17.

Paired with Sarah Bovy in the Le Mans Cup, she impressed enough to be called up for a WEC debut at Spa last year when a positive COVID test sidelined Bovy and forced Michelle Gatting to self-isolate. In a busy season alongside her Ferrari Challenge programme, she also took in three European Le Mans Series rounds with Bovy and Gatting, taking a GTE class win at the Algarve Circuit.

"It was the chance of my career," says Pin of joining the Deborah Mayer-backed all-female Iron Dames effort. "They gave me a lot of opportunities and options to grow as a driver and a person also."

It must be said that Pin has grasped the opportunities presented to her. She claimed the Ferrari Challenge crown with nine wins from 14 starts, adding four further podiums. The only blemish in an "almost perfect season" resulted from a puncture at Paul Ricard. In a mark of her character, Pin fronts up to kerb over-use. "It was a mistake from myself, I learned from it," she says.

Pin hasn't been fazed by her LMP2 graduation to join Lamborghini factory drivers Mirko Bortolotti and Daniil Kvyat. They were in victory contention at Portimao until the latter stages, and at Spa Pin cheekily ambushed leader Tom Blomqvist into the Bus Stop on the opening lap.

Pin is enjoying soaking up her team-mates' wealth of experience, but says she's treated as their equal within the team: "They're not considering me like someone who has no experience.

We are three in the car and we are working together for the same goals."

Having raced on the Le Mans support bill previously, Pin is "really excited" to be part of the main show for the first time, but stresses sagely that she's "not putting extra pressure on" her debut. "We will do the same work and for sure it's a longer race, so we are training for that," Pin says.

"We are three in the car and we are working together for the same goals at Prema"



Sebring podium bubbles with Bortolotti (left) and Kvyat

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



United Autosports' #22 leads the way

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

ANOTHER UNITED VS WRT LMP2 DUEL IN PROSPECT?

The largest single class in the race with 24 entries is as usual a nightmare to predict. Three different winners from as many World Endurance Championship races thus far muddy the waters, but a common denominator has been the strength of United Autosports' #23 crew.

Only denied victory at Sebring to a freak problem caused by an onboard camera being shaken loose and knocking the kill switch, Oliver Jarvis and Josh Pierson responded with victory at Algarve alongside stand-in Giedo van der Garde. Tom Blomqvist returned from IMSA duty to snare pole at Spa and built up a 45-second lead that was wiped out by the safety car, but still led until the final pitstop, where a shorter fill from WRT proved crucial.

And it's their sister #22 outfit that leads the standings, despite an off-kilter run to fifth at Spa, hampered by a kiss with the wall on the reconnaissance lap in the damp conditions. Jota was victorious on the road at Sebring, but its entry didn't count for points as the #38 team prepared for its Hypercar debut, so United's Filipe Albuquerque, Phil Hanson and Euroformula Open graduate Freddie Lubin claimed maximum points on the latter's series debut. The British duo then took second with Ben Hanley in Portugal, a race

they felt they could have won without having to be pushed back in the pits.

United hasn't won at Le Mans since Albuquerque, Hanson and Paul di Resta took the spoils in 2020, but count on the team to be in the hunt.

"WRT'S #41 SQUAD IS SECOND IN THE POINTS. WILL THIS BE THE YEAR FOR ROBERT KUBICA AND LOUIS DELETRAZ?"

The other crew to win in the WEC, WRT's #41 squad, is second in the points. Will this be the year for Robert Kubica and Louis Deletraz? Denied in dramatic circumstances on the final lap at Le Mans in 2021, they finished second with Prema last year and now will look to go one better upon their return to Vincent Vosse's squad alongside Rui Andrade.

Deletraz also led TF Sport's Pro-Am Racing Team Turkey to a remarkable outright victory in the Barcelona European Le Mans Series opener. A similar result might be a tall order against the WEC regulars at Le Mans, but Salih Yoluc won the GTE Am class at Le Mans in 2020 and has called up BMW ace Dries Vanthoor (a GTE Am winner in 2017) and McLaren counterpart Tom Gamble to complete a handy line-up in the nine-car sub-division.



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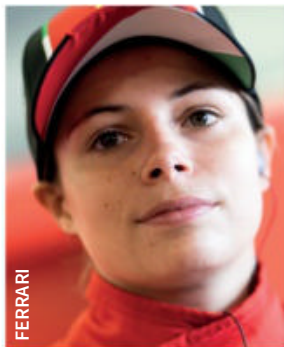
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LILOU WADOUX

Team/car: #83 AF Corse Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

Age: 22

Le Mans starts: 1

Best Le Mans finish: 9th in class (2022)

History was achieved three days after Autosport sat down with Lilou Wadoux in the Ferrari hospitality at Spa. Victory alongside Luis Perez Companc and Alessio Rovera made her the first female class

winner in the World Endurance Championship's modern history.

A back injury that curtailed a promising tennis career set Wadoux on the path to a future in motorsport. Having only started karting as a teen for fun, Wadoux firmly qualifies as a late starter by today's standards, but compensated by learning quickly and was soon on the radar of the FIA Women in Motorsport Commission for a two-day evaluation at Navarra. At this stage, the 17-year-old Wadoux still considered motorsport "my passion", not a potential profession. That didn't last long.

A TCR Europe roll triggered by another driver's off at Spa looked set to curtail her 2019 campaign, but Wadoux finished third on her French Clio Cup debut in the Paul Ricard finale following a six-month layoff, which opened the door to an Alpine Cup switch for 2020.

"It's a very close championship because all the cars are the same and it's not easy to make a big difference," she says. But Wadoux was a winner in her

second season, finishing third in 2021. Her performances were noted by the Signatech-run Richard Mille Racing team and, after a test with its LMP2 ORECA-Gibson 07, Wadoux was brought into its line-up for the 2022 WEC alongside Charles Milesi and rallying royalty Sebastien Ogier.

Having an eight-time world champion team-mate arguably reduced the attention on Wadoux, who appreciated that as both were

"The focus is on GTs, but I hope to test the Ferrari LMH and why not do some races?"



Wadoux was on the GTE podium at Portimao

series newcomers "in this car we are the same". "All the races were good because every weekend I learned something different," she says. And by Fuji's round in September, conversations had started with Ferrari. "Richard Mille was a sponsor for many years with Ferrari, Philippe Dumas my manager works in AF Corse and a lot of things [came together]," Wadoux explains.

But before her decisive audition in the post-Bahrain test was the small matter of a first Hypercar outing for Toyota. Learning both new cars either side of a lunch break made for "not an easy day for me". But Ferrari was sufficiently convinced to make Wadoux the first female member of its Competizioni GT driver roster and that faith was repaid in Portimao. On her belated first race outing with the Scuderia, after Perez Companc's early exit from Sebring, Wadoux starred en route to second.

Ferrari's 499P Hypercar programme is tantalising, but Wadoux is clear that "for the moment I will stay concentrated on the GT". "I hope one day to test the LMH and why not to do some races?" she says. "But for the moment GT is the only focus."

CAN CORVETTE END ITS LE MANS DROUGHT IN GTE AM?

History is against Ben Keating in his quest to claim back-to-back GTE Am wins as the class bids farewell to Le Mans. The feat hasn't been achieved since Patrick Bornhauser and Julien Canal doubled up with Larbre Competition in 2011-12, also the last time a Corvette scooped Am class spoils.

Corvette Racing is without a win of any kind since 2015 in GTE Pro, but enters this year's race as the World Endurance Championship's form team and boosted by the pedigree of bronze-rated Keating. The Texan was runner-up in 2021 prior to his breakthrough last year, third in 2018 and

only lost victory in 2019 to a fuel infraction on his Riley Ford.

The #83 Ferrari Lilou Wadoux shares with Luis Perez Companc and 2021 GTE Am Le Mans winner Alessio Rovera is the only

crew to have beaten Keating, Nicky Catsburg and Nico Varrone's Corvette in the WEC this year. But there are no shortage of challengers in what could develop into a four-way scrap involving

each of the car makers.

Keating's former squad TF Sport has won or finished second in each of the last three editions, and its Aston Martin Vantage GTE has a line-up eminently capable of

continuing that run. Charlie Eastwood, a winner in 2020, is joined by British GT race winner Ahmad Al-Harthi and New Yorker Michael Dinan, the trio scoring its first WEC podium at Spa last time out.

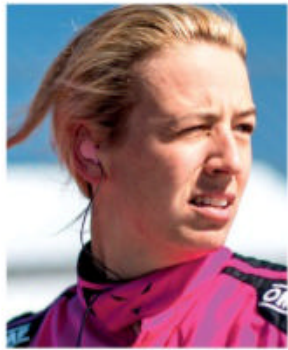
Porsche hasn't won the Am class at Le Mans since 2019, when Project1 was the beneficiary of Keating's misfortune. However, a Porsche crew does lead the European Le Mans Series' GTE standings: Proton drivers Ryan Hardwick and Zacharie Robichon won the Barcelona opener with Alessio Picariello, who is replaced by former Champ Car racer Jan Heylen for Le Mans.



Keating and his Corvette head to Le Mans on form

JEP/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

ANDREA LORENZINA



SARAH BOVY

Team/car: #85 Iron Dames Porsche 911 RSR-19

Age: 34

Le Mans starts: 2

Best Le Mans finish: 7th in class (2022)

The last-chance saloon counted Sarah Bovy among its regulars before she joined Iron Dames in 2021. Deborah Mayer's programme opened the door to a regular international racing programme "in good conditions with the best engineers, having the opportunity to do a lot of kilometres", which the Belgian had always been denied by budget struggles.

A second-generation racer, father Quirin making 10 Spa 24 Hours starts between 1976 and 1991, Bovy's career is a story of one-offs and "last-minute drives in some not ideal line-ups". Her Spa 24 debut came in 2007 with the Alfa-powered Gillet Vertigo – which "was not an easy car" for an 18-year-old – but, as she puts it, "the journey was clearly not linear".

"I had some cool opportunities, I did some good things, then I spent many years with no drive at all," she says. "Joining the Iron Dames project was more than my last chance – I already had my last chance two or three times before! W Series was already my last chance and I was only a reserve driver in it [making two race starts in 2019]."

Bovy's regular qualifying duels with benchmark bronze Ben Keating have been a highlight of the World Endurance Championship in recent times, with Bovy taking a historic first pole for a female driver at Monza last season. That one-lap prowess has become a Bovy strong suit, a point underlined by pole on the Dames' Porsche debut at Sebring. She points to this as evidence that her vastly increased seat time over the past two years "brought me to a level I had no idea I could get to", having previously considered qualifying "one of my big weaknesses". For that reason, her Monza feat was more significant as a "personal achievement" than for its significance to stat boffins.

But Bovy acknowledges that, for all the effort involved, qualifying is only one element of a race weekend. "It's not what makes the final result, it's just one point when a race win can be up to 50 points in Le Mans," she says. Having tasted success last year in the European Le Mans Series at Portimao with Doriane Pin and Michelle Gattling, and in the Spa 24 Gold Cup class with Rahel Frey, Bovy is itching to translate that winning feeling into the WEC.

The disappearance of the GTE Pro class means more Platinum factory drivers than ever are in the Am division, while the level of bronze drivers is continually increasing. But Bovy is confident "that we have an extremely strong package" to better the Dames' best finish to date at Le Mans. "The competition is not waiting for us," she says. "We keep working really hard."

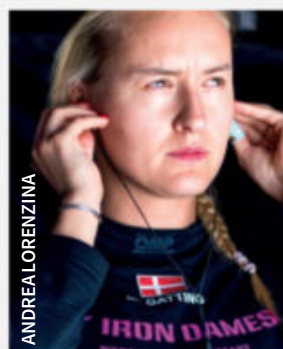
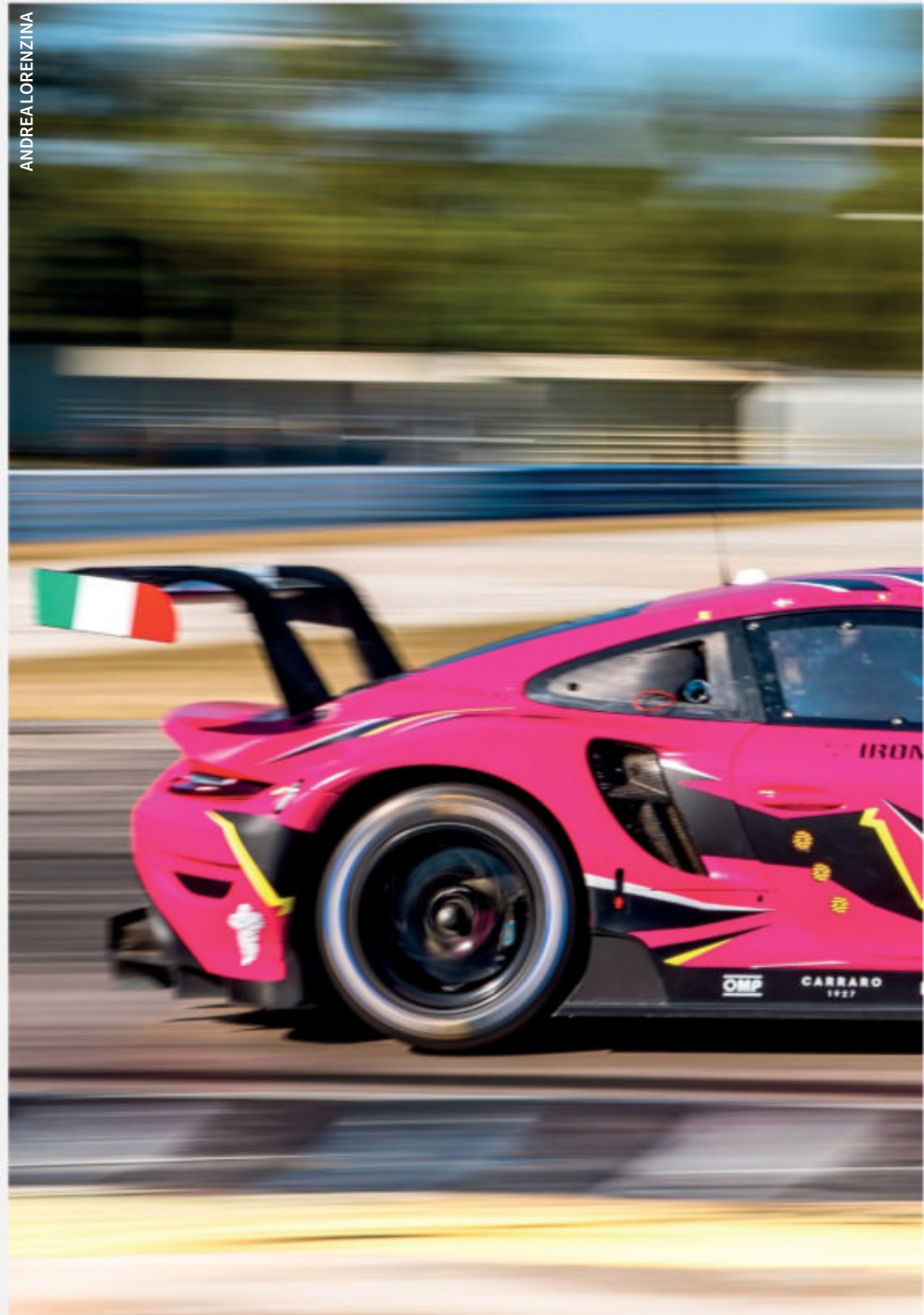
"I had some cool opportunities, did good things, then spent many years with no drive"

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Gattling, Bovy and Pin celebrate their Portimao ELMS win

ANDREA LORENZINA



ANDREA LORENZINA

MICHELLE GATTING

Team/car: #85 Iron Dames Porsche 911 RSR-19

Age: 29

Le Mans starts: 4

Best Le Mans finish: 7th in class (2022)

A speculative phone call was vital in putting Michelle Gattling onto the international stage in sportscars, after she'd taken the long route to keep her racing career alive.

The Dane's promise had been demonstrated during two seasons in the DTM-supporting Scirocco R-Cup, including a run of four consecutive podiums in 2013 as part of the FIA-endorsed young driver excellence academy. But momentum was sapped by a lack of funds that curtailed her 2014 Porsche Carrera Cup Germany campaign and led to an enforced year on the sidelines.

When she returned to racing in 2016 it was, by necessity, in the burly V8 touring cars of her domestic Thundersport championship. And despite standout performances, winning races and finishing third in the 2018 standings, it seemed nobody was paying much attention. This was underlined when Gattling first enquired about

"I'm definitely becoming a much better team player than I was five years ago"

All-female Iron Dames has switched from Ferrari to Porsche for the final year of GTE class



a test with the nascent Dames project then run by Kessel Racing, as she says “people had no clue who I was”.

But a ringing endorsement from a Danish motorsport contemporary secured Gating an all-important try-out at Misano that led to entering the 2018 Gulf 12 Hours, the first outing for Deborah Mayer’s Dames. She has become a programme fixture in the years since, contesting the European Le Mans Series from 2019 to 2022, the World Endurance Championship from 2021 and the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup from 2022.

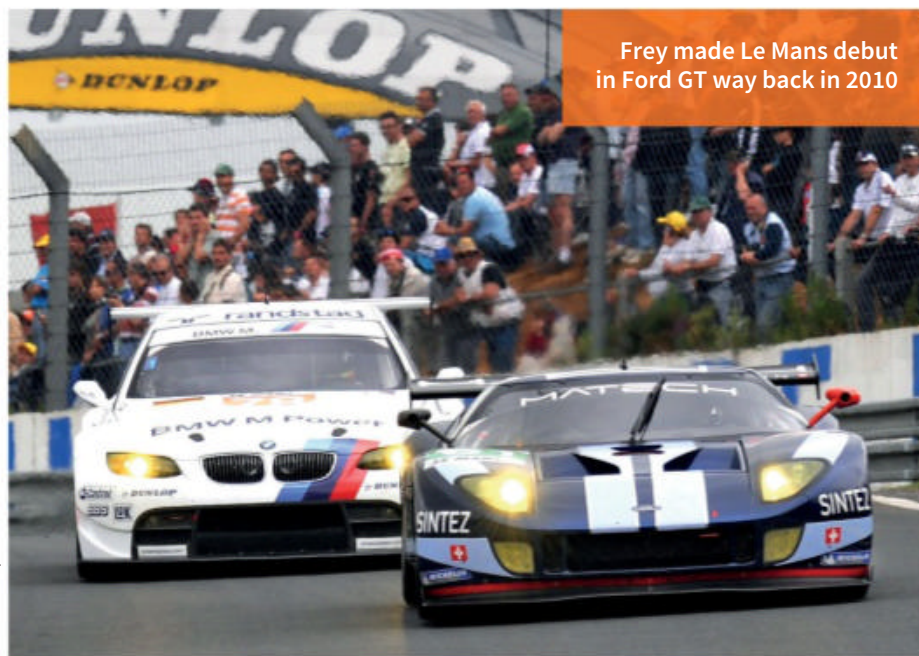
Gating reflects on an “incredible” amount of personal development in that time, having moved beyond her initial determination “to show [the team] who I am” by proving her speed in every session to make good on this “one-shot opportunity”.

She says: “It’s not that they didn’t like it, but for sure they were a bit like, ‘We need to calm her down a bit’. I’m definitely becoming a much better team player now than I was five years ago.”

Gating also believes she’s “a much better driver” with the benefit of that experience. She regards her Ferrari Challenge Europe title-winning exploits in 2021, blazing a trail followed last year by Doriane Pin, as “very important for my own self-confidence” as she took her first car racing crown. “Let’s say I bloomed as a flower after that,” Gating says.

This year has brought new challenges for the Dames, following the Iron Lynx outfit that runs the Dames splitting with Ferrari to forge a partnership with Lamborghini in GT3 racing. Sister brand Porsche was an obvious stop-gap for the GTE class’s swansong year and the 911, Gating says, is “fitting our driving style very well”. A technical alliance with Proton Competition has helped the Dames to hit the ground running and Gating welcomes the healthy rivalry with Christian Reid’s squad. “I love it,” she beams. “It’s amazing!”

Frey made Le Mans debut in Ford GT way back in 2010



JBLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



ANDREA LORENZINA

RAHEL FREY

Team/car: #85 Iron Dames Porsche 911 RSR-19

Age: 37

Le Mans starts: 5

Best Le Mans finish: 7th in class (2022)

A stalwart of Audi Sport’s customer racing pool in GT3 who also represented the four rings for two seasons in the DTM, Rahel Frey is among the most experienced female racers on the international scene. That made the Swiss a logical choice both to lead the Iron Dames line-up on-track and be its project manager.

“This just felt right from the beginning,” says Frey, who has been involved since the start in 2018 and along with Michelle Gating contested Le Mans every year since 2019. “I saw the possibilities the project is creating and I am very happy that I took that decision.”

Frey’s remit, as well as passing advice on to young female karters, includes building up physical and simulator programmes for the Dames drivers, plus deciding who drives where. It was Frey’s call to replace herself with Doriane Pin for the final three European Le Mans Series rounds of 2022.

“I’m not someone who will block a young driver,” she says. Frey is open in admitting plans to “increase testing with new females in the future to really be a door-opener”, so the current line-up can’t get too comfortable. But by the same token, she has ensured continuity in recent years, fostering a tight-knit environment in which the drivers’ respective strengths are well known.

“We know exactly what’s needed, when someone needs more support, when someone feels very confident just jumping into the car and race as fast as possible,” she says. “It’s one of the key factors.”

As a result, Frey feels the programme is well-placed to succeed in a manner that her first outing at Le Mans as part of an all-female assault in 2010 was not. Only her third race outing in Matech’s Ford GT1 and the first with both team-mates present, after Natacha Gachnang’s leg-breaking crash in Abu Dhabi, ended early with engine failure. Frey recalls: “Clearly this first attempt was a dream come true, but we were *not* ready by then.”

The task facing the Dames in the ultra-competitive GTE Am class isn’t lost on Frey, but she has full faith in her crewmates after their Portimao podium. “I always dreamed about Le Mans, to do it in a competitive car, with competitive people in a competitive environment,” she reflects. “That’s why I was very excited to go back in 2019 and now we know each other so well, we are aware of our potential. Clearly, we have the experience to do a competitive race.”

If Frey is successful in her aim of finding more promising talents, then more tough calls may be on her hands soon. “I love to drive,” she smiles. “For me, it’s very difficult to let go!”

“I always dreamed about Le Mans, in a competitive car, in a competitive environment”

INNOVATIVE CAR

THE NASCAR WORLD RETURNS

It's almost half a century since US stock cars raced at Le Mans. And this year's Garage 56 entry is certain to be just as much of a crowd-pleaser

GARY WATKINS



Camaro ZL1 has lost weight and gained downforce, fatter tyres, a paddleshift – and headlights

CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES



“I

t’s going to put a smile on people’s faces.” That’s how Jenson Button sums up the machine in which he is making his second Le Mans 24 Hours start. It’s something out of the ordinary, a car that tips its hat

to the past and perhaps also the future. It’s a NASCAR Cup racer to all intents and purposes and it fills the Garage 56 slot reserved on the grid for an experimental racer, the so-called Innovative Car.

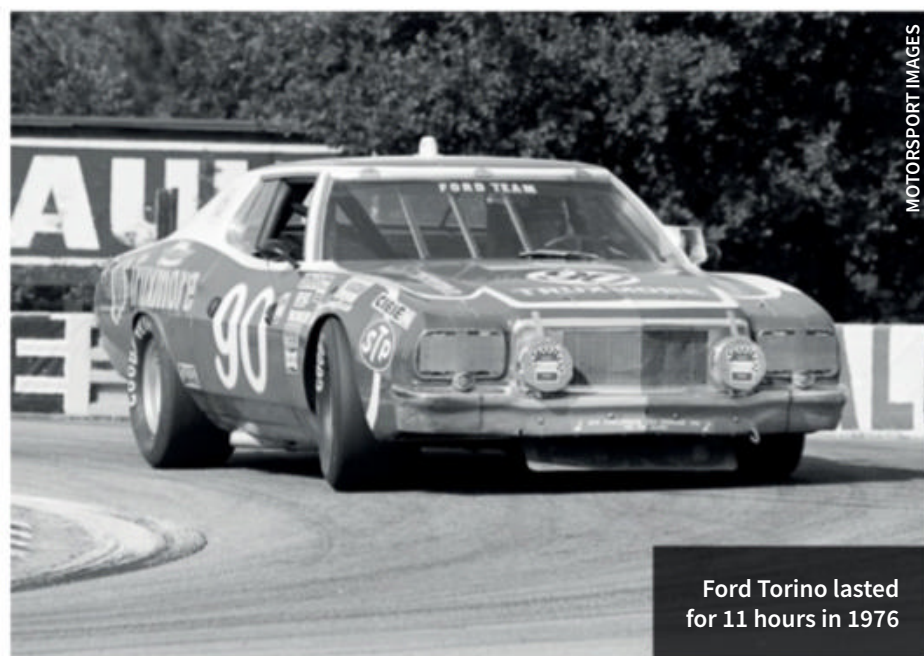
The truth is that the Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 isn’t really very innovative, nor is the idea of bringing a NASCAR to Le Mans new. But the history of the US stock car series at the French enduro underpins the thinking behind this year’s campaign with an all-star line-up comprising Formula 1 world champion Button, seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Jimmie Johnson and 2010 Le Mans winner Mike Rockenfeller.

Nearly half a century ago, in 1976, NASCAR founder Bill France hatched a plan for a pair of cars from what was then known as the Winston Cup to race at Le Mans to showcase his series in Europe during the US’s bicentennial year. Hershel McGriff and Wesley ‘Junie’ Donlavey respectively entered a Dodge Charger and Ford Torino together with NASCAR – the name of the sanctioning body was on the entry list. Bill France Jr, president and CEO of both NASCAR and sportscar sanctioning body IMSA today, remembers well the quirky programme set in motion by his late father and decided to recreate the magic that surrounded the arrival of two thundering stock cars in France all those years ago. And more to the point, to do it in a year of another two important anniversaries – the 100th for the 24 Hours at Le Mans and the 75th for NASCAR – and at a time when links between IMSA and Le Mans organiser the Automobile Club de l’Ouest are growing ever closer.

“It’s been almost 50 years since my father took NASCAR over to Le Mans,” says France. “I remember asking Dick Brooks, one of the drivers [in the Donlavey Ford], what his thoughts were on it. He said, ‘Number one, the fans loved the car, number two, it was a fantastic experience and number three, it was a hell of a challenge.’ I know all the folks involved in this project like a challenge.”

NASCAR president Steve Phelps reckons the programme is a good way to spread the NASCAR message to a wider audience early in the second season of its new Next Gen Cup racer: “We as a sport are trying to look at things that are different, and that put us apart. That is exactly what this opportunity is. We have a series in Europe – the NASCAR Whelen Euro Series – and we know there is enthusiasm for NASCAR in Europe, but this is going to take it to a new level.” ▶

“We know there is enthusiasm for NASCAR in Europe, but this is going to take it to a new level”



Ford Torino lasted for 11 hours in 1976

Rick Hendrick, boss of an eponymous team with a record 14 titles in NASCAR's premier series to its name, and Chevrolet jumped at the chance to be involved. Hendrick describes it as "an honour to be asked", while Mark Stielow, director of racing at Chevrolet parent company General Motors, was similarly enthusiastic when the idea was put to him. "Having Hendrick Motorsports as part of it – they are a great Chevrolet team and have a lot of capability – really brought it all together," he says. "When we were asked back at Daytona last year, we said yes straight away. It's great to take the DNA of the Next Gen platform and harden it in a premier race like Le Mans. There is going to be some learning that trickles back into the Cup series."

The enthusiasm of Button and Johnson matches that of the technical partners. Johnson put his hand up for the project long before the confirmation of the driver line-up in January this year, and prior to announcing that he was calling time on his full-time driving career in the wake of his IndyCar campaign with Chip Ganassi

"It's great to take the DNA of the Next Gen platform and harden it in a premier race like Le Mans"

Racing. Le Mans, he explains, is "top of my bucket list" of events in which he still wants to compete. He says that his aspirations to do the race stretch back 20 years: he states that his earliest appearance at the Daytona 24 Hours in 2004 was partially about gaining experience in endurance racing "so if I was ever given the opportunity to go to Le Mans one day, I'd be prepared".

The last two of Johnson's nine starts in the Daytona enduro came in 2021-22 in a Cadillac DPi-V.R run by Action Express Racing in conjunction with Hendrick. Rockenfeller was among his team-mates on both occasions. The German became part of the programme after leaving Audi at the end of 2021, and led the development of the Garage 56 racer on both the simulator and the race track.

Button came into the equation via his friendship with Johnson. When he asked the seven-time Cup champion what he was up to this year and found out about the Chevy Le Mans racer, he caught a flight out to Sebring to watch it test and meet the team behind it.

The test programme began on track in August last year, five months after its announcement in March 2022 as the latest in a line of Garage 56 racers dating back to the Nissan DeltaWing of 2012. But the idea had been in the works for a long time. It was in France's mind when the Next Gen car produced in conjunction with Dallara was in its initial stages of development ahead of what was initially planned to be a 2021 debut. COVID forced it to be set back a year.

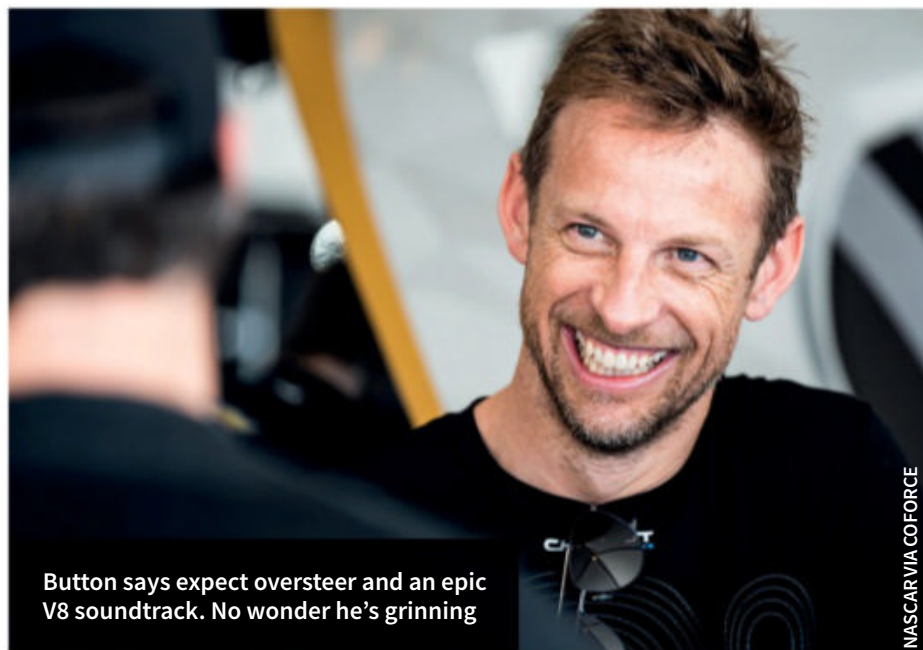
The new car was running only in the virtual world early in 2020



NASCAR VIA COFORCE

when France suggested that it would be good to give it a whirl in road-course trim around both the Daytona 24 Hours 'roval' course and full 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe at Le Mans. That was with a car dubbed internally at NASCAR as Next Gen Prototype 3 (there was no Prototype 2). It was followed by a real test at Daytona with one of the early Next Gen development cars, which was built up by Action Express, the following August. The car was at Daytona to run on the so-called 'modified road course' at the self-styled World Center of Racing. It just so happened that the two drivers on hand, Austin Cindric and Felipe Nasr, were asked on occasion to miss out the chicane at the NASCAR Turn 4 to recreate the layout used for the 24-hour IMSA race.

"We skipped the chicane a few times so we could get an idea of



Button says expect oversteer and an epic V8 soundtrack. No wonder he's grinning

NASCAR VIA COFORCE



Racing at Le Mans has long been at the top of Johnson's bucket list

NASCAR VIA COFORCE



what our pace would be in comparison to an IMSA GT Le Mans or a GTE car,” recalls Brandon Thomas, NASCAR’s vice-president of vehicle design. “We kind of hit our targets from our simulator work earlier in the year, so we thought, ‘OK, we know we’ve got work to do to get in the right window.’”

By ‘the right window,’ Thomas means being more or less on a par with a GTE Am car around Le Mans. That’s not just on lap time, but in the way the car achieves that time. He recounts a tale from the initial test of the first Garage 56 Camaro at Road Atlanta in August 2022 to illustrate his point. “The second day there, Ganassi turned up with one of its Daytona Prototype international chassis, and Earl Bamber came over and told ‘Rocky’ how much he would catch him under braking and through the corners, but when they rolled onto the back straightaway, our car would just leave him,” explains Thomas. “We knew we had to address that. We know we can’t go to Le Mans and park in front of the other competitors in the corners and then leave them down the straights. The ACO is inviting us to be part of their race and we want to be a good-citizen add-on to the event and not be a problem. To show up and run roughly the speed trace of a GTE car was definitely a requirement.”

Button puts it another way: “We don’t want to get in the way; we want to be respectful of other people’s races.”

Thomas says that the aim has been to get the Camaro somewhere in the middle of the GTE pack. The target is to be able to lap Le Mans somewhere in 3m58s-4m00s in the race. That compares with the fastest GTE Am race lap last year of 3m50s and the best lap by the slowest amateur driver of 4m03s. “We knew we had to start tilting the curve down from maximum speed and increase the cornering speeds and decrease the braking distances,” he explains. “We had to improve the car from the vehicle dynamics standpoint. We worked on our targets in terms of weight, engine power and downforce levels; we asked ourselves, ‘How are we going to get this car faster than a Cup car

in road course trim and get it into the GTE performance window?’”

Moving the Cup car closer to GTE Am involved the Next Gen racer going on a diet, adding downforce, increasing engine power a tad and going to wider tyres front and rear developed by long-time NASCAR rubber supplier Goodyear, as well as incorporating carbon pads and discs on the standard AP Racing Cup braking system and paddleshift activation on the Xtrac gearbox used in the series. But there were limits to what could be done because, says France, he wants the fans to be treated to the “full NASCAR experience”. That’s why they will see wheel changes undertaken with trolley jacks *a la* Cup, and the drivers entering and exiting the car through the window.

So the Camaro Le Mans racer runs a six-inch flap on the bootlid, what’s officially known as a spoiler but described by Button as a ▶



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“barn door”. A conventional rear wing, says Thomas, “would definitely have helped in terms of aero efficiency”, as well as being beneficial in terms of tyre degradation. “The reason we didn’t do it was easy,” he says. “The word from Jim and NASCAR management was that we were going to be taking a stock car to Le Mans, not a GT car.”

The desire to get weight out of the car explains why the Chevy isn’t running a hybrid system. When the programme was announced, ACO president Pierre Fillon stated clearly that it would be required of the car to run a hybrid system, something that was seen as a potential lead-in to the eventual introduction of energy-retrieval technology in the NASCAR Cup. Stielow uses the phrase “directionally incorrect” to explain why it didn’t happen. “Early on that was the way it was framed up, but really there were a lot of concerns over the mass of the car and intermixing with the other classes at Le Mans,” he explains. “Getting the car lightweighted allowed us to get the car on pace with the GTs.” Thomas adds: “The car was at power, but we had to work

“You’ll be able to hear it coming a mile off. I’ve had to have different ear plugs made to cope with the noise”

hard to get the speeds in the corners so we wouldn’t be a hindrance.”

The car weighs in at 1342kg without fuel, which is around 150kg lighter than a road course NASCAR Cup car. The diet yielded a more significant weight loss than that, but some of the lost kilos were added back in as the Camaro was turned into an endurance racer.

“We started trimming weight out of the car, but also adding it back in with all the extra systems we have,” points out Thomas. “There are a lot of new systems, like the paddleshift and its electric actuator, new electronics from Bosch and a new refuelling system.” That’s not to forget the head and tail lights – NASCAR Cup cars don’t have lights!

There may be no rear wing, but the Chevy has a lot more downforce than a regular NASCAR racer. There is some trick aero underneath the car, along with some *de rigueur* flicks and dive planes. The 5.8-litre push-rod Chevy V8 now produces 670bhp, which is only a tad more than a Cup car in engine configuration it runs on a road course, street track or a long or short oval.

The first stab at the Garage 56 racer, also built by Action Express,

was described as more of a mule and tested for the first time at Road Atlanta last August. The first iteration of the real car to roll out of Hendrick’s workshops subsequently hit the track at Virginia International Raceway in November. Known as Garage 56/1, it was the first custom-built car for the project and undertook the lion’s share of the development testing before the introduction of Garage 56/2, the car that’s racing at Le Mans. This definitive car proved to be nine seconds a lap faster around Watkins Glen than a pure Cup car.

The development programme had to focus on reliability as well as performance. The two chassis between them have completed more than 6000 miles of testing. That has included a through-the-night endurance run at Sebring in mid-February, which followed a 12-hour run at Daytona at the start of the month. The car was out on track for 23 hours at Sebring, the only significant downtime coming as the result of a small fire caused by the build-up of spent rubber.

Thomas isn’t sure that Sebring was actually the right place to do the test. “My worry was that the things we were going to break at Sebring weren’t going to be representative of the issues we are likely to have at Le Mans,” he says. “Sebring is all about shaking the car over the bumps, but the suspension on this car is built up from straight-off-the-shelf Cup parts. The sign-off test for the Next Gen wheel-bearing and upright set was eight straight 500-mile races around Dover Motor Speedway.” Thomas suggests that the engine, developed in-house at GM’s Pontiac, Michigan facility, is of more concern: “It’s an iron-block, single-cam push-rod V8 that hasn’t been engineered for endurance racing.”

The aim, though, is to run through to the finish and run strongly throughout. “We don’t want to be putting the car back together with an hour left just to limp around; the goal is to be out there showing off the car all day and all of the night,” says Thomas. “This car is spectacular when you see the glow of the carbon discs at the front with the exhausts right behind them. The sound is distinctive. No one will appreciate this thing until they experience it: the noise of this thing coming down the pitstraight in between the grandstands is going to mindblowing.”

It’s going to be wild to watch out in the corners, too, according to Button. “Every lap feels like a quali lap,” he says. “The amount of steering angle we have to put in... You don’t normally see cars oversteering at Le Mans – you will this year. The Porsche Curves are going to be a handful. Everyone will be able to hear it coming a mile off. I’ve had to have different ear plugs made to cope with the noise. The low rumble of the engine of that V8 is awesome.” 🇫🇷



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CLASS OF 2023 AT A GLANCE

GARY WATKINS, JAMES NEWBOLD AND STEPHEN LICKORISH

ILLUSTRATIONS CAMILLE DEBASTIANI PHOTOGRAPHY JEP 



HYPERCAR

The top class brings together bespoke Le Mans Hypercars (four-wheel-drive hybrids and non-hybrids) that have been eligible to race at Le Mans since 2021, plus the new-for-2023 LMDh prototypes. These are based on an LMP2 spine and incorporate a spec rear-axle hybrid system built by Williams Advanced Engineering, Bosch and Xtrac. The two philosophies are balanced using a so-called platform Balance of Performance. All cars run on Michelin tyres.

LMP2

LMP2 is the secondary prototype division for privateers running off-the-peg chassis produced by one of four constructors and powered by the spec Gibson V8. ORECA's 07, for the first time, fills out the entire grid in 2023. Car performance has been gradually reduced in recent seasons to maintain a gap to the Hypercars. Goodyear is the sole tyre supplier. Regular P2 line-ups must have at least one silver-rated driver, and pro-am entries a bronze.

GTE AM

With Ferrari's and Porsche's moves to Hypercar triggering the dissolution of the GTE Pro class, there is now only a single category for road-based GT cars. In the final year of the GTE technical regulations, which will be replaced by the so-called LMGT3 for 2024, all entrants are pro-am crews normally made up of one pro sharing with one silver and one bronze-rated driver under the FIA ranking system. All cars run on Michelin tyres.

HYPERCAR LMP2 GTE AM

CADILLAC RACING (GANASSI) Cadillac V-Series.R

- 2 Earl **Bamber**
Alex **Lynn**
Richard **Westbrook**
- 3 Sebastien **Bourdais**
Renger **van der Zande**
Scott **Dixon**

Ganassi has been at the forefront of Cadillac's North American sportscar involvement since 2021. One DPi-V.R in IMSA became two, run under the Cadillac Racing banner, in 2022, and now the team has segued into the WEC with the new V-Series.R LMDh. It fields a single entry in both series, with the two cars (#2 WEC, #3 IMSA) coming together for Le Mans with their regular driver line-ups, including Dixon who is doing the IMSA enduros with Bourdais and van der Zande. **Autosport says** Podium near-misses for #2 in the 2023 WEC suggest Caddy will be in the mix.



4

Esteban **Guerrieri**
Tristan **Vautier**
Tom **Dillmann**

The German-based ByKolles squad is back after two seasons away with a new LMH designed and built in-house. The car, powered by a Gibson normally aspirated V8 like the last incarnation of its predecessor, has been branded a Vanwall after the 1958 F1 constructors' title-winning team. Sebring 12 Hours winner Vautier replaces F1 world champion Jacques Villeneuve, who drove the car in the first three WEC rounds, alongside team regular Dillmann and newcomer Guerrieri. **Autosport says** Bringing it home will be an achievement on car's Le Mans debut.



5

Dane **Cameron**
Michael **Christensen**
Frederic **Makowiecki**

6

Kevin **Estre**
Andre **Lotterer**
Laurens **Vanthoor**

75

Felipe **Nasr**
Mathieu **Jaminet**
Nick **Tandy**

Porsche bids for Le Mans win number 20 after just five seasons out of the prototype game. The new 963 LMDh is racing in both the WEC and IMSA in the hands of the Penske factory squad. The two cars competing in the WEC (#5 and #6) with a new Penske satellite operation based in Germany are joined by an additional Le Mans entry masterminded by the IMSA squad, which is running as #75 to mark Porsche reaching the three-quarter-century mark. **Autosport says** Porsche and Penske are making progress, but it might be too slow for 20th win.



7

Mike **Conway**
Kamui **Kobayashi**
Jose Maria **Lopez**

8

Sebastien **Buemi**
Brendon **Hartley**
Ryo **Hirakawa**

The Japanese manufacturer is back for a 12th straight Le Mans campaign run out of Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe HQ in Cologne, bidding for a sixth victory in a row and third for its GR010 HYBRID LMH. The well-developed contender has undergone a second upgrade, less significant than the first, for its third campaign – and first facing true manufacturer opposition. The driver line-up remains unchanged, except for the return of the retired Kazuki Nakajima as reserve driver. **Autosport says** Three victories so far in the 2023 WEC have confirmed Toyota's status as favourite.



38

Antonio **Felix da Costa**
Will **Stevens**
Yifei **Ye**

The reigning champion team in LMP2 in the WEC graduates to the Hypercar class with the first of the initial wave of four customer Porsche 963 LMDhs to hit the race track. The British team is making the step up with Porsche Formula E racer da Costa and ex-F1 driver Stevens – two-thirds of its winning P2 line-up last year – plus another former champion in Porsche Motorsport Asia Pacific-backed Ye, who claimed the ELMS title with WRT in 2021. **Autosport says** Jota knows the size of the task ahead but sixth on debut for its 963 bodes well.



28 AUTOSPORT.COM/WEC 1 JUNE 2023

HYPERCAR

LMP2

GTE AM

FERRARI AF CORSE Ferrari 499P

50 Antonio **Fuoco**
Miguel **Molina**
Nicklas **Nielsen**

51 Alessandro **Pier Guidi**
James **Calado**
Antonio **Giovinazzi**

The Ferrari factory is back competing for overall victory at Le Mans for the first time in 50 years with an LMH developed in-house at Maranello. The marque continues its relationship with its long-term partner in GTE Pro, AF Corse, to run the 499P, which had eight months of testing under its belt on arrival prior to the season. Five of the drivers have moved up from the Ferrari GT squad, while Giovinazzi doubles up on his role as F1 reserve.

Autosport says A run of podiums so far suggests Ferrari will lead the chase of Toyota.

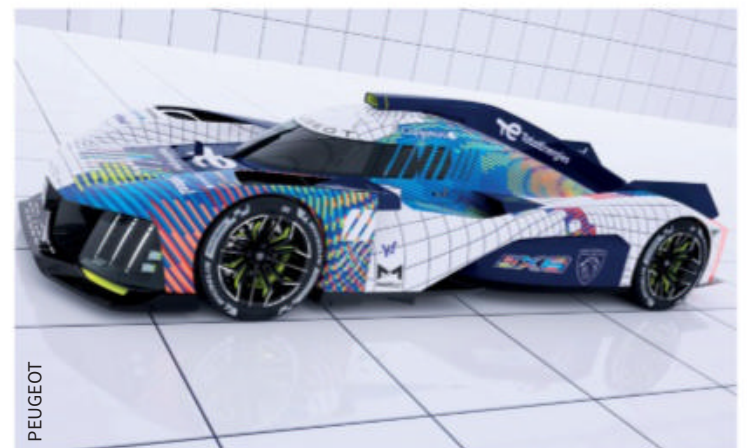
**PEUGEOT TOTALENERGIES** Peugeot 9X8

93 Paul **di Resta**
Mikkel **Jensen**
Jean-Eric **Vergne**

94 Loic **Duval**
Gustavo **Menezes**
Nico **Muller**

Three-time winner Peugeot makes its return to Le Mans after an absence of 11 seasons following its entry into the WEC for the first time with its avant-garde 9X8 LMH after the big race last summer: it opted for six months of testing before racing the car. The 9X8 – like its successful predecessors, the 905 and 908 – is run by an in-house squad from Peugeot Sport based on the outskirts of Paris. Muller came into the driver squad at the end of last year.

Autosport says Question marks remain about both the reliability and the pace of the 9X8.

**ACTION EXPRESS RACING** Cadillac V-Series.R

311 Pipo **Derani**
Alexander **Sims**
Jack **Aitken**

This IMSA stalwart and long-time partner of Cadillac parent company General Motors in North America makes its Le Mans debut. It bolsters the Caddy ranks with its regular IMSA line-up of Sims, Derani and Aitken, who is contesting the long races with the team in the US. Action Express might be new to Le Mans, but it has an impressive endurance racing record and has already won the Sebring 12 Hours with the V-Series this year.

Autosport says AXR will be on a steep learning curve as it seeks to match sister team Ganassi.



NELSON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

GLICKENHAUS RACING Glickenhaus-Pipo 007 LMH

708 Romain **Dumas**
Olivier **Pla**
Ryan **Briscoe**

709 Esteban **Gutierrez**
Franck **Mailleux**
Nathanael **Berthon**

The American entrant makes its third appearance at Le Mans with its non-hybrid 007 LMH developed in Italy by Podium Advanced Technologies, which also masterminds the Glickenhaus squad with help from Joest. The team skipped the final two races of last year's WEC but is back with one full-season entry and a second car for Le Mans. New faces Gutierrez and Berthon join a roster of team regulars across two cars that are largely unchanged from last year.

Autosport says Repeating last year's Le Mans podium looks like a big ask based on current form.



PREMA RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

- 9

Bent Viscaal
Juan Manuel Correa
Filip Ugran
- 63

Doriane Pin
Daniil Kvyat
Mirko Bortolotti

Reigning ELMS champion team returns for a second crack at Le Mans glory with a two-car line-up after finishing second on its debut last year. Just two Le Mans starts between its six drivers, but plenty of potential, particularly in its #63 crew helmed by two Lamborghini factory drivers plus 19-year-old Pin that took Sebring podium and Algarve pole. Correa, a winner in the ELMS last year, returns for second WEC outing after missing two rounds with F2 clashes. **Autosport says** Despite limited Le Mans experience, #63 is a good bet for the podium.



VECTOR SPORT ORECA-Gibson 07

- 10

Ryan Cullen
Gabriel Aubry
Matthias Kaiser

British team that will run the Isotta Fraschini Hypercar that comes on stream later this year makes its second LMP2 start at Le Mans, with Irishman Cullen its only returning driver. Fellow silver Kaiser aims to become the first Liechtenstein native to contest the 24 Hours since 1982. Vector's one-lap pace is not in doubt, 2019 Le Mans LMP2 runner-up Aubry just 0.001s shy of Portimao 6 Hours pole, but niggling issues mean it's yet to enjoy a clean race in 2023. **Autosport says** Vector needs to avoid the mechanical issues that have blighted its season.



TOWER MOTORSPORTS (TDS RACING) ORECA-Gibson 07

- 13

John Farano
Ricky Taylor
Rene Rast

Full-season IMSA entrant TDS Racing returns to Europe after placing fourth last year, fielding the entry Farano secured by clinching IMSA's 2022 LMP2 crown. For his second Le Mans start, four years after his first, the Canadian bronze is joined by two top pros who will make for a competitive proposition in the Pro-Am sub-division. McLaren Formula E racer Rast is back in LMP2 for the first time this year, while double IMSA champion Taylor clocks up a ninth Le Mans appearance. **Autosport says** TDS's history at Le Mans and crack team-mates should serve Farano well.



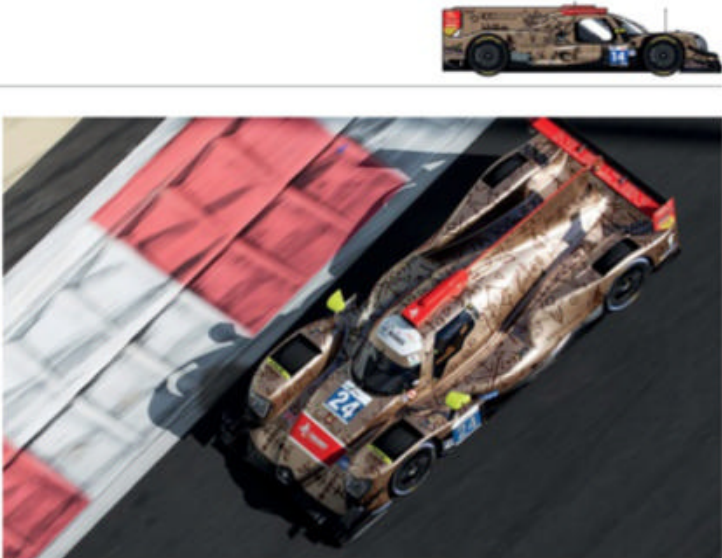
DOLE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

NIELSEN RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

- 14

Rodrigo Sales
Mathias Beche
Ben Hanley

British squad with extensive LMP3 background fields its regular ELMS line-up in the Pro-Am sub-division. American bronze Sales continues his association with Nielsen for its second full season of LMP2 competition, following their 2022 Asian LMS title success, and reunites with 2021 LMP2 Pro-Am winner Hanley. Fellow gold Beche, a safe pair of hands who took third outright with Rebellion in 2018, completes the line-up that managed a top-10 in the ELMS season opener. **Autosport says** A line-up that counts plenty of LM pedigree has a good chance of its best finish.



HYPERCAR

LMP2

GTE AM

UNITED AUTOSPORTS ORECA-Gibson 07

22 Phil **Hanson**
Filipe **Albuquerque**
Freddie **Lubin**

23 Josh **Pierson**
Tom **Blomqvist**
Oliver **Jarvis**

Two strong cars, each with a maximum score and a second in the WEC this season, head into Le Mans among the favourites. Only a freak problem with a cockpit TV camera working loose while leading at Sebring means Portimao winners Pierson and Jarvis trail their team-mates in the LMP2 standings. Rookie Lubin has shown he's up to the task of complementing 2020 Le Mans class victors Hanson and Albuquerque. That's a success Richard Dean's team has worked hard to repeat... **Autosport says** WEC form makes United a strong contender for a first Le Mans win since 2020.

**JOTA** ORECA-Gibson 07

28 David **Heinemeier Hansson**
Oliver **Rasmussen**
Pietro **Fittipaldi**

The 2022 class winner at Le Mans is down to a single LMP2 entry for its full-season WEC line-up after expanding into Hypercar with a Porsche 963. Fittipaldi makes his second Le Mans start, having swapped from Inter Europol with 2013 P2 runner-up Heinemeier Hansson. Rasmussen finished third on Le Mans debut with Jota in 2022. The Sebring win for the 'other' car while it awaited the 963 shows the team is still capable but perhaps its biggest assets are now directed elsewhere. **Autosport says** A fourth Le Mans class victory seems a stretch based on 2023 WEC form.

**DUQUEINE TEAM** ORECA-Gibson 07

30 Neel **Jani**
Rene **Binder**
Nico **Pino**

French Le Mans regular, badly delayed during last year's race by fixing an electronics glitch, fields its ELMS line-up headlined by ex-Porsche LMP1 ace Jani. The overall 2016 Le Mans winner finished second in the Barcelona season opener in April with sometime IndyCar racer Binder and Chilean rookie Pino. The 18-year-old runner-up in last year's ELMS P3 division appears a very useful silver. It all indicates that the one-car team could be in the mix near the front of LMP2. **Autosport says** Duqueine can banish memories of a tough 2022 Le Mans with this line-up.

**TEAM WRT** ORECA-Gibson 07

31 Sean **Gelael**
Ferdinand **Habsburg**
Robin **Frijns**

41 Rui **Andrade**
Louis **Deletraz**
Robert **Kubica**

WRT's two full-season WEC entries ought to be contenders at the scene of its dramatic victory two years ago, despite 2021 winners Habsburg and Frijns only mustering a trio of sixths with Gelael so far. Being cruelly denied on the final lap at Le Mans in 2021 means Spa winners Deletraz and Kubica aren't lacking motivation upon their return from a year at Prema. There's little reason to think the endurance masters at WRT won't again be a force at the Circuit de la Sarthe. **Autosport says** Vincent Vosse's squad has a good chance of repeating its 2021 success.



INTER EUROPOL COMPETITION

ORECA-Gibson 07

32

Mark Kvamme
Jan Magnussen
Anders Fjordbach

34

Jakub Smiechowski
Albert Costa
Fabio Scherer

Much-improved Polish squad was buoyed by maiden WEC podium for its full-season crew bolstered by Costa at Spa. One-off entry for Le Mans features veteran Magnussen. Presence of bronze Kvamme, who raced a Porsche at Daytona with Magnussen, means it's a Pro-Am runner.

Autosport says Going off-strategy helped Inter Europol at Spa; Le Mans will be tougher.





ALPINE ELF TEAM (SIGNATECH)

ORECA-Gibson 07

35


Andre Negrão
Olli Caldwell
Memo Rojas


36

Matthieu Vaxivière
Charles Milesi
Julien Canal

Treble LMP2 class winner is back in secondary division before a renewed Hypercar assault in 2024, but its two WEC full-season crews are yet to set the world alight. Milesi, a P2 winner with WRT in 2021, and three-time GT class king Canal, teamed with last year's Toyota botherer Vaxivière, have mustered a best finish of seventh.

Autosport says Decent line-ups on paper, but likely a holding year before its top-class return.





COOL RACING

ORECA-Gibson 07

37


Nicolas Lapierre
Alexandre Coigny
Malthe Jakobsen


47

Reshad de Gerus
Vlad Lomko
Simon Pagenaud

Swiss operation owned by four-time LMP2 class victor Lapierre fields its two ELMS crews. IndyCar racer Pagenaud is back at Le Mans for the first time since 2011 with Peugeot, replacing Toyota's Lopez alongside team regulars whose combined age is two years his junior. ELMS P3 champion Jakobsen is a winner with Am Coigny in Asian LMS.

Autosport says A shot at Pro-Am honours is certainly on the cards for Lapierre.





GRAFF RACING


ORECA-Gibson 07


39

Roberto Lacorte
Giedo van der Garde
Patrick Pilet

Ex-F1 racer van der Garde was due to reprise IMSA partnership with Francois Heriau, part of the line-up that secured Graff's entry by winning the Asian LMS P3 crown, until a back injury from a test crash sidelined the Frenchman. Replacement bronze Lacorte comes in for a fifth LMP2 start. Porsche expert Pilet switches from IDEC Sport.

Autosport says This all-new line-up thrown together late could factor in the Pro-Am ranks.





DKR ENGINEERING


ORECA-Gibson 07


43

Tom van Rompuy
Ugo de Wilde
Maxime Martin

A second consecutive entry from the Luxembourg squad that scooped Asian LMS LMP2 title. All-new Belgian line-up is headed by Martin, a GTE Pro winner in 2020, in his first P2 appearance since 2013. His co-drivers are 24 Hours rookies, though de Wilde won a support race in 2021. Van Rompuy stays with DKR in ELMS after P3 graduation.

Autosport says Don't expect DKR to be a factor when BMW factory ace Martin isn't driving.





HYPERCAR

LMP2

GTE AM

ALGARVE PRO RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

45 George **Kurtz**
James **Allen**
Colin **Braun**

Anglo-Portuguese squad scales back to a single Pro-Am entry for IMSA regular Kurtz, making his Le Mans debut. Allen, who pipped Kurtz's car at the line for Daytona LMP2 victory, reprises his role from APR's ELMS roster and is joined by Daytona 24 winner Braun, back for the first time since 2007. **Autosport says** A top-10 finish would be a good outcome on its bronze driver's debut.

**IDEC SPORT** ORECA-Gibson 07

48 Paul **Lafargue**
Paul-Loup **Chatin**
Laurents **Horr**

The 2019 ELMS title-winners are running in colours of 1914 Indy 500 winner Delage. French squad led by Nicolas Minassian has continuity in its ELMS line-up, with returnees Chatin and Lafargue, son of team owner Patrice, joined by German P3 specialist Horr following his Le Mans debut with DKR last year. **Autosport says** Matching IDEC's best result of fifth in 2019 is possible with a clean run.

**PANIS RACING** ORECA-Gibson 07

65 Manuel **Maldonado**
Tijmen **van der Helm**
Job **van Uiter**

Panis/Tech 1 partnership enters its ELMS crew that only retains van Uiter from 2022's series runners-up. The Dutchman, joined by compatriot van der Helm and ex-United driver Maldonado (cousin of 2012 Spanish GP winner Pastor), finished fifth in the Barcelona opener. Van der Helm's fourth last year with TDS is best LM result of the trio. **Autosport says** After two podiums in the last three years, a top-six is achievable.

**AF CORSE** ORECA-Gibson 07

80 Francois **Perrodo**
Ben **Barnicoat**
Norman **Nato**

The Italian team running Ferrari's Hypercar programme is also present in the secondary division with a Pro-Am entry for 2021 GTE Am winner Perrodo. Bronze AF stalwart Perrodo and Lexus IMSA driver Barnicoat – making his first LMP2 start at Le Mans after two GTE outings – took third in the ELMS opener with Vaxiviere. **Autosport says** Strong team-mates could aid Perrodo in repeating P2 podium of 2019.



GALSTAD/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

RACING TEAM TURKEY (TF SPORT) ORECA-Gibson 07

923 Salih **Yoluc**
Tom **Gamble**
Dries **Vanthoor**

Two-time GTE Am winner TF Sport makes LMP2 bow in third season of its programme for 2020 Am class victor Yoluc. The Asian LMS P2 champion with DKR began his ELMS Pro-Am title defence with outright victory alongside Deletraz and Eastwood, both otherwise occupied for Le Mans. BMW factory driver Vanthoor won GTE Am in 2017. **Autosport says** Yoluc and TF are a well-oiled combination, a solid bet for Pro-Am honours.





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HYPERCAR

LMP2

GTE AM

PROTON COMPETITION Porsche 911 RSR

16 Ryan **Hardwick**
Zacharie **Robichon**
Jan **Heylen**

88 Harry **Tincknell**
Don **Yount**
TBC

911 Michael **Fassbender**
Martin **Rump**
Richard **Lietz**

Two extra ELMS Proton Porsches join the regular WEC entry for Le Mans, and these include the #911 of Hollywood star Fassbender and two-time GTE Pro winner Lietz, ahead of the squad's planned expansion to a 963 LMDh later this year. ELMS victors Hardwick and Robichon aren't sharing with regular team-mate Tincknell. **Autosport says** Media spotlight will again be on the team, but may not deliver on that attention.

**AF CORSE** Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

21 Simon **Mann**
Julien **Piguet**
Ulysse **de Pauw**

54 Thomas **Flohr**
Francesco **Castellacci**
Davide **Rigon**

83 Luis **Perez Companc**
Alessio **Rovera**
Lilou **Wadoux**

Expect the AF Corse Ferrari triumvirate to be in the mix, likely headed by the #83 Richard Mille machine – which, without a sizeable Sebring shunt for Perez Companc, would be right in the title fight after winning at Spa. Neither of the other cars has yet managed a WEC podium, and Piguet is the third different bronze in the #21 this year. **Autosport says** Wadoux has been a star this season, meaning the #83 will be one to watch.

**TF SPORT** Aston Martin Vantage GTE

25 Ahmad **Al Harthy**
Michael **Dinan**
Charlie **Eastwood**

72 Arnold **Robin**
Maxime **Robin**
Valentin **Hasse-Clot**

TF Sport has enjoyed GTE Am glory in two of the past three years at Le Mans but only one of its six winning drivers, Eastwood, is part of the line-up this time around. The Northern Irishman, Al Harthy and Dinan have been the most successful of the WEC Astons so far, and are joined in France by the ELMS squad comprising local racers. **Autosport says** Pick of the Aston squads, but adding a third Le Mans win seems a challenge.

**CORVETTE RACING (PRATT & MILLER)** Chevrolet Corvette C8.R

33 Nicky **Catsburg**
Ben **Keating**
Nico **Varrone**

Is this when Corvette finally ends its eight-year Le Mans victory drought? All the signs are positive, with the addition of reigning GTE Am champion Keating as the bronze helping to propel the American car to a huge lead in the early WEC standings with two wins and a further podium, even if there was some good fortune on the way. **Autosport says** Quite possibly the best chance for the C8.R to achieve a Le Mans victory.

**GMB MOTORSPORT** Aston Martin Vantage GTE

55 Gustav **Birch**
Marco **Sorensen**
Jens Reno **Moller**

The Danish team, only founded last year, has secured an entry courtesy of winning the 2022 Le Mans Cup GT crown. But it's not last season's successful pairing on duty; instead teenager Birch – son of the team owner – steps up alongside last year's GTE Am victor Sorensen and Moller. **Autosport says** Sorensen and Moller bring experience but don't guarantee debut success.



PROJECT 1-AO Porsche 911 RSR

56 PJ Hyett
Gunnar Jeannette
Matteo Cairoli

Americans Hyett and Jeannette are again due to partner Cairoli at the German team after calendar clashes prevented them from racing in Portugal. But preparations for Le Mans were disrupted by Spa qualifying crash for Hyett that left him in hospital and the car withdrawn. The #56 has been a midfield contender in the other WEC events. **Autosport says** A repeat of its 2019 Le Mans triumph appears unlikely for this Porsche squad.



KESSEL RACING Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

57 Takeshi Kimura
Scott Huffaker
Daniel Serra

74 Kei Cozzolino
Yorikatsu Tsujiko
Naoki Yokomizo

The Swiss squad expands to running two Ferraris at Le Mans, courtesy of finishing second in the GTE ELMS ranks last year. Its charge will be led by the regular #57 WEC entry, which claimed third in the Sebring opener and has been boosted by Serra's arrival, while it's joined by a second all-Japanese crew that lacks experience at this level. **Autosport says** Could improve upon its previous best of ninth, but may not be by much.



IRON LYNX/DAMES Porsche 911 RSR

60 Claudio Schiavoni
Matteo Cressoni
Alessio Picariello

85 Sarah Bovy
Michelle Gatting
Rahel Frey

Again the sole all-female crew on the entry, the Iron Dames trio has successfully swapped from Ferrari to Porsche machinery this year and shown impressive WEC qualifying pace, ever-present on the front row. Yet it only has a third and fifth place to show for it after a couple of errors from Frey. Sister Iron Lynx car less likely to feature. **Autosport says** Historic Iron Dames win could be possible if qualifying prowess is converted.



JMW MOTORSPORT Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

66 Thomas Neubauer
Louis Prette
Giacomo Petrobelli

The British entrant is one of only three teams joining the GTE Am ranks at Le Mans that doesn't have a full-season WEC entry. Instead, its Ferrari can be found in the ELMS. But, rather than the crew that took a podium in the ELMS opener in Spain in April, it's a combination not truly proven at this level. **Autosport says** Another year when the chances of replicating its 2017 triumph appear slim.



DEMPSEY-PROTON RACING Porsche 911 RSR

77 Christian Ried
Mikkel Overgaard
Pedersen
Julien Andlauer

Ried has reunited with former one-make Porsche ace Andlauer as the pair aim to repeat their 2018 Le Mans class success and make up for Ried missing out on a podium with late wishbone woe last year. They are joined by former Project 1 driver Pedersen and were runners-up at Sebring. **Autosport says** With two proven winners aboard, this car cannot be discounted.



HYPERCAR

LMP2

GTE AM

GR RACING Porsche 911 RSR**86**Michael **Wainwright**
Ben **Barker**
Riccardo **Pera**

An unchanged line-up for the British regular as it makes another attempt at GTE Am glory. But, given how competitive the class is looking, a repeat of GR's somewhat surprising fourth last year – when it profited from problems for others – might be a challenge. Especially as it's yet to finish higher than seventh in the 2023 WEC races. **Autosport says** Porsche rivals are more likely to win but 2022 showed it can't be discounted.

**NORTHWEST AMR (PRODRIVE)** Aston Martin Vantage GTE**98**Ian **James**
Daniel **Mancinelli**
Alex **Riberas**

The #98 Aston may still be entered under the NorthWest AMR banner but, following marque veteran Paul Dalla Lana's sudden retirement from the cockpit pre-Spa, it's the successful IMSA Heart of Racing operation behind it. James, Mancinelli and Riberas finished seventh in class on their debut but competing at Le Mans is a sterner challenge. **Autosport says** It would be impressive if this Aston is at the heart of the GTE lead action.

**WALKENHORST MOTORSPORT** Ferrari 488 GTE Evo**100**Chandler **Hull**
Andrew **Haryanto**
Jeff **Segal**

Walkenhorst is best known as a successful BMW GT squad, scoring a Spa 24 Hours triumph in 2018, but gets to make its Le Mans debut courtesy of Asian series glory over the winter. Of its ALMS title winners, only Hull retains his place for the switch to a Ferrari and is joined by 2016 class conqueror Segal and regular GTE Am guest Haryanto. **Autosport says** Given the strength of the class, Walkenhorst will be in at the deep end.

Team earned slot
with ALMS BMW**D'STATION RACING (TF)** Aston Martin Vantage GTE**777**Satoshi **Hoshino**
Casper **Stevenson**
Tomonobu **Fujii**

The Japanese car run in collaboration with TF is back for a third crack at Le Mans and the WEC. Team bosses Hoshino and Fujii are again behind the wheel and have been joined by ex-British F4 frontrunner Stevenson, who switched to sportscars last year. But the trio has yet to do better than a 10th-place finish in 2023. **Autosport says** Not one of the favourites and will be tough to improve upon sixth from 2021.

**HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS** Chevrolet Camaro ZL1**24**Jimmie **Johnson**
Mike **Rockenfeller**
Jenson **Button**

The Garage 56 entry slot for a so-called innovative car returns for the first time since 2021 with an intriguing project put together by NASCAR, Chevrolet and Hendrick. The idea is to promote NASCAR in Europe by running a modified Next Gen Cup car with a trio of high-profile drivers. **Autosport says** The aim has to be to keep rumbling around at GTE pace for 24 hours.



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How it all began:
Excelsiors (1 and 2) and
Lorraine-Dietrich (5) at
a wet Le Mans in 1923

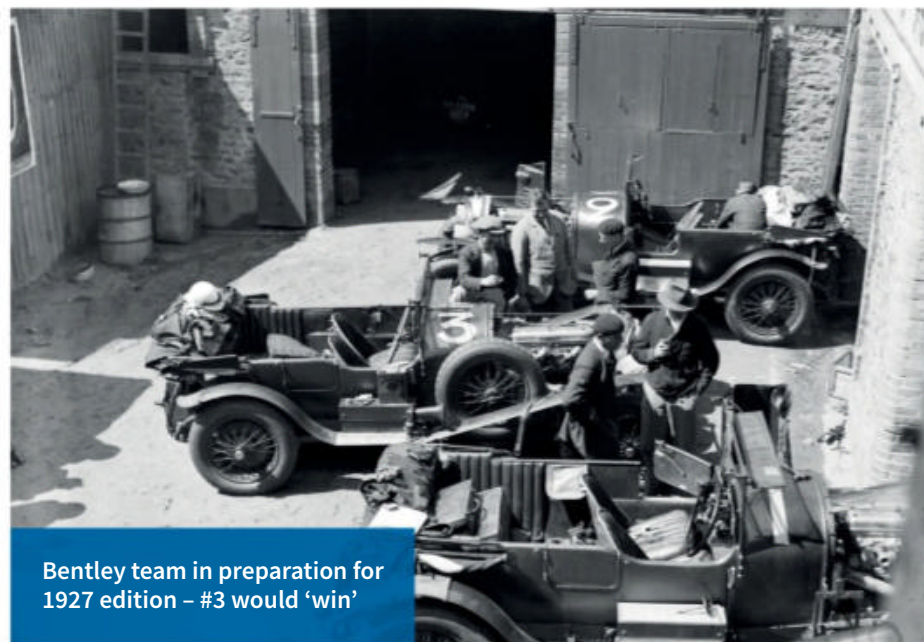
The Grand Prix d'Endurance — now known as the Le Mans 24 Hours — was devised by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest as an endurance *trial* for production cars. That was never going to work...

Right from the start of the inaugural event — in cold, squally weather at 4pm on Saturday 26 May 1923 — it was clear that the frontrunners fundamentally disagreed with the ACO's view that this was not a race. The drivers of the three fastest cars fought an intense, 19-hour battle for supremacy — despite the fact that there was literally nothing to be won.

All each entrant had to do in 1923 was to exceed a target distance in order to qualify for the second year of a multi-year competition; the margins by which the targets were exceeded were immaterial. But 12 manufacturers had deployed long-established racing departments to build and operate their cars, using professional drivers. It was inevitable that they would race each other.

The battle between two Chenard-Walckers and a Bentley only subsided when the latter was delayed, just before noon on the Sunday. At that juncture, all three were already at their target distances. For these teams (and many of those in the midfield), beating the opposition clearly offered much more exhilaration than qualifying for the actual competition.

The entrants also had the racing instinct. Chenard-Walcker lost no time in placing media advertisements declaring a 'victory' it had not actually achieved. Bentley in 1924, Lorraine-Dietrich in 1925-26 and Bentley again in 1927 also proclaimed illusory victories. There were only 22 starters in 1927, and the ACO — foiled by human nature! — knew the time was right to accept the de facto situation by offering a prize to the car completing



Bentley team in preparation for 1927 edition – #3 would 'win'

the greatest distance. From 1928, then, this was officially a motor race, after all. Two years later, the cars were split into classes according to engine volumes: now there were several races in one.

It had turned out to be immensely difficult to build, equip, prepare and operate cars strong enough to endure 24 hours of hard driving, in both daytime and darkness and in variable weather, and fast enough to defeat rivals with similar resources. To win meant devising new equipment, techniques and strategies. The competitors had already fully understood the huge complexity of the challenge, which was what made it irresistibly attractive. It still does today.

First Le Mans 'winners':
Chenard-Walcker team
line up at 1923 Grand
Prix d'Endurance



The event then staged a recovery in terms of numbers but, four months after the 1929 Le Mans, the world was changed by a few thousand complete and utter bankers on Wall Street. The 1930s was all about surviving the Great Depression, which led to the cancellation of the 1936 race due to crippling national strikes. Salvation came in 1937, when powerful new French cars, complying with regulations devised by the Automobile Club de France for its own Grand Prix, were also eligible for Le Mans. The decade ended on high notes, with big fields containing potent cars in numbers. Although road-legal in theory, the ACF formula cars were really the first full-on racing cars to contest the race.

Aspects of the original ‘endurance trial’ concept had already begun to fade away. But the ACO ensured three of its elements – the 24-hour duration, the provision of a harsh proving ground for innovative technologies that would transfer from circuit to road, and the encouragement of factory entries – were actively sustained. These remain three of the great strengths of the race. The others include a partnership with influential civic bodies, regulatory control (now facilitating the pursuit of ecologically sound solutions), and enduring spectator appeal.

Even in the 1920s, alongside countless advances in existing hardware, new technologies trialled and proved at Le Mans included aerodynamic bodies, air-cooled engines, foglamps, front-wheel drive, four-wheel hydraulic brakes, friction suspension dampers, stiff-walled tyres, all types of electrical components, control and supply systems, quick-fill replenishment devices, and many more. Later disc brakes, direct-injection fuel systems, radial tyres, and halogen, quartz-iodine and LED headlights were all developed by Le Mans teams.

From 1926, the ACO’s Biennial Cup was decided on the basis of an Index of Performance. This became a separate annual competition in 1938 and gradually gained more significance than the Biennial Cup, which was finally discontinued in 1960. Later, as energy efficiency became a motor industry priority, the Index competition spurred fuel-saving techniques long before the ACO inspired the introduction of the successful FIA Group C ‘fuel formula’ of the 1980s. Alternative fuels have been encouraged since the outset, leading, for example, to Audi’s successful programme to prove the potential of diesel in the 2000s. Since last year, all cars entered in the World Endurance Championship have been powered by a renewable fuel produced from waste from the wine industry, including the latest Hypercar electric hybrids.

In addition, the ACO has consistently encouraged entrants to trial radical solutions. This tradition is maintained in the ‘Garage 56’ initiative, first seen in 2012, and in the ACO’s commitment to the Mission H24 electric-hydrogen prototype project. It is not difficult to imagine manufacturers proving the technology by fielding works teams of such cars at Le Mans in the future.

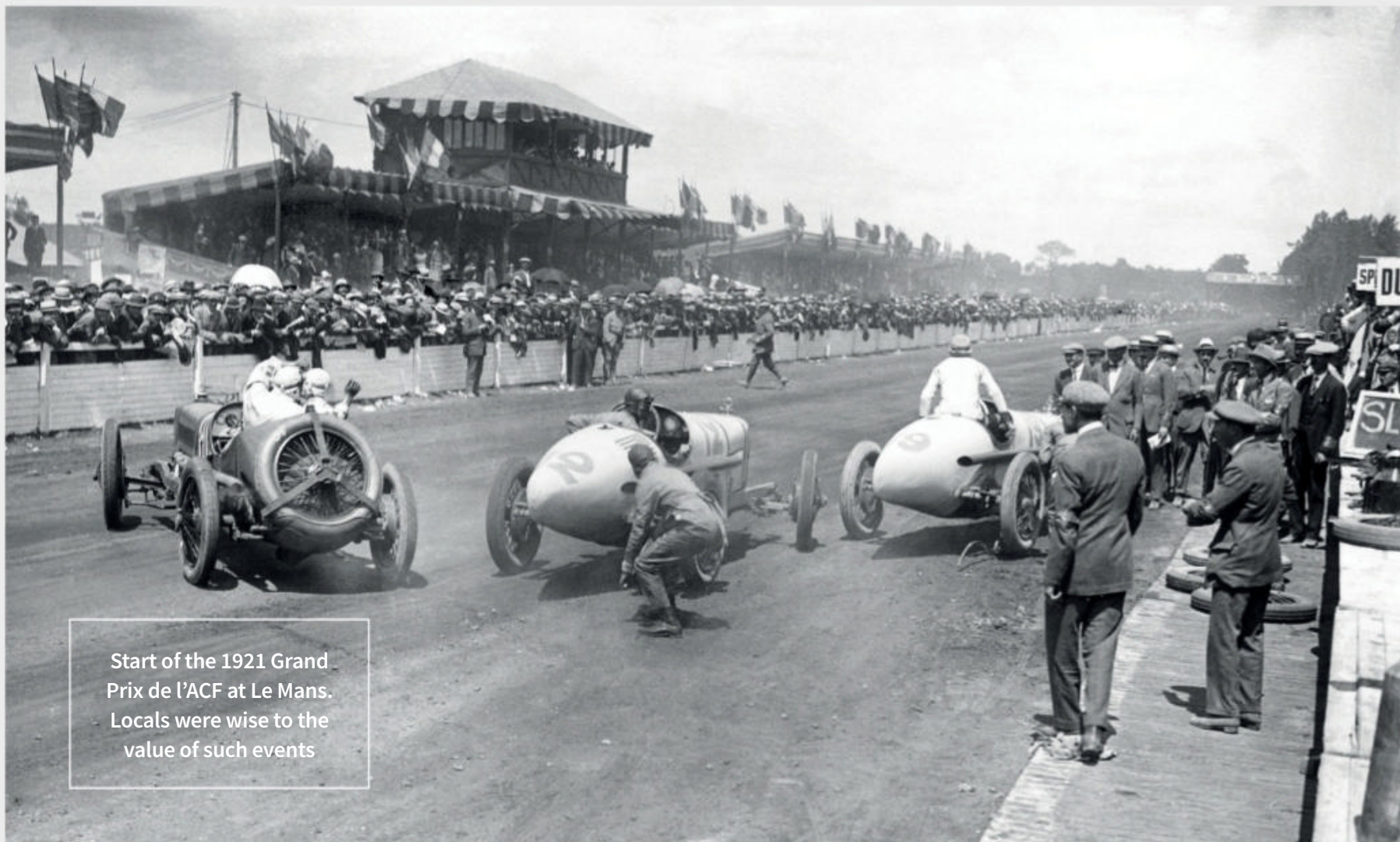
The importance of Le Mans to car brands – and therefore its global significance – is well established. It skyrocketed in the 1950s. The revival of the race after the Second World War was delayed until 1949 because the venue had been devastated. The adjacent airfield had been a Luftwaffe base, and heavily bombed by the RAF. Part of the site had been used as a prison camp, and mined.

Once the post-war recovery was under way, Le Mans scaled new heights. Active promotions of victories in the 1950s had measurable and startling impacts on road car sales for Ferrari and Jaguar, notably in the USA. Through the early 1960s, Ferrari ►



Le Mans shook off Luftwaffe and RAF damage to commence post-war era in 1949

HOW IT ALL BEGAN



Start of the 1921 Grand Prix de l'ACF at Le Mans. Locals were wise to the value of such events

What was known as the Grand Prix d'Endurance was conceived in the first week of October 1922 during the 17th annual Paris Salon de l'Auto, in the Grand Palais exhibition centre in the Champs-Élysées. The prime mover was Charles Faroux, editor of the magazine *La Vie Automobile*. Faroux was well versed in devising automobile events, having created the famous Coupe de L'Auto races before the First World War and, with the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, the Grands Prix de Consommation in 1920-21-22. Held on sections of the new Circuit de la Sarthe, to the south of Le Mans, these had been fuel economy runs for production cars, each being given a fuel allocation and a target average speed according to weight and engine volume. The three events attracted many French manufacturers, among which at least a dozen

had fielded factory teams and professional drivers.

Faroux was in Paris to meet Emile Coquille, the French concessionaire for Rudge-Whitworth, the British motorcycle maker that also made automobile components. Coquille had told him a new, long-distance trial, designed to test and prove the latest components, would be welcomed by the industry.

Faroux had collaborated with Georges Durand, the ACO's secretary-general, on the Consommation events. So he took Durand to meet Coquille on the

Rudge-Whitworth stand in the Grand Palais. No fewer than 81 French car makers were exhibiting. In the booming post-war French economy, they were eager for new events.

Faroux and Coquille had envisaged an eight-hour event, four hours in daylight, four at night. By most accounts, it was the far-sighted Durand who suggested a 24-hour format. Coquille confirmed that, if such an event could be organised, he would offer title sponsorship. Durand asked Faroux to draft regulations for an

inaugural 24-hour trial on the full Circuit de la Sarthe (with its 3.5-mile straight) the following summer. His companions doubted that he could obtain permits for public roads to be closed for such an extended period, but they misjudged the relevant civic officials, who had fresh memories of the boost to the local economy provided by staging the Grand Prix de l'ACF on the same circuit in 1921.

Faroux's regulations specified all entries were to be filed by car makers, and to be 'standard'

touring cars on public sale. To encourage future entries, he defined the trial as a multi-year competition. To put components under stress, all cars would be handed target distances, according to engine volumes, to be progressively increased year by year. Replacing components would not be permitted (unless the spares were carried on board). A curiosity is that, although it replaced the Consommation trials, there was no restriction on fuel. This was rectified the following year, with a minimum distance imposed between replenishments of any liquids (fuel, oil or water).

Faroux was the race director of the 24 Hours until 1956, the year before he died. He was also the race director of the Monaco Grand Prix from 1929 until 1955. A school near Le Mans, at Compiègne, bears the name of the great man.

Charles Faroux congratulates 1948 Monaco GP winner Giuseppe Farina





British interest hit its stride in 1950s



Le Mans village and big sponsor features? They are far from new

burnished its brand with a string of Le Mans wins. From the late 1970s until the late 1980s, so did Porsche. Success at Le Mans had become a genuinely effective marketing tool.

The roll call of manufacturer winners has the names of Aston Martin, Audi, Bentley, BMW, Bugatti, Chenard-Walcker, Ferrari, Ford, Jaguar, Lagonda, Lorraine-Dietrich, Matra, Mazda, McLaren, Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot, Porsche, Renault and Toyota. This year, 20 cars will be operated by works teams representing eight brands.

The commitment of local and regional administrations has given this event real resilience in the face of adversity. Having noted the economic benefits from twice staging the Grand Prix de l'ACF, in 1906 and 1921, and several other major races before the Great War, Le Mans civic officials embraced the 24-hour event from the outset. In 1926, it was public money that built the first permanent buildings at the venue. The starkest example of this public commitment was a setback that would have destroyed a lesser event – the appalling accident in 1955, the worst in motor racing history, in which at least 80 spectators lost their lives. Civic administrations actively resisted calls for the race to be banned, and facilitated loans to pay for alterations to the circuit layout at the scene, and a new pits complex. Always close, the collaboration was formalised in 1985 by the creation as the circuit owner of the Syndicat Mixte du Circuit des 24 Heures du Mans, in which the Departement de la Sarthe (with 50%), the Pays de la Loire (25%) and the Le Mans Metropole (25%) administrations are the current stakeholders. These days the estimated direct economic benefit to the city and region exceeds €100million annually.

The ACO has often been at loggerheads with the FIA over sportscar racing regulations, but no longer. Since 2012, the two have devised the WEC rules together and the ACO has handled promotion. It has also instigated the European Le Mans Series, the IMSA SportsCar Championship in the USA, and the Asian Le Mans Series. Regulatory control has secured the flagship event.

Very high speeds have attracted spectator interest since the late 1930s, when those ACF formula cars set the tone for future entries. For decades (although no longer), they were the fastest on the planet, reaching speeds as high as 250mph on the Mulsanne straight before it was chicaned in 1990. If a car was driven into Times Square 24 hours after leaving Le Mans, that is the approximate mileage of the record winning distance – 3362 miles at an average speed of 140mph (including all pitstops).

The ACO has always tried to give spectators a good time. Back in 1923, a row of cafes behind the grandstands, a pop-up cinema and an 'American bar' (with a stage for a jazz band and a dance floor) were provided, along with radio broadcasts of classical music from the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Today we have the 'Le Mans Village', while corporate guests are a feature dating right back to the 1920s.

The race gained enduring popularity among British spectators during and after Jaguar's successes in the 1950s. It has not been uncommon for more than 50,000 fans to cross the Channel for the spectacle, the ambience and the fun. Last year, the trackside

attendance was 244,200. The race was shown live on TV in 196 countries, and generated 3.5million page views on the ACO's website. Tickets for this year's centenary event sold out as early as January, and 300,000 people are expected.

The greatest race? Any such claim requires genuine heritage. Over a 100-year history, the culture of Le Mans has been incomparably enriched by countless compelling human stories,

“Of course it is the greatest race. This is a wonderful centenary, cherished by motor racing people everywhere”

heroic deeds, triumphs and tragedies, and by dazzling achievements of engineering and racing expertise. Of the other traditional candidates, the Monaco Grand Prix remains special and yet, like that of other historic Formula 1 races, its status has been diluted by the recent escalation in the calendar. The Indianapolis 500 can no longer command worldwide attention, even though it remains the world's biggest one-day sporting event in terms of attendance. *National Geographic* magazine put Le Mans at the top of a list of 'must-see' events that all sports enthusiasts should witness during their lifetimes, ahead even of the Olympic Games.

Last year, the cars competing in the 24 Hours covered a combined total of 173,631 racing miles, almost exactly 100,000 more than all the cars racing in the entire, 22-race Formula 1 World Championship (73,473).

Of course it is the greatest race. This is a wonderful centenary, to be cherished by motor racing people everywhere. 🇫🇷



Le Mans beats F1 easily, at least on accrued mileage

CHRISTOPHER LEE/DREW GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY

ATTRACTIONS AND POINTS

Crucial stats and info for the 91st running of the 24 Hours

KEVIN TURNER

2022 POLES (HYPERPOLE)

HYPERCAR	3m24.408s	Brendon Hartley	Toyota GR010 HYBRID
LMP2	3m28.394s	Robin Frijns	ORECA-Gibson 07
GTE PRO	3m49.985s	Nick Tandy	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R
GTE AM	3m52.594s	Vincent Abril	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

2022 FASTEST LAPS

HYPERCAR	3m27.749s	Jose Maria Lopez	Toyota GR010 HYBRID
LMP2	3m30.918s	Norman Nato	ORECA-Gibson 07
GTE PRO	3m48.356s	Kevin Estre	Porsche 911 RSR
GTE AM	3m50.445s	Julien Andlauer	Porsche 911 RSR

Centenary specials

There’s always plenty to do and see if you make the pilgrimage to the Le Mans 24 Hours, from the on-track action to the famous fan village. But this year, thanks to the centenary celebrations, there will be even more to get excited about for the record-breaking sell-out crowd.

From today (1 June), a one-of-a-kind exhibition will open its doors at the 24 Hours of Le Mans Museum. It’s always worth a visit anyway, but this year’s special display will bring together 86 Le Mans cars, 65 of which are race winners. The Grande Exposition du Centenaire des 24 Heures du Mans will be open every day from 1 June to 2 July 2023 from 1000 to 1900.

Scrutineering gets under way tomorrow (Friday). The technical and administrative checks take place at Place de la Republique in central Le Mans, and continue on Saturday, followed by a special evening event organised by the town council. This will include a ceremony in honour of the volunteers, track marshals and local authority agents who help make the event possible, plus a parade along Avenue du General Leclerc.

The cars will take to the track on the Test Day on Sunday 4 June and there will be a Ligier European Series support race.

Fans are then invited to a special Open Track day on Tuesday 6 June.

They will have the chance to visit the garages, collect autographs and watch the Pit Stop Challenge, back for its second year to showcase the mechanics’ skills during a series of wheel changes. At the end of the day, many of the drivers will be out to meet the public at an autograph session in the town centre.

The serious track action begins on Wednesday (see timetable on page 50), while there will be a large display of classic cars in Le Mans town centre. The week’s first concert will also take place at the circuit that evening.

After the support races on Friday morning, the traditional drivers’ parade will wind its way through Le Mans from 1400 onwards. After that, the track will be open to the public, offering spectators a rare opportunity to step out on the 24 Hours of Le Mans circuit. Anyone can come along and explore the track on foot or using an eco-friendly form of transport, such as a bicycle, a kick scooter or rollerskates. At the same time, RM Sotheby’s will be holding an auction of Le Mans cars on the pitstraight. Head for the grandstands to see the machines.

And to celebrate the centenary in fitting style, there will be a big parade at the circuit from 1930, when the most famous cars to have competed in the 24 Hours of Le Mans will be back on track.

2023 WEC STANDINGS

HYPERCAR DRIVERS			
POS	DRIVERS		PTS
1	Brendon Hartley /Ryo Hirakawa /Sebastien Buemi		71
2	Jose Maria Lopez /Kamui Kobayashi /Mike Conway		66
3	Nicklas Nielsen /Antonio Fuoco /Miguel Molina		42
4	Richard Westbrook /Alex Lynn /Earl Bamber		40
5	Alessandro Pier Guidi /James Calado /Antonio Giovinazzi		32
6	Michael Christensen /Dane Cameron /Frederic Makowiecki		28

HYPERCAR MANUFACTURERS			
1	Toyota Gazoo Racing		90
2	Ferrari AF Corse		57
3	Porsche Penske Motorsport		42
4	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi)		40
5	Peugeot TotalEnergies		19
6	Glickenhaus Racing		12


LMP2 DRIVERS			
1	Phil Hanson /Freddie Lubin		66
2	Rui Andrade /Robert Kubica /Louis Deletraz		58
3	Filipe Albuquerque		48
4	Josh Pierson /Oliver Jarvis		45
5	Daniil Kvyat /Doriane Pin /Mirko Bortolotti		41
6	Albert Costa /Fabio Scherer /Jakub Smiechowski		40

GTE AM DRIVERS			
1	Ben Keating /Nicky Catsburg /Nico Varrone		82
2	Alessio Rovera /Lilou Wadoux /Luis Perez Companc		43
3	Simon Mann /Ulysse de Pauw		36
4	Christian Ried /Julien Andlauer /Mikkel Overgaard Pedersen		35
5	Michelle Gatting /Rahel Frey /Sarah Bovy		32
6	Daniel Serra /Scott Huffaker /Takeshi Kimura		28

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A VERY SPECIAL GATHERING

To celebrate 100 years of the Le Mans 24 Hours, a display of some of the race's greatest cars will feature at Hampton Court's Concours of Elegance on 1-3 September. Organised in partnership with race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and presented by A. Lange & Söhne, the successful racers will join many other concours machines in the Palace grounds. Here are just some of the special cars you can expect to see...

Bentley Speed Six 'Old Number One'

'Old Number One' was the first car to win the Le Mans 24 Hours back-to-back. One of five Bentleys entered in 1929, the sole 6.6-litre straight-six led a crushing Bentley 1-2-3-4, with Woolf Barnato and Henry 'Tim' Birkin at the wheel.

The opposition was tougher in 1930, with grand prix ace Rudolf Caracciola sharing a mighty 7.1-litre Mercedes SSK with Christian Werner. There were also two teams of Bentleys: three factory Speed Sixes and two 4.4-litre 'Blower' Bentleys entered by Dorothy Paget. In an epic battle all three teams led but only the works Bentley squad made it to the end. Barnato completed his Le Mans hat-trick in the same car that had triumphed in 1929, this time sharing with Glen Kidston.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES



TIM SCOTT/FLUID IMAGES

1929-30 WINNER



1931 WINNER

Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 Zagato Le Mans Spider

After the Bentley era, Alfa Romeo took over as the Le Mans benchmark with its successful, supercharged 2.3-litre, straight-eight 8C. The second of four long chassis Le Mans Zagato Spiders, 005 was entered for the 1931 edition by Earl Howe, sharing with Henry Birkin.

They overcame challenges from bigger-engined Mercedes and Bugatti entries to take the first of four consecutive Alfa Romeo victories and become the first Le Mans winners to cover over 3000km (1860 miles).

Chassis 005 was also raced at the Tourist Trophy, Brooklands and finished third at the 1932 Spa 24 Hours, again with Howe and Birkin driving, before being sold to land speed record king Sir Malcolm Campbell in 1933. After surviving the war years in England, by 1950 it had found its way to New Zealand and a second racing career. By 1971, the 8C had moved on to the United States, where owners included Stephen Griswold and Paul Pappalardo. In the 1980s the well-travelled Alfa returned to the UK in the hands of Alain de Cadenet and Peter Honnen before another trip to Australia and Japan, finally stopping again in the United States in 2000.

FLUID IMAGES

1952 WINNER



Mercedes-Benz W194 Coupe

All the cars at Le Mans in 2023 will be closed, but the first racer to win the 24 Hours with a roof was the W194, which also scored the maiden Le Mans success for Mercedes-Benz.

Mercedes returned to international motorsport after the Second World War in endurance competition with the three-litre straight-six coupe. The 1130kg gull-winged W194 had already finished second on the Mille Miglia and the well-organised Mercedes team benefited at Le Mans as rapid challenges from Jaguar, Gordini and Pierre Levegh's Talbot wilted to score a 1-2. One of just 10 produced, the show car was driven to victory by Hermann Lang and Fritz Riess.

Mercedes went on to score another 1-2 in the gruelling Carrera Panamericana and the W194 would inspire one of the great road cars, the 1954 300SL.

Ford GT40 Mk1, chassis 1075

Gulf-liveried, JW Automotive-run Ford GT40s are among the most iconic sportscars but many of the combination's successes were scored by one car. Chassis 1075 won six of its 11 races, including at Brands Hatch, Spa and Sebring. But it is at Le Mans that its record is truly remarkable.

Driven by Pedro Rodriguez and Lucien Bianchi, 1075 defeated a strong Porsche challenge to win the 1968 24 Hours, held in September, and clinch the world sportscar title for Ford.

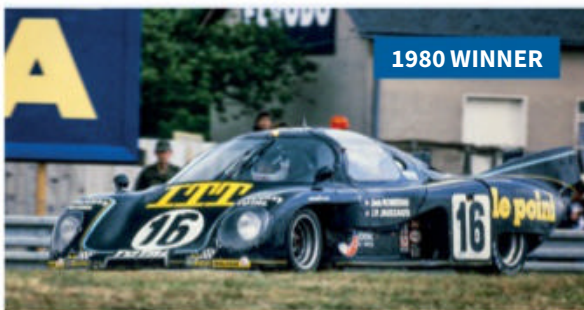
Porsche's onslaught was even stronger for the 1969 race, which also included Ferrari, Lola and Matra entries. Jacky Ickx and Jackie Oliver qualified 14.6 seconds off pole and fell to the back following Ickx's famous protest against the traditional echelon start. But as the quicker Porsches failed, the ageing GT40 moved forwards and Ickx defeated Hans Herrmann's Porsche 908 by just 120 metres in one of the race's most famous and memorable finishes.

1968-69 WINNER



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

1980 WINNER



Rondeau M379B

Frenchman Jean Rondeau became the first – and so far only – driver to win Le Mans in a car bearing his own name in 1980. And this is the M379B in which he achieved that feat, sharing with 1978 victor Jean-Pierre Jaussaud.

In a race hit by bad weather, the Cosworth DFV-engined Rondeau battled the Porsche 908/80 (really a 936) of Jacky Ickx and Reinhold Joest for victory. Gearbox problems hampered the Porsche, leaving Rondeau and Jaussaud to win by two laps and head a Rondeau 1-3.

Porsche WSC95

Also known as the TWR-Porsche or even Joest-Porsche, the WSC95 was famously based on an old Jaguar XJR-14 Group C chassis (a winner in the world sportscar championship and IMSA), with the roof chopped off and a three-litre Porsche turbo installed. Porsche abandoned the project after a rule change but Joest saw the potential and, once it had undergone a renewed development programme in conjunction with Porsche, the WSC95 was a formidable prototype.

Porsche supported two Joest entries in 1996 and, driven by Davy Jones, Alexander Wurz and Manuel Reuter, chassis 001 had

better fuel economy than the other open prototypes and more speed than the GTs.

That victory earned Joest the car, which took on the Evo version of the 911 GT1 in 1997 without the factory's support. Despite the WSC95 taking pole, the GT cars had the edge over the first half of the race, but Michele Alboreto, Stefan Johansson and star rookie Tom Kristensen were still pushing when the leading Porsche caught fire with less than three hours to go.

The car's final Le Mans appearance, with revised bodywork and rear end in 1998, was not a success, but it remains one of only four chassis to have won the 24 Hours twice – and three of them will be at Hampton Court Palace in September.

1996-97 WINNER



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

STATS AND RECORDS

COMPILED BY KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



GIBSON

Fastest laps

Jacky Ickx holds the record for the number of fastest laps at five. Mike Hawthorn and Andre Lotterer are next on four, while Tom Kristensen scored three.

QUICKEST LAPS

The fastest lap at Le Mans in terms of average speed is Kamui Kobayashi's 156.51mph 2017 pole lap of 3m14.791s in a Toyota TS050 HYBRID (below). Mike Conway holds the fastest race lap record with 154.49mph (3m17.297s), set in a TS050 in 2019. In terms of shortest elapsed time for a tour of the Circuit de la Sarthe, Jackie Oliver has the record with 3m13.6s (155.63mph), set at the 1971 test in a long-tailed Porsche 917.



SUTTON

DISTANCE RECORD

Timo Bernhard, Romain Dumas and Mike Rockenfeller covered 3362 miles (397 laps) when they took their Audi R15 TDI-plus to victory in 2010, an average speed of 139.95mph.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW

The highest-placed woman so far is Odette Siko, who finished fourth and won the two-litre class with Louis Charavel in an Alfa Romeo in 1932.



MOST POLES

Jacky Ickx scored five pole positions, more than any other driver. Porsche is the most successful manufacturer, with 18 poles. It also has the highest number of fastest laps: 14.



HIGHEST SPEED

Prior to the installation of the Mulsanne chicanes, Roger Dorchy officially hit 251mph in a WM-Peugeot P88 in 1988, though the actual top speed was almost certainly a little higher...

Most starts

Henri Pescarolo started the 24 Hours 33 times, winning in 1972-74 for Matra and in 1984 driving a Joest Porsche 956 with Klaus Ludwig. The great, late Bob Wollek is second on the starts list with 30.

Starting position
Since practice times dictated the grid from 1963, Le Mans has been won from pole position 13 times (22%). In that period, the race has been won from outside the top 10 on just five occasions.

Numbers

The most successful race numbers are 1 and 2, both of which have recorded 10 victories. The highest number to win is 63, worn by the Sauber-Mercedes C9 of Jochen Mass/Manuel Reuter/St Stanley Dickens in 1989.

WINNING MARGINS

SHORTEST

YEAR	WINNING DRIVERS	RUNNERS-UP	WINNING MARGIN
1966	Bruce McLaren /Chris Amon	Ken Miles /Denny Hulme	20 metres
1969	Jacky Ickx /Jackie Oliver	Gerard Larrousse /Hans Herrmann	120 metres
1933	Tazio Nuvolari /Raymond Sommer	Luigi Chinetti /Philippe Varent	401 metres
2011	Marcel Fassler /Andre Lotterer /Benoit Treluyer	Pedro Lamy /Sebastien Bourdais /Simon Pagnaud	775 metres (13.854s)
2019	Sebastien Buemi /Kazuki Nakajima /Fernando Alonso	Mike Conway /Kamui Kobayashi /Jose Maria Lopez	1099 metres (16.972s)

LONGEST

YEAR	WINNING DRIVERS	RUNNERS-UP	WINNING MARGIN
1927	Dudley Benjafield /Sammy Davis	Andre de Victor /Jean Hasley	217 miles
1987	Hans-Joachim Stuck /Derek Bell /Al Holbert	Pierre Yver /Bernard de Dryver /Jurgen Lassig	161 miles
1963	Ludovico Scarfiotti /Lorenzo Bandini	Jean Blaton ('Beurlys')/Gerald Langlois van Ophem	134 miles
1981	Jacky Ickx /Derek Bell	Jacky Haran /Philippe Streiff /Jean-Louis Schlesser	116 miles
1934	Luigi Chinetti /Philippe Etancelin	Jean Sebilleau /Georges Delaroche	112 miles

Youngest winner

Youngest winner:
Alex Wurz was 22 years, four months and one day when he won in 1996.



Youngest starter

Josh Pierson was 16 years, three months and 27 days when he raced in the 2022 event.



Oldest winner

Luigi Chinetti was 47 years, 11 months and nine days when he won in 1949.



100% record

Eight drivers have won every Le Mans they started. Woolf Barnato tops the list with three.

MOST WINS

Manufacturers

Brand	Count
Porsche	19
Audi	13
Ferrari	9
Jaguar	7
Bentley	6

Drivers

Tom Kristensen	9	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Jacky Ickx	6	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Derek Bell	5	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Frank Biela	5	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Emanuele Pirro	5	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

Tyres

Dunlop	34	<div></div>
Michelin	31	<div></div>
Goodyear	14	<div></div>
Englebert	5	<div></div>
Firestone	3	<div></div>

Engines

Engine		
Six-cylinder	38	<div><div></div></div>
12-cylinder	22	<div><div></div></div>
Eight-cylinder	19	<div><div></div></div>

Four chassis have won the 24 Hours twice:

LUCKY CARS?

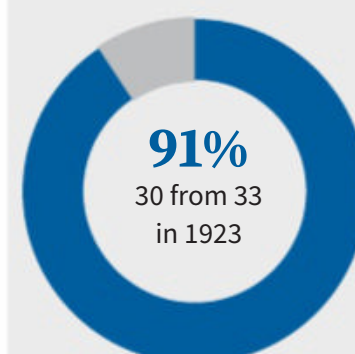
YEARS	CHASSIS
1929-30 Bentley Speed Six ‘Old Number One’	LB2332
1968-69 Ford GT40	1075
1984-85 Porsche 956	956-117
1996-97 Porsche WSC95	001



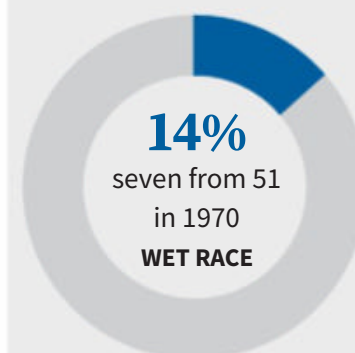
FINISHING RATES

Percentage of finishers
to starters

Highest



Lowest



The total number of classified finishers since 1923 is

2035

LE MANS HYPERCAR			
NO	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR
2	Earl Bamber (NZL) Alex Lynn (GBR) Richard Westbrook (GBR)	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi)	Cadillac V-Series.R
3	Sebastien Bourdais (FRA) Renger van der Zande (NLD) Scott Dixon (NZL)	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi)	Cadillac V-Series.R
4	Esteban Guerrieri (ARG) Tristan Vautier (FRA) Tom Dillmann (FRA)	Floyd Vanwall Racing Team	Vanwall-Gibson Vandervell 680
5	Dane Cameron (USA) Michael Christensen (DNK) Frederic Makowiecki (FRA)	Porsche Penske Motorsport	Porsche 963
6	Kevin Estre (FRA) Andre Lotterer (DEU) Laurens Vanthoor (BEL)	Porsche Penske Motorsport	Porsche 963
7	Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID
8	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Brendon Hartley (NZL) Ryo Hirakawa (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID
38	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT) Will Stevens (GBR) Yifei Ye (CHN)	Hertz Team Jota	Porsche 963
50	Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Miguel Molina (ESP) Nicklas Nielsen (DNK)	Ferrari AF Corse	Ferrari 499P
51	Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) James Calado (GBR) Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Ferrari AF Corse	Ferrari 499P
75	Felipe Nasr (BRA) Mathieu Jaminet (FRA) Nick Tandy (GBR)	Porsche Penske Motorsport	Porsche 963
93	Paul di Resta (GBR) Mikkel Jensen (DNK) Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	Peugeot TotalEnergies	Peugeot 9X8
94	Loic Duval (FRA) Gustavo Menezes (USA) Nico Muller (CHE)	Peugeot TotalEnergies	Peugeot 9X8
311	Pipo Derani (BRA) Alexander Sims (GBR) Jack Aitken (GBR)	Action Express Racing	Cadillac V-Series.R
708	Romain Dumas (FRA) Olivier Pla (FRA) Ryan Briscoe (AUS)	Glickenhause Racing	Glickenhause-Pipo 007
709	Esteban Gutierrez (MEX) Franck Mailleux (FRA) Nathanael Berthon (FRA)	Glickenhause Racing	Glickenhause-Pipo 007
LMP2			
9	Bent Viscaal (NLD) Juan Manuel Correa (USA) Filip Ugran (ROU)	Prema Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
10	Gabriel Aubry (FRA) Ryan Cullen (GBR) Matthias Kaiser (LIE)	Vector Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07
13	Ricky Taylor (USA) Rene Rast (DEU) John Farano (CAN) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	Tower Motorsports	ORECA-Gibson 07
14	Mathias Beche (CHE) Ben Hanley (GBR) Rodrigo Sales (USA) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	Nielsen Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
22	Filipe Albuquerque (PRT) Phil Hanson (GBR) Freddie Lubin (GBR)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07
23	Tom Blomqvist (GBR) Oliver Jarvis (GBR) Josh Pierson (USA)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07
28	Oliver Rasmussen (DNK) Pietro Fittipaldi (BRA) David Heinemeier Hansson (DNK)	Jota	ORECA-Gibson 07
30	Neel Jani (CHE) Rene Binder (AUT) Nico Pino (CHL)	Duqueine Team	ORECA-Gibson 07
31	Robin Frijns (NLD) Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT) Sean Gelael (IDN)	Team WRT	ORECA-Gibson 07
32	Jan Magnussen (DNK) Anders Fjordbach (DNK) Mark Kvamme (USA) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	Inter Europol Competition	ORECA-Gibson 07
34	Albert Costa (ESP) Fabio Scherer (CHE) Jakub Smiechowski (POL)	Inter Europol Competition	ORECA-Gibson 07
35	Andre Negrao (BRA) Olli Caldwell (GBR) Memo Rojas (MEX)	Alpine Elf Team (Signatech)	ORECA-Gibson 07
36	Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA) Charles Milesi (FRA) Julien Canal (FRA)	Alpine Elf Team (Signatech)	ORECA-Gibson 07
37	Nicolas Lapierre (FRA) Malthe Jakobsen (DNK) Alexandre Coigny (CHE) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	Cool Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
39	Giedo van der Garde (NLD) Patrick Pilet (FRA) Roberto Lacorte (ITA) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	Graff Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
41	Robert Kubica (POL) Louis Deletraz (CHE) Rui Andrade (AGO)	Team WRT	ORECA-Gibson 07
43	Maxime Martin (BEL) Ugo de Wilde (BEL) Tom van Rompuy (BEL) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	DKR Engineering	ORECA-Gibson 07
45	James Allen (AUS) Colin Braun (USA) George Kurtz (USA) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	Algarve Pro Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
47	Simon Pagenaud (FRA) Reshad de Gerus (FRA) Vlad Lomko (RUS)	Cool Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
48	Paul-Loup Chatin (FRA) Laurents Horr (DEU) Paul Lafargue (FRA)	IDEC Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07
63	Daniil Kvyat (RUS) Mirko Bortolotti (ITA) Doriane Pin (FRA)	Prema Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
65	Tijmen van der Helm (NLD) Job van Uitert (NLD) Manuel Maldonado (VEN)	Panis Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
80	Ben Barnicoat (GBR) Norman Nato (FRA) Francois Perrodo (FRA) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	AF Corse	ORECA-Gibson 07
923	Dries Vanthoor (BEL) Tom Gamble (GBR) Salih Yoluc (TUR) <i>Pro-Am entry</i>	Racing Team Turkey (TF)	ORECA-Gibson 07
GTE AM			
16	Jan Heylen (BEL) Zacharie Robichon (CAN) Ryan Hardwick (USA)	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR
21	Ulysse de Pauw (BEL) Simon Mann (GBR) Julien Piguet (FRA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
25	Charlie Eastwood (GBR) Michael Dinan (USA) Ahmad Al Harthy (OMN)	ORT by TF	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
33	Nicky Catsburg (NLD) Nico Varrone (ARG) Ben Keating (USA)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R
54	Davide Rigon (ITA) Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Thomas Flohr (CHE)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
55	Marco Sorensen (DNK) Gustav Birch (DNK) Jens Reno Moller (DNK)	GMB Motorsport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
56	Matteo Cairoli (ITA) Gunnar Jeannette (USA) PJ Hyett (USA)	Project 1 - AO	Porsche 911 RSR
57	Daniel Serra (BRA) Scott Huffaker (USA) Takeshi Kimura (JPN)	Kessel Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
60	Alessio Picariello (BEL) Matteo Cressoni (ITA) Claudio Schiavoni (ITA)	Iron Lynx	Porsche 911 RSR
66	Thomas Neubauer (FRA) Louis Prette (ITA) Giacomo Petrobelli (ITA)	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
72	Valentin Hasse-Clot (FRA) Maxime Robin (FRA) Arnold Robin (FRA)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
74	Kei Cozzolino (JPN) Naoki Yokomizo (JPN) Yorikatsu Tsujiko (JPN)	Kessel Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
77	Julien Andlauer (FRA) Mikkel Overgaard Pedersen (DNK) Christian Ried (DEU)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
83	Alessio Rovera (ITA) Lilou Wadoux (FRA) Luis Perez Companc (ARG)	Richard Mille AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
85	Rahel Frey (CHE) Michelle Gatting (DNK) Sarah Bovy (BEL)	Iron Dames (Iron Lynx)	Porsche 911 RSR
86	Ben Barker (GBR) Riccardo Pera (ITA) Michael Wainwright (GBR)	GR Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
88	Harry Tincknell (GBR) Don Yount (USA) TBC	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR
98	Alex Riberas (ESP) Daniel Mancinelli (ITA) Ian James (GBR)	Northwest AMR	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
100	Jeffrey Segal (USA) Chandler Hull (USA) Andrew Haryanto (IDN)	Walkenhorst Motorsport	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
777	Tomonobu Fujii (JPN) Casper Stevenson (GBR) Satoshi Hoshino (JPN)	D’Station Racing (TF)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
911	Richard Lietz (AUT) Martin Rump (EST) Michael Fassbender (IRL)	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR
INNOVATIVE CAR			
24	Jimmie Johnson (USA) Mike Rockenfeller (DEU) Jenson Button (GBR)	Hendrick Motorsports	Chevrolet Camaro ZL1

WEDNESDAY 7 JUNE
0900-0945
Porsche Carrera Cup
Free Practice 1

1015-1100
Ferrari Challenge
Free Practice 1

1130-1230
Road to Le Mans
Free Practice 1

1400-1700
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 1

1900-2000
Le Mans 24 Hours
Qualifying

2030-2130
Road to Le Mans
Free Practice 2

2200-0000
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 2

THURSDAY 8 JUNE
0900-0945
Ferrari Challenge
Free Practice 2

1055-1140
Porsche Carrera Cup
Free Practice 2

1255-1315
Road to Le Mans
Qualifying 1

1330-1350
Road to Le Mans
Qualifying 2

1500-1800
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 3

1830-1925
Road to Le Mans
Race 1

2000-2030
Le Mans 24 Hours
Hyperpole

2200-2300
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 4

FRIDAY 9 JUNE
0900-0945
Porsche Carrera Cup
Qualifying

1015-1100
Ferrari Challenge
Qualifying

1130-1225
Road to Le Mans
Race 2

1400-1630
Le Mans 24 Hours
Drivers’ parade (city centre)

SATURDAY 10 JUNE
0930-1005
Ferrari Challenge
Race

1045-1130
Porsche Carrera Cup
Race

1200-1215
Le Mans 24 Hours
Warm-up

1600
Le Mans 24 Hours
Start

SUNDAY 11 JUNE
1600
Le Mans 24 Hours
Finish



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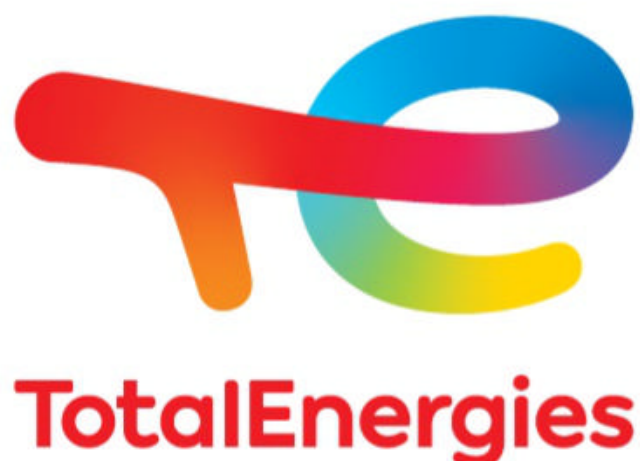
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