



**Ferrari** pips Porsche to top **Le Mans** test



# AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

8 JUNE 2023

**SPANISH GP**

## Max wins as Merc recovery begins

Verstappen takes his 40th victory while Hamilton and Russell star

**'We'll keep chasing them down'**

LEWIS HAMILTON



**PLUS**

Neuville ignites **WRC** title challenge as Ogier crashes

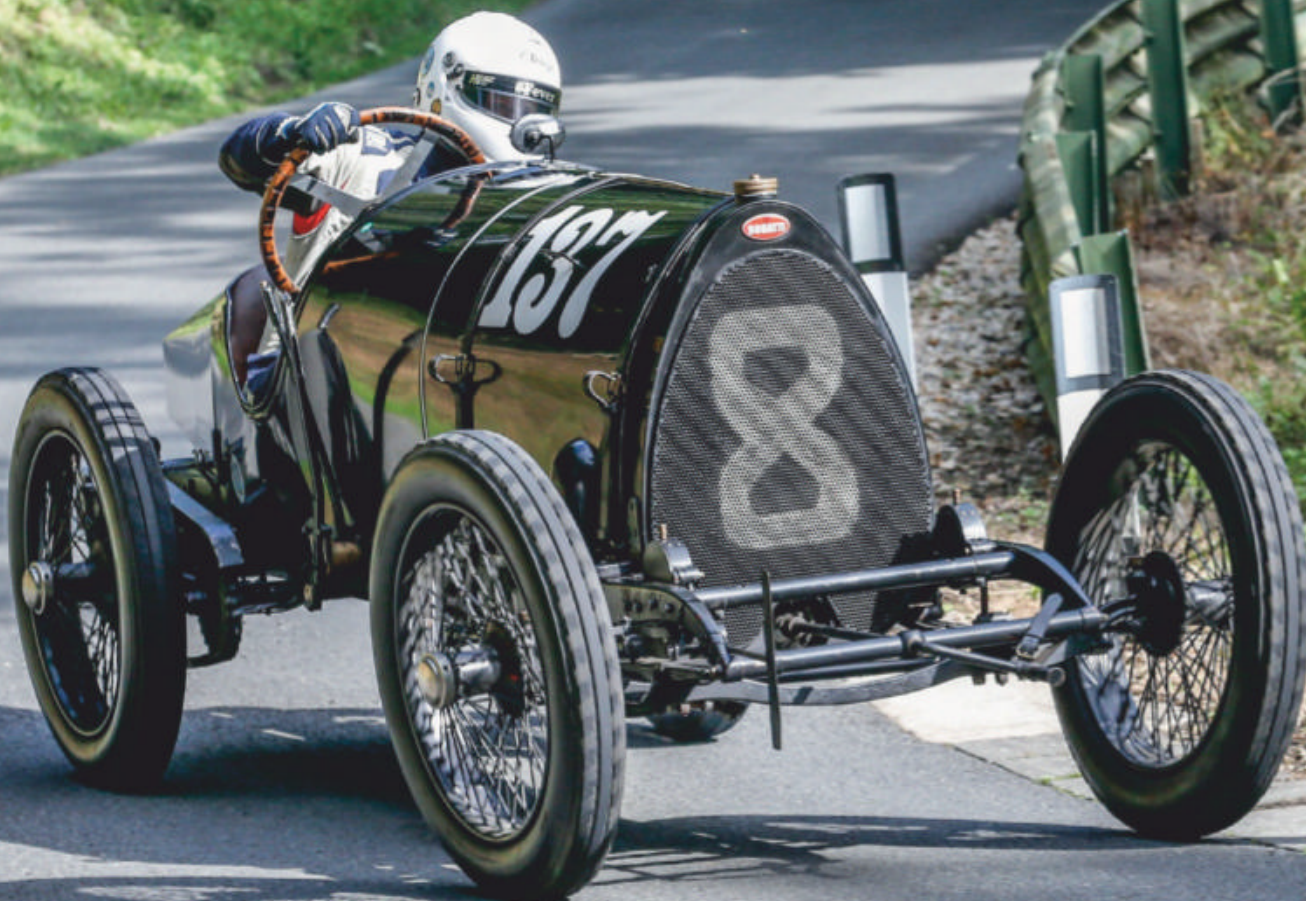




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# More of the same but a hint of something different to come?

So, on the one hand, we got exactly the winner we expected at the Spanish Grand Prix. Max Verstappen never looked under threat, not even from Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez. But on the other hand, the track changes at the end of the lap made for more action and the revised Mercedes W14 suddenly came alive last Sunday.

As Alex Kalinauckas explains both on page 11 and in our report (p14), there were several reasons why Mercedes jumped Aston Martin and Ferrari at Barcelona. Some of them were situation-specific, but there is also now a real hope that the multiple championship-winning team is finally on the right path. The question now is how long it will take to get to the level of Red Bull, which has been on this road since the ground effect regulations were introduced.

On a busy motorsport weekend, Thierry Neuville got his World Rally challenge back on course with a victory for Hyundai on a bruising Rally Italy Sardinia (p30), while Porsche's Pascal Wehrlein bounced back from recent troubles to take Formula E success in Indonesia (p34).

But the only performance remotely in Red Bull's ballpark came in the British Touring Car Championship at Thruxton! Ash Sutton and his Motorbase Ford Focus demonstrated a superiority rarely seen in modern tin-tops. Marcus Simmons saw the excellence unfold (p38).

This weekend is all about the Le Mans 24 Hours. Controversial tweaks have thrown the form book into doubt (p4), so keep your eyes on Autosport.com for all the latest news and look out for our bumper report special in next week's issue (15 June).



*Kevin Turner*

**Kevin Turner**  
Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK**  
**15 JUNE**

**The 91st Le Mans 24 Hours**  
An in-depth report on the  
centenary edition from  
our team in France



## Cover images

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# PIT + PADDOCK

## Hypercar teams blindsided by last-minute Le Mans penalties

### LE MANS 24 HOURS

The battle for the Le Mans 24 Hours appears to have been blown wide open by a late Balance of Performance change.

The odds on Toyota winning this weekend's double-points round of the World Endurance Championship lengthened dramatically after it was hit with a weight penalty ahead of the official Le Mans Test Day last weekend. The big winners in a shuffle of the Hypercar pack appear to be Porsche and Peugeot after torrid starts to their 2023 campaigns.

The BoP change was revealed on Wednesday afternoon last week by the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, just days ahead of Sunday's Le Mans Test Day. Its effect on the Hypercar order was dramatic. Ferrari again showed it had the one-lap pace with the 499P Le Mans Hypercar as it topped both the morning and afternoon sessions with Antonio Fuoco and Antonio Giovinazzi, despite a 24kg increase in its minimum weight. Porsche, now running 3kg heavier than before, was right up there in the times with its 963 LMDh, while Peugeot's 9X8 LMH showed some real pace for the first time with an unchanged BoP.

And Toyota? The marque that dominated the opening three rounds of the WEC slipped down the order after the GR010 HYBRID LMH received a whopping 37kg hit. Mike Conway set the best Toyota time in the opening three-hour session to take fifth spot, before Kamui Kobayashi made a late improvement in the second period of the same length to take third spot.



Giovinazzi set pace, but Ferrari (main pic) has always been quick anyway



EHRLHARDT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Conway was 1.2s off Ferrari's pace, Kobayashi 0.3s. The significance of what is after all a test as its name implies should never be overplayed, especially because it takes place on a track that gets quicker through the main event, but Toyota hinted at its concerns as it bids for a sixth consecutive Le Mans victory.

Kobayashi, who is also team principal of

the Toyota Gazoo Racing squad, suggested in the wake of the test that it was in a "tough situation in terms of performance". He didn't elaborate on that comment, except to say that "we need to keep working".

The test was described as "not our best day" by Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon. Asked to expand on that, he replied: "Just look at the lap times, and I'm sure you will have an idea." He also didn't mention the BoP, only saying the lack of pace was "not a surprise".

Vasselon refused to be drawn how much the increase in minimum weight to 1080kg, 10kg more than the 1070kg at which it ran at Le Mans last year, had cost the car. Kobayashi, however, tweeted straight after the BoP came out that 37kg equated to 1.2s around the 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe.

Ferrari's pace over a single lap hasn't been in doubt this year from the moment Fuoco grabbed a sensational pole for the Sebring 1000 Miles WEC season-opener back in March. It shouldn't be forgotten that Giovinazzi set a time good enough for pole at Spa at the end of April, only to lose his time to a track limits infraction. The task for the Italian manufacturer heading into the start of free practice and opening

Porsche has taken a step forward. Vanthoor set second fastest time



PORSCHE





qualifying yesterday (Wednesday) was to continue to hone the 499P into a consistent race car. “We have the speed, for sure, but we haven’t been there all the time,” said James Calado. “It’s about understanding how to get the car in a good working window to be quick consistently.”

Porsche set the fastest lap of the day, although Laurens Vanthoor lost a time that was a couple of tenths up on Giovinazzi’s mark when it was scrubbed out because he went wide at Tertre Rouge. His next best lap was still good enough for second, which followed Yifei Ye putting the Jota customer 963 third in the times in the morning.

Porsche believed it had made genuine progress with the car since Spa after two tests in Europe at Monza and Paul Ricard and one in the US at Watkins Glen. Most pertinently, it appeared to be getting on top of the braking instability that has dogged the car so far.

Peugeot was second in the morning, although it played down the significance of that. Testing is just testing, it stressed.

But what became clear in the days leading up to Le Mans week was that Toyota is not going to have things all its own way.

**GARY WATKINS**

## WHY HAVE THE CHANGES BEEN MADE?

Wholesale changes to the Balance of Performance for the Le Mans 24 Hours were not possible under the new system introduced for 2023. Not without the unanimous agreement of all seven participating marques. But the FIA and the Automobile Club de l’Ouest, who run the World Endurance Championship, opted to make unilateral changes in the run-up to the most important race of the season in its centenary year.

There was scope to change the balance between the Le Mans Hypercar and LMDh machinery ahead of Le Mans, though when that could come seemed to be a matter of debate between the manufacturers. Deciding who was correct wasn’t possible because the document governing the BoP isn’t in the public domain. That debate came to a sudden and dramatic end at lunchtime last Wednesday when the FIA and the ACO told the participants in Hypercar that it was going to enforce changes across the board. There was no debate, neither were the manufacturers told who was getting what. They had to wait for the publication of the BoP table for that.

The FIA and the ACO only offered a brief statement – it ran to all of 78 words – explaining the rationale for the BoP change to the wider world. It described their move as “a correction” that was necessary because the differences in the performance of cars built to the LMH rules were “greater than initially anticipated”.

That should probably be interpreted as meaning that they considered Toyota to be too quick. Clearly, in such an important year for Le Mans, the ACO in particular



Fillon wants exciting  
Le Mans centenary

didn’t want a single manufacturer running away from the pack. It wanted a good motor race to celebrate its 100th birthday. The decision was driven by ACO president Pierre Fillon and Richard Mille, his opposite number on the FIA’s Endurance Commission, rather than the technical staff of the two bodies. That much is known.

It is understood that during last Wednesday’s online meeting the manufacturers were assured that there would be no further changes to the BoP through race week. But Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon argued that the unilateral move by the FIA/ACO sets a dangerous precedent. The 2023 BoP system was devised to do away with sandbagging, but Vasselon suggested that if it could change once on the basis of race performances, then it could do so again.

“The principle was to discourage people from sandbagging because there was no adjustment,” explained Vasselon. “As soon as there are adjustments like this, then you create an incentive to have sandbagging.”

**GARY WATKINS**

Six in a row for Toyota  
is now a tougher task





# McLaren snaps up Red Bull tech maestro

## FORMULA 1

McLaren has pulled off a major coup by snapping up Red Bull chief engineering officer Rob Marshall to complete the overhaul of its Formula 1 technical division.

The ex-Renault designer, who is credited with evolving the squad's innovative mass damper system that helped it to the 2005 and 2006 titles, has stepped back from his current role with immediate effect as his 17-year stint in Milton Keynes comes to an end. He will punch in at Woking in January as the new technical director for engineering and design.

It appears as though Marshall, the Red Bull chief designer from 2010-13, only recently became available to McLaren since the team had already elevated the long-

serving Neil Houldey, who has now agreed to relinquish the top position and serve as deputy to Marshall. McLaren also insists that signing Marshall, who has been heavily involved in the fledgling Red Bull Powertrains project, does not indicate that the engine partnership with Mercedes will come to an end. That's despite McLaren Racing CEO Zak Brown holding recent talks with Christian Horner about a prospective supply deal beginning in 2026.

McLaren team principal Andrea Stella said: "Rob's appointment is one of the fundamental steps and a natural fit to aid the team's journey to get back to our winning ways. We are a team with the ambition of fighting for championships, but over the last couple of seasons we



THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

have not shown a steady upward trend from an on-track competitiveness point of view. Over the last few months, we have worked towards inverting this trend [by also recruiting Ferrari's David Sanchez]."

As part of a coordinated announcement with McLaren, Red Bull boss Christian

Horner said Marshall's "work on the generation of cars that gave us four incredible championship doubles between 2010 and 2013 was truly outstanding... His influence will be missed but once again we thank him for all he has done and wish him the very best in his new role."

**MATT KEW**

# Yellow card to Steiner for F1 'ref' remarks

## FORMULA 1

Haas Formula 1 boss Guenther Steiner was slapped with a reprimand by the FIA stewards at last weekend's Spanish Grand Prix after he labelled the governing body's referees as "laymen" for handing a five-second penalty to his driver Nico Hulkenberg in Monaco for his role in a first-lap collision.

Steiner reckoned Hulkenberg did nothing untoward and so called for the appointment of full-time professional stewards in a bid to bring about greater consistency. "Every professional sport has got professionals being referees and stuff like this," he said. "F1 is one of the biggest sports in the world, and we still have laymen deciding on the fate of people who invest millions in their careers. And it's always a discussion because there's no consistency. I think we need to step it up. I think it's now time. We're discussing this for years and years and we always go back to this."



Those comments did not go down well with the FIA. Steiner was summoned to answer potential misconduct charges for using language, in this case "laymen", that could cause "offence, humiliation or be inappropriate" to the Monaco stewards, FIA personnel and many motorsport volunteers.

Steiner "freely apologised", which was good enough for the stewards. The Italian reacted to the reprimand by writing in a statement: "The stewards informed me that they had no issue with people disagreeing with decisions but were more concerned about the interpretation that had been placed on

some of my comments. I explained to the stewards that I had not intended to offend anyone and that my use of certain words could have been open to misinterpretation or misunderstood by some people."

Amusingly, the FIA noted that Steiner proposed that he would have used far more colourful language if he had indeed intended to offend. The decision noted: "Mr Steiner stated that if he had meant to insult or offend anyone, he would have used much different words. The stewards do not dispute this."

**JONATHAN NOBLE**





**WRX** Five-time World Rallycross champion Johan Kristoffersson took honours in the opening round of the 2023 season at Montalegre last weekend at the wheel of his Volkswagen Polo RX1e, but hands up who would rather see a photo of Sebastien Loeb at the wheel of Special One Racing's Lancia Delta Evo-e RX... The French legend made the final in Portugal, but sustained a puncture and finished sixth. Peugeot driver Kevin Hansen chased fellow Swede Kristoffersson home in second place, holding off Niclas Gronholm. The other finalists were Ole Christian Veiby (fourth) and Klara Andersson (fifth). **Photo by Mitter/Red Bull Content Pool**

## Villeneuve split with Vanwall turns into a public argument

**WEC**

Jacques Villeneuve is looking increasingly unlikely to return to the Vanwall Racing Hypercar line-up in the World Endurance Championship after a public spat broke out between driver and team last week. The 1997 Formula 1 world champion claimed that he had been unilaterally dropped for this weekend's Le Mans 24 Hours, only for the team to counter by claiming that he had already withdrawn from the programme when it brought in Tristan Vautier to replace him.

Villeneuve issued a statement claiming that he learnt that the Frenchman would be driving the solo Vanwall-Gibson Vandervell 680 Le Mans Hypercar alongside Tom Dillmann and

Esteban Guerrieri on the announcement by the team. He pointed out that he remained under contract with the former ByKolles team and its timing coincided with the birth of his latest child, so was unable to react immediately. He concluded by saying he was withdrawing from the programme.

An email purported to have been sent to the team by Villeneuve earlier in May then emerged in which he said he was making the decision to end his involvement with the Vanwall project. Team boss Colin Kolles also pointed out that Villeneuve remained under contract, which is why he told Autosport early last week that his star driver remained scheduled to drive at the Monza round in July.

**GARY WATKINS**



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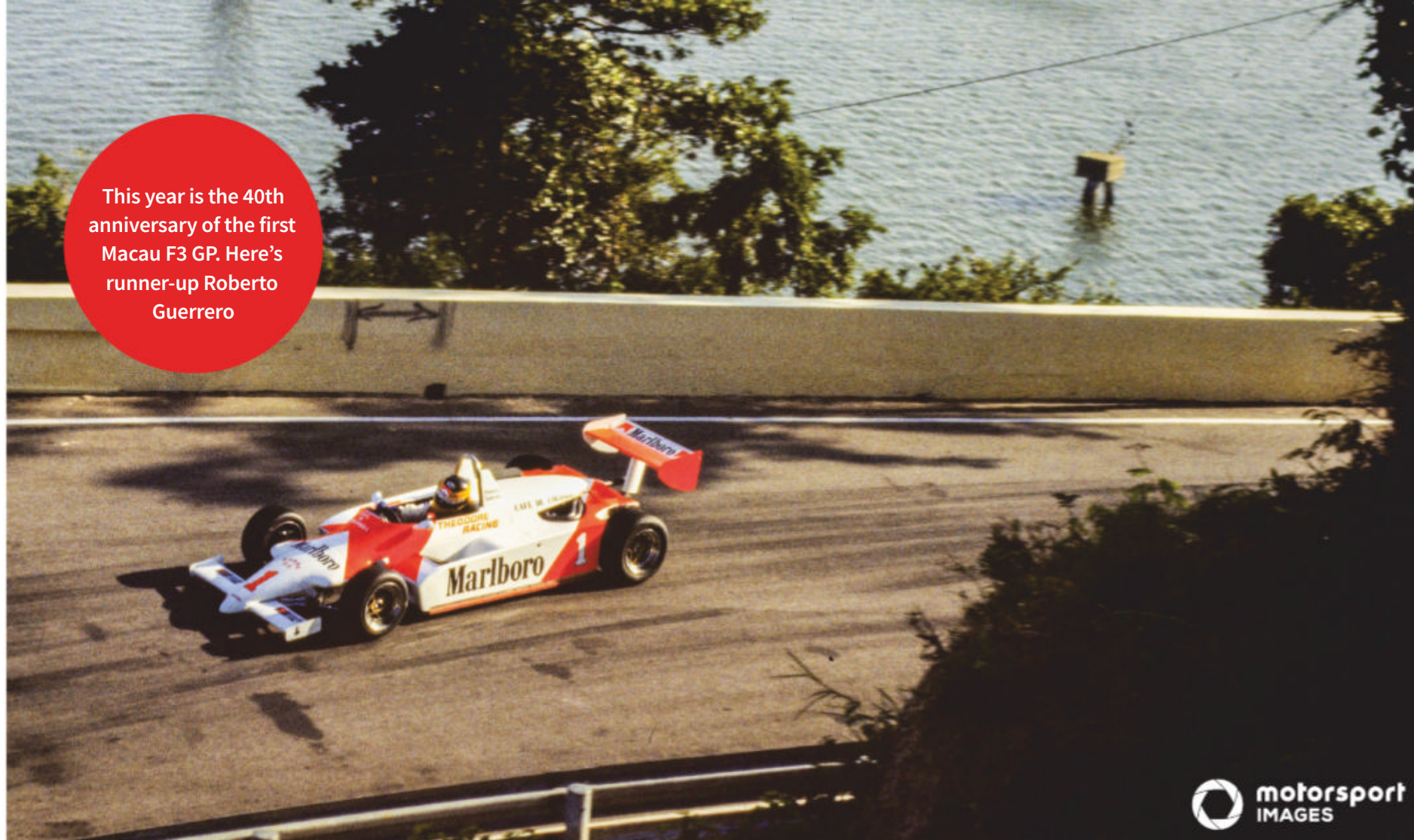
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This year is the 40th anniversary of the first Macau F3 GP. Here's runner-up Roberto Guerrero

motorsport  
IMAGES

## F3 set to return to Macau after COVID absence

### MACAU GRAND PRIX

Formula 3 is to return to the streets of Macau this November after an absence of three seasons. The FIA Formula 3 and GT World Cups will headline the 70th running of the Macau Grand Prix on the weekend of 18-19 November following three years during which travel restrictions into China resulting from the COVID pandemic precluded an international presence.

The two races had been scheduled to return last year, but the quarantine period that remained in force for arrivals into China resulted in the fixtures falling over. Confirmation of the return of F3 follows comments from FIA single-seater strategy director Francois Sicard in March that the

governing body was working on bringing the category back to Macau.

The F3 race, which in 2019 was held for the first time for the FIA one-make category based on the Mechachrome-engined Dallara F3 2019 chassis, was replaced from 2020-22 by a round of the Chinese Formula 4 Championship, which carried the Macau GP title as the premier single-seater race. Chinese F4 again has a round scheduled on the bill of an event that will be extended into a two-weekend affair and looks set to incorporate further single-seater grids drawn from the Formula Regional Middle East and UAE F4 series.

The Stephane Ratel Organisation, the world's premier promoter of GT3 racing, has again been retained to put together the

entry for the sportscar race. It has worked with the FIA and the event organisers since 2015, when the race previously known as the Macau GT Cup gained world status.

The FIA-sanctioned races are returning to the Macau Guia circuit as part of a three-year agreement between the governing body and the Macau national sporting authority and the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee.

FIA single-seater director Nikolas Tombazis said: "We are all very pleased to see the return of the FIA F3 World Cup in Macau – the history of Macau and F3 is one of the most renowned stories in motorsport and the event has long been the highlight of the junior single-seater calendar."

**GARY WATKINS**

## Bruni and Tincknell pair up again in IMSA



### IMSA

Gianmaria Bruni and Harry Tincknell will drive for the Proton Porsche LMDh squad in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in North America alongside their campaign with the German team in the World Endurance Championship's Hypercar class.

Former WEC GTE Pro sparring partners Bruni (left) and Tincknell will

give Proton Competition's US-based Porsche 963 its debut in the GTP division at Road America on 6 August, just four weeks after they race the sister car for the first time in the WEC round at Monza at the beginning of July. They will drive as a duo at Road America and Indianapolis in September before being joined by an as-yet-unnamed third driver for the Petit Le Mans 10-hour enduro at Road Atlanta

in mid-October.

"This is a learning season with us with the LMDh, so it will be good to have the same drivers racing our cars in both series," explained team boss Christian Ried.

Ried revealed that he could fill the third berth for the WEC programme as early as this week, although didn't rule out running just two drivers – Bruni and Tincknell.

**GARY WATKINS**



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



## BTCC in Sunday Church service

### BTCC

The Thruxton circuit was effectively widened at the ultra-fast Church Corner last weekend in the latest track-limits saga to hit the British Touring Car Championship amid the new regulations introduced for 2023.

While last weekend was the first for mandatory use of Motorsport UK's stricter new rules, which came into effect on 1 June, BTCC organiser TOCA had implemented them from the start of their campaign in late April on the recommendation of the series' drivers, who did not want a change of regulations mid-season.

But drivers were worried in their briefing last Saturday morning when they were told that the green paint beyond the first narrow strip of red, white and blue on the exit of Church was now forbidden territory. The red, white and blue paint was only around a tyre width in depth. When repeated track-limits transgressions were reported during the first session of free practice, there was a five-minute red flag while clerk of the course Ian Watson reminded teams of their drivers' obligations.

"Heading into the weekend, I thought we'd probably see a new qualifying lap record, but with the changes in track limits and the way we drive the circuit I think it's going to be slower," said Josh Cook, the

all-time BTCC wins record holder at Thruxton, who topped free practice on Saturday. "The architecture of Church and the way it falls towards the exit kerb means that however fast you drive it, you still end up on that kerb. I nearly had a big moment there trying to avoid the kerb."

After FP1, a further meeting resulted in a concession. While the rest of Saturday's activity – including qualifying – would continue with the same ruling, Thruxton circuit staff would get their paint brushes out that evening and effectively double the width of the red, white and blue area in time for racing on Sunday.

BTCC boss Alan Gow explained: "We've got a good working relationship with our drivers. We sat down with them after FP1, but we'd already investigated the decision [to widen the red, white and blue area] before then. They're happy with that."

Cook was correct. His free practice best in his One Motorsport Honda turned out to be the quickest lap of the weekend, but was 0.210 seconds away from the qualifying record from 2020 set by Dan Cammish in the Civic now raced by Will Powell. But, after 33 lap times were deleted in qualifying for track limits, race day passed with barely a mention of the scourge.

MARCUS SIMMONS

➔ P38 BTCC THRUXTON

### IN THE HEADLINES

#### BRIDGESTONE BIDS FOR F1

The question of Formula 1 tyre supply was thrown open just as we went to press with suggestions that Bridgestone, which provided control rubber from 2007-10, is to take on the incumbent Pirelli in the tender process for 2025-27. The deadline for applicants closed on 15 May, and the FIA will declare the approved bidders on 16 June. Pirelli faced rivalry from Hankook in the last tender process.

#### LE MANS ENTRY CHANGES

Tower Motorsports boss John Farano has pulled out of the Le Mans 24 Hours due to back injuries he sustained at last month's Laguna Seca IMSA round. The Canadian has been replaced by Steven Thomas, who races in IMSA for the TDS Racing squad that is masterminding the Tower Le Mans entry. The other late addition to the field is Jonas Ried, 18, who will make his Le Mans debut with the family Proton squad in one of its Porsche 911 RSRs alongside Harry Tincknell and Don Yount.

#### FOSTER OUT OF LUCK

American-based Brit Louis Foster was out of luck in the Indy NXT races on the streets of Detroit last weekend after claiming pole position for both. In the first, he was rear-ended into the barriers at Turn 3 on the opening lap by Hunter McElrea, while in the second he finished third after running wide with Christian Rasmussen on lap one. Reece Gold won the opener from Jagger Jones after the driveshaft failed on Nolan Siegel's car within sight of the chequered flag. Siegel (below) bounced back to beat Rasmussen on Sunday.



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# How real is the Mercedes revival?

*Wary of false dawns, the team is determinedly realistic in its predictions after its best result of the season so far. But there is a case to be made for optimism*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

**T**his all feels familiar. Formula 1 heading home from the Spanish Grand Prix with Max Verstappen as the dominant race winner at the championship's laboratory track. And Mercedes hopeful it has made tangible progress in closing the performance gap to the front. "Probably the most interesting thing in Spain was that Mercedes turned a corner," claimed Autosport, four days on from Verstappen's triumph ahead of Sergio Perez and George Russell in the 2022 Barcelona contest. Fast-forward to the 2023 edition just gone and, while Mercedes' positive performance in Spain has set tongues wagging, arguably the most interesting thing about last weekend was how good the racing was. Behind Verstappen, that is...

Attention now turns to those races remaining and the key question of this season and the rest of the to-2026 ruleset: can Red Bull be caught? After all, when a rental car attendant tells Autosport upon the return of the machine that got us around Barcelona, Valles Oriental and Maresme last weekend that all the home fans had to cheer in the race was Fernando Alonso surviving Esteban Ocon's rather disgraceful defence, it demonstrates part of F1's problem.

It may be selling packed grandstands, but people aren't as engaged if one team dominates and there's little scrap for victory honours. Evidence of the domination was the margin of Verstappen's win: 24.1 seconds over Lewis Hamilton, with Russell brilliantly beating Perez's similar charge from a poor Q2 exit to seal third. Yet, this still

**"It may be selling packed grandstands, but people aren't as engaged if one team dominates"**

represents an important moment of F1 2023. It was arguably (we've got important caveats to cover further on) the smallest Red Bull winning gap of the year so far. And it was Mercedes that managed it.

Again, the post-Barcelona-2022 feeling rears. After that contest, Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said "we bet we can fight for a championship", having addressed the W13's porpoising problem with a major floor and front wing update. This time, the Black Arrows squad has a W14 that's much changed, finally, after the new sidepods and suspension arrived in Monaco and sent it down the Red Bull-style route of upper aerodynamic surfaces.

With its adapted machine, Mercedes secured in Spain its best result of the season so far. And Wolff claims that Hamilton's gap to Verstappen at the chequered flag was "was 15 in reality" as "Lewis at the end was cruising". Hamilton certainly backed off

to the flag, particularly in the final four tours. But the gap when both he and Verstappen had attempted their fastest laps of the race, with the Dutchman sealing it by 0.336s over Perez and 0.346s to Hamilton, was 18.7s.

The difference between this and Wolff's assertion is the rough difference between the "two/three tenths" he says Red Bull was quicker per lap over Barcelona's 66-lap distance, which works out as a 13.2s/19.8s winning margin. So, if we take the fastest lap gap as the cutoff between F1's two most recent world title-winning drivers, given it signalled the end of the chase at the start of the final stints, we arrive at this being the closest gap to a Red Bull victory so far this year (excluding the strange end to the Australian GP altogether). Alonso's 20.7s to Perez in Jeddah was boosted by a mid-race safety car, and Charles Leclerc was 24.4s behind Verstappen at the time of his Bahrain retirement and set to fall further back over the remaining 17 laps.

"For me, [that was] definitely the best the car's been the past year and a half," Hamilton said after the Barcelona race. But Mercedes is remaining rigidly realistic in its expectations with its upgraded car. Most presciently from Wolff is this: "We need to remain cool, because last year we've been looking pretty decent in Barcelona."

Indeed, having worked on its porpoising problem in Spain last year, Mercedes was shocked to discover the additional issue of its awful ride over the bumps in Monaco and Baku that followed. So, should the team be worried that it's set to face another false dawn as it prepares for the rest of 2023 and a desired 2024 title challenge?

Of course, it's right to be cautious because F1 squads are relentlessly pragmatic. A note of restraint should also be sounded regarding Barcelona being an outlier track. The teams and drivers just know it so well that things can go a little differently when they arrive elsewhere with less data to rely on. Plus, the cloud-cooled conditions did flatter Mercedes last Sunday compared to Aston Martin and Ferrari.

But the case for optimism at Mercedes centres on this: in 2023, F1 has already visited the Baku and Monaco tracks where it so suffered last year. Now, Mercedes heads to Canada, where Hamilton is always mighty, even with the recalcitrant W13 last year, and the smooth, fast track types at the Red Bull Ring, Silverstone and the Hungaroring. Spa, where Red Bull was so crushingly dominant last year, is a key pre-summer-break test of Mercedes' new ride, with Wolff saying that the W14 is now a "really more solid platform".

This is an era where the Red Bull RB18 and RB19 have excelled, and making progress here is a vital indicator on whether Mercedes, or anyone else given the leading cars all now look rather alike, can *finally* catch Red Bull. 🏁

 **P14 SPANISH GP REPORT**





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# YOUR SAY

*Indianapolis was like a top-grade action movie. It knocks F1 out the window and the F1 world could do with learning a little more about making a real dramatic show*

**GRAHAME BUTTERWORTH**

## Monaco versus Indianapolis

So the two great races in one day — and what a difference. Monaco may have had royalty but the race was boring and even when it rained the excitement was low and the race predictable.

Indianapolis on the other hand was like a top-grade action movie. It had it all with amazing onboard shots, action-packed pitstops, horrific but safe accidents and then that incredible last-lap charge. Oh and the winner jumping in with the fans.

It knocks F1 out the window and the whole F1 world could do with learning a little more about making a real dramatic show. No doubt in F1 the winner's joyous trip into the crowds would have given him a huge penalty!

New focus required.

**Grahame Butterworth**  
Epworth, North Lincs

## Oldest surviving GP driver

I refer to the obituary of Kenneth McAlpine on page 9 of Autosport dated 27 April. In the last paragraph it professes his status as the oldest surviving GP driver has now passed to 95-year-old Hans Herrmann. With respect, there are two former GP drivers older than Herrmann and who are still living. The older of the two is the Brazilian Hernando da Silva Ramos, who will be 98 in December, and British driver John Rhodes, who is six months senior to Herrmann.

However, if the net is cast a little wider to include drivers who did not participate in a GP but did so in a World Championship race, the American Paul Goldsmith is even older than the three previously mentioned. He started in three Indy 500s between 1958 and 1960 and was born two months before da Silva Ramos.

**Peter Marriott**  
Wellington, New Zealand

## Look to historics for Pau action

I share Stephen Chipping's sadness at the loss of the Pau street circuit as a major international venue (Your say, 1 June). However, the Classic GP still provides an opportunity to see some wonderful cars being driven on it each year. It must be said that the quality of the



entry varies from year to year but when it attracts top drivers in the historic scene such as Will Nuthall and Michael Lyons, as it did in 2022, it is a wonderful place to see real street racing. I recommend it.

**Chris Willows**  
By email

## F1 exhibition gets seal of approval

Recently I visited Madrid with a friend. During our time there we found out about the Formula 1 exhibition at IFEMA and went to see it, which was very enjoyable. I thought people should be made aware of it. I also wonder whether it will be touring other countries and may visit the UK in the future?

**Mark Gilbert**  
Portishead, North Somerset

*The exhibition's stay in Madrid has been extended until 16 July, but any plans for it to appear elsewhere are as yet unconfirmed — ed*


## Correction

The CEO and chairman of NASCAR is Jim France, who was quoted in our feature on NASCAR's Le Mans return (1 June).


## Have your say, get in touch


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# RACE CENTRE



Mercedes' upgrades propelled both of its drivers onto the podium



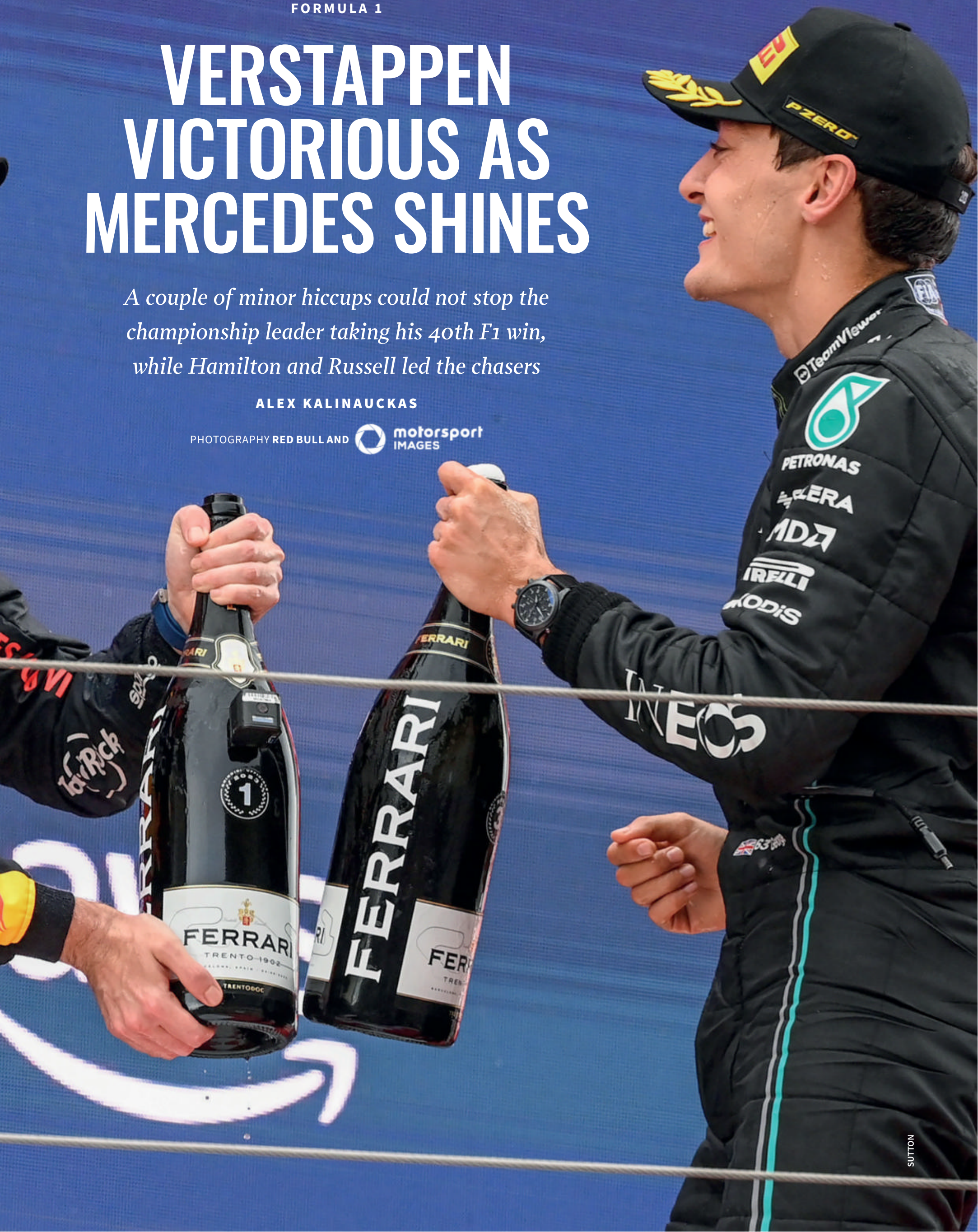
FORMULA 1

# VERSTAPPEN VICTORIOUS AS MERCEDES SHINES

*A couple of minor hiccups could not stop the championship leader taking his 40th F1 win, while Hamilton and Russell led the chasers*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY RED BULL AND  motorsport  
IMAGES





“

was just in a daze out there. I didn't even know it was the last lap at the end. That's how zoned in I was. I was ready to keep going." Those aren't the words of Max Verstappen after the 2023 Spanish Grand Prix, but of the driver behind him last Sunday after the finish at Barcelona three years ago. And whereas Lewis Hamilton was serene in that 2020 event, Verstappen had several visible and audible distractions from what on paper looked like an equally simple blast from pole to victory.

When the starting tyres were revealed, it was little surprise to see Sergio Perez, who was lining up 11th, starting on the mediums instead of the softs that most of the top 10 were on. They'd gone with the soft for optimum launch grip on the long, plunging run to Barcelona's first corners. But Verstappen, surprisingly, was also armed with a set of the yellow-walled rubber. "We were concerned that the soft tyre would degrade quite quickly and could put you on the cusp of a three-stop," Red Bull team boss Christian Horner explained. "So, we were a little bit more conservative."

The choice left Verstappen slightly more exposed than usual at the start, when the long first dash would offer a slipstreaming opportunity to Ferrari driver and home hero Carlos Sainz, starting second. The Spaniard had been left somewhat rueing that front-row slot, since it meant launching away from the grippy racing line and without a tow to immediately latch onto.

But Red Bull's tyre choice meant Sainz felt he actually had "a bit more grip", and then Verstappen also solved his tow conundrum. When the lights went out, the Dutchman launched well, but quickly moved right to cover off Sainz's soft-shod surge. That allowed the Ferrari to continue closing on the Red Bull, with Sainz gaining such momentum that he was able to send a lunge to Verstappen's outside. It was an ambitious move, and one that might have come off had Verstappen not sent his car shooting down the inside line and running his rival to the Turn 1 run-off. It was reminiscent of his actions against Hamilton in the 2021 event here.

Verstappen was demonstrating that his ultra-aggressive tendencies remain, even though Red Bull's straightline speed potency this year (Verstappen had been topped only by Nico Hulkenberg in the qualifying speed trap) meant he surely would have been quickly back past Sainz had he come out of Turn 1 behind.

After securing pole, Verstappen had insisted "I'll be fine" even if something went wrong early in the race, but his demeanour when discussing the subject of his defence was surprisingly spiky post-race. "Just imagine it the other way around – it would have been the same story," he stated. "I defend my position like they would have defended their position."

Sainz, in any case, had no problems with Verstappen's defence, saying: "He defended well, he ran me wide and did what he had to do." Although that hard, just-about-fair racing was to have big consequences for one driver in the pack behind, Verstappen now romped clear at the front.

By the end of the opening lap he was 1.1 seconds ahead and out of the Ferrari's DRS range threat. Then he eased away, pulling out



a comfortable 7.1s lead before Sainz stopped on lap 15.

By the time of his own stop, Verstappen was leading the sister Red Bull of the yet-to-pit Perez, who, like Verstappen, ran long as the soft starters inevitably came in first, and was now up to second. But those pitstops were not as early as Red Bull had expected while it was deciding to take the mediums for the first phase of the race. By the time he emerged on the hards for his second stint, Verstappen had no opposition.

The question became whether he would be able to one-stop, as had been theorised by paddock sources following Verstappen's crushing race simulation run, actually on the softs, in FP2. But the middle phase of the race was the hardest for the world champion – a relative term considering he extended his lead to 16.3s before the second round of stops. This was with a quarter-distance left to run, and he took on softs.

This was because Verstappen was rather unhappy with his car balance on the hard tyre compound, which left him sliding more than he had been expecting. As the race was a test of controlling thermal degradation, Verstappen was concerned that this would raise his temperatures too much, eat into his tyre life and risk knocking him towards the three-stopper Red Bull had wanted him to avoid. Again, it was a relative worry given the massive chasm to the chasers. "It was a worse medium, to be on the same kind of deg and it was just sliding a lot more," Verstappen said of his feeling on the hards. "Luckily we had another pitstop, but it was definitely not the most enjoyable stint I've ever done in my life."

Pirelli didn't "have any explanation", said its motorsport boss Mario Isola, regarding Verstappen's complaints since "the lap times were not clearly indicating that he had no grip". And indeed, Verstappen's laps went from the high 1m19s before his first stop to the low 1m19s and high 1m18s, as he further increased his lead – with the fuel burn-off factor included too. All Isola could theorise was that the track evolution may have contributed to Verstappen's relative struggles, that as ever-more rubber went down it was having an impact when he moved even slightly off line.

The bigger and higher-profile issue for Verstappen – and the second key reason why his Barcelona victory cannot be said to have been as straightforward as Hamilton's in 2020, given the obvious parallels between the two dominant drives – was his bizarre late struggle with track limits.

On the 39th tour, with his lead a commanding 15.6s, Verstappen had his lap time deleted for straying too far beyond the white line at Turn 5, despite being in full control. Nearly 10 minutes later, he lost



RAMOS/GETTY IMAGES/REDBULL CONTENT POOL





## “THE RELATIONSHIP THEY HAVE IS LIKE AN OLD MARRIED COUPLE, DEBATING WHICH TV CHANNEL TO WATCH”

his effort on the 45th lap for a similar thing. And for a third time he was warned for his conduct exiting the Turn 10 uphill hairpin on lap 56, which in this instance brought with the time deletion a black-and-white warning flag. To transgress again would earn a five-second addition – perilous if there’d been a late safety car.

Verstappen, who was the only driver other than Kevin Magnussen (with two times lost to track limits infractions) to earn multiple warnings, shrugged it off, blaming his handling on the hard tyres. This ignores the fact that his final track limits slip came when running the softs, onto which he’d moved on lap 52.

“It happens sometimes,” he said. “Some tracks it’s a bit easier to do and I was struggling a little bit with the harder tyres to keep it within the white lines. Once I had that last warning then I had to keep it within the white lines. But it’s not an issue really.”

Horner was more forthcoming, stating that Verstappen was “very surprised” to be told his lines were flirting with sanction because “at [Turn] 10, I think he didn’t realise there was a limit there”.

By this point, there was still something to settle – the fastest lap bonus point. Perez had moved into position to secure it with a DRS-assisted run very early in his final stint. But Verstappen, once informed of his team-mate’s pace, had enough of his own in hand to blow that away and set the fastest lap at 1m16.330s on the 61st tour. His engineer Gianpiero Lambiase then, somewhat sarcastically, asked if he wouldn’t mind driving to “bring it home within the white lines – thank you”. “Yeah, yeah,” came the no-nonsense cockpit reply.

“The relationship they have is one like an old married couple, almost debating about which channel of television they should be watching,” Horner said of this strange late episode, which echoed Verstappen ignoring Red Bull’s requests to drive to a set pace in Jeddah. But all was ultimately well.

“Max was totally in control,” Horner concluded. “And he was aware of the risk and was still able to do the fastest lap quite comfortably with the tyres that he had on the car.” Verstappen finished with a winning margin of 24.1s and reflected that he was “happy in the car”. >>

## QUALIFYING



Qualifying for the Spanish Grand Prix deviated from ‘normal’ in every way but the most important: Max Verstappen sealed pole for Red Bull. There was a twist even in that, though, given how Q3 played out for the world champion.

In Q1, the pack had largely been queueing at the end of the pitlane in anticipation of rain ruining the slick running fun, as it had in FP3. A few drops fell, but it wasn’t a deluge to be feared. Nevertheless, so many drivers went off on the still slippery surface – Fernando Alonso at the final corner, Alex Albon at Turn 5, Valtteri Bottas and Nyck de Vries at Turns 11/12 – that early red flags were required so marshals could sweep away the gravel. When Q1 resumed, Charles Leclerc was in trouble. His Ferrari had “something off in the left-hand corners” and he was shuffled down to 19th – a slide of 18 spots from 2022 pole.

Q2 was even more action-packed. First, George Russell was enduring a Leclerc-like run with “the car not feeling OK every single lap” and he was under pressure. Then at the end, the two Mercedes had a baffling coming-together running down the main straight ahead of their final fliers. Russell had moved right to slipstream past the slowing Carlos Sainz but, as he swung back left, Lewis Hamilton was there. The seven-time world champion had got such a brilliant slipstream from his unaware team-mate that he’d been barrelling alongside when Russell moved across and took the right side of Hamilton’s front wing off. That was easily fixed, but Russell’s last chance to make Q3 was blown. Elsewhere, Sergio Perez was dumped out in 11th, unable to improve after a slide into the Turn 5 gravel on his penultimate lap.

In the final segment, Verstappen headed straight out on new tyres while the rest – minus Hulkenberg and Alonso, who completed single

runs on their way to eighth and ninth respectively, the Haas carrying floor damage from its Q1 off – ran used rubber. The Dutchman flew to a 1m12.272s with the “main lap time gains initially [from Turns] 1, 2, 3, 4 and probably 6”. “It just all felt quite connected so once you have that feeling, you can really push all the entries and that gives you quite a bit of lap time around here,” he added.

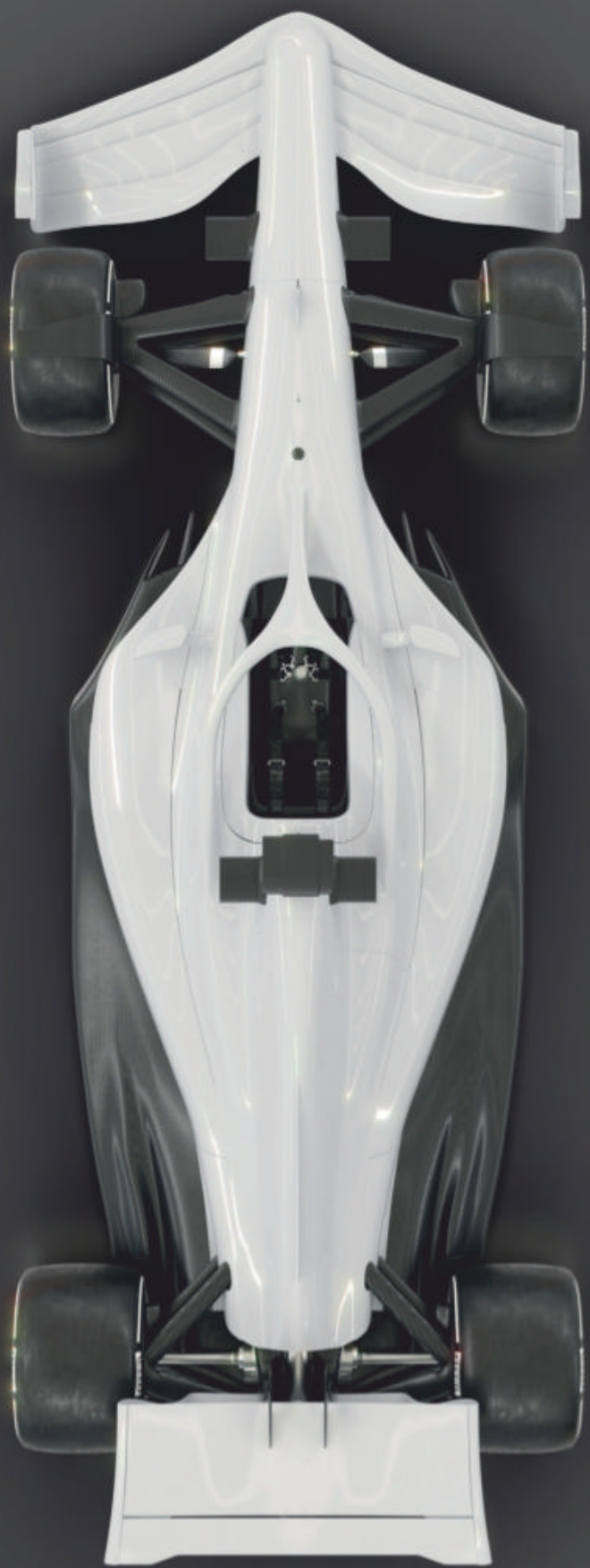
Red Bull initially wanted that to be Verstappen’s final run to save tyres for the race, but he insisted on trying again – on the condition that he’d stop if no one was threatening pole. Sainz’s run of personal best sectors took him to second, ahead of Lando Norris, who brilliantly took a high-downforce-generating McLaren to a shock third. And so, Verstappen abandoned his final flier, despite being confident that he was “going faster”.

**“NORRIS  
BRILLIANTLY TOOK A  
HIGH-DOWNFORCE-  
GENERATING  
McLAREN TO A  
SHOCK THIRD”**





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Updated W14 “felt great”,  
but challenging for lead  
never on cards for Hamilton

“WE WERE JUST TRYING TO MAKE IT  
TO TARGET LAPS OF THE STINTS AND  
FALLING SHORT IN A FEW OF THEM”

“The last few race weekends have definitely been a lot more positive for me,” he said, having been informed in the post-race press conference that his championship lead is now 53 points. “But this was one where I think it went really well.”

Verstappen’s gap at the flag was over Hamilton, who’d started the race fourth thanks to Pierre Gasly’s pair of qualifying impeding penalties. The story of how the Mercedes driver reached the finish was rather less straightforward and all the more exciting for it.

While Verstappen was towing Sainz down to the first corner, Hamilton was attacking compatriot Lando Norris. The McLaren driver had stunned the pack by qualifying third, but lost what should have been an optimum spot in Verstappen’s slipstream to the Red Bull jumping over to cover Sainz on the run to Turn 1. This meant that Hamilton, who had gained from running in Sainz’s tow when the lights went out, and forced Norris away from it when the McLaren moved right too in Verstappen’s wheeltracks, could surge alongside and then seal third at the apex of Turn 1. Then, when Verstappen and Sainz were moving back onto the racing line, having both gone partially off-track thanks to Verstappen’s trademark attacking defence, they were moving slower than the Britons approaching fast behind.

Hamilton “got in the wake” and so “had to be patient and then I got a hit from behind”. This was Norris, who was “too close to Lewis to be able to react and brake – just an unlucky moment”.

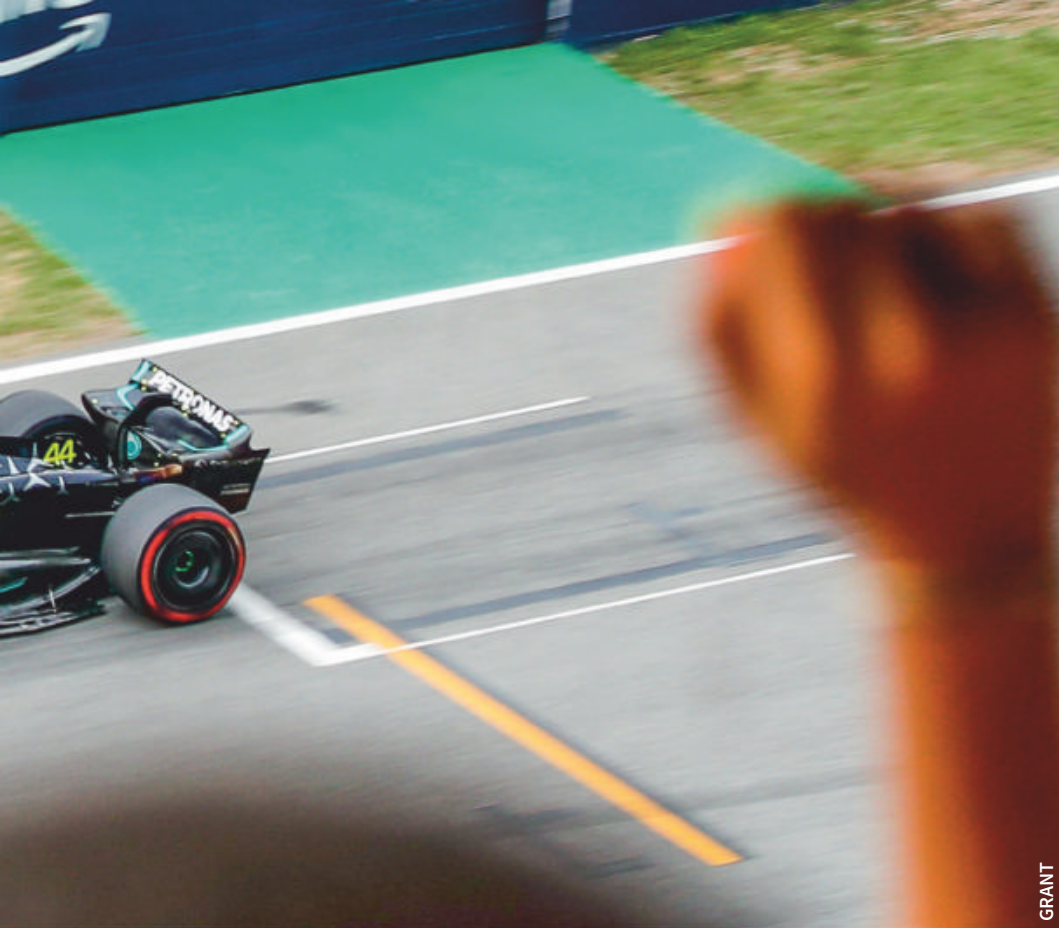
The damage was solely to Norris’s MCL60; the blow was to Hamilton’s left-rear and he somehow got away without a puncture. But Hamilton lost enough momentum that Lance Stroll was able to



“A weakness” of the  
Ferrari meant home hero  
Sainz “just couldn’t push”

MAUGER





GRANT



Perez's climb from 11th  
to fourth exceeded  
sim expectations

SUTTON

get a good run through the rest of the first sector and launch an opportunistic attack inside at Turn 5 that dropped Hamilton back to where he'd started. Only briefly, though. On lap eight, Hamilton repassed the Aston Martin with a forceful outside line move at Turn 1 – using DRS, he just about got ahead enough to swing around Stroll.

Hamilton was then soon surging after Sainz, who simply had no real response. "I just couldn't push," Sainz explained afterwards. "We know it's a weakness of our car. We were just managing the whole way trying to make it to target laps of the stints and still falling short in a few of them." Indeed, Sainz was surprised to be called in to switch from soft tyres to mediums on lap 15. But what was more interesting was how well the red-walled rubber was holding up on the Mercedes.

Hamilton was able to run nine laps deeper in the opening stint, while team-mate George Russell followed him in one tour later on lap 25. The Black Arrows duo were benefiting from the softs holding up better than many teams had expected based on the data gathered during FP2.

Temperature comparisons between the two sessions falling from 27C to 23C played a big part – the race took place under heavy cloud cover that teased rain, but never went beyond a few spots falling on the grid. Plus, the thermal deg affair meant the drivers could push on with the softs if required, so long as they didn't encounter one particular problem. "We had less graining than Friday," explained Isola. "That's probably due to track evolution. After the rain [in FP3] we had some support events and obviously Formula 2 and Formula 3 are using our tyres so it's the same philosophy of compounds. I believe the track was better plus the cooler temperature was helping. If you don't generate graining, it's helping for sure to manage the temperature of the soft compound. We saw that the level of degradation was lower than expected."

This all combined with significant strategic variation for the leading pack last Sunday. The Red Bulls and Sainz would get through all three compounds, albeit in a different order, while the Mercedes pair avoided the hards. They'd come into the race with just one new set each – some teams were boosted on this front by establishing that the prototype new C1 hard compound, on which they were allowed to test ahead of its Silverstone introduction, was so similar to the existing C1 that they could save a set of those for the race. This included Ferrari.

Russell was by now a major factor in the race, but he'd had two big >>

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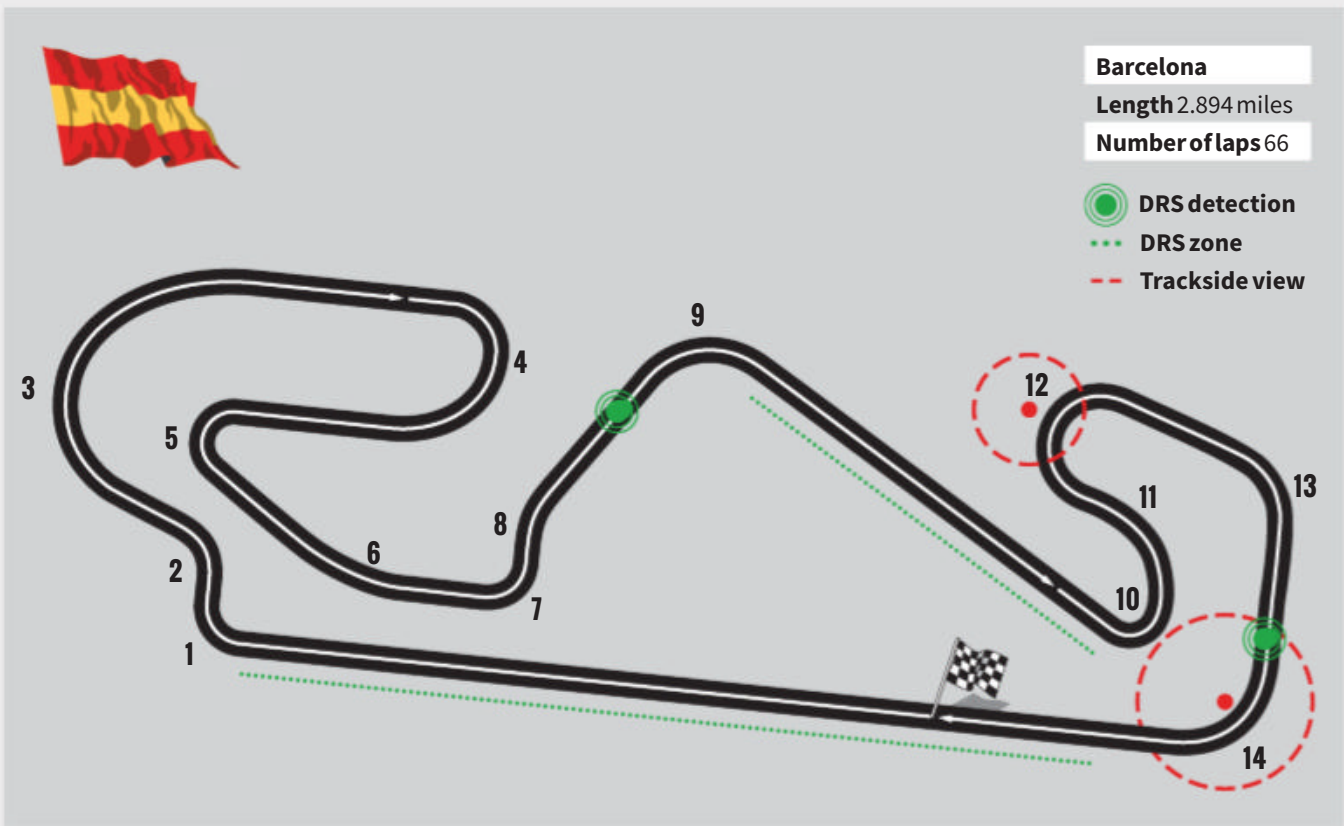


TRACKSIDE VIEW

The final two corners of the Circuit de Catalunya had dominated discussion in the build-up to last weekend’s event. The removal of what Lewis Hamilton called the “little Mickey Mouse”, technical low-speed chicane late in the final sector meant the pair of fast right-handers that had originally ended the lap were restored to their former glory.

The layout change therefore puts the final sector in Autosport’s mind across a pair of trackside wanderings on Friday and Saturday. In FP1, we venture to behind Turn 12 – underneath a dedicated ‘Carlos Sainz Grandstand’, where partisan fans cheer the Ferrari driver and compatriot Fernando Alonso each time they shoot by. The uphill long right is a tricky spot, requiring compliant car balance and delicate throttle application thanks to the off-camber exit. George Russell tests the limit here late on, running too wide after stamping early on the gas, and rattles his floor hard over the exit kerbs. Sergio Perez is generally taking a wider line, his Red Bull oddly lethargic and suggesting it’s fat with fuel. The teams are spending much of FP1 assessing new upgrades, so few cars are pushing flat-out.

But when taking that final



corner, several drivers encounter something surprising. *A la* February 2022, their machines are porpoising. This time, the final corner is the focus – a bump on the approach heading downhill from Turn 13 is unsettling even the Red Bulls.

For FP3, Autosport is parked inside the last corner – the pitlane entrance almost underneath our feet. The pack heads out en masse to make the most of

what will be limited dry running, thunder rumbling in the distance. As they flash through, only the Ferraris are porpoising as the corner goes on. The rest, however, are also sparking dramatically as they glance off the bump.

The rain doesn’t stop the fun, though. Williams driver Logan Sargeant clips the inside kerb at Turn 14, producing an audible thud just as the first heavy spots of rain splat down. He shoots off into the gravel next to the track’s main grandstand. The session is red-flagged and, as the rain now properly comes down, the track is empty for the next 15 minutes.

In that time, we walk back to the inside of Turn 12, with Lando Norris rewarding everyone’s patience by

**“THEIR MACHINES ARE PORPOISING. A BUMP IS UNSETTLING EVEN THE RED BULLS”**

heading back out on intermediates with 28 minutes left. In the final 10 minutes, he also leads the switch back to slicks. The Turn 12 exit is much more treacherous in the wet, with the AlphaTauri pair regularly having to get off the gas as their AT04s snap left towards the wetter kerbs. The exit of the Turn 10 hairpin behind us has the drivers risking their rears spinning as the natural line takes them over the painted lines on the exit. It’s not flat-out, but it’s compelling.

**ALEX KALINAUCKAS**





scares — including one with ‘rain’. The first came when he tried to go three-wide with Oscar Piastri and Hulkenberg at Turn 1, and instead chose to bail left and take the ‘escape’ lane around the bollards into Turn 3. The stewards investigated this as possibly gaining an advantage from leaving the track, but he’d actually emerged behind Hulkenberg, who’d pinched and slowed Piastri through Turns 1 and 2.

Russell’s five positions gained on lap one followed a Q2 exit stemming from his slightly shambolic clash with Hamilton in the middle part of qualifying. This included Norris exiting the scene to get a new nose, and Russell blasting past Perez off the line and powering straight ahead of Gasly too.

Perez had started 11th, one spot ahead of the Mercedes, thanks to his own Q2 misery, but his initial rise was less rapid than

## “IT WAS A VERY GOOD RECOVERY. THAT’LL GIVE HIM A LOT OF CONFIDENCE COMING OUT OF THIS”

Russell’s — the medium tyres inevitably took longer to fire up to optimum operating temperature.

While Hamilton was closing on Sainz, Russell passed Esteban Ocon with a bold, late Turn 1 swoop and had Stroll pit out of his way to reach a net fourth by the time of his stop. The first stint was ended for the leaders when Perez pitted on lap 27 — one after Verstappen — to take the hards.

In the second stint, Hamilton eroded a 2.3s gap to Sainz within three laps and seized second with a DRS blast inside at Turn 1. From there, Hamilton said the updated Mercedes W14 “felt great” as he ran adrift of Verstappen to the finish. But he “just couldn’t match the times that Max was doing” up ahead.

Russell had shown slightly quicker pace than Hamilton early in their second stint on the medium tyres, but this fell away slightly as the laps wore on. During this phase, Russell feared it was raining as spots appeared on his visor under the dark clouds. This had a rather complex explanation. “I had my hair dangling down — I think I didn’t quite get it in my balaclava and that was annoying me because it was in my peripheral vision,” Russell stated. “And then as I was sweating because it wasn’t in my balaclava, it was dripping down onto my face. Then when I was braking, it was coming onto my visor. So with the grey clouds, and then the spots of water on the visor I thought it was rain. Bit of an embarrassing one...”

Through working all this out, Russell caught and passed Sainz at Turn 1 too — his move on lap 35 rather harder to pull off than Hamilton’s since he came from much further back. But he did it with aplomb and earned, deliberately muted, praise from engineer Marcus Dudley.

Ferrari then pitted Sainz for hard tyres on lap 41, and four laps later



Mercedes moved to cover this with a stop for Russell to retake the softs. This raised the prospect of Perez being left out on a one-stopper, at which Russell promptly tore chunks from his 13.4s advantage.

Perez had also pulled off a series of passes on a day when the Circuit de Catalunya’s restored final sector layout aided overtaking — the front-left tyres were wearing “a bit more” this year thanks to the punishing high speeds in the re-glorified right-hander, according to Isola. This combined nicely with DRS to produce a surprisingly action-packed race behind Verstappen.

Red Bull in fact called Perez in for soft rubber on lap 50, just as Hamilton had done likewise. Now the Mexican had an 11.3s gap to close to reach Russell’s podium berth, which would also mean passing Sainz. Perez achieved that with an easy run to the inside of Turn 1 on lap 53, but he fell 3.4s short of catching Russell.

“The sim said on a clean race [he would reach] P5,” Horner said of Perez’s pre-race expectations on climbing from 11th. “He did one better than that in P4. We felt maybe the Ferrari would have better race pace than it had. It was a very good recovery, particularly the second half of the race. That’ll give him a lot of confidence coming out of this.”

Mercedes had managed to beat one quicker Red Bull, but team boss Toto Wolff concluded that his squad must remain “realistic” and the relative factor here is Verstappen’s utter dominance up front. But for Mercedes, “the [race] temperatures really suited us — it was nice and fresh”, said Wolff. “Not too cold. Not too hot. The car was in the absolute mega window.”

### NEXT F1 REPORT

CANADIAN GRAND PRIX  
22 JUNE ISSUE





## ASTON MARTIN CAN'T FIND RAPIDE STREAK

Aston Martin left the Spanish Grand Prix with “disappointment” over its sixth and seventh-place finishes, and struggled for pace throughout the 66-lap race.

The team attempted two soft-tyre stints with both cars in a bid to work its way up the order and, although they helped Lance Stroll’s excellent early launch that got him ahead of Lewis Hamilton on the first lap, the decision didn’t pay off. The cars only really came alive on their hard-tyre stints at the end but, by then, the AMR23s were some way off making any further dent on the points.

“There is a small disappointment about our pace, especially in the first stint on the soft tyres,” team principal Mike Krack reckoned. “Compared to some of our direct competitors, we didn’t have the pace, honestly. And we need to really understand why, because the gap was quite substantial at the beginning. Some cars were just driving through us more or less.”

Fernando Alonso, after being outqualified by Stroll following a mistake at Turn 10 on his Q3 lap, managed to mount a recovery to seventh on the hard tyre. Calling the shots on the radio, the veteran Spaniard elected not to challenge Stroll for sixth to opt for a “zero-risk” approach and therefore lock in the available points.



GRANT

## Norris and McLaren struggle despite qualifying highlight

Lando Norris’s bid to add to McLaren’s points tally at Barcelona was eradicated in the opening two corners after the Briton made contact with Lewis Hamilton at Turn 2, causing a front-wing breakage.

McLaren had starred in qualifying and Norris had been able to coax his MCL60 into third, but had been doubtful of his chances of achieving anything more than a finish in the lower reaches of the points.

Norris chose not to defend the inside line from Hamilton at the start, allowing the Mercedes to slip down the inside at Turn 1. But with Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz bunched up through Turn 2, forcing Hamilton to react, Norris was simply caught in a position where he clipped the W14’s left-rear wheel. The McLaren’s endplate was broken, lodged in Norris’s front suspension, and this prompted a retreat to the pits for a

new one to put him some way down on the rest of the field.

“The pace was as expected today, which was bad,” Norris rued. “I don’t think we expected anything else really. Our aim was to maybe finish in the points, but we weren’t expecting anything like yesterday.”

“I did see in Turn 1 that Max went off the track, went a bit wide, so then he had to bounce over the kerb in Turn 2 and then everyone just checked up. I was too close to Lewis to be able to react and brake and whatever. So just an unlucky moment.”

The cooler conditions on Saturday had played into the McLaren’s hands, creating a climate in which the car thrived, but this narrow window was largely wiped out when it came to Sunday. Oscar Piastri’s fortunes exemplified this, falling out of the top 10 to cross the line 13th and struggling with performance all day.



SBLOXHAM

BIG NUMBER

# 401 vs 16

The number of laps Red Bull has led in 2023 versus the combined total of the rest of the field.



HONE





## TSUNODA PENALISED AFTER ZHOU BATTLE

Alfa Romeo driver Zhou Guanyu reckoned that the Spanish Grand Prix was perhaps his best F1 race to date, after his swashbuckling endeavours yielded ninth place.

The Chinese was battling with Yuki Tsunoda's AlphaTauri for the position when their skirmish boiled over on lap 56 at Turn 1. Zhou took evasive action at the run-off as Tsunoda warded off a pass around the outside, but the Japanese was adjudged to have forced him off the road, taking a five-second penalty. This promoted Zhou from 10th, bringing Alfa Romeo level with Haas in the constructors' standings on eight points.

Tsunoda disagreed with the penalty decision, labelling it "ridiculous", and felt that Zhou "pretended" to be pushed onto the run-off. "Obviously I gave him pressure but there's still space, so I don't understand why it was a penalty," Tsunoda protested.

### Q&A

#### CHARLES LECLERC FERRARI DRIVER

##### What happened with the tyres?

We expected the hard to be a good tyre, but for some reason it was so bad – no grip at all, especially from the front. The limitations were completely different to qualifying, so today we were expecting more than this. Then for some reason on the second hard, I just did exactly the same and it feels really good, so for some reason we seemed to never really get in the right window of the tyre. When we do, it's a bit of a surprise to us. There is a lot of work we need to do.

##### Is it hard to judge the impact of upgrades?

No, our second and last stint was more where it should be at least, so there it felt a little bit better but



still lacking performance, especially in the race.

##### Is the car on the edge of peakiness?

Yes, in some ways. But I think where we really need to put all our focus is to try and be more often at the peak of our tyres and know how to manage them better. Two or three degrees makes a huge difference on balance and this weekend we've been struggling – getting completely outside the window, or in the

window and being happy with the car.

##### What are your expectations for Canada?

We just have to focus on ourselves and try to understand what's going on with those tyres and put them in the right window more often, try to understand this upgrade and maximise it in the best possible way in the next few races.

##### What can you do as a driver when managing tyre temperatures?

The thing is that today we really did exactly the same on both tyre sets, and so I will check with the team what we are doing on those two sets that is different and try and understand, but it's very difficult. As soon as the wind changed slightly we've got a car that still changes quite a lot.

## Third double points finish in a row for Alpine

Alpine collected its third double points finish in a row after Pierre Gasly was promoted to 10th following Yuki Tsunoda's penalty.

Gasly's march to fourth in qualifying was impressive, although penalties for impeding over the course of the Saturday session rather took the shine off and bumped him down to 10th. A poor start forced him into having to recover the damage, ultimately fending off Charles Leclerc for the last point.

Monaco podium finisher Esteban Ocon had a great race once again, battled hard for the best-of-the-rest honours and collected a hard-earned eighth-place finish. After spending much of the race in the top seven, Ocon was subject to a risky pass from ex-team-mate Fernando Alonso, and undercut during the second round of pitstops by Tsunoda when the Japanese's aggressive out-lap paid off. This forced Ocon into pushing to reclaim eighth, which he

duly made work. While Tsunoda attempted to mount a retaliation, Zhou Guanyu's emergence in the frame took the pressure off Ocon, who was able to break clear.

"It's not disappointing, but there's a little bit of a mixed feeling about this race," Ocon reflected. "The pace was a lot better [in qualifying] than it was today. That's definitely going to be a focus point for the future, to find that race pace. But in general, it's been a great two weeks!"





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 Close Brothers  
Asset Management

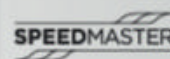
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SPANISH GP **TECH**

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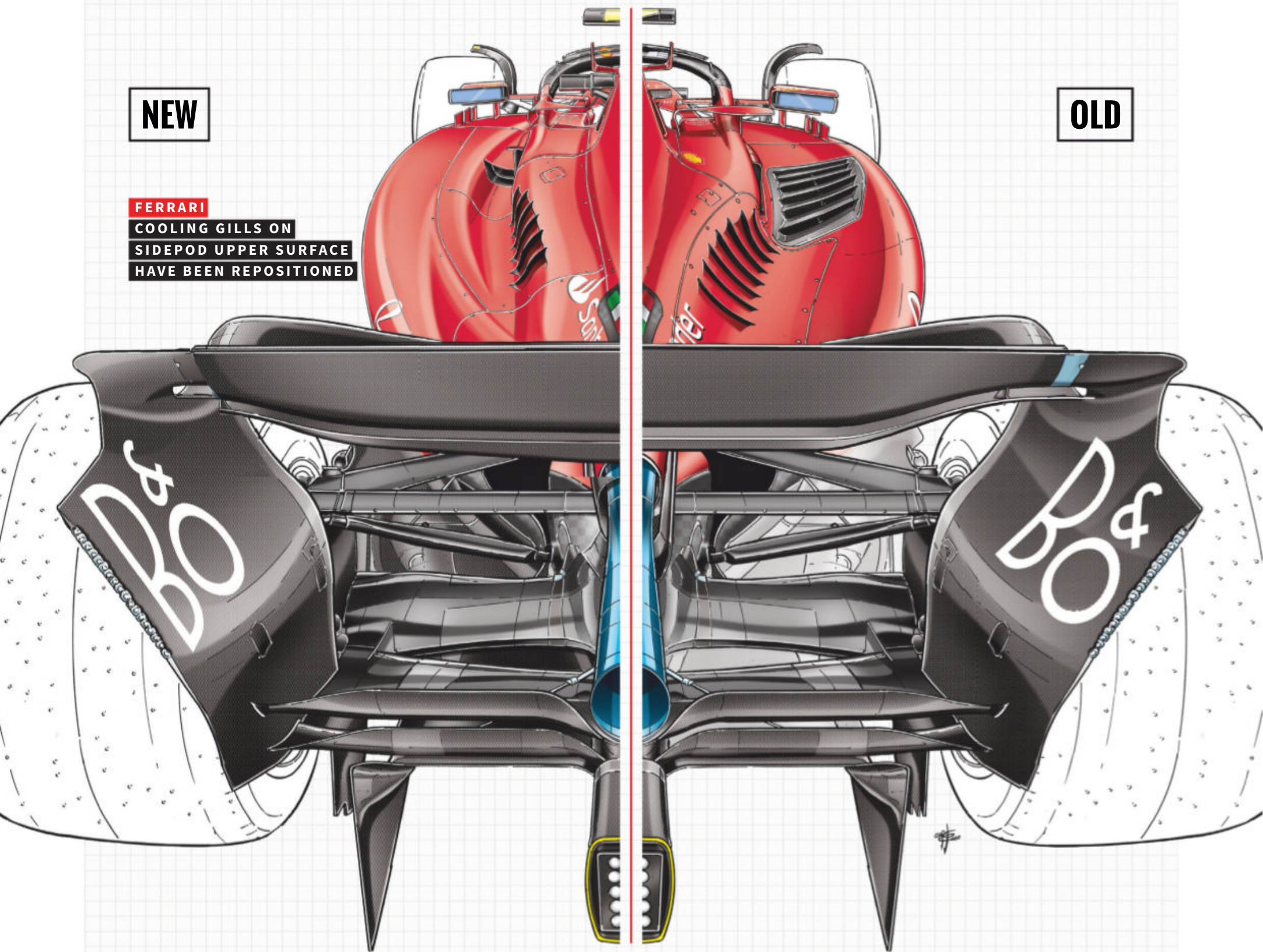
GIORGIO PIOLA

**NEW**

**OLD**

**FERRARI**

**COOLING GILLS ON  
SIDEPOD UPPER SURFACE  
HAVE BEEN REPOSITIONED**



## FERRARI THE LATEST TO FOLLOW RED BULL'S LEAD

At the Monaco Grand Prix, Mercedes brought a new set of sidepods to the party; at Barcelona, it was Ferrari's turn to reshape its bodywork.

Having stuck with the sidepod concept it used to great effect last year, which featured a bathtub-like crevice on the top in pursuit of an inwash-style flow pattern at the rear of the car, the team switched to a Red Bull-influenced concept for the Spanish GP. It features a notable downwashing element, where the bodywork forms a ramp at the rear to send airflow to the top of the diffuser. The new design also includes a blister at the front, just at the bottom of the Shell logo, to help direct and partition the airflow passing around the face of the sidepods.

The sidepods themselves are not a key performance differentiator, but it's their influence on the floor that can bestow a

more noticeable effect on the aerodynamics. When developing a floor, the aerodynamicists are looking to create the biggest pressure differentials in certain areas to build downforce, and a different sidepod shape can accommodate this depending on the team's ideal pressure map.

Elsewhere, the cooling gills placed within the old design's top surface have been moved slightly further up, although an outlet remains in the smaller crevice on the new design. These changes to the upper surface affect the flow to the rear wing, which was replaced with a circuit-specific design for the Barcelona weekend. Ferrari stated in its pre-event notes that: "This development [to the sidepod's top surface] focuses on flow conditioning towards the rear wing assembly and rear

corner, combined with a different cooling flow management, for overall car efficiency improvements."

Ferrari ran the sidepods back to back with the old design in FP1; Carlos Sainz was entrusted with the new bodywork, while Charles Leclerc ran against him with the old specification. Both drivers were then kitted out with the new sidepods for the rest of the weekend. "We made a step forward in terms of potential," reckoned team principal Fred Vasseur. "In quali pace at least we were able to put Carlos on the first row, a step forward probably. On the race you could consider that we made a step forward compared to Aston, but it's far from enough. We still have a huge delta in terms of performance with Mercedes, quali to race."

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**



20 Leclerc #16  
1m14.079s

18 Albon #23  
1m14.063s

16 Bottas #77  
1m13.977s

14 de Vries #21  
1m14.083s

12 Russell #63  
1m13.447s

19 Sargeant #2  
1m14.699s

17 Magnussen #20  
1m14.042s

15 Tsunoda #22  
1m14.477s

13 Zhou #24  
1m13.521s

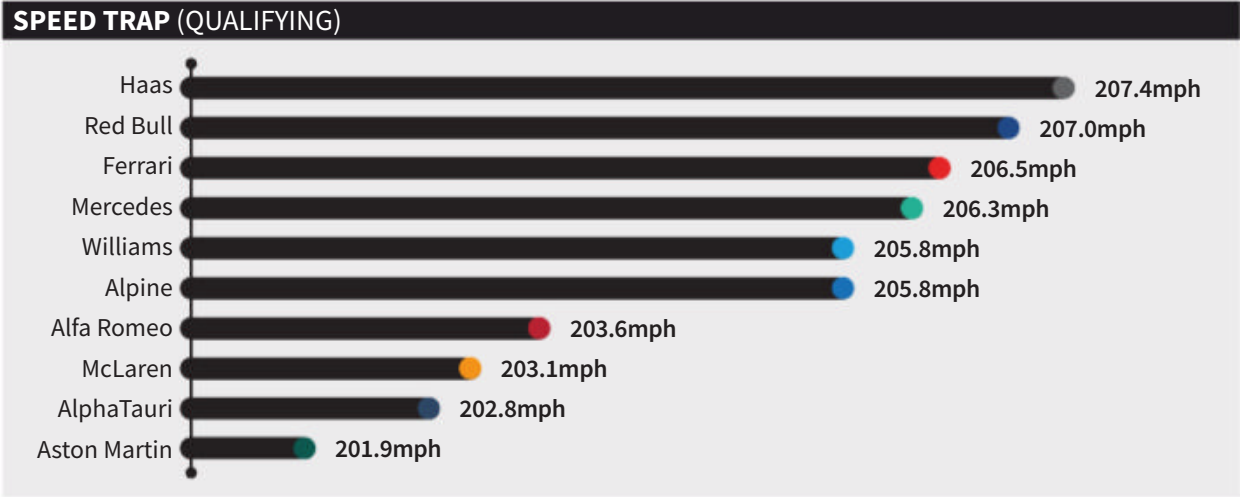
11 Perez #11  
1m13.334s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m14.606s	1	Verstappen	1m13.907s	1	Verstappen	1m13.664s
2	Perez	1m15.374s	2	Alonso	1m14.077s	2	Perez	1m13.914s
3	Ocon	1m15.418s	3	Hulkenberg	1m14.177s	3	Hamilton	1m14.072s
4	de Vries	1m15.504s	4	Perez	1m14.219s	4	Sainz	1m14.240s
5	Gasly	1m15.545s	5	Ocon	1m14.242s	5	Alonso	1m14.264s
6	Alonso	1m15.547s	6	Leclerc	1m14.246s	6	Russell	1m14.278s
7	Magnussen	1m15.689s	7	Sainz	1m14.274s	7	Leclerc	1m14.353s
8	Leclerc	1m15.694s	8	Russell	1m14.392s	8	Bottas	1m14.360s
9	Sainz	1m15.726s	9	Bottas	1m14.448s	9	Tsunoda	1m14.659s
10	Russell	1m15.753s	10	Gasly	1m14.457s	10	Norris	1m14.681s
11	Norris	1m15.783s	11	Hamilton	1m14.549s	11	Zhou	1m14.681s
12	Hamilton	1m15.845s	12	Piastri	1m14.583s	12	de Vries	1m14.693s
13	Zhou	1m15.906s	13	Zhou	1m14.585s	13	Stroll	1m14.756s
14	Tsunoda	1m15.915s	14	Norris	1m14.694s	14	Hulkenberg	1m14.988s
15	Stroll	1m15.939s	15	Magnussen	1m14.713s	15	Piastri	1m15.105s
16	Bottas	1m15.978s	16	de Vries	1m14.785s	16	Ocon	1m15.266s
17	Piastri	1m16.353s	17	Tsunoda	1m14.840s	17	Magnussen	1m15.534s
18	Hulkenberg	1m16.461s	18	Stroll	1m15.010s	18	Gasly	1m15.841s
19	Sargeant	1m16.506s	19	Albon	1m15.056s	19	Albon	1m15.851s
20	Albon	1m16.630s	20	Sargeant	1m15.415s	20	Sargeant	1m16.529s

WEATHER Sunny, air 25-27C track 27-45C

WEATHER Sunny, air 23-27C track 30-28C

WEATHER Wet, air 20-21C track 22-25C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m12.937s	1	Verstappen	1m12.760s	1	Verstappen	1m12.272s
2	Norris	1m13.295s	2	Norris	1m12.776s	2	Sainz	1m12.734s
3	Russell	1m13.326s	3	Sainz	1m12.790s	3	Norris	1m12.792s
4	Sainz	1m13.411s	4	Hamilton	1m12.999s	4	Gasly	1m12.816s
5	Hulkenberg	1m13.420s	5	Ocon	1m13.001s	5	Hamilton	1m12.818s
6	Ocon	1m13.433s	6	Piastri	1m13.059s	6	Stroll	1m12.994s
7	Gasly	1m13.471s	7	Stroll	1m13.082s	7	Ocon	1m13.083s
8	de Vries	1m13.581s	8	Alonso	1m13.098s	8	Hulkenberg	1m13.229s
9	Verstappen	1m13.615s	9	Gasly	1m13.186s	9	Alonso	1m13.507s
10	Zhou	1m13.677s	10	Hulkenberg	1m13.283s	10	Piastri	1m13.682s
11	Piastri	1m13.691s	11	Perez	1m13.334s			
12	Alonso	1m13.747s	12	Russell	1m13.447s			
13	Stroll	1m13.766s	13	Zhou	1m13.521s			
14	Tsunoda	1m13.862s	14	de Vries	1m14.083s			
15	Perez	1m13.874s	15	Tsunoda	1m14.477s			
16	Bottas	1m13.977s						
17	Magnussen	1m14.042s						
18	Albon	1m14.063s						
19	Leclerc	1m14.079s						
20	Sargeant	1m14.699s						

WEATHER Overcast, air 21-22C track 23-25C

NEXT RACE

18 JUNE

CANADIAN GP

Montreal

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	170	1	1
2 Perez	117	1	1
3 Alonso	99	2	2
4 Hamilton	87	2	3
5 Russell	65	3	2
6 Sainz	58	4	2
7 Leclerc	42	3	1
8 Stroll	35	4	6
9 Ocon	25	3	4
10 Gasly	15	7	4
11 Norris	12	6	3
12 Hulkenberg	6	7	8
13 Piastri	5	8	9
14 Bottas	4	8	10
15 Zhou	4	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		287
2 Mercedes		152
3 Aston Martin		134
4 Ferrari		100
5 Alpine		40
6 McLaren		17
7 Haas		8
8 Alfa Romeo		8
9 AlphaTauri		2
10 Williams		1

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	5	1	Perez
Leclerc	4	2	Sainz
Hamilton	3	4	Russell
Gasly	3	4	Ocon
Norris	6	1	Piastri
Zhou	3	4	Bottas
Alonso	6	1	Stroll
Magnussen	2	5	Hulkenberg
de Vries	2	5	Tsunoda
Sargeant	0	7	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

Verstappen 5

Perez 2

POLE POSITIONS

Verstappen 4

Perez 2

Leclerc 1

FASTEST LAPS

Verstappen 3

Hamilton 1

Perez 1

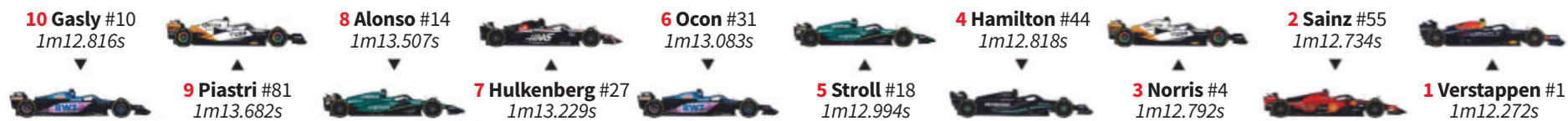
Russell 1

Zhou 1

Pole scores taken based on qualifying results, not the result of any sprint races or qualifying



STARTING GRID



RESULTS ROUND 7/22 (66 LAPS – 190.91 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	1h27m57.940s	66	Mn, Hn, Su
2	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+24.090s		Su, Mn, Su
3	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+32.389s		Sn, Mn, Su
4	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+35.812s		Mn, Hn, Sn
5	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+45.698s		Su, Mn, Hn
6	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m03.320s		Su, Su, Hu
7	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m04.127s		Su, Su, Hu
8	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m09.242s		Su, Mn, Hn
9	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m11.878s		Sn, Hn, Hn
10	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m13.530s		Su, Mn, Hn
11	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+1m14.419s		Hn, Sn, Hn
12	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	+1m15.416s		Sn, Hn, Mn
13	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+4.275s		Su, Hn, Mn
14	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+5.327s		Sn, Hn, Mn
15	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+17.297s		Su, Mn, Hn, Mn
16	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+27.708s		Sn, Hn, Mn
17	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+30.390s		Su, Hn, Mn, Su
18	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+38.080s		Sn, Mn, Hn, Mn
19	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+49.943s		Sn, Hn, Hn
20	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+51.677s		Mn, Hn, Hn

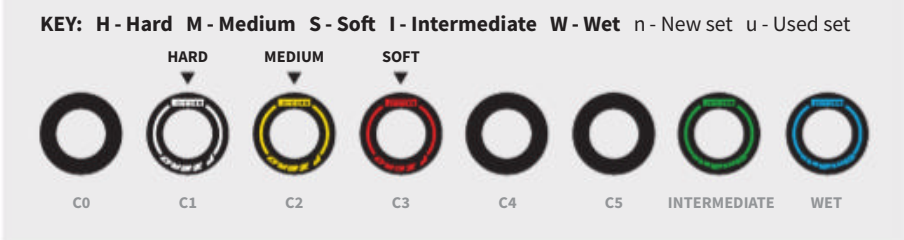
FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Verstappen	1m16.330s	-	61
2	Perez	1m16.666s	+0.336s	52
3	Hamilton	1m16.676s	+0.346s	62
4	Norris	1m17.182s	+0.852s	55
5	Russell	1m17.875s	+1.545s	48
6	Magnussen	1m18.069s	+1.739s	44
7	Alonso	1m18.083s	+1.753s	49
8	Bottas	1m18.242s	+1.912s	50
9	Leclerc	1m18.357s	+2.027s	52
10	Gasly	1m18.375s	+2.045s	41
11	Sainz	1m18.403s	+2.073s	60
12	de Vries	1m18.594s	+2.264s	41
13	Piastri	1m18.679s	+2.349s	41
14	Stroll	1m18.722s	+2.392s	56
15	Zhou	1m18.753s	+2.423s	38
16	Hulkenberg	1m18.776s	+2.446s	53
17	Tsunoda	1m18.904s	+2.574s	59
18	Ocon	1m18.946s	+2.616s	54
19	Albon	1m19.133s	+2.803s	59
20	Sargeant	1m19.247s	+2.917s	41

WEATHER Overcast, air 22-23C track 26-31C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 130.215mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 136.479mph

TYRES



RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

**GASLY** Two three-place penalties for impeding Sainz and Verstappen

**LECLERC** 15-place penalty for additional power unit elements used, then required to start from pitlane because car modified while under parc ferme conditions

**SARGEANT** required to start from pitlane because car modified while under parc ferme conditions

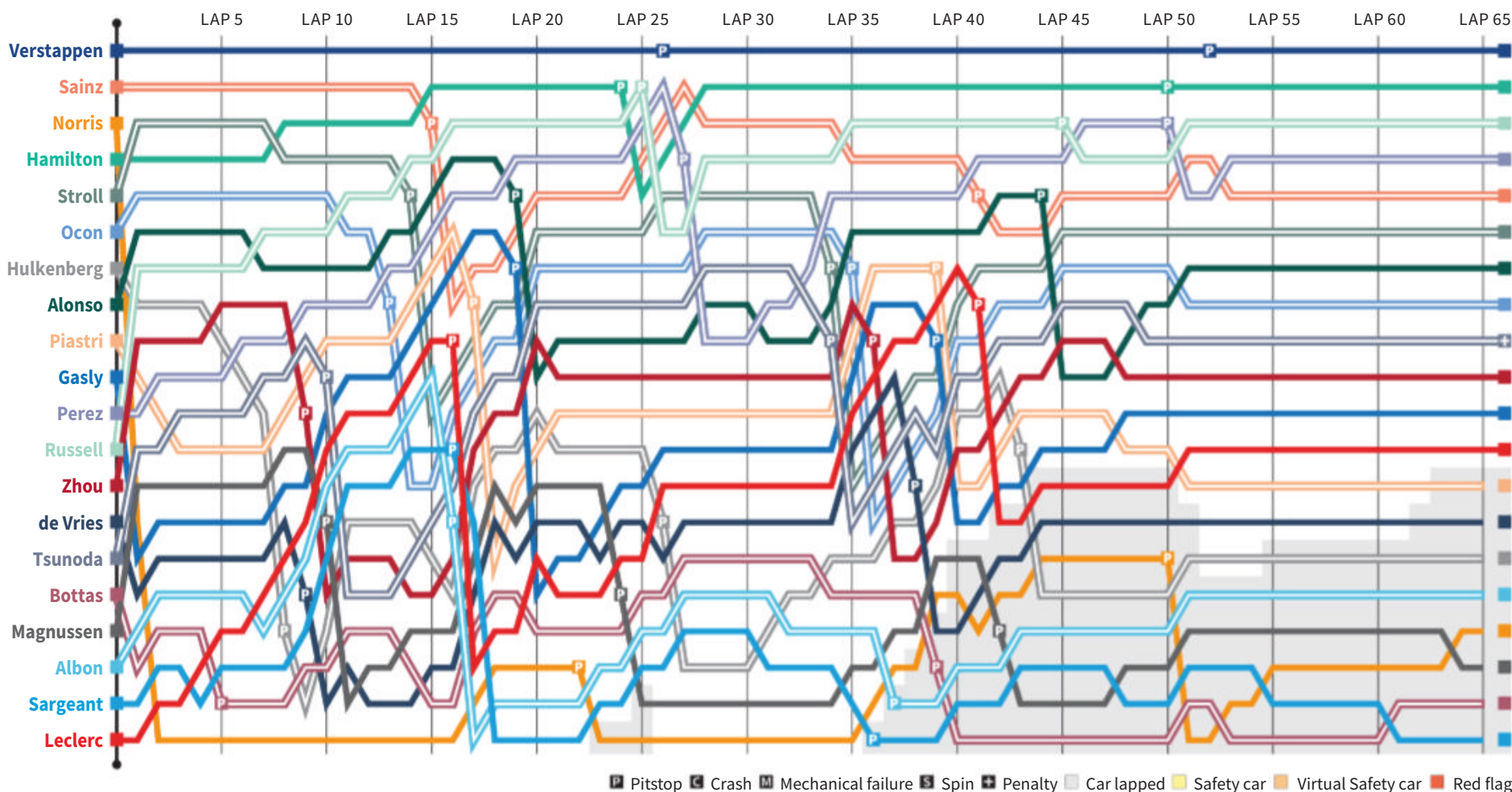
RACE PENALTIES

**TSUNODA** Five-second penalty and one licence point for forcing Zhou off the track

STAT  
**24**

Verstappen now has as many fastest laps in F1 as three-time champion Niki Lauda

LAP CHART What happened, when



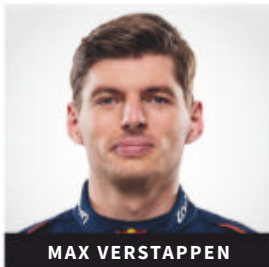


# SPANISH GP DRIVER RATINGS

*Nobody was perfect – but the top three all came close. Look out too for a high score from a driver who put in a true Alfa-grade performance*

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

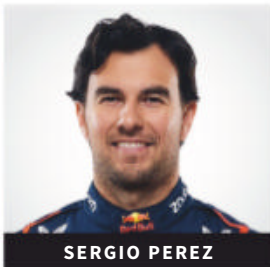
## RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

**9** Crushing in his domination, but 10s are for flawless drives. This wasn't so, and he picked up multiple track limits warnings. Red Bull advantage was colossal, so simply did what came naturally and disappeared off into the distance, collecting the fastest lap point towards the end.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **11th** — Result **4th**

**6** A solid recovery, and Red Bull's projections of a top-five finish were achieved – so gets an extra point for going one further. But with his car advantage, it felt like face-saving; with a Russell-like start, second would have been on the cards. Title credentials are eroding like a handprint on a beach.

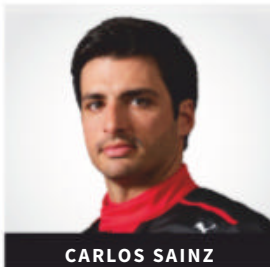
## FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **20th** — Result **11th**

**4** Bore the brunt of Ferrari's tyre management problems after dismal qualifying. Early progress through the field stalled prior to pitstop phase, and undercuts from cars around him forced him to make up ground again. Turning the Ferrari upside down overnight did little to fix his issues.



CARLOS SAINZ

Started **2nd** — Result **5th**

**7** Great hustle on Verstappen at the start, but ambition outweighed reality. Settled in behind, but tyre management issues were exposed and he was powerless to resist the slide behind the Mercedes duo. Ferrari's strategic attempts to beat Perez came to naught, owing to tyre offset.

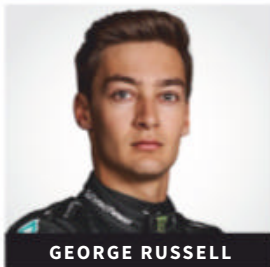
## MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **4th** — Result **2nd**

**9** Much happier with the car now upgrades have been dialled in. Touch with Norris at the start hardly his fault, but did lose a position to Stroll on lap one. Recovered from a dicey first lap and tore past Sainz after their opening pitstops to claim second place, then cemented that result.

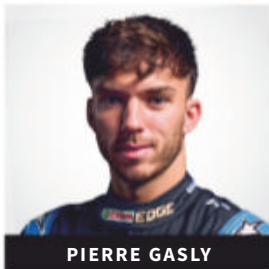


GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **12th** — Result **3rd**

**9** Did what Perez should have been doing to recover from an out-of-position grid spot. Lightning start netted seventh by the end of the first lap, then patiently made his way past the cars ahead either side of first pitstops. Pace at the end was enough to ward off Perez on fresher soft tyres.

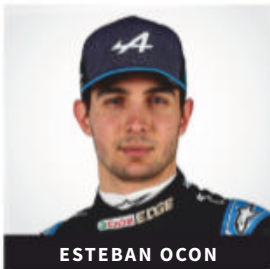
## ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **10th** — Result **10th**

**5** Lucky to scrape into the points after Tsunoda's penalty. Copped his own after strong qualifying, dropped back even further from starting position of 10th off the line. Never a match for Ocon over the race after getting mired in the midfield, although did well to keep Leclerc at bay at the end.

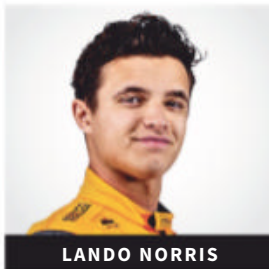


ESTEBAN OCON

Started **6th** — Result **8th**

**7** Couldn't repeat Monaco heroics, but still another strong race result that confirms Alpine is on the right track. Undercut by Tsunoda in second stops, but repaid the favour a few laps later to reclaim a top-eight finish. Defence against Alonso was borderline, but the Spaniard wasn't worried by it.

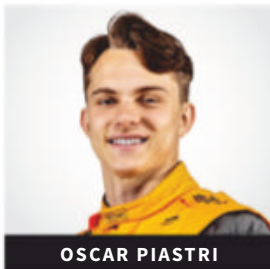
## McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **3rd** — Result **17th**

**4** Too defeatist at the start and let Hamilton go through unchecked. Was in the wrong place at the wrong time in Turn 2, which caused front-wing clip against the Mercedes that ruined his race. Spent the early stages after repairs running at a deficit that he could never truly claw back.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **9th** — Result **13th**

**5** McLaren was a bit of a qualifying one-hit wonder, but race pace was still disappointing for the team. The Aussie didn't really have anything to challenge the cars ahead, so ended up as a bit of a sitting duck. Expected to drop out of the points, and therefore earns a par mark on balance.

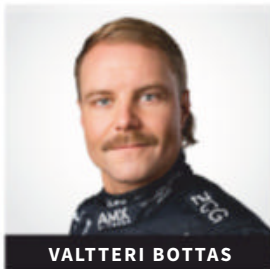
## ALFA ROMEO



ZHOU GUANYU

Started **13th** — Result **9th**

**8** Thoroughly outclassed Bottas over the weekend, and reaped the rewards. Fired up to ninth at the start, kept Perez at bay, then passed Hulkenberg. Skirmish with Tsunoda added life into the race, but wide moment at Turn 1 cost momentum. One of his best races in F1 so far.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **16th** — Result **19th**

**4** Felt something was "not right", later posting on Instagram that he had significant floor damage. Reckoned it cost him about a second a lap relative to Zhou, and early pit call didn't help. But we are not in the business of giving out sympathy points. Spent much of the day being used as a meat shield for Zhou.





ASTON MARTIN



Started **8th** — Result **7th**

**5** Spent 80% of the race languishing in the bottom reaches of the points as he struggled to make inroads on the soft tyre. Switch to hards breathed life into his day. Quickfire moves on Zhou, Tsunoda and Ocon made a disappointing day into one where the minimum expected result was achieved.



Started **5th** — Result **6th**

**7** Doesn't get enough credit for his race starts, and the jolt into third was a prime example. Didn't have the legs over the Mercedes duo on a day when Aston Martin struggled more, particularly with tyre degradation, and then kept sixth over Alonso in the dying stages of the race.

HAAS



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

**4** Almost a copy-paste of Hulkenberg's race, but without the moments that gave the German's performance more sheen. Moments of good pace, but three-stopper and heavy degradation were stifling. Hoping for tyre life answers in time for Canada, lest a repeat happen again.



Started **7th** — Result **15th**

**5** Early efforts were strong and had lodged himself within the top 10 early on, but it slowly derailed from there as Haas's tyre degradation was heavier than others. This locked him into a three-stop, knocking him outside of the points. Initial pace on new tyres was good, but then fell away.

ALPHATAURI



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

**4** Couldn't exploit the car like Tsunoda, who jumped him at the start. Thrust into lock-step with the other midfielders, despite undercut attempt, and paid the price in the opening two thirds. Pace on medium tyre in final stint was strong, but ran out of time to pass Piastri.



Started **15th**-Result **12th**

**6** Made the most of solid strategy and racecraft to battle his way into the points-paying positions. Felt the penalty that cost him ninth was "harsh" and "unfair" after the Zhou battle boiled over at Turn 1. Nonetheless, showed greater confidence in his car after braking issues were cleaned up.

WILLIAMS



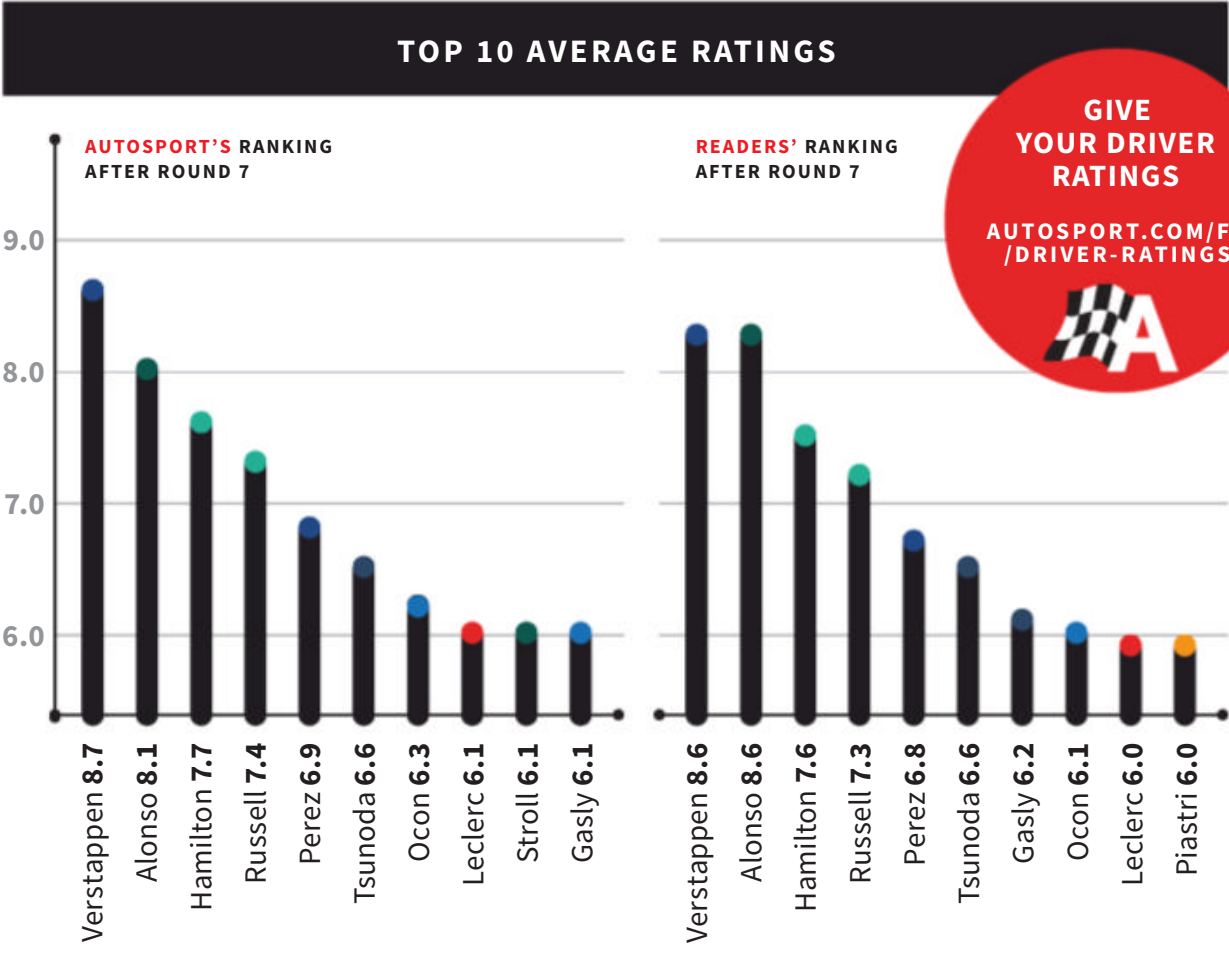
Started **19th** Result **20th**

**3** Pitlane start didn't come at too high a price, but final stint pace was inconsistent and sometimes two to three seconds down on Albon's. Reckoned his opening two stints were stronger, so difference between his first set of hards and the second is even more baffling. All told, an anonymous day.



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

**5** Circuit exposed car's weakness with regards to downforce and overall performance. Albon felt 16th was the maximum possible amid a dry race. Final result flattered by Norris and Magnussen three-stop races, along with Bottas's strife, although medium-tyre pace was solid in that last stint.





WRC  
**50**  
YEARS





# Neuville back in the game after gruelling contest

*Heavy rain made the island rally on Sardinia a different proposition, one more in keeping with the next WRC round, as Hyundai scored a much-needed 1-2*

TOM HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN

**R**ally Italy Sardinia is renowned as a brutal event at the best of times. And last weekend unseasonable rain created a European homage to the Safari Rally to once again outline why World Rally Championship drivers are among the elite in global motorsport. Surviving the gruelling 19 gravel stages was an achievement in itself. The task was made even more challenging by organisers, who increased the event's difficulty by adding a brand-new test in addition to extending the famous Monte Lerno stage to a whopping 31 miles, to celebrate the event's 20th anniversary.

It was perhaps fitting that the 20th edition since Subaru's Petter Solberg won the inaugural event in 2004 was arguably the most challenging and drama-filled gravel grand prix ever witnessed on the usually sun-drenched Italian island.

Whoever came through this onslaught intact rightfully deserved the plaudits, and on this occasion it was Thierry Neuville who won a rally for the ages to score his and Hyundai's first win of the season to boost his title hopes. The Belgian also upheld Hyundai's honour of being Sardinia masters, with the marque chalking up its sixth win from the past eight visits.

Neuville and Martijn Wydaeghe were one of just five Rally1 crews to complete the 200 competitive miles, which emphasised that Rally Sardinia was far from a simple one. Fears over the impending brutality of the event were made clear after the recce was interrupted by rain, with M-Sport's Pierre-Louis Loubet tweeting that a boat would have been more appropiate than a car.

Four-time Sardinia winner Sebastien Ogier said: "I thought Safari Rally Kenya was in three weeks' time, but we are having a taste of it already. Some sections are very rough, harder than a lot of sections we go through in Kenya."

The weather held off for Thursday night's superspecial as fans flocked to Olbia city centre to witness Hyundai's Esapekka Lappi win the opening stage. It was here that the Finn showed the first glimpse of what was one of the best drives of his career. Lappi's preparation for the rally had unearthed an experimental suspension set-up that he said was "risky but worth a try".

He wasn't the only driver hoping to benefit from suspension tweaks — M-Sport's Ott Tanak, who was Lappi's nearest rival on Thursday despite suffering a puncture, revealed that he was running a "much needed" upgrade in that department of his Ford Puma. "It is a bit early to say if we are completely there, but we have definitely improved," said the 2019 world champion.

Friday was earmarked to be the toughest, with two passes through the extremely rough Tantariles and the infamous almost 31 miles of Monte Lerno endurance. As the crews returned to service on Friday morning there were several battle scars and stories to tell. The headline, however, was Ogier, who was leading for Toyota on his return to the championship after sitting out Portugal.

The Frenchman won two of the three stages to open up a 16.3-second lead over Lappi, who was clearly benefiting from his set-up gamble, while Loubet impressed to sit third. The key to Ogier's lead was a stunning run through Monte Lerno, in which he proved 12.7s faster than anyone else.

But it was this marathon stage that generated three wild moments. The first of these afflicted reigning world champion Kalle Rovanpera, who already faced the challenge of opening the roads that were damp at this point. Flying round a blind corner, the Finn encountered a small herd of cows and required cat-like reflexes to take evasive action. In the process his GR Yaris clipped one of the grazing mobile chicanes. "It did some damage to the front and we



Cautious Lappi backed off, but this was still one of his best WRC drives

**"I thought Safari Rally Kenya was in three weeks' time, but we are having a taste of it already"**

went off into a ditch to avoid the other cows — we were a bit lucky," said Rovanpera, who ended the morning 49.5s adrift in eighth.

He fared better than Hyundai's Dani Sordo, who ran wide near the end of the stage and, in the process of trying to return to the road, slid down a steep embankment and slowly rolled his i20 end over end. With the help of spectators, he made it to service but lost three minutes. "It was not a big crash, there was just a big hole and we didn't expect it," said Sordo, who helped his mechanics repair the damage. "We just hit the ground really strong with the front of the car and then we rolled. It looks much more serious than it was."

Toyota's Takamoto Katsuta misjudged his braking and went straight on, resulting in his Yaris pitching over a boulder, before >>





Tanak's "tow truck"  
Puma was among the  
water splash victims

becoming wedged between two large rocks. Amazingly he was able to reverse out, losing only 30s. "I thought it was game over when I saw where I was heading, but I must say that the team have made a very strong bumper and that is why we are here," said Katsuta.

The rain arrived for the afternoon, providing teams a headache over tyre strategy, with only 12 softs – the best tyre for the conditions – provided for the event. It was Hyundai that made the right call on tyres and set-up direction as Lappi slashed Ogier's lead in half after the first afternoon stage. He continued to eat into Ogier's advantage over the next two stages to snatch a 0.1s lead over a disappointed Frenchman, who rued a wrong strategy call.

"I don't know where I pulled that time on the first short stage, it wasn't like crazy driving," said Lappi, who had a left-rear puncture in the day's final stage. "It was just clean all of the time. To be that much faster than Seb, I have to say the damper is really working."

Neuville was watching this scrap unfold in third, 18.6s adrift, while Rovaniemi relished the slippery conditions to climb to fourth, ahead of Toyota team-mates Katsuta and Elfyn Evans, who wasn't a fan of the many mud baths and bumps. "It's a bit crazy now, you need a four-wheel-drive pickup in there I think – it's like Dakar," said Evans, who had a front-right puncture on Friday's final stage.

It had proved a difficult Friday for M-Sport as Loubet's strong start quickly turned into a nightmare. A gear selection issue prevented him from starting stage five, which was red-flagged for a crash involving WRC2 driver Gus Greensmith, before broken steering put him out of the event completely.

Tanak reached service more than a minute adrift in seventh, having struggled with his Puma. The Estonian said it was like driving a "tow truck" in the morning, before a water pump issue developed in the afternoon. "We are happy to be here," said Tanak. "We lost the water pump quite early in the beginning and we were cooking at the end. In some bumps it came back, but then we had no water pressure and no power in the engine."



Ogier was left  
exhausted by his wet  
and muddy adventures



Neuville and Lappi  
scored an emotional 1-2  
for their Hyundai team

Tanak's hopes of a significant points haul ultimately ended thanks to a water splash that claimed several victims across Saturday. The day had begun in dry conditions, although the rain had made the water splashes much deeper and, while traversing one in stage nine, his Puma stalled with the finish line in sight. Engaging EV mode allowed him to crawl to the finish, losing 44.2s, but a complete electrical shutdown caused by the water ended his day prematurely. "We didn't have any water over the bonnet and we didn't put the splitter in the water so everything was perfect," said Tanak. "It seems like some other way we got the water in and did some damage. I'm not sure if it is unlucky but it wasn't needed."

Katsuta had attacked a water splash too quickly on stage eight,

## "I have responsibility behind the wheel. But there are limitations because the car is not a boat"

which damaged the front of his GR Yaris. The Japanese was able to repair the radiator but a loss of power ended his day. "There has been so much rain making it deeper and it is very hard for the cars," he explained. "At the same time I have responsibility behind the wheel. But there are limitations because the car is not a boat."

The Toyota seemed particularly susceptible to the water splashes, and Evans also lost power running through another crossing on stage 10, which necessitated a roadside repair to the radiator and cooling package. "I knew it was there and I was expecting to go through it really slowly but it didn't go as planned," he rued.

At the front, Ogier and Lappi were locked in an intense battle. The Toyota briefly claimed the lead before Lappi fought back. Then a combination of a slow puncture and a struggle for grip slowed the Hyundai's progress. This prompted an eighth lead change that put Ogier in command by 18.2s, with Neuville a further 6.5s back.

But there was another twist in the tale triggered by water splashes and the return of heavy rain. Seemingly in control of the rally, Ogier was caught out by the same water splash that claimed Katsuta's Toyota. The Frenchman claimed he "took it [the water splash] easy but still the engine died". As a result the lead battle began to swing back in Lappi's favour. He won stage 12 to close to 10.5s away. This gap decreased to 4.3s, with Neuville only 7.4s adrift after Ogier's wounded GR Yaris bogged down in the same water splash that ended Tanak's charge on the next test.

The situation soon turned terminal for Ogier. After working on the roadside to repair his car, a slow puncture alarm went off as he approached stage 14. A frantic wheel change was required with only a minute to spare before check-in, and somehow he and co-driver Vincent Landais achieved it in 58s. But it was all for nothing. While



changing the wheel, Ogier's boot had become muddy and his foot slipped off the brake pedal less than a mile into the stage. Unable to recover the car, he veered off the road and into retirement.

"There was a lot of mud on my foot and it was a stupid mistake because when I hit the brake for this corner my foot slipped off the pedal so I didn't brake," said Ogier. "It got stuck somehow between the clutch pedal and the brake. We moved it and braked again but I locked the wheel and we stopped one metre too late into the ditch, and we couldn't reverse any more.

"I was exhausted and was nearly passing out afterwards as I didn't have anything to drink because I used all my water for my car. There was no reward for our effort, but that's the way it is."

Upon hearing the news from his team before he started the stage, Lappi backed off to ensure he navigated through the tricky conditions. Neuville, however, was ahead on the road and unaware as to what had unfolded behind, and decided to push. The result was the rally lead as he leapfrogged ahead of Lappi by 23.8s, a gap that ballooned to 36.4s at the end of the day.

"I am relieved to be at the finish," said Neuville, who had won five of the day's eight stages. "It was a tough day out there but the feeling was getting better and better with the car."

"Let's say the last two and a half stages have been the toughest I have seen for a while," added Lappi. "We kept the pressure on Seb and in the end he made a mistake. Now it's looking good for the team."

With Hyundai and Neuville both yet to win this year, the Walloon completed Sunday's final four stages to wrap up a 33.0s win over a frustrated Lappi to head an emotional 1-2 for the South Korean marque.

"Obviously it was a challenging weekend," said Neuville after his 18th WRC victory. "We came here with the belief that we could fight for victory. Yesterday we found ourselves in the lead and we had to manage it until the end. It's the first victory for the team this year, it's a 1-2, and the first time for our team principal Cyril Abiteboul as well. But Craig [Breen] is in our memories as well – we wanted the win in Croatia but we got it now."

Ogier's retirement handed Rovannerpa an unlikely third, 1m55.3s adrift as he cleverly wrestled 20 points to extend his championship lead to 25 after claiming the final Power Stage held in desperately wet conditions.

Evans finished fourth, while an exhaust issue robbed Sordo of fifth, which went to surprise WRC2 winner Andreas Mikkelsen after long-time class leader Adrien Fourmaux crashed out on the final stage.

Neuville's Sardinia's splash-and-grab has brought him back into the championship fight, but the wily Rovannerpa is still the driver they are all chasing. 🏆

## RESULTS ROUND 6/13, RALLY SARDINIA, 1-4 JUNE

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	<b>Thierry Neuville</b> (BEL) <b>Martijn Wydaeghe</b> (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	3h40m01.4s
2	<b>Esapekka Lappi</b> (FIN) <b>Janne Ferm</b> (FIN)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+33.0s
3	<b>Kalle Rovannerpa</b> (FIN) <b>Jonne Halttunen</b> (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1m55.3s
4	<b>Elfyn Evans</b> (GBR) <b>Scott Martin</b> (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+5m20.5s
5	<b>Andreas Mikkelsen</b> (NOR) <b>Torstein Eriksen</b> (NOR)	Toksport WRT 3 / Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+9m33.3s
6	<b>Teemu Suninen</b> (FIN) <b>Mikko Markkula</b> (FIN)	Hyundai Motorsport N / Hyundai i20 N Rally2	+11m49.0s
7	<b>Kajetan Kajetanowicz</b> (POL) <b>Maciek Szczepaniak</b> (POL)	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+12m46.1s
8	<b>Yohan Rossel</b> (FRA) <b>Arnaud Dunand</b> (FRA)	PH Sport / Citroen C3 Rally2	+12m53.6s
9	<b>Mikolaj Marczyk</b> (POL) <b>Szymon Gospodarczyk</b> (POL)	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+15m33.8s
10	<b>Erik Cais</b> (CZE) <b>Petr Tesinsky</b> (CZE)	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+16m49.5s

### OTHERS

14	<b>Sebastien Ogier</b> (FRA) <b>Vincent Landais</b> (FRA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+19m50.5s
35	<b>Ott Tanak</b> (EST) <b>Martin Jarveoja</b> (EST)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+1h00m59.5s
40	<b>Takamoto Katsuta</b> (JPN) <b>Aaron Johnston</b> (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1h10m11.1s
R	<b>Dani Sordo</b> (ESP) <b>Candido Carrera</b> (ESP)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	SS17-exhaust
R	<b>Pierre-Louis Loubet</b> (FRA) <b>Nicolas Gilsoul</b> (BEL)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	SS7-accident/broken steering

## STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Olbia-Cabu Abbas (2.01 miles)	Lappi 2m24.9s	<b>Lappi</b>	Tanak +0.2s
SS2 Tantariles 20RIS 1 (6.62 miles)	Ogier 7m19.2s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +0.4s
SS3 Terranova 1 (5.23 miles)	Katsuta 5m31.6s	<b>Lappi</b>	Ogier +0.4s
SS4 Monte Lerno 1 (31.02 miles)	Ogier 31m33.9s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +16.3s
SS5 Tantariles 20RIS 2 (6.62 miles)	Lappi 7m08.9s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +8.7s
SS6 Terranova 2 (5.23 miles)	Neuville 5m29.1s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +6.7s
SS7 Monte Lerno 2 (31.02 miles)	Rovannerpa 31m55.4s	<b>Lappi</b>	Ogier +0.1s
SS8 Coiluna-Loelle 1 (10.15 miles)	Neuville 10m01.6s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +1.7s
SS9 Su Filigosu 1 (12.11 miles)	Neuville 12m45.0s	<b>Lappi</b>	Ogier +0.3s
SS10 Erula-Tula 1 (13.83 miles)	Ogier 18m45.7s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +12.7s
SS11 Tempio Pausania 1 (6.27 miles)	Neuville 6m53.2s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +18.2s
SS12 Coiluna-Loelle 2 (10.15 miles)	Lappi 9m52.3s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +10.5s
SS13 Su Filigosu 2 (12.11 miles)	Neuville 12m53.8s	<b>Ogier</b>	Lappi +4.3s
SS14 Erula-Tula 2 (13.83 miles)	Sordo 19m31.6s	<b>Neuville</b>	Lappi +23.8s
SS15 Tempio Pausania 2 (6.27 miles)	Neuville 7m23.1s	<b>Neuville</b>	Lappi +36.4s
SS16 Arzachena-Branatogghiu 1 (9.48 miles)	Tanak 8m37.7s	<b>Neuville</b>	Lappi +41.4s
SS17 Sardegna 1 (4.84 miles)	Tanak 5m37.1s	<b>Neuville</b>	Lappi +43.0s
SS18 Arzachena-Branatogghiu 2 (9.48 miles)	Katsuta 8m31.7s	<b>Neuville</b>	Lappi +42.5s
SS19 Sardegna 2 (Wolf Power Stage) (4.84 miles)	Rovannerpa 5m55.0s	<b>Neuville</b>	Lappi +33.0s



### DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

**1 Rovannerpa 118; 2 Neuville 93; 3 Tanak 85; 4 Evans 83; 5 Ogier 70; 6 Lappi 67; 7 Sordo 36; 8 Katsuta 23; 9 Craig Breen 19; 10 Gus Greensmith 16.**

### MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

**1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 235; 2 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 212; 3 M-Sport Ford WRT 148.**

## NEXT REPORT

**SAFARI RALLY KENYA**  
**29 JUNE ISSUE**



# Wehrlein turns the tables to move back ahead

*The Porsche ace put his troubles behind him to rediscover his early-season form, as Maserati's Maximilian Guenther made a bit of history in Jakarta*

RACHIT THUKRAL

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport  
IMAGES

One look at the championship standings heading to Jakarta would have suggested that Pascal Wehrlein was very much in the hunt for the 2023 Formula E title. After all, he was the closest rival to Envision's Nick Cassidy and well clear of Jake Dennis in the similar Porsche-powered Andretti car. But the reality was that the German was losing his grip on the 2023 championship fight, with Porsche usurped by Jaguar as the benchmark powertrain during the crucial middle part of the season.

Wehrlein's pair of wins in Diriyah in January had started to seem like a distant memory and, with Jaguar-powered cars winning the last four races across Sao Paulo, Berlin and Monaco, the odds were stacked against the Porsche ace on FE's second visit to Indonesia.

But on a weekend where the need for energy-saving was minimised, and qualifying played a bigger role than it has done in the Gen3 era so far, Wehrlein reset the title fight with a fine victory and a sixth-place result across the two races. He laid the foundation for his first FE victory in more than four months by putting himself third on the grid for the opening race of the weekend, his best starting position since Monaco in April 2022.

As the 36-lap contest got under way, Wehrlein made an excellent start from the cleaner side of the grid, immediately dispatching Dennis for second before challenging polesitter Maximilian Guenther for the lead on the outside of Turn 1. Wehrlein smartly backed away from that move but kept the pressure up on the Maserati MSG driver, whose race pace had been a bit of a question mark despite topping all sessions up to that point of the weekend. As it turned out, Guenther didn't have the pace to stay at the front, and Wehrlein wasted little time in making a move, passing the Maserati into Turn 1 on the fourth lap of the race.

Wehrlein retained the lead through the attack mode cycle, with drivers getting eight minutes of additional power in Jakarta rather than the usual four, but in the second half of the race he started coming under serious pressure from Dennis, who had also passed Guenther. The crucial moment took place at the start of lap 24, with Dennis moving to the inside into Turn 1, the chief point of overtaking on the 1.5-mile circuit. But long before they had reached the braking point, Wehrlein jinked to the right to cover off the Andretti driver, forcing him to take evasive action. Dennis nearly lost a place to Guenther in the process but gathered himself to stay within striking distance of Wehrlein.

Over the remaining third of the race, Wehrlein had to try hard to stave off the Briton, with the two circulating within a second of each other. But Dennis was never really in a position to attempt another overtaking move, and Wehrlein crossed the finish line 0.477s clear to end a barren run of no podiums stretching back to



January. It was a crucial result for the 28-year-old, and one that could decide who lifts the crown come London at the end of July.

Second place and a sixth podium of the season was also crucial for Dennis's title hopes, but he was more frustrated with Wehrlein's defence, which he believed broke FE's rules of racing. "I don't know how he got away with that, to be honest, it's ridiculous," he said. "There's obviously a rule and every driver generally knows the rule. We can't protest them because they also have a Porsche powertrain."

Guenther wasn't able to contend with Wehrlein and Dennis in the closing laps, eventually finishing 1.4s behind the winner in third. While a podium was a great result in itself for Maserati, especially after its woeful start to the season, there was naturally some disappointment at the Monaco-based team given how rapid





Jake Dennis was unhappy with Pascal Wehrlein's defence in the opening race

## “We can’t protest against them because they also have a Porsche powertrain. A bit ridiculous”

Guenther had been over a single lap.

That disappointment would turn into joy on Sunday. Maserati was able to make some overnight changes to the car and aid Guenther in taking a historic first win for the marque in Formula E.

The first indication of Maserati's improved pace came in qualifying, already the team's strongest point in Jakarta, with Guenther setting a blistering time to take pole position by nearly 0.6 seconds. Come the race itself, Guenther found it relatively easy to stay in front of the competition in the opening stages compared to Saturday, but a huge problem arose when Dennis managed to leapfrog him by taking his attack mode a lap later. With overtaking opportunities still limited – a two-lap increase in race length was not enough to necessitate extreme energy saving – Guenther had to

tuck in behind the in-form Andretti driver in the battle for the lead.

But when the second round of attack mode activations began, Guenther beat Dennis at his own game, upping his pace significantly when Dennis was the first of the two to go through the loop at Turn 16. By arming his own attack mode a lap later, Guenther was able to rejoin the track just in front of his former BMW team-mate, putting himself back in the lead of the race.

For a while, Dennis managed to keep the pressure up, but the Bavarian was soon able to check out from the competition, eventually taking the chequered flag with a 2.8s buffer to become the first driver to win a race from pole position this season. It was also Guenther's first victory in FE since his 2020-21 campaign with BMW, as well as the first for a works Maserati in any world championship single-seater race since Juan Manuel Fangio's success at the 1957 German Grand Prix.

“I’m absolutely over the moon and so proud about this achievement,” said the 25-year-old, who spent a trying year at Nissan in 2022 after BMW's FE exit before joining Maserati for its series entry. “The season hasn’t been easy, especially the start of it and we really kept believing in us, working hard, working in a »



good direction and clearly the momentum of our season changed a few weekends ago. Berlin was great and we scored good points in the last few races and now the top two poles here, one win and another podium is huge. Just extremely happy.”

Dennis again missed out on a victory, but the result was his fourth consecutive podium, and seventh this season.

Third place went to Jaguar’s Mitch Evans, who bagged some solid points on what was otherwise the marque’s worst weekend of the season. Both the factory cars were mysteriously off the pace, particularly in the opening leg of the weekend, struggling both in qualifying and race trim. And as if that wasn’t concerning enough, Sam Bird had taken out team-mate Evans for a second time in 2023. Running ninth behind Evans with just three laps to go in race one, Bird misjudged his braking into Turn 1 and slammed into the back of the Kiwi, sending him into immediate retirement. Having already cost the team valuable points when he similarly took out Evans in Hyderabad, it was another disaster for Jaguar – and one that could have serious consequences to the title fight.

Jaguar put the incident behind it on Sunday and delivered some tangible improvements over one-lap pace, particularly for Evans, but he lacked the speed of the frontrunners in the race and was lucky to finish third as a train of cars followed him in the final laps.

The Envision team was also impacted by Jakarta being a bogey track for its powertrain supplier Jaguar, with Cassidy finishing seventh on Saturday after making little progress from 10th on the grid. An improvement in pace was visible on Sunday, but Cassidy felt he was simply out of place in the race, having missed out on the duels stage in qualifying. Some points were still up for grabs as he climbed from 10th to seventh by the halfway point of the race, but an ill-judged attempt at passing Wehrlein into Turn 16 damaged his front wing and left him at the very back of the pack.

Seven points was all Cassidy managed to score across the two races, which meant both Wehrlein and Dennis were able to leapfrog him in the drivers’ standings. Wehrlein now holds a narrow one-point lead over Dennis, with Cassidy six points adrift in third with five races still to go. Evans also remains in the battle for the title, albeit 25 points behind new leader Wehrlein.

While much of the focus in Jakarta was on Jaguar and Porsche-powered cars, the DS Penske and Nissan teams also put in starring performances to bag a solid haul of points. Jean-Eric Vergne and



## “Running ninth, Bird misjudged his braking into Turn 1 and slammed into the back of Evans”

Stoffel Vandoorne finished fourth and fifth in the opening contest of the weekend, using the same powertrain as Maserati. Nissan effectively took over from DS Penske on Sunday, with Sacha Fenestraz and Norman Nato charging through the field to finish fourth and fifth respectively. It was easily the best points haul of the season for Nissan and also its first double top-10 finish of the year.

On a weekend when his team-mate Guenther starred, Edoardo Mortara had to settle for lowly sixth and eighth-place finishes. After facing Guenther in duels on both occasions, Mortara wasn’t able to qualify as high up as might have been possible had he been paired with a driver from another team, compromising his chances at a track where overtaking proved to be harder than usual. Missing Attack Mode made things even tougher in race two, for which he had qualified fourth, before a lock-up at Turn 1 due to braking issues cost him several positions in one go. ❄️





## IN THE HEADLINES

### BECKMANN MAKES FE DEBUT...

Ex-Formula 2 driver David Beckmann made his debut as a substitute for fellow German Andre Lotterer, who was unavailable due to his Le Mans commitments with Porsche. Beckmann found six tenths between the first and second qualifying sessions and could have also improved on his Saturday race result of 16th, but the Andretti driver was forced into retirement when Lucas di Grassi shoved him into the wall at Turn 16.

### ...AND SO DOES MERHI

Roberto Merhi also got to race in FE for the first time after replacing Oliver Rowland, who split with Mahindra coming into the weekend. But with limited preparations and a car that appeared the slowest in the field, a 17th place was all the Spaniard had to show for his efforts.

### RAST'S POINT-LESS RUN

Rene Rast's streak of non-points finishes extended to five races after another disastrous weekend for the McLaren driver. Rast was already struggling to hang onto a top-10 position when he spun after hitting Sam Bird towards the end of the first race. A five-second penalty for the collision demoted him further to 15th. A 16th-place result in Sunday's qualifying session left him with too much ground to make up in the race.

### FRIJNS BREAKS POINTS DUCK

Robin Frijns registered his first points finish of the season with an unheralded drive to ninth in Saturday's race. The Abt Mahindra driver was able to progress into the duels and qualify a strong seventh, losing out only to cars with Porsche and Stellantis powertrains. Despite the Mahindra package lacking the efficiency of his rivals, Frijns (below) was able to hang on to ninth to score Abt's second top-10 result of the 2023 season.



Magic Maserati! But what would Fangio make of Formula E?

### RESULTS ROUND 8/11, JAKARTA (IDN), 3-4 JUNE (36 LAPS – 53.015 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	<b>Pascal Wehrlein</b> (DEU)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	42m21.995s
2	<b>Jake Dennis</b> (GBR)	Andretti/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+0.477s
3	<b>Maximilian Guenther</b> (DEU)	Maserati/Maserati Tipo Folgore	+1.413s
4	<b>Stoffel Vandoorne</b> (BEL)	DS Penske/DSE-TENSE FE23	+3.871s
5	<b>Jean-Eric Vergne</b> (FRA)	DS Penske/DSE-TENSE FE23	+4.986s
6	<b>Edoardo Mortara</b> (CHE)	Maserati/Maserati Tipo Folgore	+5.587s
7	<b>Nick Cassidy</b> (NZL)	Envision Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	+5.982s
8	<b>Antonio Felix da Costa</b> (PRT)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+20.136s
9	<b>Robin Frijns</b> (NLD)	Abt/Mahindra M9Electro	+21.687s
10	<b>Jake Hughes</b> (GBR)	McLaren/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+23.356s
11	<b>Nico Muller</b> (CHE)	Abt/Mahindra M9Electro	+23.792s
12	<b>Norman Nato</b> (FRA)	Nissan/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+25.162s
13	<b>Dan Ticktum</b> (GBR)	NIO 333/NIO 333 ER9	+28.824s
14	<b>Lucas di Grassi</b> (BRA)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M9Electro	+29.495s
15	<b>Rene Rast</b> (DEU)	McLaren/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+30.002s
16	<b>David Beckmann</b> (DEU)	Andretti/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+31.079s
17	<b>Sergio Sette Camara</b> (BRA)	NIO 333/NIO 333 ER9	+32.102s
18	<b>Roberto Merhi</b> (ESP)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M9Electro	+46.662s
19	<b>Sacha Fenestraz</b> (FRA)	Nissan/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+48.822s
20	<b>Sam Bird</b> (GBR)	Jaguar Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	+1m14.072s
21	<b>Sebastien Buemi</b> (CHE)	Envision Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	+1m18.081s
R	<b>Mitch Evans</b> (NZL)	Jaguar Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	33 laps-accident

**Winner's average speed** 75.080mph. **Fastest lap** Buemi 1m09.755s, 76.002mph.

**QUALIFYING** 1 Guenther 1m08.141s; 2 Dennis 1m08.482s; 3 Wehrlein 1m08.646s; 4 Vergne 1m08.740s; 5 Vandoorne 1m08.588s; 6 Mortara 1m08.704s; 7 Frijns 1m08.957s; 8 Rast 1m09.205s; 9 Muller 1m09.191s; 10 Cassidy 1m09.273s; 11 Evans 1m09.202s; 12 Fenestraz 1m09.333s; 13 Buemi 1m09.216s; 14 Ticktum 1m09.339s; 15 da Costa 1m09.280s; 16 Bird 1m09.410s; 17 Nato 1m09.405s; 18 Sette Camara 1m09.645s; 19 Beckmann 1m09.470s; 20 Hughes 1m09.933s; 21 di Grassi 1m09.562s; 22 Merhi 1m10.560s.

**RACE 2** (38 LAPS – 55.961 MILES)

1 Guenther 44m57.285s; 2 Dennis +2.822s; 3 Evans +18.498s; 4 Fenestraz +19.307s; 5 Nato +19.924s; 6 Wehrlein +20.108s; 7 da Costa +20.521s; 8 Mortara +20.996s; 9 Vandoorne +26.630s; 10 Buemi +27.273s; 11 Ticktum +28.614s; 12 Muller +28.787s; 13 Frijns +29.125s; 14 di Grassi +29.530s; 15 Rast +30.670s; 16 Vergne +56.598s; 17 Merhi +1m06.645s; 18 Cassidy +1m06.879s; R Hughes 36 laps-technical; R Beckmann 5 laps-accident; NS Bird; NS Sette Camara.

**Winner's average speed** 74.689mph. **Fastest lap** Dennis 1m09.171s, 76.643mph.

**QUALIFYING** 1 Guenther 1m07.753s; 2 Dennis 1m08.338s; 3 Evans 1m08.077s; 4 Mortara 1m08.443s; 5 Vandoorne 1m08.289s; 6 Wehrlein 1m08.450s; 7 Fenestraz 1m08.664s; 8 Hughes 1m08.962s; 9 Vergne 1m08.603s; 10 Cassidy 1m08.623s; 11 da Costa 1m08.609s; 12 Nato 1m08.681s; 13 Buemi 1m08.733s; 14 Bird 1m08.792s; 15 Sette Camara 1m08.796s; 16 Rast 1m08.805s; 17 Muller 1m08.924s; 18 Beckmann 1m08.840s; 19 di Grassi 1m09.048s; 20 Ticktum 1m08.904s; 21 Merhi 1m09.489s; 22 Frijns 1m08.937s.

**CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Wehrlein 134; 2 Dennis 133; 3 Cassidy 128; 4 Evans 109; 5 Vergne 97; 6 da Costa 78; 7 Guenther 70; 8 Bird 62; 9 Buemi 62; 10 Hughes 46.

### NEXT REPORT

## PORTLAND 29 JUNE ISSUE



# Incredible Sutton leads another Ford fiesta

*As at Brands and Snetterton, the three-time champion was a double winner on the fast sweeps of Thruxton. The BTCC urgently needs someone to take the fight to him*

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport  
IMAGES

**T**hat yellow-and-blue Ford Focus ST was four-wheel-drifting around the fast sweeps of Thruxton, absolutely on the limit. And we're talking about a front-wheel-drive car... Ash Sutton, three-time British Touring Car Championship winner, was once again giving an exhibition, a masterclass, on his way to two more victories and surely, if the season continues in this vein, his fourth title.

The second of those wins at the Hampshire speedbowl was the sucker punch. For the first time in BTCC history, someone had recorded two successes on three consecutive race weekends. Sutton alighted from the Ford and couldn't hold back the emotion. "Making history, it's big," he spluttered. "I just can't thank the team enough. The car is phenomenal and it's just a joy to drive."

In the wake of Sutton's *tour de force* last time out at Snetterton, his race engineer Antonio Carrozza had predicted that the development carried out on the Focus by the Motorbase Performance squad during the winter would make it an absolute weapon at Thruxton.

He was right. The car had consistent grip at the front end – no mean feat on a high-speed circuit that dishes out punishment to the front-left – and Sutton is a past master from his rear-wheel-drive exploits at controlling the rear. And just look at those stats from race two: it wasn't so much the margin of victory, a 'mere' 2.234 seconds over the Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N of Tom Ingram, but his fastest lap, set on the second tour, was 1.029s clear of anyone else's...

As he reflected on this at the end of the day, Sutton explained: "They were squabbling behind us. You saw in qualifying you get one lap out of the tyre. I got my head down at the start, used that one lap, those guys were squabbling so they never maximised the time. It's purely just down to maximising my opportunity." True, Ingram was having to keep a wary eye on the One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R of Josh Cook, but this wasn't really a full-blooded battle of defensive lines and probing advances.

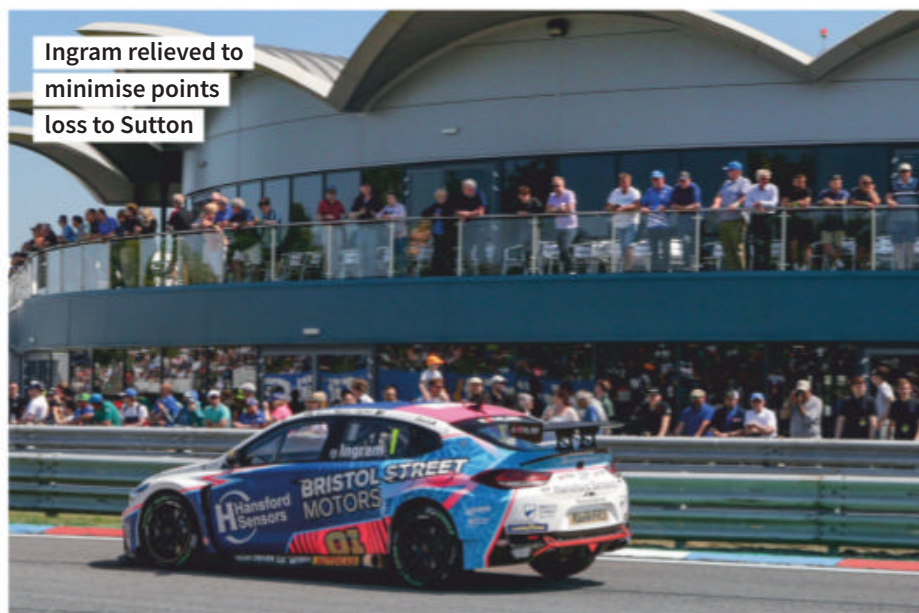
Once that second lap was done and dusted, Sutton's pace dropped immediately by a second to a second and a half, while







Sutton made BTCC history with third successive pair of wins



Ingram relieved to minimise points loss to Sutton

Ingram circulated a fraction more quickly than the Ford ahead and kept his lap times within half a second of his best for over half the race. Then, on the 16th and final lap, Sutton, still armed with the one lap of hybrid usage he was allowed as the winner of race one, popped in his second quickest lap time, and it was just 0.013s adrift of the second best of Ingram – set on lap three. And Sutton had done it on tyres that had just covered a race distance of abrasive old Thruxton.

“It’s been quite a good weekend in terms of points,” said Ingram, who beat Cook to second in each of the first two races, “but not good in the sense that the guy who’s scored more points is the guy that we need to beat. It feels like we’ve just had our sieve by the river, thinking at some point we’re going to find some gold, just keep checking and hopefully something will come up. It just feels like we’re waiting on Ash to trip up at the moment. The first half of the year hasn’t been great for us in terms of consistency, which hasn’t helped. And those [Motorbase] boys are very very very fast. They’ve qualified on pole everywhere, out of 12 races they’ve won

nine of them. They’re fairly dominant this year.”

Jake Hill, fourth in each of those opening two races as the best of the West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport brigade, had another take on it. “It’s just that... I’m sure I share the view of many, that the championship is heading in a direction it wasn’t before,” he offered. “It’s just a bit of a takeover, but fair play to them – they’ve done the development and the testing and done incredibly well, but there have been multiple hits to the BMWs [in the past].”

Ah, the old turbo boost conundrum. Back in 2019, when WSR unleashed the 3 Series BMW upon the BTCC, it carried Colin Turkington and Andrew Jordan to nine wins from the first 15 races, but had its boost lowered by series organiser TOCA while the opposition had theirs raised, in the interests of levelling up the competition. No such measure has been taken against the Fords this year, although for Thruxton the rear-wheel-drive BMWs had a little bit of additional starting boost, while the TOCA engine customers (the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhalls and Team Hard »



Sutton leads Ingram and Cook. First two races had same result – up to seventh place!



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Cupras) were given an extra 0.2 bar of power.

But here's a tricky thing. For all the potency of that Focus, its not down to sheer power, with engine builder Mountune concentrating more on driveability in its off-season development: in that epic second race performance, Sutton was a modest 14th (exactly halfway) in the speed trap on the exit of Segrave, 16th in the trap through the flat-out Village sweeper, and 18th across the start/finish line. None of the four Fords cracked the top 11 in either of the first two traps in that race, although Dan Rowbottom was quickest at start/finish, with Sam Osborne fifth and Dan Cammish eighth. And here's another tricky thing. As dominant as Sutton is, team-mate Cammish, who was the class act at Thruxton last August, could do no better than ninth in

## “We had a misfire for three laps. We had a boost sensor fail and it started coughing”

qualifying and fifth in the first two races. Are we just finally seeing a wonder talent of the BTCC in the form of Sutton finally at the wheel of the most potent car, man and machine working in perfect harmony?

If this sounds like a lot of theorising rather than biff-bang-pow! action, it's because the racing, at least in the first two encounters, wasn't much to write home about. It was more like the old 1990s days of Super Touring. Since that era, TOCA has largely done a very good job of balancing the purity of sport against entertainment via success ballast, reversed grids, option tyres and performance equalisation (although 17 different race winners in 2018 arguably devalued the merit of a victory). With success ballast now gone and hybrid boost penalties in place instead, this is having less of an effect. Further, the mandatory usage of the hard-compound Goodyear tyres across the entire Thruxton weekend for safety reasons removed another variable.

And then there was the mysterious loss of pace of Cook's Honda between free practice and the rest of the weekend. The West Countryman is, of course, the King of Thruxton, his 10 BTCC wins here a record, and he was on sparkling form on Saturday morning, a good half a second clear of the opposition in both sessions. He never again matched his best time, and neither did anyone else, not even



poleman Sutton, who outpaced Ingram by 0.210s (despite being allowed just one second per lap of hybrid to Ingram's three). Cook slotted into third. "From the start we knew something was amiss," he sighed. "That lap was quite pedestrian. We found quite a lot of leaking fluid on the car, which could have contributed to it. It's one of the worst qualifying I've had here ever. To be P3 with that lap I'm quite surprised – I'm actually surprised it was top 10. On every right-hander it was inconsistently snappy."

Cook went on to suggest that he was "quietly confident" for the races, but it never came back to him and, for the first time since 2017, he will end the year without a Thruxton victory. He chased Ingram hard throughout the first two races, but explained that "we're still not finding that sweet spot – the car was really hard to drive. I can't fault the effort that the team are putting in, and I know I'm doing the job behind the wheel."

For a while, Hill was homing in on the Ingram/Cook duo during the second race, but then his BMW began to drop back, secure in another fourth place. "We had a misfire for three laps," he recounted. "We had a boost sensor fail and it started coughing until the back-up sensor cut in." Team-mate Turkington, meanwhile, lost >>

## ‘ROWBO’ COPS A LOT BEFORE WIN

Good old track limits... During qualifying at Thruxton, no fewer than 33 lap times from 17 drivers were deleted due to track limits. Two of those worst affected were Dan Rowbottom and Adam Morgan, who respectively were shoved down from eighth to 14th on the grid, and from 13th to 15th. And then, just over 24 hours later, they finished 1-2 in the finale.

Overnight, the track-limits crunch point at Church Corner was sorted via a few tins of paint (see Pit & Paddock).

As is the way of the BTCC, further setbacks on Sunday had ironically contributed to 'Rowbo' and Morgan hitting the reversed-grid jackpot. Rowbottom's Motorbase Performance Ford Focus suffered a delaminated right-front tyre after the bearded Midlander had worked



up to eighth place in the opener, and he had to charge from the back to 11th next time out. Morgan's West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport, meanwhile, shipped three places on the final lap of race one when he was frozen

out in a battle with Ricky Collard.

Rowbottom took another hit with a three-place grid penalty for an incident with Ronan Pearson, but picked off Aron Taylor-Smith, Collard and Aiden Moffat to close on Morgan and move in front when the ginger Lancastrian made "a small mistake at Goodwood". It allowed Rowbottom his second BTCC victory. "I know it's only reversed-grid and Ash [Sutton] is commanding the respect at the moment because he's doing what he's doing," he said in reference to his dominant team-mate. "But we'll keep going."

Morgan's champagne, meanwhile, was but a prelude. By the time you read this, he'll be on the Isle of Man at the TT for his beery stag do "with 14 in a house that sleeps six"!





Cook did beat Sutton once, but only for 11th

out to fifth-placed Cammish in each of the first two encounters. The four-time champion had qualified alongside team-mate Hill on the third row, a tad slower but with slightly less access to hybrid. “Thruxton has never been our patch,” mused Turkington. “The thing is, we just don’t have the pace of the top three cars round here – we’re quite a step back from them. We just have to take a bit of pain this weekend.” Turkington did do better in the reversed-grid finale than the other leading contenders, finishing fourth in the middle of a tight-knit trio headed by Aiden Moffat’s One Honda and tailed by the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla of Ricky Collard.

Both Cammish and Turkington fell behind Rory Butcher’s Speedworks Toyota early in the second race, the Scot going much better in the races after the balance wasn’t quite there amid the evolving track conditions on Saturday. Turkington “got doored” by the Corolla, dropping him behind Cammish after getting ahead off the start. But the hard work of making up those places in the early going took its toll on Butcher’s tyres, and he conceded positions to complete a top seven that entirely replicated what we’d seen earlier in race one.

Cammish, for his part, was philosophical. For all team-mate Sutton’s domination, things are proving tougher for the Yorkshireman. “I think in race trim we’re a lot closer to the front,” he opined after qualifying ninth, “as long as I don’t get stuck in the aero wash. But our one-lap pace needs a bit of looking at; I don’t think we’ve found a solution for me.” Things were looking up on Sunday:

**“We did well to recover something on what could have been a catastrophic weekend”**



Rookie Doble was a star in qualifying

“That’s a definite improvement. I hung on and beat Colin.”

Close to this bunch was Aron Taylor-Smith on a weekend when PMR hit form with its trio of venerable Astras – he and fellow cheery Irishman Andrew Watson both qualified on row four, but were outpaced by the highly impressive Mikey Doble, who was fourth fastest on his fourth weekend at this level. Watson’s Sunday was scuppered when a technical glitch on the grid forced him to start the first race from the pitlane, while Doble fell away slightly but did claim overall Jack Sears Trophy honours on the day.

Taylor-Smith, though, was comfortably ahead in the finale, in sixth place, of the marauding pack of Butcher, Cammish, Ingram, Hill, Cook and Sutton. Finding an opening at Thruxton proved as difficult as ever, with Sutton losing out and Ingram profiting amid the few changes. Ingram’s gain in position came in opportunistic style at Goodwood on the penultimate lap after Hill tried to pass Cammish and lost momentum. “I was convinced I was having an enormous crash at that point,” quipped the Hyundai man. “I was convinced Jake was going to roll out of the brakes, put it into understeer, but he didn’t so full credit to him. I generally didn’t want to be on the outside going into Goodwood – it’s not usually an advantageous place to be. But I didn’t really have much option, because if I checked up I was going to get done from behind. So I was acutely aware that I had to take my chance when it was there.”

Sutton, meanwhile, had got past Cook on the opening lap, only for the Honda to repass next time around. “When you’ve had it cushty for two races, we underestimated how much of an aero-wash understeer you get,” shrugged Sutton. “We made a few changes but nowhere near enough and ultimately Josh just got under me. I was just going to touch the grass at Goodwood and I had to get out of the throttle and he got me on the run to Church.”

On a weekend where Sutton was dominant, that mitigated Ingram’s net loss of points at the top of the table over the Thruxton weekend to seven. “We did well in that last race to recover something on what could have been a catastrophic weekend in terms of points lost against Ash,” he chirped. But is the writing on the wall? That Focus looks sweet as a nut. “When you get the car dialled in, it’s just moving around behind you and you kind of don’t worry about that end of the car – you’ve just got to make sure you’re not hurting the front tyre too much,” grinned Sutton. “From last year to this year the biggest thing is just going from an understeery car to an oversteery car. You don’t want it too loose and nervous, you’ve still got to maximise everything. Looking after the tyre has been a big part of that.”

It looks as though all the boxes are ticked. ✨



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RESULTS

ROUND 4/10, THRUXTON (GBR), 4 JUNE RACE 1 (16 LAPS – 37.696 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	20m41.048s
2	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+2.513s
3	Josh Cook (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R	+4.086s
4	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+8.506s
5	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+10.753s
6	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+11.128s
7	Rory Butcher (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+21.941s
8	Mikey Doble (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+26.971s
9	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+27.698s
10	Bobby Thompson (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+27.964s
11	Ricky Collard (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+28.265s
12	Tom Chilton (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+30.099s
13	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+30.195s
14	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R	+30.505s
15	Ronan Pearson (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+31.563s
16	Dexter Patterson (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+31.715s
17	George Gamble (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+32.496s
18	Andrew Watson (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+32.685s
19	Stephen Jelley (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+41.646s
20	Will Powell (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R	+43.861s
21	Sam Osborne (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+44.569s
22	Nicolas Hamilton (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+55.279s
23	Jade Edwards (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+1m03.225s
24	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+1m17.169s
NC	Dan Lloyd (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	13 laps
NC	Nick Halstead (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	11 laps
R	Jack Butel (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	10 laps-damage

Winner's average speed 109.34mph. Fastest lap Cook 1m16.015s, 111.57mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Sutton 1m15.489s; 2 Ingram 1m15.699s; 3 Cook 1m15.735s; 4 Doble 1m15.895s; 5 Hill 1m15.928s; 6 Turkington 1m16.017s; 7 Watson 1m16.034s; 8 Taylor-Smith 1m16.107s; 9 Cammish 1m16.112s; 10 Butcher 1m16.188s; 11 Collard 1m16.213s; 12 Lloyd 1m16.371s; 13 Thompson 1m16.427s; 14 Rowbottom 1m16.568s; 15 Morgan 1m16.585s; 16 Jelley 1m16.618s; 17 Moffat 1m16.669s; 18 Chilton 1m16.907s; 19 Pearson 1m16.940s; 20 Osborne 1m16.972s; 21 Patterson 1m17.006s; 22 Gamble 1m17.530s; 23 Butel 1m17.594s; 24 Powell 1m17.967s; 25 Hamilton 1m18.105s; 26 Edwards 1m18.440s; 27 Halstead 1m19.126s.



Moffat beat Turkington and Collard in race three battle for the podium



Rowbottom's first winner's trophy since summer of 2021

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 2 (16 LAPS – 37.696 MILES)

1 Sutton 20m46.245s; 2 Ingram +2.234s; 3 Cook +6.330s; 4 Hill +8.730s; 5 Cammish +9.580s; 6 Turkington +15.734s; 7 Butcher +17.003s; 8 Taylor-Smith +17.411s; 9 Collard +19.834s; 10 Moffat +23.723s; 11 Rowbottom +24.012s; 12 Morgan +24.743s; 13 Chilton +25.348s; 14 Doble +29.666s; 15 Patterson +30.737s; 16 Watson +31.039s; 17 Jelley +34.943s; 18 Osborne +35.490s; 19 Pearson +35.758s; 20 Butel +40.852s; 21 Lloyd +44.785s; 22 Hamilton +56.787s; 23 Halstead +1m03.640s; R Edwards 11 laps-driveshaft; R Thompson 4 laps-holed radiator; R Gamble 1 lap-damage/toe link; R Powell 1 lap-accident. Winner's average speed 108.89mph. Fastest lap Sutton 1m16.130s, 111.40mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top 12 reversed. Rowbottom given three-placed grid penalty so started fifth, with Moffat second, Collard third and Taylor-Smith fourth.

RACE 3 (16 LAPS – 37.696 MILES)

1 Rowbottom 20m56.631s; 2 Morgan +2.733s; 3 Moffat +3.786s; 4 Turkington +4.022s; 5 Collard +4.559s; 6 Taylor-Smith +5.054s; 7 Butcher +6.347s; 8 Cammish +6.985s; 9 Ingram +7.608s; 10 Hill +7.814s; 11 Cook +8.451s; 12 Sutton +8.896s; 13 Watson +10.136s; 14 Doble +13.182s; 15 Patterson +14.054s; 16 Jelley +15.424s; 17 Gamble +16.028s; 18 Lloyd +16.954s; 19 Pearson +18.375s; 20 Osborne +19.021s; 21 Butel +25.033s; 22 Halstead +35.325s; 23 Hamilton +36.092s; 24 Powell +37.209s; 25 Chilton -1 lap; R Edwards 13 laps-grass in radiator; NS Thompson radiator. Winner's average speed 107.99mph. Fastest lap Cook 1m17.079s, 110.03mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Sutton 183; 2 Ingram 169; 3 Turkington 142; 4 Hill 130; 5 Cammish 128; 6 Rowbottom 95; 7 Cook 95; 8 Morgan 90; 9 Butcher 90; 10 Collard 63.

NEXT EVENT

OULTON PARK 18 JUNE ISSUE

Can anyone overturn the domination of Ash Sutton on the visit to leafy Cheshire?



# Palou gets his Motown groove on

**INDYCAR**  
**DETROIT (USA)**  
**4 JUNE**  
**ROUND 7/17**

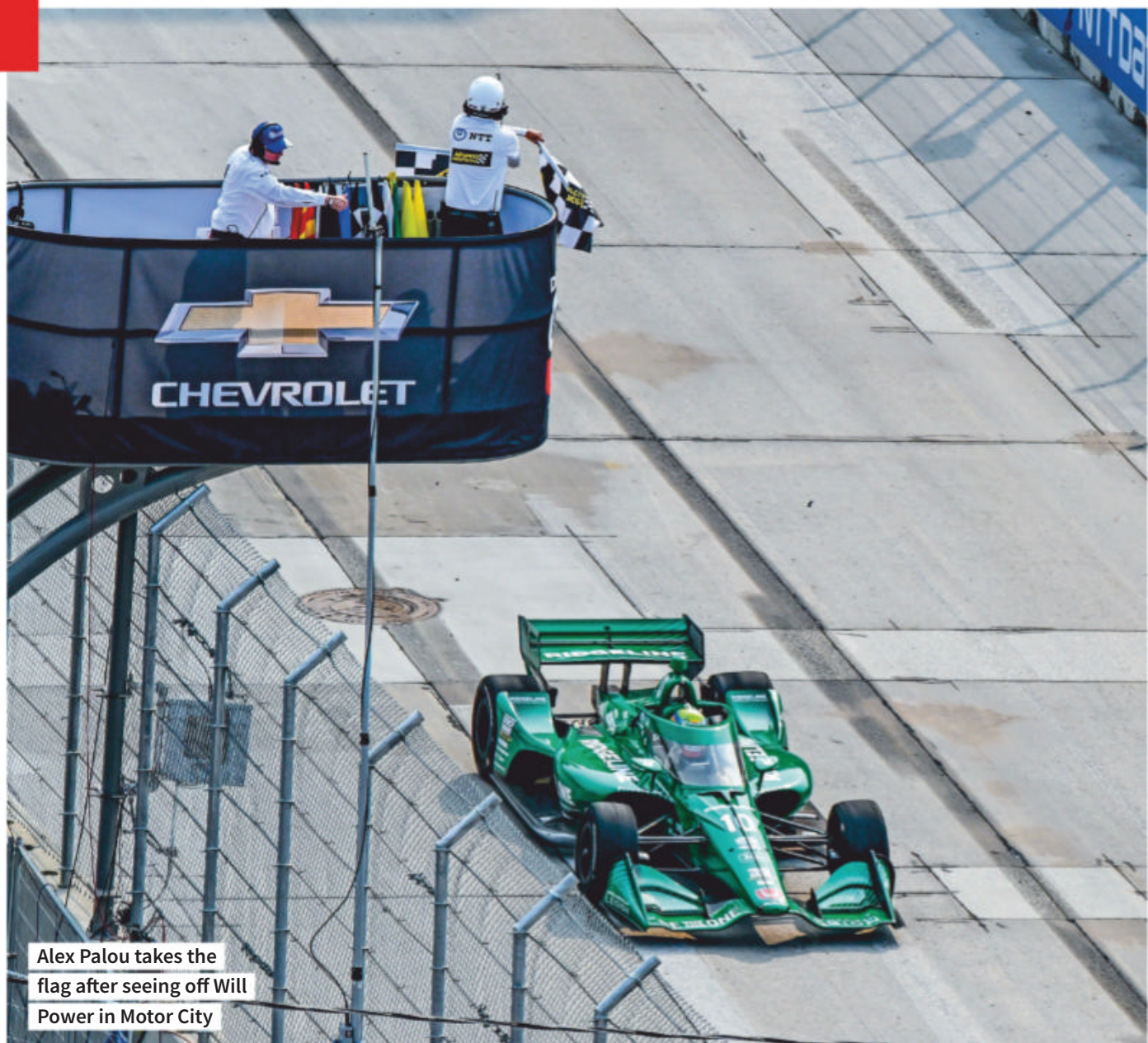
A week after the Indianapolis 500, IndyCar's Detroit Grand Prix came down to a shootout between two stars from Team Penske and Chip Ganassi Racing. This time, it wasn't Josef Newgarden and Marcus Ericsson going toe-to-toe, but Will Power and Alex Palou – and Chip got his revenge over his old adversary Roger.

The stage couldn't have been more different, with Indy's vast oval giving way to a new 1.645-mile layout around Detroit's downtown streets, using a couple of small portions from the Formula 1 track of the 1980s. The lure was General Motors' headquarters, the Renaissance Center, as Penske Entertainment switched the event from nearby Belle Isle.

Palou labelled the circuit "too tight" and "too short", but couldn't complain as he took a vital pole position and converted that into his second win of the season.

Power made his life tough. A stellar first stint in which he used the harder primary tyre to fine effect allowed him to charge from seventh to second. "We [qualified] too far back to play conservative," said Power. "We had to attack at every chance."

Palou pitted first to get rid of his softer alternate Firestones, allowing Power to lead from lap 29 of 100. When Power stopped five tours later to take his own alternates, Palou retook the top spot and pulled away until a caution just before half distance



Alex Palou takes the flag after seeing off Will Power in Motor City

interrupted his progress.

Pato O'Ward, who'd earlier been delayed when the left-rear wheel of his Arrow McLaren car wasn't attached properly, misjudged a move on Santino Ferrucci and smashed into the Turn 9 wall. Cautions breed cautions: Sting Ray Robb got stranded after the restart at Turn 3 and, under yellow, Graham Rahal crashed at Turn 1 and was collected by Benjamin Pedersen.

Palou had a huge scare when his gearbox refused to upshift and required resetting. "I upshifted into second when the wheels were spinning and it got stuck in first," he said. "I couldn't really shift, so I switched to emergency mode."

Due to Palou's temporarily slower

upshifts, Power pounced at the lap 57 restart, diving inside him to grab the lead at Turn 3. Palou was then able to switch his gearbox electronics back to normal.

Power pulled away on his softer tyres but the pendulum soon swung back when Palou's harder rubber came into its own as the race entered its final third. "I was struggling a little bit more than I wanted on getting the tyres up to temperature," explained Palou. "I saw Will's was probably one of the best cars doing that."

Now it was Palou's turn to get a run on the 0.7-mile straight on Jefferson Avenue, duping Power into overshooting Turn 3 on lap 66 and grabbing the lead back. It was soon time for the final round of pitstops, and Palou rejoined ahead of Power, who had Scott Dixon (Ganassi) right on his tail after the Kiwi had almost undercut him.

Things were heating up behind them, and the McLaren entries of Alexander Rossi and Felix Rosenqvist swapped fourth. Behind them, Scott McLaughlin clashed with Romain Grosjean when the Frenchman chopped across his nose as he rejoined from the pits. With 20 laps to go, McLaughlin could allow himself a smirk as Grosjean suffered a suspension failure at Turn 4 and ended his race in the wall. After another yellow for a David Malukas shunt, we got an incident-packed restart with 10 laps to go.

Power got a great run on Palou again but couldn't chivvy an opening on the outside line. Dixon sensed his moment and filled



Callum Ilott broke Kyle Kirkwood's rear wing in early-race collision





RESULTS ROUND 7/17, DETROIT (USA), 4 JUNE (100 LAPS – 164.500 MILES)			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	2h01m58.1171s
2	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.1843s
3	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+5.9515s
4	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+7.5682s
5	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.9841s
6	Kyle Kirkwood (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+10.5426s
7	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.9350s
8	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+11.6792s
9	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+13.0181s
10	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+14.0223s
11	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	+17.6606s
12	Devlin DeFrancesco (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+19.4321s
13	Simon Pagenaud (FRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+19.6486s
14	Agustin Canapino (ARG)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+21.4219s
15	Conor Daly (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+21.7748s
16	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+22.1160s
17	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+23.0710s
18	Rinus van Kalmthout (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+23.8193s
19	Helio Castroneves (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+24.6734s
20	Benjamin Pedersen (DNK)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
21	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
22	Sting Ray Robb (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR / Dallara-Honda	-3 laps
23	David Malukas (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with HMD / Dallara-Honda	85 laps-accident
24	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	80 laps-susp/acc damage
25	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	50 laps-accident
26	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	41 laps-accident
27	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	1 lap-accident

Winner's average speed 80.922mph. Fastest lap Kirkwood 1m01.9410s, 95.607mph.

Q3 1 Palou 1m01.8592s; 2 McLaughlin 1m02.1592s; 3 Grosjean 1m02.2896s; 4 Dixon 1m02.4272s; 5 Newgarden 1m02.5223s; 6 Ericsson 1m02.6184s.  
Q2 Palou 1m01.6390s; Grosjean 1m01.9018s; Ericsson 1m01.9449s; Newgarden 1m01.9679s; McLaughlin 1m01.9794s; Dixon 1m02.0608s; 7 Power 1m02.1817s; 8 Pagenaud 1m02.1860s; 9 Rosenqvist 1m02.1937s; 10 O'Ward 1m02.2564s; 11 Armstrong 1m02.2958s; 12 Kirkwood 1m04.6075s.

Q1-GROUP 1 Armstrong 1m01.8558s; Grosjean 1m02.1756s; Palou 1m02.2431s; Power 1m02.3454s; Pagenaud 1m02.3952s; Rosenqvist 1m02.5341s; 13 Rossi 1m02.5714s; 15 Daly 1m02.9522s; 17 DeFrancesco 1m03.0017s; 19 Pedersen 1m03.1599s;

21 Malukas 1m03.2126s; 23 Castroneves 1m03.3879s; 25 Harvey 1m03.7728s.  
Q1-GROUP 2 Kirkwood 1m01.5305s; McLaughlin 1m01.7482s; O'Ward 1m02.0470s; Dixon 1m02.0602s; Ericsson 1m02.0754s; Newgarden 1m02.1900s; 14 van Kalmthout 1m02.1911s; 16 Ilott 1m02.2644s; 18 Lundgaard 1m02.6495s; 20 Canapino 1m02.9071s; 22 Ferrucci 1m02.9589s; 24 Herta 1m03.4165s; 26 Robb 1m03.7496s; 27 Rahal 1m03.8663s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Palou 273; 2 Ericsson 222; 3 Newgarden 203; 4 Dixon 194; 5 O'Ward 191; 6 Rossi 176; 7 McLaughlin 175; 8 Power 172; 9 Herta 149; 10 Rosenqvist 148.

the gap behind Palou that Power drove into, the Aussie briefly riding up onto two wheels over the six-time champion's front wing. Rossi opportunistically swept past both, as Power's Chevy lapsed into anti-stall but recovered in time to shove Dixon wide at Turn 4, which allowed Rosenqvist up to fourth. Ferrucci and Robb then clashed, causing the seventh yellow of the day. The final shootout was over five laps, with Power snatching second from Rossi at Turn 4 as Palou jumped clear again. Rosenqvist got his elbows out and swatted Rossi towards the wall in the closing stages. "He squeezed me a little bit on entry, I squeezed him a little bit on exit," said Rosenqvist, while 'team-mate' Rossi, who lost a further spot to Dixon, snapped: "We'll discuss it internally." Long Beach GP winner Kyle Kirkwood drove a brilliant race to finish an unlikely sixth, having been savaged by Callum Ilott at the start and required a new rear wing, ahead of McLaughlin and Marcus Armstrong (Ganassi). Ericsson beat Newgarden this week, but it was for ninth spot rather than the Indy 500 win.

CHARLES BRADLEY

NEXT REPORT

ROAD AMERICA 22 JUNE ISSUE



Prema-run  
Brit Bearman  
took victory on  
Sunday...



SCUDERIA FERRARI PRESS OFFICE

# It's olé Bearman in Spain

**FORMULA 2**  
**BARCELONA (ESP)**  
**3-4 JUNE**  
**ROUND 6/13**

Formula 2 rookie sensation Ollie Bearman completed a Prema Racing clean sweep at Barcelona by adding victory in the feature race to series leader Frederik Vesti's triumph in Saturday's sprint race. The 18-year-old Ferrari Driver Academy starlet converted pole to a comfortable third win in the category to bounce back from a tricky weekend last time out in Monaco, which followed a clean sweep in Baku.

Bearman had to fight off a strong challenge from Enzo Fittipaldi at the start. The Briton, the Brazilian and Ayumu Iwasa ran side by side into Turn 1, but Fittipaldi had to take to the escape road before his Rodin Carlin car emerged in second place. Bearman broke out of DRS reach in the first

few laps, while Fittipaldi fought to hold off ART Grand Prix star Theo Pourchaire.

Crucially, Bearman was able to hold out later than his rivals on the hard tyres. While Pourchaire pitted for the softs on lap nine, and Fittipaldi the next time around, Bearman went until the 13th tour. Although Fittipaldi initially closed as Bearman built up tyre temperature, the Prema man used traffic to his advantage and put several of those yet to stop between himself and his pursuer.

Victor Martins and Vesti were among those on the alternate strategy, and the Frenchman led the middle portion of the race in his ART car before he pitted for the softs. Vesti had already made his switch and was soon on the tail of Martins. The Dane had passed title rival Pourchaire on the start/finish straight with DRS, the Sauber junior struggling with tyre wear by the closing stages after his early pitstop.

Martins passed Jack Doohan the following tour before Vesti followed suit around the outside of Turn 10, and the pair closed on the top three. Iwasa and Martins then tussled before the DAMS-run Red Bull Junior succumbed and Martins took the final podium spot on lap 35, with Vesti securing fifth ahead of Doohan and Pourchaire.

Mercedes junior Vesti's win on Saturday came in an intriguing wet/dry race and was his second consecutive victory following his triumph in the feature event in Monaco.

The race had a rolling start as heavy rain fell, with Vesti, from third on the grid, passing Jak Crawford around the outside

of Turn 1 for second place. There was contact, and Crawford suffered a puncture.

Vesti then made it past poleman Amaury Cordeel (Invicta Virtuosi) at Turn 10 after the Belgian ran too deep and went wide, before Martins passed Cordeel for second on lap four at Turn 1. Pourchaire, who had lined up ninth due to a grid penalty for impeding during qualifying, was up to sixth by lap four, then passed Doohan for fifth on lap 10 around the outside of Turn 12 before getting past Iwasa two tours later.

The safety car was deployed on lap 20 after Juan Manuel Correa ran into the gravel, forcing most of the leading runners to pit for slick tyres on the drying track.

Vesti cleared a 1.2s gap out front, while a brilliant restart for Pourchaire got him third from Dennis Hauger at Turn 1, before going around the outside of Martins at Turn 4.

**MEGAN WHITE**



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# Marti wild to be teenager in love with winning

**FORMULA 3**  
**BARCELONA (ESP)**  
**3-4 JUNE**  
**ROUND 4/9**

It was a Spanish super-Sunday for Formula 3 at Barcelona, with Pepe Marti taking a dominant feature race win at his and Campos Racing's home track. After securing his third victory of the season, and his first in a feature race, the 17-year-old was greeted by jubilant mentor and local hero Fernando Alonso, whose A14 Management stable looks after Marti.

Marti led from the off and, although second-place starter Taylor Barnard made a challenge at Turn 1, the British Jenzer Motorsport racer ran wide and was forced to drive around the bollard upon rejoining. Further back, Williams junior Luke Browning and Leonardo Fornaroli made contact at Turn 4, and Browning became stranded on the track with broken suspension, causing the intervention of the safety car.

While Marti pulled out a small gap at the front, Barnard came under pressure from Franco Colapinto, and the MP Motorsport-run Williams protege seized second place on lap 11 on the start/finish straight with ease. Ferrari Driver Academy prospect Dino Beganovic (Prema Racing) did the same to take third as Barnard struggled for pace.

Trident's championship leader Gabriel Bortoleto was the next to pass Barnard, on lap 17, with Paul Aron following him through in his Prema-run car. Barnard continued to slip back and finished the race in ninth.



...and Prema-run Brit  
O'Sullivan took a  
win on Saturday

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By lap 21, Marti was two seconds ahead of Colapinto, with a further 6.3s back to Beganovic, and that gap only grew, with Marti crossing the line 4.5s ahead of the Argentinian.

Saturday's sprint race featured a battle of the Brits, with Zak O'Sullivan taking his second win of 2023 after holding off fellow Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award winner Browning.

Prema driver O'Sullivan lined up on pole and defended from his Hitech rival into Turn 1, but racing was almost immediately neutralised after Ido Cohen smacked the wall at Turn 9 due to contact with Rafael Villagomez.

When racing resumed, O'Sullivan got the early jump at Turn 12 to escape Browning's clutches. The older Briton continued to pressure the leader as the laps progressed, trying a move at Turn 1 on lap 10, but was unable to pass.

Despite several more challenges from Browning and another safety car interruption on lap 16, O'Sullivan was able to build a 1.7s gap to rookie Browning to add a second F3 win to his triumph in the Melbourne sprint race.

Trident driver Fornaroli finished third, the Italian taking his second podium in as many weekends. He lined up fourth before passing ART driver Gregoire Saucy when the Swiss ran wide at Turn 2 on the opening lap.

Monaco winner Gabriele Mini's title charge hit a setback. He lined his Hitech car up in 18th and charged to eighth, only for a penalty to drop him back to 20th in the results. He failed to score over the weekend, meaning it's Marti now up to second in the standings, 24 points adrift of Bortoleto, the Brazilian claiming fourth in both races.

**MEGAN WHITE**



Marti led all the  
way in feature race

2023 FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED





## Brilliant Marciello spearheads Mercedes glory

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE  
ENDURANCE CUP**

**PAUL RICARD (FRA)**

**3 JUNE**

**ROUND 2/5**

A scintillating final pair of stints from Raffaele Marciello helped the ASP Mercedes team claim a thoroughly well-deserved GT World Challenge Europe victory on home soil at Paul Ricard last Saturday. With Jules Gounon and Timur Boguslavskiy also on driving duties, the reigning Endurance Cup champion team demonstrated its long-distance form in efficient fashion, beating the GetSpeed-run AlManar Mercedes of Maro Engel, Luca Stolz and Fabian Schiller by 10 seconds at the end of six hours of racing.

Gounon took pole ahead of Engel, and they maintained position at the start despite a post-qualifying Balance of Performance change that added an extra 20kg to the AMG GT3 machines. Following

an early safety car, the race then started to play into the hands of the Attempto-run Tresor Audi of Dennis Marschall, who slipstreamed past Engel for second on the Mistral Straight and then closed right onto the tail of Gounon before the first stops.

Mattia Drudi took over the Audi and managed to undercut the ASP Mercedes to seize the lead, which ballooned to nearly 30 seconds before Ricardo Feller suffered a right-rear puncture, with a cruel retirement for the Audi following soon after. That handed the advantage to the Rowe Racing BMW of Marco Wittmann, Nick Yelloly and Philipp Eng, who had jumped to second after Gounon swapped with Boguslavskiy. The BMW, winner of the Monza season opener, showed strong pace in Eng's double stint mid-race but tailed off, and Yelloly cut short his penultimate stint by 10 laps.

All the while, the Sainteloc Junior Audi in the hands of Patric Niederhauser had played itself into the mix for victory. Christopher

Mies started and was one of three Audi drivers inside the top six early on, but it was Niederhauser's chase of Yelloly, whose pace began to wane, that left Sainteloc just under 10s shy of the lead. It finished third on the road but was demoted to fourth following a track-limits penalty post-race.

Although he's prone to the odd error or two, Boguslavskiy's performance at the wheel in the middle of the race cannot be understated. He held fourth amid waves of attacks from the lead Iron Lynx Lamborghini, which suffered a puncture and subsequent brake issues that forced its retirement, and the two AF Corse Ferrari 296s. By the time Marciello took over for the final couple of hours, the gap to the podium was 16s. Marciello then drove superbly to pick off Stolz, Niederhauser and Yelloly and take the lead as the final hour dawned.

From then on, it was plain sailing and the Merc opened up a nine-second margin over Stolz, who had leapfrogged the Audi and BMW to secure second. Ferrari, last year's winning marque, didn't feature heavily at the sharp end but did finish with both cars in the top 10, Daniel Serra, Antonio Fuoco and Davide Rigon the best-placed in fifth ahead of the Rowe BMW of Dan Harper, Neil Verhagen and Max Hesse.

Best of the class victors was the Gold Cup-winning Comtoy Audi of Maxime Soulet, Max Hofer and Nicolas Baert in ninth overall, one spot behind the WRT BMW of Maxime Martin, Augusto Farfus and Valentino Rossi.

**STEPHEN BRUNSDON**

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# Massive shunt mars Bandoh Toyota success

**SUPER GT**  
**SUZUKA (JPN)**  
**4 JUNE**  
**ROUND 3/8**

Super GT's first visit of the year to Suzuka was overshadowed by a huge crash for Nissan driver Tsugio Matsuda and confusion surrounding the winner. The 450km race was red-flagged on lap 59 of a scheduled 77 due to Matsuda's horrific shunt at 130R while trying to negotiate GT300 traffic, and was not resumed.

NISMO man Matsuda was fighting for third when he made contact with the Toyota GR86 of Manabu Orido and Lamborghini Huracan GT3 of Kosuke Matsuura exiting the famous left-hander, launching into the barriers. The Nissan was almost destroyed and the Lamborghini was also badly



damaged. Matsuda had to be airlifted to hospital but escaped serious injury, while Matsuura was able to walk away.

It was the NISMO-run NDDP Racing Nissan that was initially declared the winner, but the car shared by Katsumasa Chiyo and Mitsunori Takaboshi was only ahead by virtue of not having completed its second mandatory refuelling stop. After a protest lodged by the majority of the other GT500 teams, Chiyo and Takaboshi were handed a one-minute penalty, giving the win to the Racing Project Bandoh Toyota of Yuji Kunimoto and Sena Sakaguchi – a first for the team since 2016.

TOM'S Toyota duo Sho Tsuboi and Ritomo Miyata were not far off repeating their Fuji victory despite 40kg of ballast, moving into the lead of the points with second. The Impul Nissan of Bertrand Baguette and Kazuki Hiramine took third, with Chiyo and Takaboshi fourth.

There was also controversy on Saturday when the Kondo Racing Nissan of Daiki Sasaki and Kohei Hirate was stripped of pole for a fuel tank that was too big.

**JAMIE KLEIN**

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# Busch is lightning after storm

**NASCAR CUP**  
**GATEWAY (USA)**  
**4 JUNE**  
**ROUND 15/36**

Kyle Busch earned every bit of his NASCAR Cup victory at Gateway. Sunday's 300-mile race was just five laps old when it was delayed nearly two hours for lightning. Once that cleared, Busch, who had started his Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet from pole, dominated much of the race.

He powered into the lead for the final time on lap 184 of 243 but then had to fend off repeated challenges during five restarts over the final 40 laps, including one in overtime. He finally cleared Denny

Hamlin's Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota by 0.517 seconds at the chequered flag to secure his third win of the 2023 season.

"That was pretty awesome," said Busch, who was met by his son Brexton on the track after the win. "Man, to sit on the pole, lead a lot of laps, my guys did just a great job today. It was pretty flawless."

Last year's Gateway winner, Joey Logano, finished third in his Team Penske Ford from Kyle Larson and Martin Truex Jr. Ryan Blaney claimed sixth position to move into the points lead.

Corey LaJoie, who filled in for the suspended Chase Elliott at Hendrick Motorsports, struggled for much of the race and finished 21st.

**JIM UTTER**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

- GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE  
ENDURANCE CUP**  
**PAUL RICARD (FRA)**  
Raffaele Marciello/Jules Gounon/  
Timur Boguslavskiy  
ASP (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)
- SUPER GT**  
**SUZUKA (JPN)**  
Yuji Kunimoto/Sena Sakaguchi  
Racing Project Bandoh (Toyota GR Supra)
- NASCAR CUP**  
**GATEWAY (USA)**  
Kyle Busch  
Richard Childress Racing (Chevrolet Camaro)
- INDY NXT**  
**DETROIT (USA)**  
**Race 1** Reece Gold  
HMD Motorsports  
**Race 2** Nolan Siegel  
HMD Motorsports
- GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES**  
**PAUL RICARD (FRA)**  
**Race 1** Konstantin Lachenauer/Victor Weyrich  
Racing Spirit of Leman  
(Aston Martin Vantage GT4)  
**Race 2** Antoine Potty/Etienne Cheli  
Xswift Racing (Toyota GR Supra GT4)
- WORLD RALLYCROSS**  
**MONTALEGRE (PRT)**  
Johan Kristoffersson  
Kristoffersson Motorsport (VW Polo RX1e)

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LE MANS  
**100**  
YEARS

1973 312PB



SCHLEGELMILCH

1997 333SP



2023 499P



EP



# FIFTY SHADES OF RED

*It's half a century since a factory Ferrari team was in with a shot of overall victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours. That changes this weekend for a marque that, in reality, has hardly been away from the race*

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

**F**errari is back and gunning for victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours after half a century. That statement needs to be qualified, twice over in fact. It's back with a prototype and as a factory entrant. That's what is new for 2023. Beyond the inevitable fanfare of the arrival of the 499P Le Mans Hypercar, it's important to remember that the Italian manufacturer's history at the French enduro and in the wider sportscar racing realm didn't abruptly stop at the end of 1973. The Prancing Horse has been active and successful on the hallowed asphalt of the Circuit de la Sarthe in the 50 years since.

In the 49 editions of the great race since Ferrari's fleet of 312PB three-litre prototypes ran Matra close for victory, a car bearing the marque's famous shield has taken part at the French enduro on 37 occasions, a figure that includes a withdrawal and a did not start. That history is rich and varied and encompasses both prototype and GT machinery, a car the factory really didn't want on the grid, and

***“We definitely had the car to win in 1996. The car was one of the fastest at Le Mans that year, no discussion”***

another developed in the UK. There have been a quartet of top-six finishes and an impressive 14 class wins. That's not to forget the obscurities, largely forgotten specials, that were in days of old always part of the Ferrari story.

Ferrari might have added to its nine outright wins in the years when the factory was absent from the front of the grid. There were some serious shots at making it 10, by privateers running the marque's machinery. The 333SP, developed as a customer car for the North American IMSA GT Championship's World Sports Car class, was a genuine contender at least once. The 333SP years, 1995-99, weren't the only time that Ferrari was represented in a category that could have yielded an overall winner. The F40, in its LM and GTE iterations, competed in GT1, which in theory at least was the equal of the LMP prototype division in the eyes of race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest.

The one that truly got away while the factory was in absentia came in 1996. Team Scandia turned up at Le Mans with two cars, one entered under the Racing for Belgium banner and paid for by a group of 1001 companies and individuals. The car showed its pace in the preliminaries and had the speed if not the reliability to secure a first Ferrari outright win since the 1965 victory by another privateer, the North American Racing Team with a 250LM driven by Jochen Rindt



1996 Eric van der Poele shone in the Scandia 333SP

and Masten Gregory. “We definitely had the car to win that year,” remembers Eric van de Poele, the star driver in the Belgian car. “The car was one of the fastest that year, no discussion.”

That much he proved at the pre-qualifying weekend at the end of April. The ex-Modena-Lamborghini, Brabham and Fondmetal Formula 1 driver was credited with the top two positions in the times. He went quickest in his own car fitted with regular IMSA-spec bodywork, then found more than three seconds in the sister machine. That was running a new low-drag aero package developed for Scandia by Tony Southgate, the designer of the line of V12 TWR Jaguars who'd been employed by Ferrari as a consultant on the 333SP project.

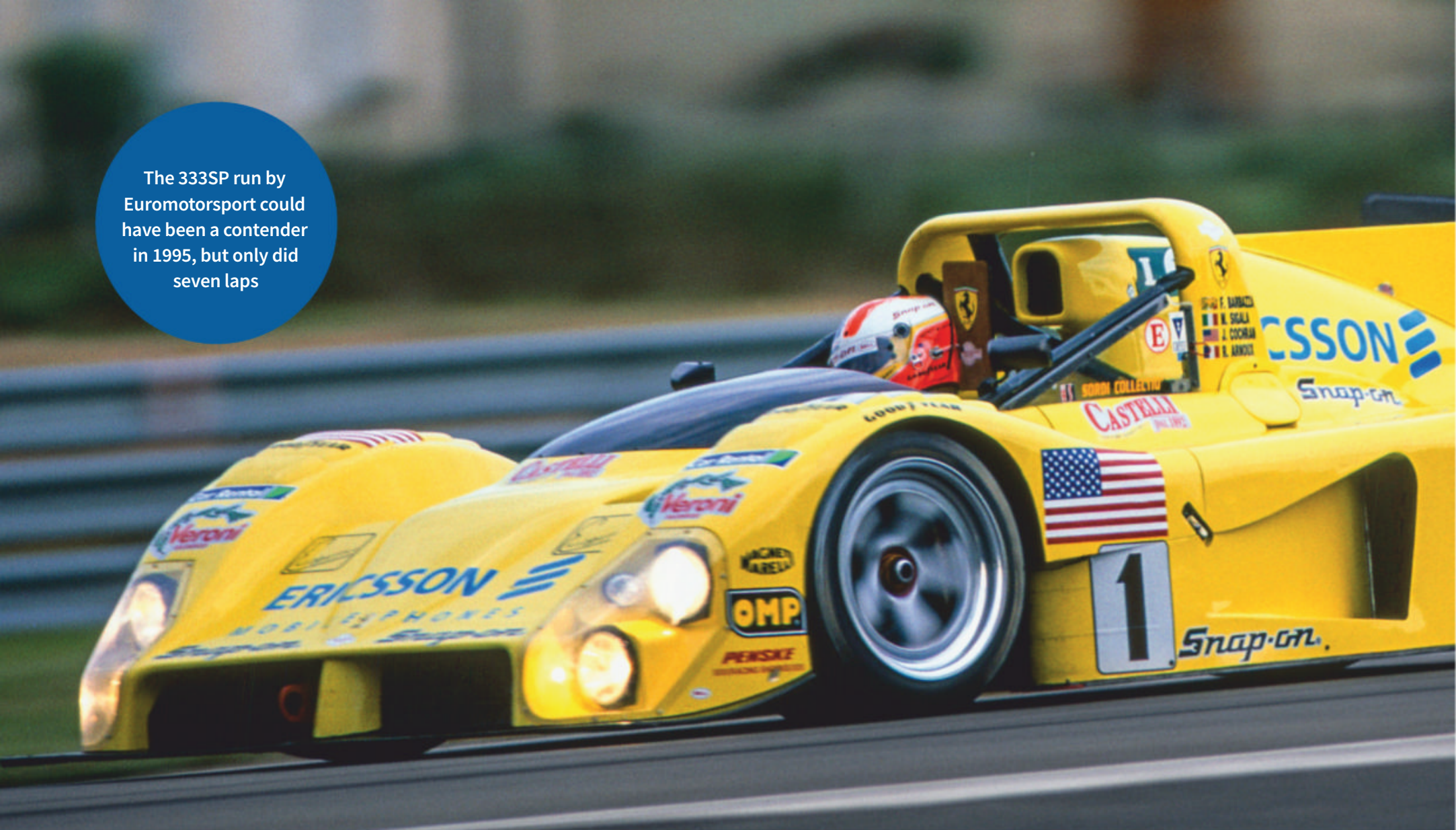
By race week, the Racing for Belgium car had the new bodywork too, and van der Poele claimed the overnight pole in the car he shared with Marc Goossens and Eric Bachelart. The team didn't bother going for a time on Thursday and was knocked off the top spot, though remained within a couple of tenths of the pole.

Van de Poele acknowledges today that he and the team always had reservations about the gearbox. A change of the complete rear was required after the car had worked its way up to fifth through dawn on Sunday morning after some early, niggly delays had kept it from the sharp end. “We lost one gear and then another,” says van de Poele, who ended up with the race's fastest lap. “That's when we decided we had to change the 'box. We didn't really have a choice at that point. It was a shame because I think we still had a chance.”

The car didn't last much longer after dropping down to 10th with a half-hour delay. Bachelart turned sharp right accelerating down the hill from the Dunlop Chicane in hour 16. The team ascribed the accident to a mechanical issue, though the exact problem never seems to have been ascertained. >>



The 333SP run by Euromotorsport could have been a contender in 1995, but only did seven laps



Scandia faced initial reticence from Ferrari towards its Le Mans campaign. The aero update to hone a car designed for the rough and tumble of North American circuits was instigated by the team rather than the factory. Twelve months earlier, it looked for a while as though the Euromotorsport squad would be prevented from taking up its entry with a 333SP. “The factory didn’t want us racing that car at Le Mans,” says (unrelated) team boss Antonio Ferrari, the first team owner to take the new Italian prototype to Le Mans. “Initially they tried to stop us.”

Ferrari explains that driver Massimo Sigala, a key player in the Euromotorsport Le Mans project, managed to pull some strings over at Maranello. He was well connected with Piero Lardi Ferrari, the son of Enzo and who, along with stalwart sportscar owner/driver Gianpiero Moretti, should be regarded as the architect of the 333SP. Opposition from Jean Todt, who’d been installed as boss of the F1 team the previous year, was overcome, Euromotorsport got the endurance-spec engine it required and pitched up with a line-up completed by former Ferrari F1 driver Rene Arnoux and Jay Cochran.

Euromotorsport, which had given the 333SP a debut victory at Road Atlanta the previous year, had the package to win, insists Ferrari. He maintains that today, even though the car completed just seven laps of the race. In that time, Sigala hinted at what might have been by storming from 17th on the grid to third inside seven laps.

The lone Ferrari in the race had been hamstrung in qualifying by a down-on-power sprint engine and the rev limiter that the ACO had forced the team to run. The maximum rpm in IMSA was enforced

*“We put a lot of effort into that race. I still have that piece that broke on my desk. That could have been our race”*

via a download from the car’s ECU. The French body wanted a hard limit for the lower maximum it applied and came up with an electro-mechanical system that its recipient suggests wasn’t fit for purpose. The Heath Robinson arrangement made up of a wheel-speed sensor mounted on the clutch and an off-the-shelf rev limiter would spell the end of the car’s race.

“They made a bracket to support the sensor,” explains Ferrari. “It broke after seven laps and hit the ignition trigger on the flywheel. The engine just stopped and we had no idea why at the time. That same engine did all the rest of the IMSA season without a problem... What we showed in those first seven laps proved that we could have dominated the race. Of course, it started raining like crazy afterwards, so you never know what is going to happen, but we had special wet tyres from Goodyear that we’d tested in America.”

Ferrari is still angry today: “We put a lot of effort into that race. I still have that piece that broke on my desk. That could have been our race.”

The 333SP remained a regular at Le Mans through to 1999. It was perhaps fitting that a car entered by Moretti scored the best result for the model with sixth in 1997 when the veteran shared with Max Papis and Didier Theys. A year later, a car entered by Risi Competizione took eighth, and first in class as the leading LMP1 car home behind seven GT1s.

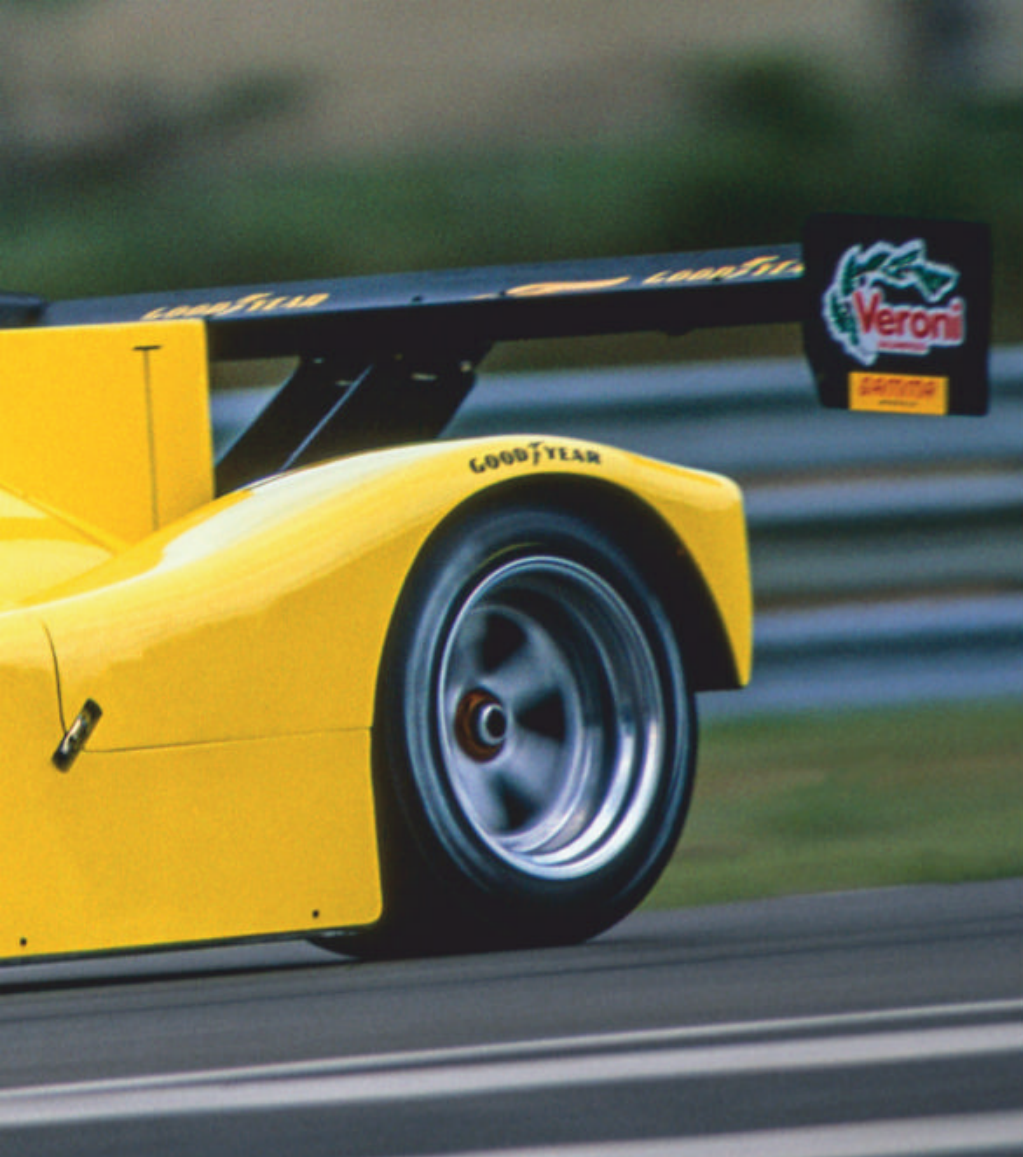
The F40 had long since disappeared from the GT1 ranks by then, the arms race in the class rendering a car conceived in the late 1980s increasingly uncompetitive. The LM designation of the original version of the car offers a clue as to what Ferrari was planning when it commissioned Michelotto Engineering to develop its new supercar for competition. The F40 raced for the first time in 1989, but it wouldn’t be until 1994 that it made it to Le Mans.

The return of GT cars to world championship sportscar racing was revealed in October 1987, an announcement lost amid the news that the Group C fuel formula would be abandoned in favour of a new version of the category with 3.5-litre engines. Ferrari’s interest was piqued and was persuaded by Daniel Marin, boss of Ferrari France,

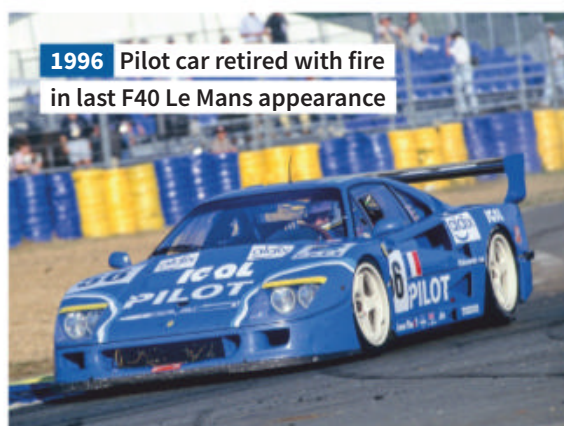


1999 JB Racing 333SP was thwarted by gearbox failure





**YOU MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN...** There was a Ferrari prototype on the grid at Le Mans the year after the 312PB programme came to an end when new team manager Luca di Montezemolo insisted Maranello focus fully on F1. The North American Racing Team entered its own special for 1974 in homage to the factory cars of the previous year. Based on a 1969 312P coupe and still with that car's V12 engine, it was a further evolution of the open-top machine previously only raced by NART in North America. Jean-Claude Andruet and Teodoro Zeccoli ended up ninth in this 'bitza' machine.



**1996** Pilot car retired with fire in last F40 Le Mans appearance



**1996** F50 tested at Fiorano but was canned before it could race

that it needed a presence in the new category.

The only problem was there were no other takers. The new category didn't happen, and Marin took the two cars he'd ordered over the Pond to compete in IMSA's GTO class. Jean Alesi made his Ferrari debut, more than a year before joining the F1 squad, at Laguna Seca in October 1989. Other drivers to race the cars before the stop-start programme ground to a halt included van der Poele, Jean-Pierre Jabouille and Hurley Haywood.

An F40 LM — not a real one but a road car converted by the Swedish Strandell team — turned up at Le Mans in 1994 in a programme bankrolled by gentleman driver Luciano della Noce. A year later a true LM (actually the US homologation car converted to that spec by Michelotto and owned by GT racing boss Stephane Ratel!) turned up in the hands of the Le Mans-based Pilot Racing squad. Della Noce entered a further two upgraded cars, with improved aerodynamics and a wide track, developed and run by Michelotto.

The three Ferraris outqualified a certain other GT1 car that would leave its mark on Le Mans 1995, ending up 6-7-8 on the grid. The new McLaren F1 GTs that qualified behind them ended up scoring a 1-3-4-5 in the race. The Ferraris weren't reliable, although the Pilot car came through to finish a delayed 12th with Michel Ferte, Olivier Thevenin and Carlos Palau. That would be the best result by an F40 in the three years the car was present at Le Mans.

There was a successor planned, as much to the 333SP as the F40. With GT racing booming in Europe under Ratel and his partners in the BPR Organisation that ran the Global Endurance GT Series, Lardi Ferrari reckoned the success of a customer racing car like the 333SP could be replicated in a new arena. Work began on the F50 GT project in the second half of 1995 under the technical leadership of Aldo Costa in his first job at Ferrari on the road to becoming F1 technical director. The GT1 car developed in conjunction with Dallara ran at Fiorano in autumn 1996, first in the hands of road car development driver Dario Benuzzi and then F1 tester Nicola Larini. After that neither hide nor hair was heard of the car.

Ferrari F1 team manager Claudio Berro, who helped run the programme, remembers the project coming to an end in the immediate aftermath of Larini's test. "He tested one day and the next it was all stopped," he says. "There was no more testing after that, >>



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but honestly the car was really good, very quick.”

Berro suggests he doesn’t know why the project was stopped. He thinks the decision was made at the highest level of Fiat, then in control of Ferrari. The technical escalation in GT1 played a role at a time when the F1 team was in rebuild mode under Todt. “The costs were almost doubling every year, and there was a desire to focus on F1,” he says. “This is probably the reason.”

The latter phases of the development of the F50 GT coincided with the arrival of Porsche’s 911 GT1, the first real goalpost mover during

GT racing’s mid-1990s reboot. Your writer reported in October 1996 that Ferrari had leaked a draft press release announcing the end of the project to BPR in an effort to prevent Porsche’s parts-bin special to be allowed to race on the following year in what eventually morphed into the FIA GT Championship (it was ineligible for points in the three Global races it contested).

There would be GT1 Ferraris in the future, though not racing for overall honours. GT2 became GTS, then GT1 as the sands of sportscar racing shifted. Prodrive took the 550 Maranello and turned it into a car good enough to win its class in 2003. It was more a successor to the 512 BB/LM of the late 1970s and early 1980s that took a class wins at La Sarthe in 1981 than the F40 LM. Ferrari cottoned on to its success and commissioned N.Technology to develop its own customer GT1 car, the 575 GTC.

By then Ferrari was a staple of the GT2 category. The British Simpson Engineering team had led the way, developing a 348 for racing and gaining an entry for the car in 1993, even if it didn’t start after team boss Robin Smith was punted off in the warm-up. A year later an official version, again developed by Michelotto and known as the 348 GT Competizione, was on the grid.

A line of Michelotto-developed machinery for a class known variously as GT, GT2 and GTE followed, and with these cars Ferrari continued to notch up class successes at Le Mans. Yes, it’s back at Le Mans going for gold as a factory after a long hiatus, but the Prancing Horse was never absent for very long. 🐎

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9 6

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1-2 overall finishes

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14 30

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100th anniversary of  
MG and Triumph will be  
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MICK WALKER

## Famous E-type joins quality GTSCC field

### GT & SPORTS CAR CUP

The GT & Sports Car Cup grid will be one of the main attractions this weekend at Silverstone for the MG and Triumph 100 extravaganza. Nine top-spec Jaguar E-types and a pair of AC Cobras head the category's strongest field in several years as the Pre-'66 invitation series kicks off its season with a 90-minute race.

Richard Kent's E-type fixed-head coupe 'CUT 7', a familiar sight at the venue in the hands of Jaguar specialist Dick Protheroe, is an exciting late entry. But the Coventry marque's quality representation runs deeper, for local heroes John and Gary Pearson, Graeme and James Dodd, Phil Keen, Oliver Bryant, Ben Adams and Scots John Clark/Gordie Mutch will

drive bubble-topped roadster versions.

Father and son Chris Chiles Jr and Sr – the latter a former International Supersports Cup champion – are regular GTSCC victors in their AC Cobra, and will be joined in the pack by the Tour de France Daytona Coupe evocation of David Smithies/Chris Clarkson.

The MG Car Club decided to partner with Triumph clubs to make the event a special celebration of the two marques' centenaries. In addition to the motorsport – which also includes the California Cup autotest – a number of off-track activities are planned, such as stunt driving displays, an expanded trade stall area and a huge selection of cars from the two famous manufacturers' histories.

"It's taken a lot of planning and it's coming together to be a fantastic event," said MGCC manager Mike Stafford. "It seemed very fitting because Triumph is celebrating its 100 years as well. We've done events with them before and they've proven popular – we will have a timeline of 100 years of both MGs and Triumphs with a car from each year."

MG Motor UK will also have a presence and bring the MG story right up to the present day with the new Cyberster electric sportscar, which is due to go on sale next summer, set to be on display.

MARCUS PYE & STEPHEN LICKORISH



Kent's ex-Protheroe  
E-type will compete this  
weekend in the GTSCC

## FITZ-SIMON PIPS RICHARDS IN LURANI TROPHY

A month after winning the opening round of the Formula Junior Historic Racing Association's Lurani Trophy at Hockenheim, Horatio Fitz-Simon came out on top again last weekend at France's GP de l'Age d'Or classic at Dijon.

Venue debutant Fitz-Simon, who learned the circuit on a simulator, and Clive Richards, on his first visit for 17 years, were closely matched in their red Lotus 22s, both raced in period by Tommy Reid.

From an extraordinary original entry of 54 competitors, 40 eventually fought to qualify for the 35 grid places. Richards claimed pole, despite Fitz-Simon, his confidence buoyed by three wins in an Elan 26R at Silverstone in the interim, being quickest in all three sectors on different laps.

Fitz-Simon got the upper hand following a safety car interlude in Saturday's opening leg, but the battle between the Britons raged throughout Sunday's sequel, Fitz-Simon beating Richards on the long uphill drag to the finish by less than a second.

Italian Roberto Tonetti, a previous champion, guided his Brabham BT6 to third in both legs.

Californian Danny Baker's pace improved with each outing in his Classic Team Lotus 27, finishing fifth on Sunday and on aggregate behind team-mate Lee Mowle (20/22).

In the drum-braked divisions, Stuart Roach (Alexis Mk3), Australian Lurani champion Marty Bullock (Wren) and Denmark's Pierre Guichard (Lynx) were split by four seconds in race two, Guichard claiming gold on aggregate.

A magnanimous gesture from Dane Erik Justessen allowed Richard Bishop-Miller to take over his ex-Arthur Mallock U2 and win Class B while the Briton's Autosport-Triumph is under repair. Giampaolo Benedini (OSCA) and Clinton McCarthy (Lotus 18) took class A and C honours respectively.

CHARLES PRINGLE





**DRIVERS COMPETE ONCE AGAIN AT COVENTRY MOTOFE** The sprint on the inner ring road of Coventry MotoFest took place last weekend after a hiatus of four years, the course comprising two sides of the dual carriageway with seven chicanes installed. On top throughout the event was Olly Clark in the enormously powerful Subaru Impreza ‘Gobstopper 1’, taking the fastest time on both Saturday and Sunday (above). Chasing him hard were Damien Bradley (Subaru Legacy) and Stephen Mallett (Radical), who finished second and third on Saturday before swapping positions on Sunday. **Photograph by Joy Richings**

# Walker back behind the wheel in Germany



**BMW M2 CUP**

Ex-GB4 and National Formula Ford frontrunner Alex Walker made a return to racing last month in the BMW M2 Cup series that supports the DTM.

Walker, who won three GB4 races last season in a partial campaign, had not competed in over a year, aside from a one-off FF1600 outing. His venture away from

single-seaters comes in a series in which the cars are all centrally run by Project 1. Despite not testing prior to the opening round at Oschersleben, he took a best result of seventh.

“It’s something we’ve been thinking about for a while,” said Walker. “Just before we committed to do GB4, we were speaking to a chap involved in running the championship

but we still wanted to be in single-seaters. As single-seaters became more and more expensive, we went down this route.

“We had a few offers and did a few tests over the winter in various GT4 machinery, but this seemed a little bit better value – and it’s a good chance to learn new tracks.” Next round is at the Norisring.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

**ANGELO R. DRIVE**

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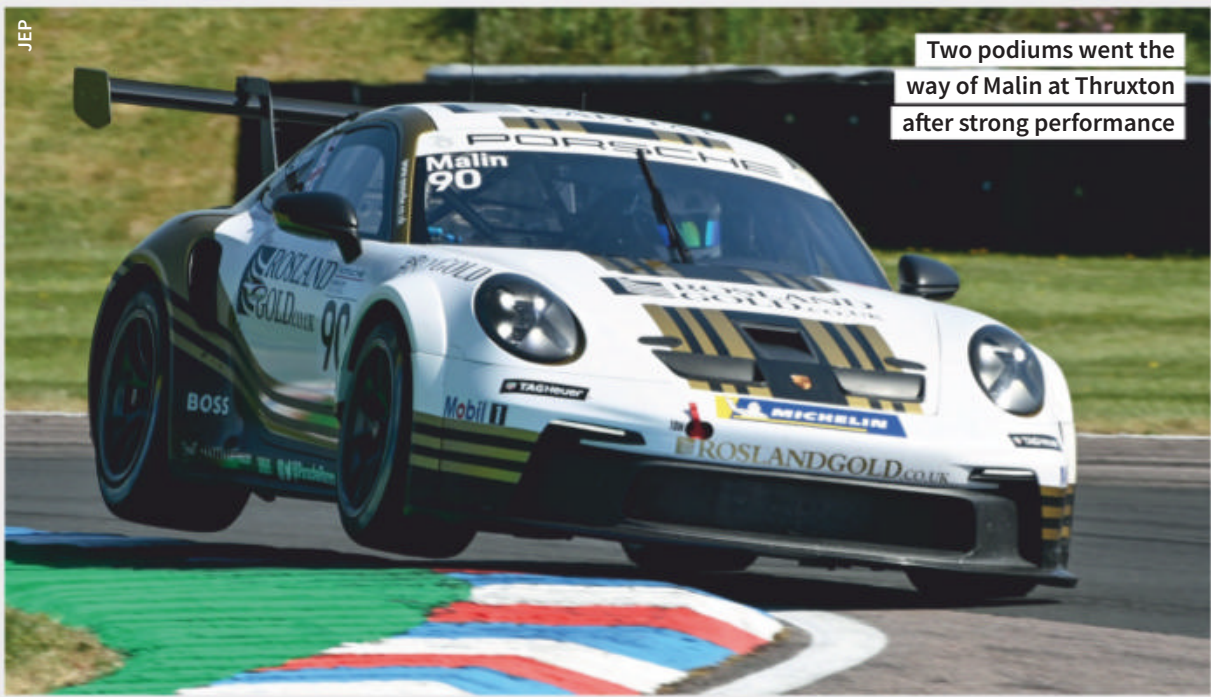
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# Malin to continue with Century in Carrera Cup GB campaign

## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Josh Malin will complete the Porsche Carrera Cup GB season with Century Motorsport after taking two podiums on his return to the series in place of Gus Burton at Thruxton last weekend. One-time Ginetta GT5 Challenge champion Malin placed seventh in his debut Carrera Cup season with Richardson Racing in 2021, before impressing while substituting for the injured Jack



Bartholomew for three events last year. After starting 2023 without a drive, Malin has stepped into the Rosland Gold-backed seat vacated by Burton, who is set to focus on his Formula 1-supporting Porsche Supercup campaign after a non-score at Brands Hatch last month derailed his Carrera Cup GB title bid. Century boss Nathan Freke said: “There’s lots of very, very talented drivers out there, but there’s not a lot that can jump into a Carrera Cup car and just be quick straight off the bat, because they are quite unique cars to drive. “Josh parachuted in last year and had some really, really great results, so it was just a no-brainer. He’s a typically talented underfunded driver – and that was me 15 years ago so I’m very sympathetic to that.” “Getting a podium in my first race back after 10 months, that’s not a bad effort,” said Malin. “It’s very special to be back and hopefully I can seize this opportunity and give it the absolute best that I can.”

MARK PAULSON

## IN THE HEADLINES

### RECORD NUMBERS IN F4

The British Formula 4 Championship recorded its largest-ever grid at Thruxton last weekend. After turning 15 since last month’s Snetterton round, South African Mika Abrahams was able to begin his campaign with Fortec Motorsports, taking the field to 23 cars. Abrahams, who was fourth in Danish F4 last year at the age of 14, set the 10th fastest time in qualifying and had a best result of ninth.

### REBRAND FOR TRUST

The British Motorsport Trust has undergone a rebrand to help it further engage with the motorsport community as it transitions from the British Motor Sport Training Trust (BMSTT). A new website has been launched – britishmotorsporttrust.org – while the UK-registered charity has also taken to social media for the first time to help showcase its initiatives.

### HANNAH WAITS FOR DEBUT

Ex-GB4 and Formula Ford racer Logan Hannah missed out on her first GT race after team-mate Ian Loggie crashed their McLaren 720S GT3 before she could take the wheel at Snetterton last weekend. They had entered the GT Cup round, with Hannah committing to a move into GT racing after several years of single-seaters. She and Loggie hope to return to the GT Cup later in the season once the McLaren is repaired.

### CRASH PROMPTS CAR SWAP

Kevin Clarke raced two different cars in last weekend’s GT Cup races at Snetterton after the Lamborghini Super Trofeo (below) he shared with Matty Evans was badly damaged in an accident during Sunday’s practice. Evans, who had a head-on collision with Keith Bush’s Porsche 911, suffered fractured vertebrae in the accident and was taken to hospital. Clarke’s Woodrow Motorsport team was able to fetch an Audi R8 usually run by 7TSix Motorsport, so he was able to do some test laps on Sunday.



# Six-day cycling charity fundraiser

## CHARITY

A fundraising mother and son completed a 500-mile cycle trip from the Nurburgring to Silverstone during Ginetta’s G-Fest weekend at Silverstone. Sarah and Tom were raising money and awareness in support of Youth at Heart,

a charity which helped Tom’s friend Freddie – a big Formula 1 fan – when he needed lifesaving open-heart surgery due to rheumatic heart disease at the age of 15. The pair completed their six-day challenge by cycling a lap of honour around the Silverstone circuit after the

day’s racing had concluded on Saturday evening. “We just wanted to do something, Freddie is into motorsport and it seemed a suitable thing to do,” said Sarah. “An amazing experience, we raised about £3500.”

STEVE WHITFIELD



# Ovenden cooking for BRX points advantage

## BRITISH RALLYCROSS

Twelve months after claiming his maiden outright Supercar victory at Mondello Park, Citroen DS3 campaigner Tristan Ovenden left the Irish circuit in the lead of the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy standings.

But the weekend was far from straightforward for the former Supernational title-winner. Contact with former British RX champion Derek Tohill in the final on Saturday broke the right-rear suspension on Ovenden's Citroen, putting him out after leading early on.

Tohill drove to the round win ahead of fellow Irishman John McCluskey, as the British and Irish Rallycross championships combined for the double-header event, and it was six-time British champion Julian Godfrey who took top British points in third. Meanwhile, Jake Harris drove his all-electric BMW Mini RX Supercar to fifth overall and second of the British campaigners.

Godfrey's success was his first in the British series since 2021, but Sunday's running was less fruitful for him. The engineer-turned-driver had his DS3 pitched sideways in contact at Turn 1 of his Q2 race, with the moment resulting in Godfrey sustaining a heavy roll into the next bend, putting him out of the event.

Later in the day, Harris delivered an



impressive drive to win the second semi-final, and the Englishman led the final early on, thanks in part to Irish contenders Tohill and Michael Leonard coming together in the opening corner.

While Harris led for much of the final, Mondello local Tommy Graham, racing a recently acquired ex-Kevin Procter Ford Fiesta, took an early joker lap from second and drove to the front of the

order to net the win. Graham also claimed the inaugural Irish Rallycross Grand Prix title attributed to the race.

McCluskey was runner-up again, while Ovenden finished third and took maximum British points to claim the series lead. Opening-weekend victor Patrick O'Donovan missed the event to contest the Portuguese European Rallycross Championship round.

# Black shines in Legends with hat-trick

## KNOCKHILL

Stewart Black was the driver to beat in the Scottish Legends Championship at Knockhill last weekend, taking a hat-trick of wins.

The first of those came in Saturday's final after getting the better of Ryan McLeish over the 10-lap contest. Black finished 1.3 seconds clear, with Chris Dewey in third.

McLeish had earlier taken the first Legends win of the day in the opening heat, just 0.1s ahead of Black, who would

also finish as runner-up in the second heat, this time behind Dewey.

Black opened his Sunday account with another win, again from McLeish, before McLeish got the better of Black and Daniel Clark in the second heat. Black completed his hat-trick in the final race, finishing over a second clear of Clark.

Dan Martin took a brace of Scottish C1 Cup wins from Thomas Comber and Sam Corson respectively, while Andrew Graham was never headed in both the Scottish



Classic Saloons and Sportscars Championship races.

The Scottish Modsports wins were shared between Gordon Duncan, who took both wins on Saturday, and Ron Cumming

and Neil Hose on Sunday.

Both Darlington & District Motor Club Northern Saloons & Sports Cars Championship encounters went the way of Andy Robinson.





P4t was put together with help from Willis, who got the chance to drive it

PAUL LAWRENCE

## Willis competes in all-new P4t after problems with own OMS

### BRITISH HILLCLIMB

The all-new P4t hillclimb car built by Alex Summers and his family was pressed into action at Shelsley Walsh last weekend after their DJ Firehawk ran an engine bearing at Gurston Down a week earlier.

A late decision was made to give the P4t its second public appearance, after Summers had driven it on its debut at Loton Park. His wife

Debbie and father Richard shared the car initially at Shelsley but, when British Hillclimb Championship contender Trevor Willis hit engine problems with his OMS, Richard stood down to allow Willis to drive on Sunday.

"Trevor made some of the parts for the car and we wouldn't have got to Loton Park without his help," said Summers Sr.

The P4t ran faultlessly as

the drivers increased their pace in the 2.5 litre, V6-engined single-seater, both Richard and Debbie driving it for the first time in practice on Saturday. "It's very interesting and very different to the Firehawk," said Debbie.

Willis was delighted to have the chance to drive the car and posted the P4t's best climb of the weekend with a 26.05s, just 0.5s from a point-scoring time.

PAUL LAWRENCE

### IN THE HEADLINES

#### TWO CLASS WINS ON DEBUT

Scotsman Tim Jacobsen, who has previously raced an MGB and a Sports 2000 with his father Laurence, made his single-seater debut at Silverstone at the end of last month in the ex-Alan Jones/Harry Stiller Racing March 74B, winning twice in the Formula Atlantic class in Historic Formula 2. The Jacobsens acquired the famous car, which was also owned and raced by Eddie Jordan, from Richard Ellingworth and have spent some time preparing it ready for racing in Historic F2.

#### EMMO/MASS CARS IN DUBAI

More cars have been confirmed for the Gulf Historic Dubai GP Revival later this year, with the Fittipaldi F8, as driven by two-time Formula 1 champion Emerson Fittipaldi, and March 821 raced by Jochen Mass due to be at the event. A Nissan NPT-90, Toyota 86C and Chrysler Viper GTS-R will also be there on 8-10 December.

#### COMBE SCRAPS C1 IDEA

The Castle Combe Racing Club has elected not to press ahead with plans to run two C1 races, which were designed to help encourage more new drivers into the sport, at its 15 July event. The meeting will feature special sports-prototype contests named after popular Combe racer, the late Norman Lackford. "We've had some interest and it's gathering pace," said CCRC chairman Ken Davies. "Norman was a really loyal and enthusiastic competitor and that's the recognition we're giving to name the race after him."

#### LAW BAGS FIRST TOP 10

Oliver Law, 14-year-old son of historic racer and Goodwood Festival of Speed star Justin, took his first car racing top 10 with ninth in the opening Junior Saloon Car race at Anglesey last weekend (below). "When he's old enough it would be nice to race historics with me," said Law Sr.



STEVE JONES

## Dave McCloy 1937-2023

### OBITUARY

Welsh club racer Dave McCloy, one of a small band of Formule Libre scrappers who played cameo roles among the stars of Formula 5000's maiden European season of 1969, died at the end of last month following an illness.

The builder, who followed his father into the trade, competed in a Jaguar E-type in the early 1960s. "Dave was a character, who would do anything to earn a shilling," said Davy Powell, a regular Libre winner.

McCloy then acquired the 4.7-litre Ford V8-engined McLaren M2A/1 – built as an F1 tyre test car on a Mallite monocoque, formed of alloy-skinned balsa wood – from Robert Ashcroft in 1967.

McCloy's adventures with it were chequered, crashing spectacularly at Oulton Park's Lodge corner in 1967. He eventually won a Libre race at Llandow in May 1969, and two months later, after overheating while leading a Castle Combe

clubbie, he contested Europe's first continental F5000 race.

He was classified eighth in the Trofee der Nordzee on Koksijde airfield in Belgium and returned for Brands Hatch's championship finale, where an engine mounting broke. After a further non-finish at Llandow, the McLaren was destroyed in a garage fire in November.

McCloy, who also had an outing in a Lola Mk1 sportscar at his local circuit, bounced back in 1970, competing at Llandow and Combe in the ex-works Lotus Cortina registered PHK 615D, Jim Clark's frontline car and multiple race winner in 1966.

In 1972, he campaigned a Ford Escort-BDA, shared with Dennis 'Joe' Gregory, the combo becoming Llandow Special Saloon favourites. He won on August Bank Holiday Monday in 1974, the day his team-mate crashed fatally.

McCloy was devastated by the loss but competed again in 1977 with an E-type.

MARCUS PYE



TOCA SUPPORTS THRUXTON 3-4 JUNE

# Jordans star on return to the BTCC bill

## MINI 7 RACING CLUB

Andrew Jordan and father Mike reminded the British Touring Car crowds of their skill and panache with two wins apiece as they and the Mini 7 Racing Club starred on a welcome return to the BTCC bill.

Jordan Jr won the first Mini Miglia thriller around the super-fast circuit through a combination of pace and guile. He traded places throughout with Rupert Deeth, Aaron Smith and Jeff Smith, with the combatants often three-abreast up Woodham Hill approaching the chicane.

Each enjoyed spells in front, but Jordan was plotting his last-lap charge. He had been intentionally dropping back, testing how many places he could regain, to determine the optimum position to start the final tour. "I went to fifth, I think it was, and I couldn't get back to the lead in a lap, so it's probably third or fourth," he reckoned, playing it to perfection. "It was one of the best races I've ever been in. No contact, you're side-by-side through Church, three-abreast up into the chicane. You've got to be respectful when you're at that sort of speed side-by-side."

Kane Astin, who snatched third behind Aaron Smith in the final sort-out, and



Sunday's reversed-grid polesitter Scott Kendall joined to form a sextet sparring in the sequel before Astin's engine blew. Then yellow flags on Woodham Hill led Jordan to alter his tactics and attempt to win from the front. He just held off Jeff Smith, who earlier caught a wild moment entering Club on the outside of three other cars while "practising for the last lap", and three-time champion Aaron Smith.

Jordan Sr's approach was to largely control the Mini Se7en races from the front. He led Saturday's race from start to finish, covering the inside exiting Church, which forced Connor O'Brien to repeatedly attack on the outside – but without enough momentum

to decisively overcome his rival.

"I was surprised that he couldn't tow past me up the straight," admitted Jordan. "When he hadn't passed me halfway into the race, I thought, 'I don't think he's quite got enough, so as long as I don't make a mistake on the brakes anywhere, I think I'll be all right'."

Once Jordan climbed from eighth to relieve O'Brien of race two's lead, the rematch was on. But O'Brien's better run through Club led to him nudging Jordan's car, which holed his radiator. Ross Billison took up the challenge but Jordan again held firm.

**MARK PAULSON**

# Hampshire again Hitech's happy hunting ground

## BRITISH F4

Hitech's Thruxton form in British Formula 4 continued as Jimmy Piszcyk and Will Macintyre took maiden series victories – the team's sixth and seventh from nine races in Hampshire since joining the championship. But Rodin Carlin's Louis Sharp limited the damage with a pair of

podiums to retain a narrow points lead.

The Hitech quartet qualified in the top six for both races, and Australian Piszcyk converted pole to victory ahead of Macintyre and Sharp as Saturday's race ended under safety car conditions.

Polesitter Macintyre was also never headed in the finale but initially faced a concerted challenge from team-mate

Gabriel Stilp. Stilp was increasingly ragged in the closing stages, dropping a wheel off track and then suffering brake lock-ups. That invited Alpine Formula 1 junior Aiden Neate to attack through the Complex on the penultimate lap, making the move stick into Goodwood. Then, as Piszcyk got stacked up behind Stilp entering Club, Sharp boldly passed around the outside for fourth. The Kiwi wasn't finished there, running side-by-side with Stilp through Noble and Goodwood before securing third at Church.

In between times, Noah Lisle salvaged something from a difficult weekend – including causing Saturday's safety car after Patrick Heuzenroeder's spin collected him – with victory in the fully reversed-grid race. Lisle started fourth, but led within half a lap, and first resisted Matteo de Palo then Gustav Jonsson. Dion Gowda, Deagen Fairclough and Kanato Le climbed from outside the top 10 to third, fourth and fifth.

**MARK PAULSON**





# Still no double for de Haan

## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Denied by a penalty last time out at Brands Hatch, Robert de Haan's searing Thruxton pace might have secured him a first Porsche Carrera Cup GB double, only for mechanical trouble to intervene.

De Haan qualified fastest by over half a second, with the same margin covering the next eight cars as track-limits offences



or improvements under yellow flags cost several. The Richardson Racing driver then scampered away to win the opener by nearly 10 seconds. Team Parker's Adam Smalley was second, withstanding pressure from Josh Malin (replacing Gus Burton at Century Motorsport), whom he jumped at the start.

Fifth on race two's partially reversed grid, de Haan was left stranded by a suspected clutch failure. Polesitter Charles Rainford led from Malin as James Kellett (Century) was slow away. Overnight analysis had helped Kellett improve his pace and climb from seventh to fourth in the opener but he lost out in the sequel after checking a slight creep at the start before getting eased onto the grass by Smalley and needing to pit to prevent debris blocking his radiator.

Rainford resisted Malin's late challenge to claim his first win since graduating to the Pro class, while third extended Smalley's points advantage over de Haan.

MARK PAULSON

# Hero-to-zero for Solley in Minis

## MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

It was hero-to-zero and zero-to-hero respectively for Alex Solley and Jake Byrne in the Mini Challenge Trophy at Thruxton, with three generally unruly contests featuring insanely close racing and numerous incidents.

Maximus Hall and Harry Hickton made it a Junior Saloons class-of-2022 front-row lockout, and the opener shook out as a seven-car battle following an early safety car. Byrne needed a new engine after qualifying, but steering failure in the race led to a collision that caused the pause. Solley emerged in front with two and a half laps to go to beat Rhys Hurd and Tom Ovenden.

Solley was leading the second race from Nicky Taylor when Hickton, running third, clipped a tyre stack at the chicane, launching him into a series of rolls. After a lengthy delay, there was a restart before another sizeable chicane shunt caused another red flag, with Solley winning from Taylor and Ovenden.

Byrne climbed from the back of the grid to 11th in race two, and the Irishman picked his way through the marauding mob in the finale to deny Ovenden at the chicane on the last lap. Ovenden, out of shape, was tagged into a spin by Solley, who parallel parked in the barriers with Reece Lycett and was given a grid penalty for the next round.

MARCUS SIMMONS



## RACE RESULTS

### MINI MIGLIA

**Race 1 (both 14 laps) 1 Andrew Jordan;** 2 Aaron Smith +0.239s; 3 Kane Astin; 4 Jeff Smith; 5 Colin Peacock; 6 Phil Bullen-Brown. **Fastest lap** Astin 1m28.924s (95.38mph). **Pole** Jordan. **Starters** 25.

**Race 2 1 Jordan;** 2 J Smith +0.143s; 3 A Smith; 4 Rupert Deeth; 5 Scott Kendall; 6 Peacock. **FL** A Smith 1m28.658s (95.66mph). **P** Kendall. **S** 24.

### MINI SE7EN

**Race 1 (both 13 laps) 1 Mike Jordan;** 2 Connor O'Brien +0.829s; 3 Ross Billison; 4 Spencer Wanstall; 5 Damien Harrington; 6 Darren Thomas. **FL** Billison 1m36.113s (88.24mph). **P** Jordan. **S** 32.

**Race 2 1 Jordan;** 2 Billison +0.496s; 3 Wanstall; 4 Joe Thompson; 5 Harrington; 6 Glen Woodbridge. **FL** Jordan 1m36.040s (88.31mph). **P** Graeme Davis. **S** 31.

### BRITISH FORMULA 4

**Race 1 (14 laps) 1 Jimmy Piszcyk;** 2 Will Macintyre +0.494s; 3 Louis Sharp; 4 Aiden Neate; 5 Gabriel Stilp; 6 Kanato Le. **FL** Piszcyk 1m11.315s (118.93mph). **P** Piszcyk. **S** 23.

**Race 2 (15 laps) 1 Noah Lisle;** 2 Gustav Jonsson +1.096s; 3 Dion Gowda; 4 Deagen Fairclough; 5 Le; 6 Jack Sherwood. **FL** Gowda 1m11.748s (118.21mph). **P** Isaac Barashi. **S** 23.

**Race 3 (17 laps) 1 Macintyre;** 2 Neate +5.293s; 3 Sharp; 4 Stilp; 5 Piszcyk; 6 Fairclough. **FL** Fairclough 1m11.479s (118.65mph). **P** Macintyre. **S** 23.

**Points 1 Sharp 140;** 2 Macintyre 138; 3 Gowda 122; 4 Le 100; 5 Neate 91; 6 Lisle 90.

### PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

**Race 1 (both 22 laps) 1 Robert de Haan;** 2 Adam Smalley +9.446s; 3 Josh Malin; 4 James Kellett; 5 Charles Rainford; 6 Matthew Graham. **FL** de Haan 1m12.823s (116.46mph). **P** de Haan. **S** 23.

**Race 2 1 Rainford;** 2 Malin +0.250s; 3 Smalley; 4 Micah Stanley; 5 Jake Giddings; 6 Max Bird. **FL** Kellett 1m13.362s (115.61mph). **P** Rainford. **S** 23.

**Points 1 Smalley 54;** 2 de Haan 47; 3 Rainford 31; 4 Kellett 28; 5 Graham 25; 6 Gus Burton 16.

### MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

**Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Alex Solley;** 2 Rhys Hurd +0.288s; 3 Tom Ovenden; 4 Harry Hickton; 5 Nicky Taylor; 6 Maximus Hall. **FL** Reece Lycett 1m31.959s (92.23mph). **P** Hall. **S** 29.

**Race 2 (1 lap) 1 Solley;** 2 Taylor +0.305s; 3 Ovenden; 4 Gabe Fairbrother; 5 Lycett; 6 Ben Jenkins. **FL** Solley 3m46.846s (37.38mph). **P** Solley. **S** 28.

**Race 3 (12 laps) 1 Jack Byrne;** 2 Jenkins +0.691s; 3 Luca Marinoni Osborne; 4 Hurd; 5 Taylor; 6 Fairbrother. **FL** Solley 1m31.942s (92.24mph). **P** Lycett. **S** 27.



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





## Dunne does the double as Loake stays at the top

**SPA**  
**GB3**  
**3-4 JUNE**

Hitech's Alex Dunne claimed his first two GB3 Championship race victories of the season at Spa, as Joseph Loake first lost and then regained the championship lead.

Rodin Carlin's Callum Voisin secured a double pole position in qualifying on Friday evening, having gradually climbed up the order through the day's three practice sessions, but in the opening two races on Saturday Dunne was able to pass the polesitter on each occasion to earn victory.

Dunne's first triumph came after a thrilling battle with Voisin, as the Irishman frequently got into his rival's slipstream through Eau Rouge and along the Kemmel Straight. He finally made the move stick on the sixth lap around the outside into Les Combes, having drawn alongside much earlier compared to his previous attempts.

The reigning British F4 champion took the flag 1.2 seconds clear of Voisin, who admitted to making a couple of mistakes as he aimed to fight back, with Douglas Motorsport's Tymek Kucharczyk securing a first podium of the season in third.

JHR's David Morales and Hillspeed's Gerrard Xie claimed their best results of the season up to that point with fourth and fifth, ahead of Fortec's Max Esterson.

Dunne's second triumph was almost a carbon copy as he resumed his battle with Voisin, but only took two attempts to get past this time before stretching out a lead of almost 2s by the end of the encounter.

Dunne's move for the lead was identical to his race one effort, as he swept around the outside of Les Combes on lap four of nine.

A second runner-up spot for Voisin, ahead of Elite's McKenzie Cresswell, meant he snatched the championship lead from Loake, who had banked only ninth and 10th places up to that point in the weekend after a tricky event where he battled set-up issues with his JHR machine.

Xie continued his impressive weekend with fourth, ahead of Kucharczyk and Arden VRD's James Hedley.

However, the full reversed-grid finale on Sunday turned Loake's weekend around, as he surged from 12th on the grid to second after a chaotic first lap.

Elite's Oliver Stewart started in first and, once he fought his way back past a fast-starting Daniel Mavlyutov, the Scotsman led every lap despite an early safety car that was deployed following a multi-car collision exiting Les Combes.

Stewart finished 2.5s clear of Loake, with Fortec's Jarrod Waberski taking a maiden GB3 podium in third. Hedley and Douglas's Lucas Staico were fourth and fifth.

Behind, the weekend's most impressive drivers Dunne and Voisin provided plenty of highlights again, with the former blasting from 24th on the grid to sixth, and Voisin rising from 25th and last to complete the top 10.

Loake's final race effort means he carries a slender two-point margin to Snetterton on 17-18 June, where the campaign reaches its halfway mark.

**RICHARD RANDLE**

### GB3 RESULTS

#### GB3

**Race 1 (8 laps) 1 Alex Dunne;** 2 Callum Voisin +1.174s; 3 Tymek Kucharczyk; 4 David Morales; 5 Gerrard Xie; 6 Max Esterson. **Fastest lap** Dunne 2m16.223s (115.01mph).

**Pole** Voisin. **Starters** 25.

**Race 2 (9 laps) 1 Dunne;** 2 Voisin +1.995s; 3 McKenzie Cresswell; 4 Xie; 5 Kucharczyk; 6 James Hedley. **FL** Dunne 2m16.669s (114.64mph). **P** Voisin. **S** 25.

**Race 3 (10 laps) 1 Oliver Stewart;** 2 Joseph Loake +2.524s; 3 Jarrod Waberski; 4 Hedley; 5 Lucas Staico; 6 Dunne. **FL** Esterson 2m16.966s (114.39mph). **P** Stewart. **S** 25.

**Points 1 Loake 196;** 2 Voisin 194; 3 Dunne (below) 178; 4 Kucharczyk 151; 5 Hedley 143; 6 Cresswell 127.



For full results visit: [gb-3.net](http://gb-3.net)



# Bradley and Crowhurst's BMW battle

OULTON PARK  
750MC  
3 JUNE

With hordes of BMWs descending on Oulton Park for the BMW Sommerfest, it was fitting that it was the BMW Car Club Championship that stole the show at a scorching 750 Motor Club meeting.

With two wins apiece this season, Niall Bradley and Graham Crowhurst headed into rounds five and six on equal footing and set up a mouth-watering prospect for race one after qualifying alongside each on the front row in their E46 M3s.

Bradley took the advantage from polesitter Crowhurst and held a narrow lead at the start, with Paul Cook joining the scrap in third. When Lee Piercey's E36 ended up in the gravel at Shell Oils Corner, the safety car forced the leading trio together and set up a breathless second half of the race.

Crowhurst lost out to Cook on the restart, admitting "the car felt like it was floating and I went onto the grass around Druids". While this handed Irish racer Bradley the win, Crowhurst salvaged the best points he could with a brave move around Cook on the final lap to take home second place.

The issue with Crowhurst's BMW turned out to be under-inflated tyres and, combined with the extreme heat, resulted in a loss of grip. With his tyres restored to normal levels of pressure, Crowhurst managed to take the win in race two. After a blistering start, he cruised to a 4.3s win over Bradley.

"That was probably the best start I've



Crowhurst sorted tyre issue and beat Bradley

STEVE JONES

ever done," he admitted, as the BMW drivers continue to share the spoils with three wins each.

It looked like a BMW would also claim victory in the two-hour Club Enduro contest, with James Collins and Daniel Sylvester's M3 leading for much of the race after early leader Will Stacey's Lotus Elise was forced to retire with a coolant leak.

"The car wasn't revving properly and I could feel the rears going so it was obviously leaking on to them," the Britcar racer admitted.

The race was far from over, though, after the winner of rounds one and two was out. And with no fewer than five safety cars, there were plenty of opportunities to complete the mandatory pitstop and take advantage.

That's what eventual winners Mark Grice and William Beech did in their SEAT Cupra, admitting "we planned it tactically, and it worked out".

Pitting earlier in the race than the other drivers vying for the win meant that, when safety cars came out, they

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### BMW CAR CLUB RACING

**Race 1** Niall Bradley (E46 M3)

**Race 2** Graham Crowhurst (E46 M3)

### CLUB ENDURO

Mark Grace/William Beech (SEAT Cupra)

### SPORT SPECIALS

**Races 1 & 2** Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

### SPORTS 1000

**Race 1** Dan Clowes (Mittell MC-53)

**Race 2** Ryan Yarrow (Spire GT-3)

### ALFA ROMEO CHAMPIONSHIP

**Races 1 & 2** Barry McMahon (156)

For full results visit: [750mc.co.uk](http://750mc.co.uk)



Clowes (8) took the win in the first Sports 1000 race in his Mittell

STEVE JONES

could catch the leading pack, eventually taking the lead with 20 minutes to go after the leading M3 of Collins and Sylvester boxed.

It was another Cupra driven by Colin Gillespie and Phil Dryburgh that came home in second, using tactical nous to claim their best result of the season.

Elsewhere across the sun-drenched day, Andy Hiley continued his 100% winning record, twice taking victory in Sport Specials in his Chronos HR1S.

In Sports 1000, Dan Clowes and Ryan Yarrow shared the spoils in their respective Mittell and Spire machines, while Barry McMahon (156) took both wins in the Alfa Romeo Championship.

**DOM D'ANGELILLO**



# McLaren and Mercedes share GT Cup spoils

**SNETTERTON**  
**MSVR**  
**3-4 JUNE**

Tom Roche and Simon Orange were the Saturday winners in the GT Cup, steering their McLaren 720S to both the sprint and endurance wins.

Polesitter Roche won convincingly in the shorter race from Hugo Cook's Audi R8, as guest entry and British GT driver Darren Leung finished third in a BMW M4 having made progress from fifth on the grid.

McLaren debutant Mark Radcliffe was fourth having scrapped with the sister 720S of Matt Topham until a spin by Topham dropped him back, as a track limits penalty meant he finished sixth. Just ahead, the Drivetac Mercedes-AMG, driven by Sam Maher-Loughnan, finished fifth from in the pitlane as he finished with a last-lap puncture.

Looming behind the leading drivers was the 720S of reigning British GT champion Ian Loggie, which had started from the pitlane due to a disputed track limits violation in qualifying. He got as high as eighth after picking off his rivals.

The first 50-minute race went the Orange team's way after leader James Wallis, sharing with Maher-Loughnan, spun the Drivetac Mercedes at Coram in the closing stages. Orange had initially led for the first part of the race, but a quick pitstop had put Wallis ahead after the driver changes. He was able to finish second after the spin.

Both had done well to avoid another flying McLaren at the start as Loggie made an aggressive opening gambit and promptly triggered a red flag by hitting the barrier during a move on the leaders.

The restart was less dramatic, although the Cook/Sacha Kakad Audi was still in the



Roche and Orange (l)  
were the pairing to  
beat on Saturday

pits having its steering repaired following contact with Loggie. The car made it out after five laps and got to the finish, despite some problems with the power steering.

Topham and Marcus Clutton were third, ahead of Radcliffe and Rob Bell, who lost time when Radcliffe had a coming-together with a backmarker.

Maher-Loughnan won the second sprint on Sunday, having shot past poleman Radcliffe at the start. Radcliffe was promoted to second due to a track limits penalty given to Orange, who had actually passed Radcliffe in a late move at Riches on the penultimate lap. The extra 5s was enough to drop him to fourth, behind Radcliffe and Topham.

Orange's fastest lap was allowed to stand, though, so he started the second endurance race from pole. Again, he led for the first part of the race, even though a lengthy safety car period to recover the Porsche 911

of his team-mates Russ Lindsay and Patrick Collins dented his lead.

It was Radcliffe who fared best in the pitstops, handing over to Bell who kept the McLaren ahead of an ambitious Cook to take the win. Kakad had earlier lost a few places trying to go round Wallis and dropped to fifth before Cook recovered the lost ground.

Behind, Jesse Krohn finished third in Leung's BMW having passed Roche late on, as Wallis was fifth having struggled with new tyres and a lack of straightline speed. He was further hampered by a 5s track limits penalty. Topham and Clutton looked certain for a podium place, but Topham pulled in due to ominous-sounding noises, which turned out to be a cracked exhaust.

Works Phantom driver James Clarke kept up his 100% win-rate in all three Clubmans races, despite Steve Dickens in his Mallock getting the jump on him twice at the start. Dickens's advantage never lasted more than a couple of corners.

Dominance was also the theme in the Bell Sport Challenge, with Peter Smith (Ferrari 488) winning both races by big margins, even though the safety car appeared in race one while Vance Kearney's smoking 430 was removed after a fuel pipe had cracked, causing a small fire.

In comparison, the Focus Cup provided a new winner in Lewis Clark, who took race one with time to spare. Ian Mitchell took the second after Mark McCann was penalised for exceeding track limits, the first of two wins for him over the weekend. McCann was narrowly beaten by Jonathan Baker in race three.

**RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER**



McCann came close to  
winning multiple times  
in the Focus Cup

RICHARD STYLES



RICHARD STYLES



## WEEKEND WINNERS

## SNETTERTON

## GT CUP

**Race 1** Tom Roche (McLaren 720S GT3)**Race 2** Simon Orange/Tom Roche (McLaren 720S GT3)**Race 3** Sam Maher-Loughnan (Mercedes-AMG GT3)**Race 4** Mark Radcliffe/Rob Bell (McLaren 720S GT3)

## CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPE

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

## BELL SPORT CHALLENGE SERIES

**Races 1 & 2** Peter Smith (Ferrari 488)

## FOCUS CUP

**Race 1** Lewis Clark**Races 2 & 4** Ian Mitchell**Race 3** Jonathan Baker

RICHARD STYLES

## SILVERSTONE

## GINETTA JUNIOR

**Races 1 & 6** Chase Fernandez**Races 2, 3, 4 & 5** Freddie Slater

## GINETTA GT CHAMPIONSHIP

**Races 1, 2 & 3** Ruben Hage**Races 4, 5, 6 & 7** Blake Angliss

## GINETTA GT ACADEMY

**Races 1, 2, 3 & 4** Ravi Ramyeed**Races 5 & 6** Nick WhiteFor full results visit: [tsl-timing.com](https://tsl-timing.com)

# Sublime Slater bags four more Ginetta Junior wins

## SILVERSTONE

## BARC G FEST

2-4 JUNE

Freddie Slater added another four wins to his impressive Ginetta Junior campaign during the marque's 65th anniversary festival at Silverstone, but he was denied a record-equalling 12th triumph by a penalty.

The first of three days of action took place on Friday on the Grand Prix circuit, with the opening Ginetta Junior contest providing plenty of drama. Slater faced early competition from Charlie Hart and Hugo Schwarze – the trio all enjoying spells in the lead – before Slater and Schwarze collided at Brooklands and lost ground, while Hart retired with damage shortly after in a separate incident with Chase Fernandez.

Finn Harrison climbed from 20th to grab first late on but contact with Reza Seewooruthun allowed Fernandez to move ahead and lead home an Assetto Motorsport 1-2 from Harrison.

Slater made amends with victory ahead of Elite Motorsport duo Schwarze and Alisha Palmowski in the second encounter before taking two more wins on the National layout on Saturday – holding off his R Racing team-mates Mikey Porter and Luca Hopkinson for the first of those.

The second had looked more unlikely after starting from 12th, but Slater made remarkable progress to snatch the lead in little more than two laps and then prevailed following a final-lap safety car restart by 0.256 seconds – his biggest winning margin of the weekend – with



Slater is in a league of his own in Junior

JEP

Fernandez and Schwarze completing the podium.

It took less than two laps for Slater to hit the front again from sixth in Sunday's opening contest, taking his fourth consecutive win ahead of Porter. The final race featured another last-lap restart, with Slater edging Fernandez and Schwarze in a thrilling drag race to the line, but a post-race penalty for contact demoted Slater to third, with Fernandez inheriting his second victory.

Breakell Racing won all seven races in the Ginetta GT Championship as Luke Reade's early-season domination came to an end. Ruben Hage took a hat-trick of wins on the Grand Prix layout before his team-mate Blake Angliss won four in a row on the National circuit. Reade notched up four podiums to consolidate his points lead, as Harley Haughton also scored three podiums.

Ravi Ramyeed took over the Ginetta GT Academy points lead from Nick White with four wins in a row. White responded to win the next two, with Ramyeed hampered by a spin in the final contest.

STEVE WHITFIELD



Ramyeed took the points lead in the GT Academy

JEP



# Onward Christians soldier to win

**BRANDS HATCH**  
**CSCC**  
**3-4 JUNE**

Christians Douglas and Pittard swapped thuggish V8-engined TVR Griffith and Formula 5000 Chevron-Chevrolet B28 respectively at Silverstone the previous weekend for rampant lightweight four-cylinder bolides to win the opening races of the entertaining Classic Sports Car Club/Brands Britannia Indy circuit event in glorious summery conditions.

Pittard guided his stunning Team Leos/VDS Caterham 7 CSR – a 530kg missile motivated by a 350bhp 2.5-litre Duratec engine – to Magnificent Sevens pole at 47.724s (91.11mph), but took a 15-place drop for victory at Snetterton. Colin Watson rounded Andy Grant to lead at Paddock, but Pittard subsequently hurtled ahead, leaving Watson to thwart Tim Davis, up from 12th.

Davis jumped Watson at race two's start, as Pittard picked his way through again. When Christian hit the front, Davis dug deeper, but Pittard and Watson fell to fuel injector rail bracket failures within four laps, leaving Davis to lead Tim Bishop and Simon Lancashire in a BOSS 1-2-3.

Douglas's Slicks Series contest was not quite as frenetic, but his aero-laden Ariel Atom, with a 400bhp supercharged Honda sting in its tail, toppled strong Porsche opposition. Having passed Charlie Bird's 450bhp 991.1, Douglas fought to repel the sister Porsche of determined Australians David Harrison and Nathan Luckey.

A short Code 60 and a safety car



interlude couldn't prevent Danny Cassar from negating a minute's penalty – for Tin Tops victories at Silverstone and Thruxton – to add a third in Nigel Ainge's Honda Integra. Adam Brown might have held on had his Ford Fiesta ST not slowed momentarily at Graham Hill Bend. Brown kept second from Alfie Jones' Civic and the Field family's Proton.

Michael Vitulli deserved his New Millennium victory, not knowing he'd lost half his BMW M3 E46's front valance and splitter essaying to pass Bryan Bransom/Jasver Sapra's E36. Ashley Muldoon's E36 was promoted to third when Mark Lee (Ginetta G55) was nobbled for exceeding track limits twice. The same penalties meant Warren Tattersall (SEAT Leon TCR) lost out to Warren Allen (Porsche Cayman) in class. Lee atoned in Saturday's Open Series closer, ousting Dylan Popovic's G50.

With Sam Polley's Mini Marcos out following gearbox failure in qualifying and Steve Smith's MGA beached in the Paddock shingle after being clipped by Tony Hunting's Mini, nippy Spridgets looked favourites to land gold among the capacity Swinging Sixties Group 1 grid. P4 qualifier Tom Pead had other ideas, however. An early mandatory stop helped move his Niki Lauda-tribute BMW 1602 – with a two-litre M10 engine and on Yokohama tyres – smartly to the front, beyond Connor Kay, Richard Perry and Ian Staines' reach.

Geoff Taylor won the Group 2 bout in his TVR Griffith, from Steve Hodges, undeterred by an under-bonnet fire when his carburettors ingested their air filter. Only the ballistically fast Talbot Sunbeam Lotus of Martyn and Matt Ellis shaded them from the concurrent Future Classics brigade.

Special Saloons & Modsports intrigued





## WEEKEND WINNERS

## MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

**Race 1** Christian Pittard (Caterham 7 CSR)

**Race 2** Tim Davis (Caterham C400)

## SLICKS SERIES

Christian Douglas (Ariel Atom 3.5R s/c)

## TIN TOPS/PUMA CUP

Danny Cassar (Honda Integra Type R)

## NEW MILLENNIUM

Michael Vitulli (BMW M3 E46)

## OPEN SERIES

Mark Lee (Ginetta-Ford G55)

## SWINGING SIXTIES GROUP 1

Tom Pead (BMW 1602 Ti)

## FUTURE CLASSICS/SWINGING SIXTIES GROUP 2

Martyn & Matthew Ellis (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus)

## SPECIAL SALOONS &amp; MODSPORTS

**Race 1** Samuel Wilson (Aston Martin V8 Vantage)

**Race 2** Rod Birley (BMW M3 E36)

## MORGAN CHALLENGE

**Races 1 & 2** Shane Kelly (CX +4)

## MODERN CLASSICS

Tom Mensley (BMW M3 E36 Evo)

## TURBO TIN TOPS

Josh Brooks (Toyota Starlet GT)

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



**AUSTIN 'A302' HITS THE TRACK** 'Built not Bought' reads the proud motto on the nose of Andy Willis's startling five-litre Ford V8-powered Austin A30 Special Saloon. Created around a tubeframe chassis at 25/7 Race and Restoration in Birmingham, the 'A302' ran in anger for the first time on Friday and finished both races. "Given its short wheelbase and wide track, it handles better than I'd expected," said Willis, 27, previously a short oval and Ginetta G40 racer.



**DOC ENDERBY BACK IN GHIA** Thirty-two years after it last raced, Special Saloon/GT legend Dr David Enderby's VW Karmann Ghia made its comeback at the venue where he debuted it in November 1982. It is based on the ex-Nick Adams/Richard Eyre Tiga SC79 Sports 2000 monocoque, designed by marque co-founder Howden Ganley and reworked by the Doc's late pal Clive Brown. Enderby's outing fulfilled an ambition, having last competed in a Radical SR4 with son Christian several years back.



**BROOKS WINS AGAIN** A second straight Turbo Tin Tops victory for new father Josh Brooks, 32, making his 2023 bow, was extra special in the 1993 Toyota Starlet GT he acquired at 17. The former Toyota MR2 frontrunner scored a class win on its debut at Oulton Park last August, then won outright at Silverstone. "It weighs about 900 kilos, handles really well on Nankang AR-1 tyres and, with the David Yandell-prepared 1368cc engine making around 220bhp, it's great fun to drive," he said.

hundreds of classic car owners lining the Brabham Straight for the colourful Brands Britannia club gathering. Sam Wilson blasted Rikki Cann's Aston Martin clear of the E36 M3s of Rod Birley and Ronan Bradley in the opener, with veteran Ian Hall leading the chase in his meaty six-litre Darrian-Wildcat. Hall shadowed Birley until his engine temperatures rose second time out, leaving Adrian Bradley in the shared M3 and Cann to pursue hot Rod.

Quick and ultra-consistent, Thruxton victor Shane Kelly became the first Morgan Challenge race winner to repeat this term in round five, then doubled-up in the CX +4 engineered by University of Wolverhampton students. Louis Ruff bagged seconds, but Jim Mountain and defending champion Steve Lockett landed a third apiece, the latter's a first overall podium.

After Dave Griffin's similar BMW M3 E36 faltered and limped pitward, Tom Mensley was "absolutely ecstatic" to win the Modern Classics finale on his Brands RWD debut. Roger Hamilton proved a boldly conducted 175bhp Zetec-engined Ginetta G20 is a weapon to contend by suppressing Adrian Clark's 5.4-litre Porsche 928 GTS to third.

**MARCUS PYE**





STEVE JONES

# Daire is the leader of the Anglesey Junior Saloons flock

**ANGLESEY  
BARC  
3-4 JUNE**

Daire Flock proved unbeatable in the Junior Saloons at Anglesey, taking all three wins last weekend.

He led race one from the opening lap, after poleman Cameron Pratt-Thompson lost out. But, while Flock began to stretch his lead, Pratt-Thompson found his car jumping out of third gear, which left him trailing Jack James and Oskar Dix after three laps.

As James scampered clear in second, Dix and CJ Morgan began squabbling for third, after Pratt-Thompson's gear selection problem reoccurred exiting the Corkscrew. Morgan finally secured the place on the dash for the line, beating Dix by just 0.065 seconds.

It was a lights-to-flag success for Flock in the second race, with Jonathan Moore holding second from Church on the opening lap, but he had been caught by James before a brief safety car intervention. There was just a two-lap

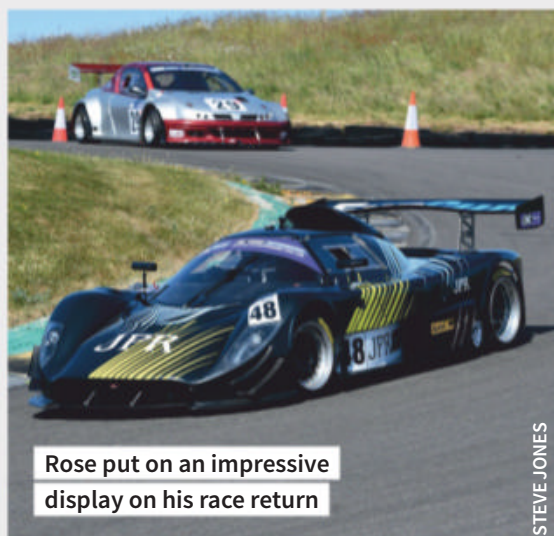
sprint to the finish after this, with Flock securing win number two over Moore, while James and Pratt-Thompson were in close formation behind.

After running side by side through Target at the beginning of the restarted finale, Flock managed to nose ahead of Pratt-Thompson, with Moore settling in third. It stayed fairly close at the front but Flock took the spoils, while Moore finished third, inches ahead of James.

In his first race for 18 months, former CNC Heads Sports/Saloons champion Paul Rose was a dominant winner in the category's opener in his Saker, with Roddie Paterson's Caterham an equally comfortable second. Arron Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra was third, while Steve Harris's Saker completed the top four, after a pitlane start.

It was Rose, from Armiger and Harris at the start of race two, after Paterson broke a driveshaft on the green-flag lap. While Rose cruised to win number two, Harris snatched second into Rocket on lap nine of 17, after Armiger was caught out by backmarkers. Oliver Thomas's Subaru Impreza just kept Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 at bay for fourth.

Thomas managed to shoot between the Sakers on the front row at the start of the finale, but Rose was ahead into Banking Hairpin, with Harris following through Church. Armiger was soon into third after taking Cryer and Thomas. Another win looked imminent for Rose, but he slowed and pitted with overheating a lap from home. Harris took the flag first on the road, but a track-limits penalty dropped him to second, and handed Armiger a maiden victory. Cryer completed the podium.



Rose put on an impressive display on his race return

STEVE JONES

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### JUNIOR SALOONS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Daire Flock

### CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS

Races 1 & 2 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX S1-500)

Race 3 Arron Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra)

### TRACK ATTACK

Race 1 Tim Evans (Audi TT)

Race 2 Nick Tasker (VW Scirocco)

### SUPERKARTS DIVISION 1/F450

Races 1, 2 & 3 Liam Morley (Anderson/VM)

### SUPERKARTS F250/F125

Race 1 Paul Platt (PVP Gas Gas)

Race 2 Lee Plain (Anderson/DEA)

Race 3 Kirk Cattermole (Raider/CAT TM)

### HYUNDAI COUPE CUP

Races 1 & 2 Luca Staccini Anzanello

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

Tim Evans's Audi TT just held onto his race-long lead in the first Track Attack bout, despite a late charge from Nick Tasker's VW Scirocco. Tasker reversed the positions in race two, nosing ahead of Evans through Banking Hairpin on the opening lap, while Mike Bowman's Renault Clio was twice third.

Liam Morley dominated the Superkarts Division 1/F450 encounters, taking three lights-to-flag victories. Carl Hulme and Andy Gulliford held second and third throughout race one, but in the second Sam Moss and Jack Tritton battled to the finish. Moss took second on lap three, only for Tritton to reclaim the place a lap from the conclusion.

Ross Allen followed Morley home in race three, with Hulme just fending off Gulliford for third, while in the F250/F125 races Paul Platt, Lee Plain and Kirk Cattermole each took a win.

**PETER SCHERER**



# Menzies the master in the Shelsley sun

**SHELSLEY WALSH  
BRITISH HILLCLIMB  
3-4 JUNE**

Wallace Menzies and hillclimbing in general were both winners at Shelsley Walsh during rounds 11 and 12 of the British Hillclimb Championship last weekend.

This was a fabulous day for the discipline. The sun shone, a bumper crowd packed the slopes of the Teme Valley and the competition was fierce but sporting as the BHC came to Shelsley Walsh. With its proud 118-year history, it is the place where everyone wants to win and the event showed off all that is great about this branch of the sport.

To win both run-offs in one day at the Worcestershire hill is very special and that's exactly what Menzies did to underline his status as favourite for a fourth consecutive title. But the Flying Scotsman was the first to admit that this was never easy as a gaggle of rivals snapped at his heels and forced him to dig deep for his two victories. Scott Moran, Alex Summers, Will Hall and Matt Ryder were all within a third of a second of glory, such is the level of competition in the BHC.

Menzies said: "It's a fantastic weekend for us here. Everyone really wants to get two wins at Shelsley. It wasn't easy, especially on the second run-off when you've got to sit and watch everyone else." Having qualified fastest, Menzies was last to run.

In contrast to Menzies' joy, it proved to be a day of highs and lows for Ryder, who lost his first run-off place to an electrical gremlin that shut the car down temporarily as he powered out of Crossing. The Gould GR59JB came back to life, he bump-started the engine and carried on, but the run was lost to a fault later traced to the master switch.



Two wins have further boosted Menzies' lead

PAUL LAWRENCE

It wasn't a good first run-off for that car because Sean Gould also broke a driveshaft on the line. However, at the end of the day, Ryder was mighty and set a mark that only Menzies was able to beat on the final climb of the weekend. "It was all or nothing on that one," said Ryder. Meanwhile, Hall had another encouraging event with second and fifth as he continues to get to grips with his new Gould.

Moran and Summers were both upbeat to be right in the mix with third and fourth in both run-offs. "I messed the Esses up on the first one, but the second one felt like a 22s run," said Moran, who stopped the clocks at 23.27s. Summers said: "I'm happy with that in the context of the season we've had. We just seem to be losing a bit in the low-speed sections."

Trevor Willis seldom has a weekend when he doesn't score strong points but this was one as an engine problem in the OMS, suspected to be a failed piston, struck in Sunday morning's practice run. However, the generosity of the Summers family put Willis into the brand-new P4t for the rest of the day, and he loved the experience of driving the newly constructed car.

Paul Haimes was an absolute hero of the weekend to be the best of the small-engined cars in his 1300cc turbo Gould GR59. He broke into the 23s barrier to set a new personal best and ended the day with sixth and seventh. In both run-offs, David Warburton chased hard in his similar chassis on a hill where power is all-important.

**PAUL LAWRENCE**

## HILLCLIMB RESULTS

### ROUND 11

**1 Wallace Menzies (3.3 Gould-Cosworth GR59M) 22.93s;** 2 Will Hall (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59) 23.02s; 3 Scott Moran (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59J) 23.05s; 4 Alex Summers (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Firestorm) 23.20s; 5 David Uren (3.5 Gould-NME GR55B) 23.25s; 6 Paul Haimes (1.3t Gould-Suzuki GR59) 24.34s; 7 David Warburton (1.6 Gould-Suzuki GR59) 24.47s; 8 Nicola Menzies (3.5 Gould-NME GR55B) 24.91s; 9 Jack Cottrill (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Dallara) 24.94s; 10 Allan Warburton (1.6 Gould-Suzuki GR59) 25.49s.

### ROUND 12

**1 Menzies 23.04s;** 2 Matthew Ryder (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59JB) 23.17s; 3 Moran 23.27s; 4 Summers 23.41s; 5 Hall 23.55s; 6 Sean Gould (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59JB) 23.74s; 7 Haimes 23.99s; 8 D Warburton 24.66s; 9 Richard Spedding (1.6 GWR-Hayabusa Raptor 2) 24.74s; 10 Graham Wynn (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59J) 25.42s.

### POINTS

**1 Menzies 110;** 2 Moran 90; 3 Ryder 86; 4 Summers 76; 5 Gould 57; 6 Trevor Willis (3.2 OMS 28-RTE) 51.

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



Ryder bounced back from car woes to finish second

PAUL LAWRENCE



# FINISHING STRAIGHT

## A celebration of the Le Mans 24 Hours

Unsurprisingly for one of motorsport's greatest events, Le Mans has been the subject of many books over the years, and the centenary of the 24 Hours has encouraged a few more. Here's our guide to some of the latest offerings on the great French endurance race.



**LE MANS  
WINNING COLOURS**  
Mike Hill  
RRP £25

If the new Hypercar era has inspired you to take more interest in Le Mans, or you have a youngster beginning to get enthused, this could be a good way into the history of the race. And that's meant as no insult to Hill.

Hill is not a hardened journalist with decades of Le Mans coverage behind him, but this book has allowed him to expand his interest, with introductions for each decade and side-on illustrations of every winner surrounded by relevant information, such as winning distances, fastest laps and pole times. We're not convinced every single one is correct, but we felt the same way going over the ACO's official records last month. As we know, a hundred years of numbers is a lot of keystrokes...

Hill has also put in a lot of work to cover other elements, such as the key track changes and map of the current iteration.

A generally easily accessible and fun work changes tone slightly with an account from Roger Vernon Price, who was present at the 1955 disaster, and there is also a graphic of the crash and list of drivers who have lost their lives at Le Mans over the years. But it's done tastefully and isn't a subject that should be ignored.



**24 HOURS**  
Richard Williams  
RRP £20

Autosport has expressed its admiration for Williams before, so a Le Mans effort by him was always going to make it onto our 'to-read' list.

This book moves through the history of the race in chronological order, but it's not a typical year-by-year account. Williams picks out certain themes and highlights key figures who have shaped the history of the 24 Hours, conveying a sense of what makes the event so special. As you'd expect, Williams has done his research and there are little snippets that even Le Mans aficionados may have forgotten.

This is not a comprehensive history filled with minute detail and reams of statistics, but it's worthy of anyone's time – and ridiculously good value at £20.

but this is the official, year-by-year history of Le Mans. Smale is a fan of the event and has previous, Porsche's participation at the French classic the subject of one of his books.

How much this book will add to what's already out there remains to be seen, but this one promises to be 240 pages and is likely to be a useful reference tool. Perhaps a 'short-hand' one-stop-shop version of the next entry...

### **LE MANS THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MOTOR RACE**

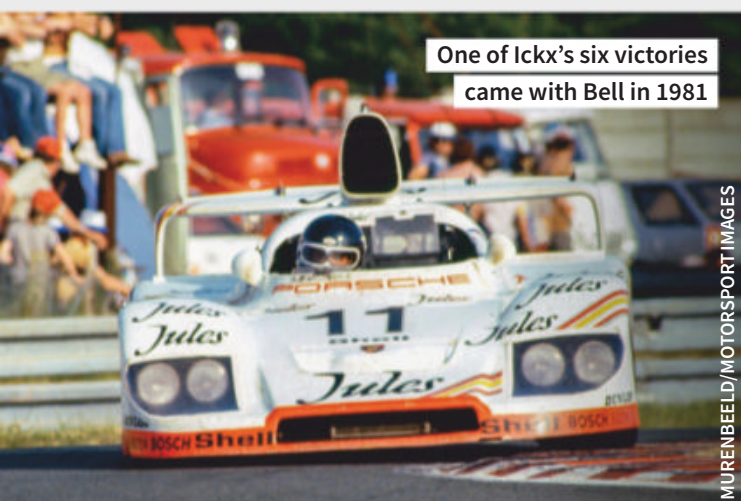
Quentin Spurring  
RRP £45-60 for  
each of seven volumes



These aren't new, but they form a key part of Evro Publishing's Le Mans Centenary Special Offer, giving 25% off certain titles this month.

Former Autosport editor Quentin Spurring is one of the Le Mans authorities and has written seven volumes, decade by decade, covering the 1923-99 period. Spurring not only highlights the key events of each race but also picks out important background events, plus there are extensive results and statistics.

In short, this should form the backbone of any Le Mans fan's library. Now someone just needs to persuade our very own Gary Watkins to write the 2000-09 and 2010-19 volumes!



One of Ickx's six victories  
came with Bell in 1981

MURENBELD/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



**LE MANS 100 A CENTURY AT THE  
WORLD'S GREATEST ENDURANCE RACE**  
Glen Smale RRP £60

We've not yet got our hands on this one, which is due to be published on 1 August,





EHRHARDT

motorsport  
IMAGES

### JACKY ICKX HIS AUTHORISED COMPETITION HISTORY

Jon Saltinstall  
RRP £95

Jacky Ickx is one of the race's biggest legends, with six victories and records for the most poles and fastest laps. But he was also much more than that — he is an eight-time world championship Formula 1 race winner, Bathurst 1000 conqueror and Dakar Rally victor.

This 608-page work covers all of Ickx's races, nearly 500 in total, across multiple categories. Saltinstall has clearly put in a lot of work, with an impressive bibliography and array of key figures he has consulted. Those include Ickx himself, who lists 'My life-changers' in the book, while there are hundreds of fantastic photographs, some not previously published.

Being critical, we would like to have seen more first-hand accounts from Ickx (and others) within the text. That feels like an opportunity missed.

At £95, this isn't the cheapest option here, but it's a must for Ickx fans and would be a welcome addition to any motorsport enthusiast's collection.

Like the official Le Mans books, this is part of Evro Publishing's Centenary Special Offer. Two books on Tom Kristensen — the other Mr Le Mans — are also included in the offer, as is five-time winner Derek Bell's *My Racing Life*, which was written with the late Alan Henry.

KEVIN TURNER



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



MAUGER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



### F1 Spanish GP review

Another weekend, another Max Verstappen domination in the 2023 Formula 1 season as the Red Bull driver charged to a third Spanish Grand Prix victory. Joining host Martyn Lee this week are Autosport chief editor Kevin Turner, F1 reporter Matt Kew and Motorsport.com journalist Filip Cleeren to discuss all the talking points.

## WHAT'S ON

### INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

#### Le Mans 24 Hours

World Endurance  
Championship

Round 4/7

Le Mans, France

10-11 June

**TV Live** Eurosport, Sat 1400

#### Le Mans Cup

Round 2/6

Le Mans, France

8-9 June

**TV Livestream** on  
Motorsport.tv, Thu 1715,  
Fri 1015

#### ADAC GT Masters

Round 1/6

Hockenheim, Germany

10-11 June

**TV Live** Viaplay, Sat 1145,  
Sun 1145

#### TCR World Tour

Round 3/9

Valllunga, Italy

10-11 June

#### NASCAR Cup

Round 16/36

Sonoma, USA

11 June

#### NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 14/33

Sonoma, USA

11 June

**TV Live** Viaplay, Sun 0030

#### MotoGP

Round 6/20

Mugello, Italy

10-11 June

**TV Live** BT Sport 2,  
Sun 1230

**TV Highlights** ITV4,  
Mon 2000

### UK MOTORSPORT

#### Oulton Park BRSCC

10 June

Civic Cup, Fiesta Juniors,  
Fiesta ST150s, Fiesta ST240s,  
TCR UK

**TV Livestream** via  
[brscc.co.uk](https://www.brscc.co.uk)

#### Silverstone MGCC

10-11 June

BCV8s/Midget & Sprite  
Challenge, Equipe (70s/Pre-  
'63/50s, GTS, Libre, Super  
Libre), GT & Sports Car Cup,  
MGCC (Cup/Cockshoot Cup,  
Triple M Racing, Trophy)

#### Castle Combe CCRC

10-11 June

CCRC (FF1600, Hot Hatch,  
Saloons), CTCRC, Kumho  
BMWs, MG Owners Club,  
Sports 2000, Z Cars/  
Production GTIs

#### Snetterton MSVR

10-11 June

7 Race Series (310R, 420R),  
MSVR Allcomers, MSVT  
Trackday Championship,  
MSVT Trackday Trophy,  
Snetterton Saloons,  
United FF1600

#### Brands Hatch CTA

10-11 June

Racing Hondas

#### Mondello Park MPSC

10-11 June

Fiesta STs, Fiesta Zetecs,  
Formula BOSS, Formula  
Sheane, Formula Vee, Future  
Classics, HRCA, Irish Global  
Lights, Irish Legends, Irish  
Strykers, Irish Touring Cars

#### Mallory Park 750MC

11 June

5Club MX-5s, Historic 750  
Formula, Hot Hatch, Ma7das,  
MR2s, Type R Trophy





#### FROM THE ARCHIVE

Rene Arnoux waits for the 13.08 seconds that it'll take to fit a set of new Goodyears and refuel his Ferrari 126C3 during the 1983 German Grand Prix at Hockenheim.

Arnoux had qualified second to team-mate Patrick Tambay, but elbowed his way past on lap three of 45 to take a lead that he would only relinquish – to Nelson Piquet's Brabham BT52 – during the race's

sequence of mid-distance pitstops. He crossed the line 1m10.652s ahead of the Alfa Romeo 183T of third-place qualifier Andrea de Cesaris; Piquet's team-mate Riccardo Patrese was a further half-minute down the road.

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## Bruno Senna

**O**f all the team-mates Karun Chandhok has had during his career, one name stands out. Bruno Senna immediately comes to mind for the Indian, and not just because the duo ended up as colleagues in GP2, Formula 1 and Formula E.

“From the first GP2 test we did together at Jerez, we just got on really well,” says the Sky F1 pundit, who raced alongside Ayrton Senna’s nephew at iSport in the 2008 GP2 Asia series as a prelude to contesting the full season together. “It was a really enjoyable year. We’d arrive at a race weekend and we’d start with two different programmes, compare data and it was all very open.”

After Senna finished fifth in GP2 Asia and Chandhok 13th, they both finished on the podium in the main series at Monaco and Hockenheim, and Senna was runner-up in the points to Giorgio Pantano. But the next time they teamed up they faced much bigger challenges with the troubled HRT operation as they stepped up to F1 together in 2010.

“We were in this rollercoaster of chaos together,” recounts Chandhok. “We were a very close unit, with his manager Chris Goodwin, my father and Bruno’s sister Bianca. So many days it felt like the five of us trying to push the team forward and trying to find where the whole project was going.”

Perhaps surprisingly, given HRT’s lack



of results, Chandhok believes there was potential: “When they had the fallout with Dallara that was really painful, because when we went there to do the seat-fitting, we saw they had 60 points of downforce they were going to bring to the car for Barcelona [round five]. And that would have put us with the Toro Rossos, in the midfield. There was so much unfulfilled potential in that project because it got political and messy.”

But the working relationship with Senna remained strong, and their similar driving styles were a bonus. “We wanted similar things from the car,” explains the 38-year-old, who had another tricky campaign with Senna in the inaugural 2014-15 season of Formula E with Mahindra. “That was useful when we went testing – generally, what worked for one worked for the other.”

**KEVIN TURNER**



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## LE MANS 24H SPECIAL REPORT

ALL THE ACTION FROM THE CENTENARY EVENT



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