

F1 Verstappen makes it **10** at Spa

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Britain's newest world champion!

Dennis takes Formula E crown amid London drama

'The race was caving in against me but to become world champion is something we all dream of'

JAKE DENNIS

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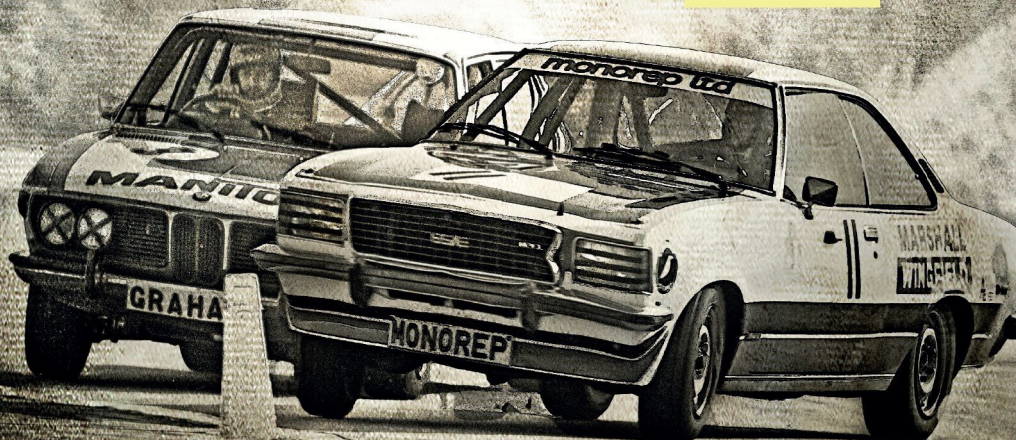
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Congratulations to a new British world champion

Jake Dennis has shared podiums with Max Verstappen, Charles Leclerc, George Russell, Esteban Ocon and Alex Albon, but he never got the chance to join them on the Formula 1 grid. He has, however, just become a world champion following the Formula E finale in London last weekend (see page 28).

Dennis, Nick Cassidy and Mitch Evans have been outstanding as they've fought for the title this season. Dennis's consistency in a category that can be notoriously unpredictable has stood out, and his team boss Michael Andretti was full of praise for the 28-year-old when Stefan Mackley spoke to him at London's double-header (p10).

Dennis is the third Autosport BRDC Award winner to become an FIA world champion, following Jenson Button's 2009 Formula 1 title and Anthony Davidson's 2014 World Endurance crown. Very soon we will be picking the finalists for the 2023 edition in partnership with Aston Martin, so look out for the next British stars later in August.

One of Dennis's less-public roles is as a Red Bull development driver, though most F1 rivals will be hoping there's not too much of that following the crushing performance of the RB19s at Spa last weekend. Turn to p12 for Alex Kalinauckas's explanation of why Verstappen so comfortably defeated team-mate Sergio Perez, and who the other real stars were at the Belgian Grand Prix.

• We'll be kicking off our F1 summer break issues with next week's half-term drivers report, grading the field over the first 12 races. Celebrations of McLaren, the World Rally Championship and Silverstone will also be part of our summer specials.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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**NEVER MISS
AN ISSUE**

Special deals for
Autosport p68



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PIT & PADDOCK

- 4 Alpine upheaval – and slating from Prost
- 6 Marciello set for shock BMW switch
- 8 Van Gisbergen to go to NASCAR full-time
- 9 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
- 10 Opinion: Stefan Mackley
- 11 Opinion: Jamie Klein

RACE CENTRE

- 12 Belgian GP report and analysis
- 28 Dennis takes Formula E crown in London
- 34 BTCC: Sutton drama keeps Ingram in play
- 40 World of Sport: Formula 2; Formula 3; GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup; NASCAR Cup; F1 Academy; Porsche Supercup; Australian Supercars

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 53 TOCA junior series confirmed for 2025
- 54 Reynolds takes Special Saloons honours
- 56 Rare Menzies mishap at Wiscombe Park
- 57 Opinion: Stephen Lickorish
- 58 National reports: Oulton Park; Cadwell Park; Croft; Silverstone; Snetterton; Kirkistown

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 70 What's on this week
- 72 From the archive: 1992 Spanish GP
- 74 My favourite track: Paul Radisich

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SELOHAM

Alpine in turmoil as Prost savages ousted

FORMULA 1

It may well be the Formula 1 summer shutdown, but the HR department at Alpine can't jet off on holiday just yet. They need to start hiring fast because, alongside the removal of CEO Laurent Rossi last month, team principal Otmar Szafnauer and sporting director Alan Permane have left by mutual consent, and chief technical officer Pat Fry is on his way to Williams.

Alpine had targeted holding onto fourth place in the 2023 constructors' championship while aggressively upgrading its car to close the gap to Red Bull, Ferrari and Mercedes. But it now resides sixth, and has slipped behind Aston Martin and McLaren. That sluggish start to the campaign prompted Rossi to arrange an

interview with French broadcaster Canal+ to label his team as "amateurish", a move that tanked internal morale. Two months later, he was moved to work on 'special projects'.

According to the team's ex-advisor, four-time F1 world champion Alain Prost, that wasn't a moment too soon. Speaking to *L'Equipe*, he blasted the former boss, saying: "I love this team, and I am saddened and distressed to see it in its current state. It deserves better and has everything it needs to succeed... Laurent Rossi is the best example of the Dunning-Kruger effect – that of an inept manager who thinks he can overcome his incompetence with his arrogance and his lack of humanity towards his people. He was Alpine's boss for 18 months and thought he understood everything from

the outset, yet that couldn't be further from the truth. His management stopped the momentum the team had built since 2016."

With Rossi replaced at the top by ex-Ferrari engineer Philippe Krief, a new senior structure handed management of the grand prix team to Bruno Famin. Previously responsible for the FIA's COVID response programme, he had been in charge of the Renault F1 engine project for a year before his promotion. This new set-up then asked Szafnauer, who had been in his post for 18 months, to deliver success in double-quick time. He informed top brass that this wasn't possible, and that it should instead stick by the already agreed 100-race plan aimed at turning Alpine into a consistently competitive force come 2026. Renault Group CEO Luca de Meo likes Szafnauer, but not his answer, so he was asked to clear his desk following last weekend's Belgian GP. Ditto Permane, an Enstone veteran of 34 years.

Famin said: "We were not on the same line or timeline on how to recover or reach the level of performance we were aiming for, we decided to split our ways. I think we have a different view of the way of doing it. What is happening is the second stage of the Alpine plan. It's not going backwards, it's moving forwards. Of course, it's a lot of change but it's also an opportunity to consolidate the foundation to go further and faster."



Prost did not hold back on former chief

STALEY



Szaferman (left) and
Fry (right) have
left the Enstone squad



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boss Rossi

Pierre Gasly, who drove to third in the Spa sprint race, said: "I just joined at the start of the year and it's quite a big step when you come inside a new team and need to work with new people. I must say, from Laurent to Otar to Alan, even Pat that I could see at the factory, they work in the best way possible. I think it was quite unfortunate that this season, at the minute, doesn't work out as well as we expected and we're not making the progress that we will like. I can only thank all these guys... and just wish them the best for the future."

Given the vacancies, the replacement for ex-Aston Martin boss Szaferman is unlikely to come from within the Alpine F1 team. There's serious speculation that Mattia Binotto is the candidate at the top of the list. The ex-Ferrari head has been out of work since he was ousted from Maranello in December, although he did return to the paddock for the first time at last month's British GP. His experience leading Ferrari's technical division and his engine expertise makes him a good fit for Alpine, whose power unit is 30bhp behind rivals. He would also inject some top-flight experience, which is now desperately lacking.

In the meantime, Famin and Alpine academy director Julian Rouse will act as team principal and sporting director respectively on an interim basis.

MATT KEW

...WHILE FRY JUMPS SHIP TO WILLIAMS

FORMULA 1

Williams has signed veteran Formula 1 engineer Pat Fry from Alpine. He will start on 1 November as chief technical officer, a role that has been vacant since the December exit of Francois-Xavier Demaison, who left alongside former team principal Jost Capito.

New Williams boss James Vowles singled out Fry back in January but it took three months to convince him. Then, amid media outbursts from ousted Alpine CEO Laurent Rossi, Fry was finally convinced to end a second Enstone stint



that began in 2020.

Fry previously served as a consultant for Manor, which ran a Mercedes customer engine. That meant he rubbed shoulders with ex-Silver Arrows strategy head Vowles throughout 2016. Williams reckons this statement signing will enable it to tempt other F1 figureheads, although a new technical director is still expected to be a rival squad's unsung design

department number two who is looking to step up.

"His knowledge and experience will further strengthen the team's technical capabilities and pursuit of excellence as we build the next chapter of Williams," said Vowles. "Pat has been a core part of winning teams throughout his career. He is one of the most respected experts in our industry and I'm excited to begin work with him."

MATT KEW



Sauber denies Audi delays

FORMULA 1

Sauber managing director Alessandro Alunni Bravi insists that 2026 Formula 1 engine and chassis partner Audi is on the "right route" despite rumours that its programme is behind schedule. The German manufacturer recently dismissed CEO Markus Duesmann, who fronted the F1 interest and commitment. There's also speculation that its powertrain development is lagging behind Red Bull and Mercedes.

Clarifying the state of the project, Alunni Bravi said: "The programme

is on the right route... The Audi project is based not on a single individual but is a project for all the company. I think that there is no change. We work as a team, all together, to be ready for 2026.

"This doesn't mean that the challenge is easy. We have such strong competitors; we need to be really humble and to work on a daily basis at our best because the competition is extremely high. We just need to be focused on our job and nothing has changed with the departure of Mr Duesmann. There is no change for us, nor for Audi."

MATT KEW

Marciello in Lambo-BMW tug of love

WEC

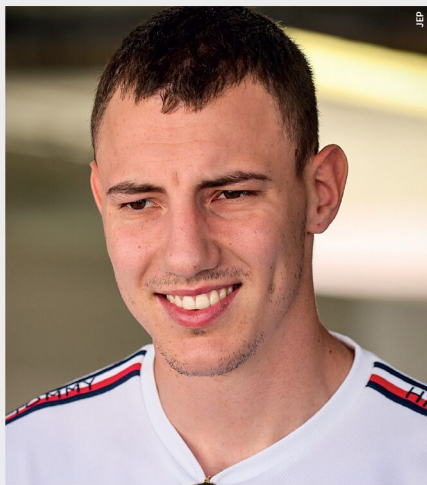
Lamborghini and BMW are battling over the services of GT superstar Raffaele Marciello for their LMDh programmes next year. A move to Lamborghini for the 2022 winner of the Spa 24 Hours and three GT World Challenge Europe titles with Mercedes looked on the cards before BMW came in with a counter offer.

Marciello is understood to have signed a contract with the Italian manufacturer to drive the SC63 to be run by the Iron Lynx team. But Autosport has learned that the German marque has made a bid for his signature and is willing to pay a buy-out fee to get its man. The likelihood is that the Swiss-Italian, 28, will end up driving an M Hybrid V8 for the WRT team when BMW joins the Hypercar class of the World Endurance

Championship next year. Lamborghini and BMW have been playing their cards close to their chest when questioned about drivers for their WEC programmes in 2024.

The two vacancies at the Iron Lynx squad, which will run a solo SC63 in both the WEC and the IMSA SportsCar Championship enduros next year, have been filled, according to Lamborghini Squadra Corse boss Giorgio Sanna at the launch of the car at Goodwood last month. He would only say that an announcement on who will join Mirko Bortolotti, Andrea Caldarelli, Romain Grosjean and Daniil Kvyat is due at the end of this year.

BMW has insisted that it hasn't made any decision on whether it will add to its 21-strong roster of factory drivers for next year when it expands its LMDh programme from



IMSA into the WEC.

"What we are doing now as we get more and more calendars is to start the puzzle," BMW M Motorsport boss Andreas Roos said last month. "You know how many championships you are doing and you see how

many clashes there are, and out of this you see how many drivers you need."

Ex-Ferrari junior Marciello joined Mercedes in 2018 and is believed to be coming to the end of his second three-year contract cycle.

GARY WATKINS

Porsche subsidiary to run non-factory LMGT3 effort

WEC

Manthey Racing will be Porsche's representative in the World Endurance Championship's new LMGT3 class next year. The Nurburgring-based team has been chosen to run the two entries the German manufacturer will be awarded for next year courtesy of its presence in the Hypercar ranks.

Porsche has picked a team in which it has had a majority shareholding since 2013,

the season in which the two organisations joined forces for a GTE Pro attack in the WEC. They remained ever present in the class with the exception of 2016 until it was phased out at the end of last season, winning the 2015 and 2018-19 titles and taking Le Mans victories in 2013, 2018 and 2022 along the way.

"Besides the fact that it is a subsidiary, several other factors speak in favour of Manthey: the team is very familiar with the Porsche 911 GT3-R from DTM races and

major endurance classics, among others," said Porsche Motorsport boss Thomas Laudenbach. "Moreover, Manthey is closely acquainted with the special characteristics of the WEC thanks to many years of factory racing with the Porsche 911 RSR. Last but not least, Porsche's successful history with the team is an important factor."

The name under which the team's pair of 992-shape 911 GT3-Rs will race is yet to be announced. The rules on driver combinations mean only one factory contractee can be placed in each car.

Factory teams are not permitted in LMGT3, but the announcement from Porsche last week presumes that the WEC organisers – the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the FIA – have ruled that Manthey's involvement does not violate the regulations.

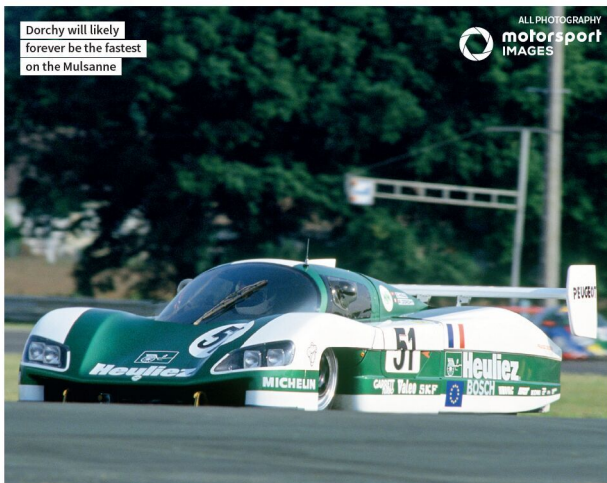
Porsche follows Chevrolet and Ford in announcing partner teams for LMGT3 in the WEC. They will respectively join up with TF Sport and Proton Competition.

GARY WATKINS



Dorothy will likely
forever be the fastest
on the Mulsanne

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Roger Dorchy 1944-2023

OBITUARY

Roger Dorchy was pretty much a fixture on the Le Mans 24 Hours grid for much of the 1970s and 1980s, though not at the chequered flag. He only saw the finish on three occasions in 13 starts and never in anything better than fourth position. Yet his place in the history of the great race was assured when the chicanes went in on the Mulsanne Straight in 1990. Two years before that, he had hit the highest speed ever recorded on the unbroken four-mile drag of public road.

Dorchy, who has died aged 78 after a battle with Parkinson's disease, clocked 407km/h (253mph) at around 9pm during the 1988 race aboard his WM-Peugeot P88 Group C car (above). The official mark was declared at 405km/h for no other reason than the WM team mostly comprised Peugeot employees working in their spare time, and 1988 was the year of the launch of the French manufacturer's 405 saloon. The record wasn't beaten in

1989, and was then effectively set in stone when the two chicanes were built at short notice for the following year.

WM had set out the previous year to break the 400km/h barrier on the Mulsanne, and Dorchy had left the race with a new mark of 381km/h. The team believed he went much quicker, however. Its calculations put the terminal velocity at around 415km/h and the discrepancy down to the inadequacies of the measuring equipment.

For all his heroics, Dorchy wasn't a professional racing driver. The day job was running his garage in Beauvais to the north of Paris — Le Mans was often his only race of the year.

He raced in Formula Renault in 1973 and 1974, making his Le Mans debut in the last of those years in a Porsche 911 Carrera RSR. He joined the WM team in 1979, recording his best Le Mans finish the following season in a P79 GTP car shared with Guy Frequelain.

GARY WATKINS

F1 TEAMS OBLIGED TO BACK DRIVERS IN FEMALE SERIES

F1 ACADEMY

The all-female F1 Academy series, which launched this year to criticism over a lack of live TV coverage, will strengthen its relationship with Formula 1 for 2024. Next season, the 10 top-flight teams must each back one driver in the Formula 4-based series and have their livery decorate a car.

Each of ART Grand Prix, Campos Racing, MP Motorsport, Prema Racing and Rodin Carlin run three entries in the F1 Academy. As such, two thirds of the grid will be F1-supported. The remaining five drivers will be backed by other partners that are yet to be announced.

Series managing director Susie Wolff (below) said: "This landmark moment not only demonstrates the depth of support for F1 Academy from across the F1 community but will inspire a whole generation of young girls to realise the opportunities both on and off-track in motorsport."

F1 president Stefano Domenicali added: "We created F1 Academy to bring about real and lasting change to ensure young female talent have the right system in place to follow and achieve their dreams. Today shows the impact the project is having."

MATT KEW



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HAMILTON MISSES CROFT

British Touring Car Championship regular Nic Hamilton left the Croft paddock last weekend on Saturday morning before free practice rather than take up his regular Team Hard Cupra seat. Series boss Alan Gow confirmed that on this occasion the non-participation could be regarded as *force majeure*, but that the seat will need to be filled – whether by Hamilton or a replacement – for next week's Knockhill event if the TBL entrants' licence is to be retained.

BTCC PITLANE ALTERCATION

Ex-Laser Tools Racing BTCC boss Bob Moffat earned One Motorsport, the team for which son Aiden now drives, a £2500 fine at Croft after Excelr8 mechanic Adam Loasby attempted to draw his attention to one of the squad's Hyundais entering the pits. According to the stewards' verdict, Moffat "pushed the mechanic backwards and placed his hand on [his] throat". Upon team manager Connor Morgan separating them, "Moffat grabbed him by the shirt and pulled him toward him". Excelr8 driver Tom Chilton's mum Nadine asked him to leave, and "this resulted in a verbal altercation... in the course of which Moffat used abusive language".

TACHIKAWA TO RETIRE

Super GT veteran Yuji Tachikawa has announced his retirement from the series at the end of this season, after 25 continuous years at the helm for the Cerumo Toyota squad. Tachikawa won the crown three times, in 2001, 2005 and 2013, with Hironori Takeuchi, ex-F1 driver Tora Takagi and Kohei Hirate respectively.

LUNDQVIST'S INDY DEBUT

2018 BRDC British F3 title winner and reigning Indy Lights champion Linus Lundqvist is to at last make his IndyCar debut this weekend in Nashville. The Swede is the latest stand-in at Meyer Shank Racing for the injured Simon Pagenaud. He has tested IndyCars for Andretti Autosport, Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing and Ed Carpenter Racing.

MASON MAKES F2 DEBUT

Briton Josh Mason made his Formula 2 debut last weekend at Spa, replacing Brad Benavides at PHM Racing by Charouz. The Euroformula Open race winner finished both races, with a best result of 14th. Fellow EFO winner Francesco Simonazzi joined Rodin Carlin for the final two F3 rounds, the Italian also grabbing a best finish of 14th.



Van Gisbergen set for US move

NASCAR

Three-time Australian Supercars champion Shane van Gisbergen has confirmed his intention to make a permanent switch to NASCAR next season. A Stateside move has been in the works since the New Zealander's sensational win on his debut in the Cup Series on the streets of Chicago last month.

Van Gisbergen is under contract with Triple Eight in Supercars for next year, but the team has been clear that it will release him if needed. An early exit is now all but a certainty, the 34-year-old confirming that he is on the hunt for a NASCAR programme next year.

When asked if it will be a full-time deal he said he wasn't sure, although that appeared to be reference to a full Cup programme. He then clarified that there is no plan to combine Supercars and NASCAR in 2024.

According to van Gisbergen, his current focus is on helping Triple Eight secure a suitable replacement. "There's a lot happening in the background," he said. "I'm not leaving because of this team. I love this team and when I leave I want to make sure there is someone here to replace me that's going to do a good job in the car. You

don't want to leave the team with nothing, scrambling to find someone. Hopefully the team has someone soon."

When he opened up on how his 2024 may look, van Gisbergen hinted at the lower rungs of the NASCAR ladder as he acclimates to oval racing. "When I study it, Marcos [Ambrose, former V8 Supercars champion] did three years before he went to Cup full-time," he said. [Juan Pablo] Montoya was pretty much a full season as well. Nobody has ever gone into Cup.

"And I have no illusion that those ovals are going to be easy. It's going to take a lot of time to learn. I don't have a plan. Hopefully I'll work it out when I'm over there." That last line is a reference to an impending second outing in the Cup Series with the Trackhouse Racing Chevrolet team at Indianapolis next week.

Triple Eight team manager Mark Dutton said the team will not twist van Gisbergen's arm to stay. "Shane is a team-mate and obviously we want him to stay, but we wouldn't ever think of running a guilt trip or anything to try and stop him from this next step," he said. "This is not going to the opposition. This is an amazing opportunity and whichever way it goes, we'll be totally supporting."

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



Triple Eight will not stand in Kiwi's way

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Penalty a concern for all drivers

The sanction imposed on Lewis Hamilton for his Spa sprint race clash with Sergio Perez has implications for the whole F1 field. They shouldn't let the matter lie

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Lewis Hamilton taking on Sergio Perez through Spa's Stavelot sequence in last Saturday's sprint race was exactly what Formula 1 wanted. It was Mercedes versus Red Bull once again, even as just the appetiser for the main event still to come in the 2023 Belgian Grand Prix. That the GP turned out to be yet another lead battle snoozefest is irrelevant, albeit unfortunate and the biggest problem facing F1.

The day before, the sprint race focus turned to Hamilton and Perez, once Max Verstappen had demoted Oscar Piastri back to second. Perez had gone from harrying Pierre Gasly's Alpine after the safety car restart to being attacked by Hamilton. Mercedes boss Toto Wolff argued that the second Red Bull driver was going "massively backwards" at this stage, but that's only half right.

Their contact, with Hamilton almost level with Perez through the second Stavelot turn, was caused by the Mercedes understeering slightly after it had clipped the inside kerb. Perez said his race was "ruined", as the damage apparently led to his car losing "too much grip". Red Bull team boss Christian Horner stated that the damage caused "a significant loss in downforce that meant we had no choice but to retire the car". As Hamilton continued, he was handed a five-second penalty, which would drop him from fourth to seventh in the final results. Inevitably, outrage followed, both camps of supporters from that bitter 2021

Sainz from the GP with similar damage. But Sainz made it through 22 laps – over twice the length of the shortened sprint. F1 teams regularly retire cars to save mileage, and indeed the consequences of the Hamilton/Perez contact weren't a part of the stewards' decision. But that very F1 word, 'optics', is a factor here. People saw the incident, the retirement, then the penalty. We can see why that transgression didn't actually lead to the five seconds Hamilton received because the outcome can't be viewed alongside the infraction – that alone should be assessed. But we cannot understand why the wet track conditions were not considered as mitigating circumstances, which is where the drivers come back into the reckoning.

These ground-effect F1 cars send water into such a wide area that the drivers just cannot see. It's a problem for F1 – that its efforts to improve racing have harmed wet-weather competition. At least steps are being taken to try to solve this. But that the wet surface – the actual reason the incident occurred, not because of a major misjudgement or deliberate dangerous driving – wasn't even mentioned as part of the stewards' reasoning is baffling. These things can happen when top-level drivers execute the type of racing that status deserves, so why wasn't it considered a factor?

Hamilton was also only judged to have been "predominantly at fault for causing a collision". Perez fairly gave him room on the outside, but this conclusion surely emphasises that it was indeed a racing incident. They both stayed on it, the track conditions made the difference, an unfortunate outcome ensued.

But this isn't the only question the drivers should be asking of race director Niels Wittich. Hamilton, for a small understeer slide, was also handed two penalty points on his superlicence. In Hungary, Zhou Guanyu was given the same number for an error egregious enough that the stewards felt compelled to stress it "was not one of those" lap-one incidents where clashes and mistakes can be waved away inside pack racing. Sainz's collision with Piastri last Sunday was, however, with the Spaniard's La Source lock-up making it harder for him to follow Hamilton through the hairpin and effectively triggering Piastri getting pinched on the inside. But it's understandable why the stewards' review into this was deemed unworthy of further investigation.

Yet Hamilton's new penalty points situation is the final baffling digestif of F1's latest sprint race assessment. The officials will point to the rulebook requiring sentences for driving infractions requiring certain penalties – that this leaves them little or no flexibility. But this element of F1's latest Mercedes/Red Bull clash alone exposes yet another outrage around stewarding consistency. ❧

"Questions about this incident remain. For the drivers, these really need to be considered"

title fight feeling aggrieved. For Mercedes, team boss Toto Wolff insisted it was an "absolute racing incident".

The debate has calmed since, which exposes how quickly F1's sprint races just fade as events – at least in a season where they just add more victories to one team's huge total. But questions about this incident remain, as the paddock jets off for its summer break. For the drivers, these really need to be considered when they reconvene at Zandvoort. It should help them in the long run.

First, it must be put to the FIA in the drivers' Friday meeting at the Dutch GP why the incident was deemed worthy of a penalty in the first place. There are several factors contained in the query. Did Red Bull really need to retire Perez's car? We take it at its word that the damage was costing him considerable downforce points, which is backed up by Ferrari eventually having to retire Carlos



The road to becoming a champion

For Jake Dennis, who has proved himself at every stage of his motorsport career, lifting the Formula E crown is a dream fulfilled

STEFAN MACKLEY

"To become world champion is something we all dream of." For Jake Dennis, that dream became a reality in the London E-Prix as he sealed the 2022-2023 Formula E title in front of his home crowd. It certainly wasn't easy, with wheel-to-wheel battles and two red flags putting Dennis's crowning in doubt until the very final moments. In fact, it has been far from easy all season for the Briton, even if his campaign did start in almost perfect fashion with a win at the opening round in Mexico City and runner-up finishes in the Diriyah E-Prix double-header.

Incredibly, between Diriyah and the second race in Berlin – a period of nearly three months – he failed to score a single point across four races. But Dennis dug deep and what followed was the start of a purple patch for the Andretti Autosport driver, who went on to record five consecutive podiums. A return to the top step finally came in the second Rome E-Prix, where he claimed an impressive lights-to-flag victory, while behind him title rivals Mitch Evans and Nick Cassidy collected each other. Their collision essentially handed Dennis a decisive advantage.

The title is the crowning glory so far of a career in which Dennis has gone up against the best the sport has to offer, beating them on numerous occasions, but never quite being in a position to make the jump into Formula 1. He's sampled modern F1 machinery, making two official test outings with Red Bull

"In his rookie year he was in championship contention, so we knew we had a special guy"

in Spain and Hungary in 2018, and he remains the squad's development driver – his feedback clearly highly regarded and playing its own part in the team's current dominance.

Dennis seemed destined for success as a youngster, having been picked up by the Racing Steps Foundation programme at the age of 12 as he continued to build an impressive karting CV. He cut his teeth in cars via the new-for-2011 InterSteps Championship, a low-budget series backed by RSF itself and using Formula BMW's Mygale chassis, where he claimed the title with eight victories. More wins and another title followed the next year in the Formula Renault 2.0 Northern European Cup, earning him a slot as a finalist for the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award – which he duly won.

A jump full-time into the Formula Renault Eurocup followed

and, although there were no wins, fourth in the 2013 standings was a decent showing behind champion Pierre Gasly, Oliver Rowland and Esteban Ocon. In the 2014 Formula 3 European Championship – the same season in which Max Verstappen also made his debut in F3 machinery – he finished ninth with Carlin before a move to Prema the next season yielded third in the standings with six wins. Although some distance behind champion Felix Rosenqvist and runner-up Antonio Giovinazzi, he finished in front of an impressive rollcall of drivers – Charles Leclerc, Lance Stroll, George Russell and Alex Albon.

He would cross paths with Leclerc and Albon again in 2016 as they finished first and second respectively in GP3 while Dennis claimed fourth with Arden. But by now a new pathway in GT racing beckoned for Dennis, his six-foot-plus frame proving a disadvantage against his rivals in single-seaters, and he competed for WRT and R-Motorsport in Blancpain GT and the DTM, even finishing second in the 2019 Bathurst 12 Hours aboard an Aston Martin Vantage GT3. But a return to single-seaters was on the horizon after impressing BMW through a series of evaluations, and beating the likes of Marco Wittmann and Philipp Eng to the second Andretti Formula E seat for the 2020-21 season. Two wins in his rookie season put him on the cusp of the title but a rear-axle issue in the Berlin finale sent him spinning out, while his sophomore campaign was slightly tougher with sixth in the standings and only one win.

Fast-forward to last weekend, and his achievement was a moment team owner Michael Andretti wanted to savour, his squad having been a part of Formula E since its inception in 2014. "I've been very impressed with Jake since the moment we hired him," said Andretti. "He almost won the championship two years ago when we had the BMW. If the motor didn't fail in the last race, we would have won. So even in his rookie year he was in contention for a championship, so we knew we had a special guy."

But what now for Dennis? To a certain extent life carries on, with the Briton already back doing simulator work on Tuesday and attention inevitably turning to the new Formula E campaign. What became clear towards the end of this season, though, is that the Jaguar powertrain is the class of the field, and that both Cassidy and Evans can match Dennis in terms of performance. With the Kiwis expected to team up at Jaguar next season, it's a mighty prospect for anyone to face. But Dennis has proved he's capable of going up against the best and beating them during his career. The difference next year is he will be the driver everyone is aiming for, and with that comes a new set of pressures and expectations that he will once again have to conquer. *✍*

P28 FORMULA E REPORT



Japan's GT3 revival

The post-pandemic recovery of GT World Challenge Asia has sparked a surge in grid sizes and fan interest in Japan that looks set to have a lasting impact

JAMIE KLEIN

Big grids of GT3 machinery may be nothing out of the ordinary in Europe, but the sight of 36 cars assembling for June's GT World Challenge Asia round at Fuji represented an important achievement for a championship that was forced into hibernation for two seasons during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With cross-border travel in Asia made impossible, GT Asia ground to a halt in 2020-21 before relaunching last year with a new 'Japan Cup' element. The idea was simple: four of that year's six planned races were held in Japan, and teams could opt to enter those races and have their own classification.

The decision to anchor the SRO-run series' relaunch in Japan was made in late 2021, when countries such as China and Thailand were still in the grip of lockdown. Sepang would hold the season opener before the first of four events in Japan and, while only eight GT3 cars took to the track for the curtain-raiser, it was an important first step to prove to wavering teams that the series was back in business.

"We had to go somewhere where there are clients, cars and race tracks, and Japan was that place," explains GT Asia general manager Benjamin Franassovici. "When we came to Fuji in 2017, 2018 and 2019, we always had a few extra cars there, so we knew there was interest. We knew Sepang wouldn't look good with eight cars. But you have to put cars on track to convince people that it's really happening."

Eight cars at Sepang became 16 at Suzuka, with each of the remaining rounds attracting 16-17 GT3 cars. That's grown this year, with a bumper field of 36 cars at Fuji, 33 at Suzuka and 31 at Motegi at the end of July, with a small contingent of GT4 machines boosting overall grids further. This year's entry list features names that would be immediately recognisable to fans of European GT racing, with Dennis Olsen, Alessio Picariello, Matteo Cairoli, Alvaro Parente, Maximilian Gotz and Luca Stolz all in action last time out at Motegi. Rising Australian star Broc Feeney was also present in a Triple Eight-run Mercedes.

"We showed people we could deliver, that the language barrier wouldn't be an issue for the Japanese teams," says Franassovici. "We have the race director radio in Japanese and English, as well as the drivers' briefing. This year we created a separate radio feed in Japanese. We try to make things as friendly as possible."

Franassovici cites two reasons for the boom in grid numbers: "First, China reopened and a lot of Chinese teams came. Second, we have more Japan Cup cars. It was important that [Takeshi] Kimura and CarGuy won the title last year, and D'Station won races, to see that they could challenge the international teams."

While anchoring the series' relaunch in Japan has

undoubtedly been a success, it has also provided a quandary. The series has already had to turn down cars this year, capping the full-season entry at 37 (including GT4 cars) due to space limitations at certain tracks. And with more teams showing interest for 2024, the series could soon find itself with far more cars than it has available grid spots.

That's why SRO is now considering whether the Japan Cup could be split off from GT Asia to become its own

"The series could soon find itself with far more cars than it has available grid spots"

series. A standalone race will be held next season at Sugo and, depending on feedback from the teams, the option of completely splitting GT Asia and Japan Cup is on the table.

"We are working out if that's feasible, whether we will have the numbers for both championships," says Franassovici. "We want to look good; the numbers have to be right. The alternative is to keep the grid capped at 36 or 37 cars and turn more people away. But I'm optimistic that there is enough interest [for two grids]."

Another consideration is GT Asia's desire to get back to a more 'normal' schedule, with more races in other Asian countries. For 2024, half of the six GT Asia rounds (excluding Sugo) will be held in Japan, and the plan is to go back to two in 2025, as was the case pre-COVID. But two rounds would not be enough to sustain the Japan Cup as a viable competition without adding standalone races.

While Franassovici is adamant that GT Asia has no interest in stealing attention from Japan's established Super GT and Super Taikyu series, there are clearly some Pro-Am teams racing in Super GT's lower GT300 class that would fit more naturally in the SRO environment. The new partnership with the Automobile Club de l'Ouest to co-run the Asian Le Mans Series could also offer a pathway to the Le Mans 24 Hours, which would only increase GT Asia's attractiveness. There are early signs that fans are taking notice of Japanese motorsport's new kid on the block. The Suzuka round attracted 15,000 fans across two days, which is more than Super Taikyu managed at the same venue this year.

Whether or not it remains part of GT Asia, the Japan Cup has certainly added a much-needed splash of international colour to the country's motorsport landscape, and has gained enough momentum to suggest it'll be a fixture for many seasons to come. Let's just hope there isn't another pandemic any time soon... ❧

RACE CENTRE

FORMULA 1

VERSTAPPEN RUBS IT IN AT SPA

On one of F1's great tracks, Red Bull was in a class of its own – and Verstappen comfortably defeated Perez despite starting from sixth

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES



Red Bull's
peerless RB19
perfectly suited
to epic Ardennes
race track

44

was surprised it took him so long to get to the front to be honest with you," joked Red Bull boss Christian Horner in the aftermath of Max Verstappen's second crushing Spa comeback drive in two years, his victory in the 2023 edition of the Belgian Grand Prix again coming ahead of team-mate Sergio Perez. He may have started sixth on this occasion rather than row seven – his lowly grid spot thanks this time to a gearbox change penalty, not stemming from an engine replacement – but this was surely just

as impressive as Verstappen's 2022 Spa steamrollering.

The description might be similar, but there is plenty to explain following Verstappen's 10th GP victory of 2023, plus his second sprintsweep of this campaign. That concerns not only why he was so good last Sunday, but also the key weakness shown by Perez that cemented his defeat against his squadmate, and a surprise other star of the race in their wake.

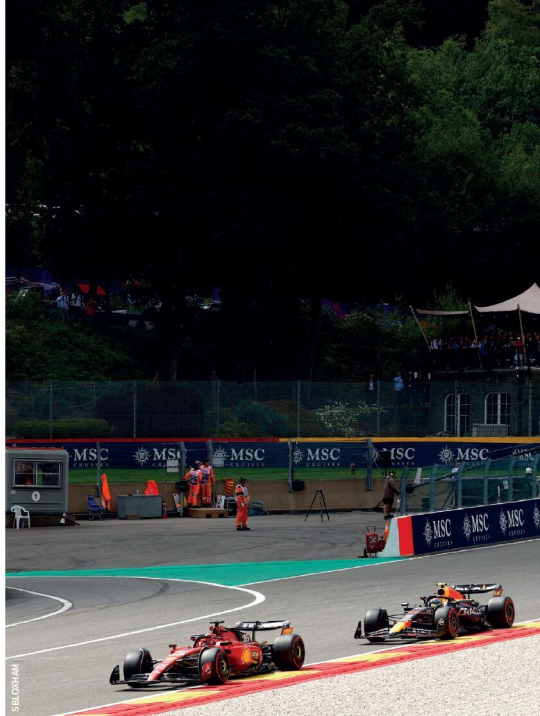
Perez had started alongside inherited polesitter Charles Leclerc of Ferrari, and was armed with an RB19 that is just perfectly suited to Spa. This season's dominant machine rides the bumps beautifully with its unruffled ride, shimmies down the straights so smoothly with its slippery aerodynamic profile, and doesn't lose its balance in either the 4.35-mile track's high-speed or low-speed stuff. Such might breeds confidence, but Perez still felt "it was quite crucial for my race to get Charles on lap one".

That explains his urgency running up the Kemmel straight for the first time, shooting into the Ferrari's slipstream as they blitzed the Raidillon kerbs, then blasting past on the outside run to Les Combes, after Leclerc had defended the inside run to La Source. Perez quickly rocketed to a 1.3-second leading margin by the end of the opening lap.

By this point Verstappen was 2.4s off the lead but already up to fourth. His progress had been eased by Carlos Sainz and Oscar Piastri colliding their Ferrari and McLaren machinery at the apex of La Source, after the Spaniard had locked his right-front hard while jostling behind the leading duo and Lewis Hamilton.

"You have to wait and see what they're going to do on the exit, because I could see Oscar couldn't really steer anymore," Verstappen later explained after recalling his similar clash here seven years ago, when he'd knocked Kimi Raikkonen into Sebastian Vettel. He was briefly caught behind the suddenly slow McLaren on the downhill plunge to Eau Rouge. "So, we lost a little bit of momentum there but luckily, it was all OK," continued Verstappen. "I also got Carlos into Les Combes. And, from there onwards, basically, my race started."

Over the next four laps, as Perez was gradually building a nice lead up front, Leclerc was gamely holding on ahead of Hamilton, with Verstappen lurking menacingly. But, to Horner and everyone else's surprise, the Dutchman wasn't harrying and attacking his 2021 title rival. Instead, Verstappen spent those laps "stuck behind Lewis,



because he was in the DRS of Charles, and with Lewis having the highest top speed this weekend it was just impossible to pass".

But on the fifth tour, Hamilton dropped out of Leclerc's DRS range. And Verstappen didn't hesitate. Immediately the Red Bull was all over the Mercedes, then on the Kemmel straight on lap six Verstappen roared ahead.

It wasn't long before Verstappen was making similarly light work of Leclerc, getting past and into second with a sweeping outside run up the Kemmel straight on lap nine. Up ahead, Perez now held a 3.0s lead, the stage set for an intra-Red Bull battle. Over the next four-lap mini-segment of the action, Verstappen did start eroding his team-mate's advantage, but only a little. He was still 2.5s in arrears at the end of lap 12 of 44.

There were two reasons for this. One was Verstappen feeling he'd "hurt my tyres a bit too much" in his early chase and then passing moves against Hamilton and Leclerc – by this time Leclerc was already 6.2s adrift in third. The other was the cryptic message Verstappen was receiving from the pitwall. Here, his engineer Gianpiero Lambiase – gaining ever more fame with





Polesitter Leclerc's lead was shortlived thanks to Perez's "quite crucial" lap-one pass

"TO EVERYONE'S SURPRISE, VERSTAPPEN WASN'T HARRYING AND ATTACKING HIS 2021 TITLE RIVAL"

every deadpan, cool reply to his charge's team radio angst and fury – was telling him to "use your head".

"Are we both doing it or what?" was Verstappen's angry response. The two Red Bulls were lapping in the high 1m52s, but this exposed for the first time Red Bull's concerns about inducing graining on its front tyres and possibly falling into the clutches of its rivals behind. Given there had been no dry practice on heavy tanks thanks to the full soaking in free practice, the team was right to be concerned.

As it was, Pirelli saw "no graining" on any of its tyres, according to its motorsport boss Mario Isola. And it also reported that degradation was "quite in line with our expectations". If anything, it was slightly less than expected, given Pirelli had predicted pre-race that the quickest strategy would be a soft/medium/medium two-stopper.

That strategy was what Red Bull had in mind, but it was also monitoring, as was everyone else, a rain shower approaching from the two Stavelot corners at the south-eastern edge of the Ardennes circuit. After Red Bull pitted Perez to change the soft tyres – all the leading runners had started on this compound – for mediums, Lambiase asked Verstappen if he could stay out for another "nine or 10 minutes" and possibly stop for wet-weather rubber if the rain was heavier than the sprinkling expected. "I can't see the weather radar, can I?" came the terse reply. And so, on lap 14, Verstappen got the same treatment as his team-mate. In fact, his pitstop was 0.7s quicker after Perez's service featured a sparky right-rear change.

That helped cut Perez's lead down to 1.1s by the end of Verstappen's out-lap, and the next time by he was finally in DRS range. On lap 17, Verstappen raced around the outside up the Kemmel straight and overtook the other RB19 with ease, and Perez "obviously didn't defend too hard because of the speed difference between the two of them" thanks to Verstappen's open DRS, said Horner. Verstappen then >>

QUALIFYING



There were three main themes to 'normal' qualifying at Spa. Two were redemption arcs, one the latest Max Verstappen radio rant and what followed.

Charles Leclerc was the main hero, valiantly splitting the Red Bull pair, as Sergio Perez finally made it back to the sharp end of a non-sprint Q3 session, the Mexican recording his best result over the typical Q1-Q2-Q3 format since early May in Miami. Ferrari star Leclerc excelling against the clock is nothing new, but in Spain, Canada and Austria this year he'd had a surprise weakness exposed; he couldn't bring things together in mixed conditions.

The evening session started wet enough for intermediate tyres to be required in Q1 and, although it dried sufficiently for slicks by the end of Q2, the track was still treacherous to the finale, thanks to its earlier Friday dousing. In Q2, Esteban Ocon and Kevin Magnussen both hit the wall at Turn 9, the unnamed 90-degree left starting the drop down to Pouhon, a tiny slide off-line having potentially massive consequences.

Leclerc had "put quite a bit of work" into addressing his shortcomings on a drying track. This involved peeling back elements of his aggressive driving style and making new uses of Ferrari's steering wheel 'tools', which control differential positioning settings. The result was calmer laps overall – on his final flier Leclerc had to catch just one snap of oversteer, between the Bus Stop apexes – and fewer mistakes. This paid off for Leclerc, and he led after the first Q3 runs with a 1m47.931s as Verstappen's biggest threat.

Leclerc found nearly a second on his second go, which edged Perez by 0.057 seconds. After he was congratulated on his result by Red Bull team boss

Christian Horner, Perez quipped "you will talk to me now?" – an understatedly damning assessment of his recent troubles against the clock.

Verstappen had beaten both, coming from 0.128s adrift of Leclerc after the first Q3 runs. But he'd almost not made it through Q2, after nearly coming a cropper at Turn 9 on his penultimate run in the middle segment. After avoiding the gravel, just, Verstappen slowed and argued with engineer Gianpiero Lambiase about his remaining Q2 efforts. He barely scraped through in 10th.

Early in Q3, Verstappen was "not actually finding the limit" because "then it's very easy to make a mistake and hit the wall". He knew he'd been "incredibly slow" in Turn 9 on his first Q3 run as he built back up there, and so in his second attempt in the final segment he "just went a lot faster". The result was a 1m46.168s and a whopping final margin of 0.82s.

"Leclerc had 'put quite a bit of work' into peeling back elements of his aggressive driving style"

SPRINT RACE



Max Verstappen may have secured a second Formula 1 sprint race win of 2023 last weekend at Spa, but there was no doubting the real star of the show: McLaren's Oscar Piastri.

The Australian had already been impressing when he qualified just 0.011 seconds behind Verstappen in the condensed Q1-Q2-Q3 session. Piastri had actually been up on the Dutchman from Stavelot 1, only losing his time going wide out of the final corner.

The other incidents of note in that session were Charles Leclerc's slow middle sector, featuring a big save at Turn 9 that cost him a shot at getting among the front row battle and let Carlos Sainz slip in ahead to start third, plus Lance Stroll crashing while attempting a run on slicks in Q2. That stopped birthday 'boy' (he turned 42) Fernando Alonso qualifying higher than 15th, while George Russell got in Lewis Hamilton's way after messing up his final Q3 lap by locking up at La Source.

When race one did get going after a rain delay, the FIA opted to shorten it from 15 to 11 laps and



use five formation tours behind the safety car to try to clear the water and improve F1's much-discussed spray problem. While Verstappen reckoned race control's calls were "probably quite a safe view on things", Pierre Gasly said taking the rolling start sixth for Alpine meant he "didn't feel safe".

Although the spray issue remained, the cars moving the water and no further precipitation meant that, when it was declared time to race, intermediates were the best option. Piastri led the pile into the pits – followed by Sainz,

"When the race did get going after a rain delay, the FIA opted to shorten it from 15 to 11 laps"

Gasly and Hamilton – with their team-mates unable to risk double-stacks and so carrying on behind Verstappen. He blasted to a 4.1s lead over Leclerc before coming in at the end of lap one to take intermediates along with the Ferrari, which got held waiting for others to pass in the pits, as had happened to Sainz too – exactly what Red Bull had feared would hamper Verstappen had he stopped at the same time.

When the world champion emerged from the pits, Piastri led by 1.5s. Verstappen had halved that the next time around. Then the safety car was called out after Alonso had uncharacteristically crashed solo at Pouhon while chasing Nico Hulkenberg.

At the restart, Verstappen showed no mercy – on Piastri's tail from the Bus Stop to Eau Rouge and blasting past as they ran onto

the Kemmel straight, "such is our straightline speed", raved Piastri. They shot clear to the finish, Verstappen winning by 6.7s, with Piastri 4.1s ahead of Gasly.

The Alpine man had been running third since jumping Sainz in the pits, with Sergio Perez (another final formation lap stopper) his biggest threat after the restart. Hamilton then chased Gasly after the Mercedes driver had clashed with Perez as the Red Bull squirmed traversing Stavelot on the restart lap, ripping a hole in its right sidepod. Hamilton was handed a five-second penalty after Perez had been overcome and then demoted by the Ferraris (led by Sainz), losing three places in six corners.

"We lost too much grip with [the damage]," claimed Perez, after being retired following a trip into the Stavelot gravel as Lando Norris closed in.

Hamilton harried Gasly to try to get a penalty-absorbing gap, but couldn't, so dropped to seventh behind Norris. George Russell deprived Daniel Ricciardo of eighth and the last point with a late rise.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



pulled a 3.9s lead over the next two and a third laps. Then, danger. The rain had arrived. On lap 20, the leader's lap time tumbled from the 1m51s to a 1m55.733s. Then, the next time up Eau Rouge, Verstappen's race was nearly ended in shocking fashion. His Red Bull's rear end stepped out of line at the most fearsome spot of Spa. He lifted off as he corrected the steering lightning fast, thinking "a swear word" he would soon be uttering to Lambiasi.

"The rain was just moving around on the track," Verstappen said of this moment of jeopardy. "Like sometimes it was just increasing in other places, from lap to lap.

"I got there and it just caught me out. It was just a bit more slippery than I thought it would be. It happens, you quickly try to correct it. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Luckily, at that speed as well, you have quite a bit of downforce on the car. That helps."

Leclerc, who was running 9.8s in Verstappen's wake but with a 3.1s advantage over Hamilton (the Ferrari and Mercedes were also now on the mediums after stopping on laps 13 and 12 respectively), had a similar moment. Leclerc's rear end did not step out as spectacularly as Verstappen's, but he was sent shooting off-line and riskily climbing the inside kerbs of Raidillon. Neither driver was unnerved by their incident. Verstappen's lead had briefly fallen to 3.6s, but he quickly started building it back up again as he romped clear of Perez. It was here that the race result was ultimately sealed.

Perez had endured his own moment of peril in the precipitation, running very wide onto the vast Pouhon run-off on lap 22 and losing a second to Verstappen. Before his second stop on lap 29, the Mexican's gap to the leader swelled to 8.9s. There was no coming back. "I did struggle quite a bit on that medium tyre, especially with the rain," Perez explained. "Felt like I lost a bit of temperature on it. We never really got a good read on that tyre."

Although his medium tyres were brand new when he took them at his first stop, Perez had completed seven long laps when the rain arrived. The track temperature briefly dipped then and this, combined with his excursion onto the damper run-off, caused Perez's yellow-walled rubber to lose more temperature than his team-mate's up ahead. On thinner, worn Pirellis, that heat just won't come back.

There was still a stint to complete, as Pirelli's two-stop prediction became reality for most. But the hard compound never got a look-in other than McLaren fitting it to Lando Norris's MCL60 for his second stint, which set up his mammoth 27-lap final run on the softs.

Norris and others could contemplate long final stints on the soft tyre because "the hard was not really the compound considering the cold conditions and the condition of the track", according to Isola. The rain and tyre temperature performance considerations

"IT HAPPENS, YOU QUICKLY TRY TO CORRECT IT. SOMETIMES IT WORKS, SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T"



made it even more unattractive.

"When it was raining, this was also helping the soft compound to last longer compared to what was predicted," Isola added. "So, a bit of pace management, plus condition of the track and obviously they were slowing down the pace, running in 1m55s or 1m54s. That was the reason why the stints on the soft were extended."

The leaders had managed to get their softs through longer opening stints than those behind, even while on heavy tanks. It was only logical, therefore, that they'd go back to that compound for the final stint. But Red Bull's hand here was in fact forced by its closest chasers. Leclerc was called in by Ferrari for a second time on lap 28, one lap after Hamilton had stopped to go back to the softs.

"Our strategy was based on Lewis and trying to keep him behind during the whole race," Leclerc explained. "He had a good pace, but I felt we had him under control."

Indeed, this was surely the most surprising element of last Sunday's race. While the team running in second place to Red Bull has varied from track to track, Mercedes had been confident that it would be able to be the squad in that position in Belgium.

But in fact Ferrari's only remaining runner, once the sidepod-damage-addled Sainz had slipped down the order and into retirement during the shower, performed much better than expected. Leclerc was able to break Hamilton's DRS range early on, then didn't slip back into it once Verstappen had powered past. He built a four-second gap over the lead Mercedes through the first pitstops (Hamilton was assessed for weaving in front of Lance Stroll after exiting his, which was deemed unworthy of investigation for the stewards by race control). When they ran on the medium tyres, the gap was generally solid at 3s.

"We had to react to what Lewis was doing behind, which then Red Bull had to react to us a lap later," Leclerc said of when Perez was pulled in on lap 29, one tour after the sole surviving red car had been serviced again. "So that's why we were all on the same strategy, because everybody was reacting to somebody else's strategy."

This set up the final stint, which Leclerc started with a reduced 1.9s gap to Hamilton. This soon grew back to its previous size, and the Ferrari driver was actually thinking about a possible bigger prize rather than defending the final podium spot he'd already safely snaffled.

From lap 36 to lap 40, Leclerc "was seeing that I was doing the same lap times as Checo" and thought "maybe we can get second place – but then very quickly I understood that he was just saving". Exactly what Perez was saving was fuel – the lack of dry practice running had also impacted the pre-race calculations in this critical area. But in any case, Leclerc spotted that "Checo started to push again for a few laps at the end and I could not match that, so I think they also had a bit of margin".

Leclerc had to ship "a bit too much" time in those final tours – his pace slipped from the low-1m51s to the mid-1m52s because Ferrari needed him to save fuel rather heavily. But his gap to Hamilton was hardly falling over, the difference between >>

TRACKSIDE VIEW

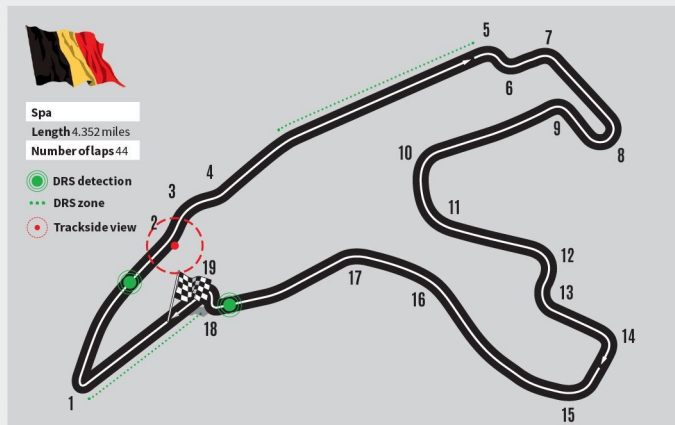


Oh, the fickle Ardennes weather, still pursuing the Belgian Grand Prix on its jump across the Formula 1 summer break. Raincoats and sunglasses packed. During FP1, Autosport takes a trackside wander and only the former is required.

It has been steadily drizzling since we woke up in nearby Malmédy on Thursday morning – at no point has the precipitation, no matter how light, held off. Where once the prospect of a wet Belgian race might have dangled happy memories of legendary Michael Schumacher drives, now the mind immediately goes back to the 2021 washout far hence.

Then, sadly, the realisation that Dilano van't Hoff lost his life here in such conditions only four weeks ago. He had been honoured along with Anthoine Hubert on the Thursday during a track run, organised by Hubert's close friend Pierre Gasly, broken up by moments of silence and reflection. Watching van't Hoff's family and MP Motorsport team-mates unite in their grief at the spot of his crash site was heart-wrenching, the mood as sombre as the grey skies above.

There's a lot in the air, then, as we head for the exit of Spa's Endurance pitlane at the foot of the Eau Rouge/Raidillon sequence. But the non-metaphorical stuff is all rain. This will severely limit the



“The rain intensifies – that all-encompassing soft soaking that silently somehow gets you wetter”

running for F1's only practice session. Alex Albon doesn't leave the fans waiting long, heading out on the intermediates. He's joined by Logan Sargeant and Lewis Hamilton, but that's as good as it gets early on, as the rain intensifies – still that all-encompassing soft soaking that silently somehow gets

you wetter. Before a lull in action as the opening 10 minutes end, we note how the water has changed this typically flat-out blast into a treacherous challenge requiring the drivers to brake and shift down as they climb the hill's right kink.

When drivers do reappear, they're all on the full wets and there's a notable split between how they tackle the complex's second part away to our right. Gasly and Esteban Ocon, plus Oscar Piastri, are running harder and earlier over the kerb on the inside of the right kink. The rest stay wider, avoiding the

red and yellow kerbs that unsettle the Alpines and the McLaren.

There's little more to observe. The rain worsens just as Sargeant causes a mid-session red flag. The crowd is then kept entertained by renditions of *Sweet Caroline* and *Summer of '69*, while Autosport enjoys imagining the spray tails of the few cars that head out to complete last-minute practice starts as shark fins swimming scarily close to the Endurance pitwall to our left. Somewhat apt, we hope, given the conditions.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Pitboard
summarises
Verstappen and
Red Bull's Spa
domination



them at 2.9s at the start of lap 42.

For all Ferrari's ongoing concerns about its tyre wear compared to its rivals', Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff felt "they had always a tenth, one and a half tenths advantage per lap", while Hamilton rued "a lot of deg, particularly in the middle sector" as he pushed on after Leclerc all race.

"I always felt like he had an answer for all the laps I did," Hamilton added. "They had the upper hand this weekend. I was trying, I was pushing a lot."

Leclerc's race may have seemed unremarkable from the outside, but his consistent pace behind Perez kept the leaders all on the same strategy. So, has Ferrari turned a corner on one of its key weaknesses to Red Bull? "I think it's a bit too early to say, but it's been two or three races where we are managing our tyres better," Leclerc said after he'd taken his third podium of 2023.

"This was definitely not the reason why we finished so far behind the Red Bulls, I think they were just quicker. But in terms of tyre management, we didn't have a huge degradation. And also looking at Mercedes behind, I was in control of the pace of my tyres."

Leclerc's third place was sealed when Hamilton stopped for a third time at the end of that 42nd lap. The Briton took new medium tyres

"I ALWAYS FELT LIKE HE HAD AN ANSWER FOR ALL THE LAPS I DID. THEY HAD THE UPPER HAND THIS WEEKEND"

and promptly obliterated Verstappen's fastest lap by 1.6s with a 1m47.305s final-tour flier.

The fastest lap destination had been the main theme of the winner's final stint too, after he'd been brought in on lap 30 to also move back to new softs, like his chasing trio. Verstappen's out-lap speed – one second quicker than Perez behind – concerned Lambiase enough for him to chide his charge. Then, after Verstappen had pumped in his personal best 1m48.922s on the next tour, Lambiase told him "this tyre had reasonable deg in the first stint" and asked Verstappen again to "use your head a bit more".

After being told that his subsequent mid-1m50s pace was more like it, but with this remaining quicker than Perez's times early in the final stint, Verstappen jokingly suggested he instead could push on and stop for a third time, to give his mechanics "a bit of pitstop practice", he mused. But Lambiase swiftly rebuffed this idea, which Horner explained: "We didn't take the stop because we didn't want to get too greedy because we won the sprint race".

Red Bull had spotted its front tyre surfaces beginning to open on the rubber that was removed at the first stops, which led to its (ignored on its lead car) insistence on careful early-stint treatment.

"A 1-2 finish," Horner concluded. "We didn't want to end up with egg on our face, compromising that in any way. So, to give away one point, I don't think anybody will lose too much sleep over it tonight."

Neither, for that matter, will Red Bull mind its Belgian constructors' trophy being damaged one race on from Norris wrecking Verstappen's Hungarian GP winner's award. Points mean prizes but, when 12 wins have been collected in a row in 2023, they don't all totally matter... 🏆



**NEXT
F1 REPORT**
Dutch Grand Prix
31 August issue

ASTON UPTURN HELPS ALONSO TO FIFTH

Fernando Alonso reckoned that Aston Martin had enjoyed a much more “normal” weekend in his run to fifth place, in which he saw off a challenge from a one-stopping George Russell.

The Spaniard, who started ninth, had moved past the Mercedes driver at the start when Russell got baulked by a slowing Oscar Piastri out of La Source, and then reeled off moves on Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz's damaged Ferrari to sit fifth. Alonso had to move past Russell again after his lap 10 pitstop, as Mercedes decided to keep Russell on track in the event that forecast rainfall necessitated rain tyres.

Russell made his sole stop at the end of lap 22, managing to set a series of laps to get closer to Alonso, but the two-time world champion had 2.2 seconds in hand as he exited the pits after his second stop. After completing half the race distance on soft tyres, Russell gave up his pursuit to nurse his Pirelli rubber to the end, locking in sixth place, having fallen nearly 7s adrift.

“The guys did an incredible job again on the strategy, also on the pitstops,” Alonso enthused. “I think today the car felt more normal. I’m happy, and it’s a good boost for the summer.”



Sainz and Piastri derailed by commotion at La Source

Oscar Piastri's second place during the Spa sprint had the shine taken off it through his first-corner clash with Carlos Sainz, with both drivers adjudged to have been at fault as the FIA waved away a possible penalty.

On the run to La Source, Sainz locked a wheel and pulled right in a bid to pass Lewis Hamilton, while Piastri attempted to take to the inside line. The Australian was left with limited space, and the McLaren's right-front wheel crunched into the wall as his left side gouged a hole out of Sainz's sidepod.

Piastri pulled up at the end of the lap to retire ahead of Stavelot, while the Ferrari eventually fell to the back and limped around with floor damage before Sainz retired his “undriveable” car on lap 24. “Unfortunately I think Oscar was trying to do a bit of an optimistic move on me,” Sainz reflected. “It’s a bit of a shame because when you review the past races here in Spa and

you know what has been the typical Turn 1 incidents, it’s exactly that. Everyone who tries the inside line into Turn 1 normally generates an incident or a crash and this time it was my turn to receive.”

Piastri did not deflect blame from himself but reckoned both drivers could have taken the corner differently. “I think from Carlos’s point of view, the move to the right surprised me a bit,” Piastri explained. “Then for myself, I think from there I was quite limited, maybe I could have braked a bit later and been further alongside, but it’s very easy to say that with hindsight.”

Nonetheless, Piastri had outperformed Lando Norris in both qualifying sessions, hurling his car onto the front row for the shorter of the two races. His conversion of that into second represented his first major result in F1, after just missing out on podium finishes at the British and Hungarian races.

“I’M FEELING READY FOR A FIGHT WITH HIM IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE SEASON”

Yuki Tsunoda is ready to take on new team-mate Daniel Ricciardo, after roundly beating the Australian over the Belgian GP weekend.



Q & A

LANDO NORRIS
MCLAREN DRIVER

Can you explain your tyre struggles at the start?

Yeah, it was terrible. We were stuck in a circle of not being able to push enough in the middle sector because of the cars ahead. People [behind] had to lift in Eau Rouge, we were that slow, and I was getting overtaken before the DRS zone even started. We went on to the hard [tyre], and this was even worse. We thought it normally kind of suits us, so I think it was the right decision to try, but it was still terrible. Then we put the soft on, and everything came back



towards us. I didn't know how I ended up P7.

Is this a reality check?

I don't think we've had the optimal wing settings, we haven't been able to focus on that because we brought a whole new car. And all of the focus was on doing that, which is the correct thing to do. There's only three or four races which are probably as low downforce as this. I'd much rather take a couple of bad weekends than just be below par the whole time. We've had some good weekends, but we're not where we need to be.

How did you find the rain?

It was lighter than I was hoping, but obviously still helped us. I think everyone got a bit scared. I was on the soft the time rain came, which I think was the perfect thing to have done, which is why we boxed.

Surprised the tyres held up at the end?

Well, the soft tyre changed the whole race for us. I think I was fighting for like 16th or 17th, and I ended up P7. So the softs just made things work, which is the opposite of what we had in Silverstone and in Budapest. Maybe it's not necessarily the best thing to have a lot of high-speed performance – here it's better to maybe cruise a little bit in the high speed, don't put stress in tyres, but have a rocketship in the straight.

OCON SCORES
FOR ALPINE WHILE
GASLY THWARTED

Esteban Ocon's rise to eighth over the second half of the Belgian Grand Prix came at the expense of Alpine team-mate Pierre Gasly, whose hopes were hamstrung by getting boxed in by a slow Oscar Piastri at the start.

Gasly dropped to 16th by the end of the first lap after getting stuck behind the broken McLaren, but a one-stop strategy brought him back into the game after going long on his opening set of soft tyres.

By pitting for mediums on lap 23 of 44, Gasly emerged ahead of the two-stopping Ocon at the time both had completed their scheduled stops, but Ocon had more pace on the softs and streaked past his team-mate on the Kemmel straight on lap 29.

Alex Albon was next up, and Ocon manoeuvred his way through at Fagnes to sit in the points. The move against Yuki Tsunoda was arguably Ocon's best of the race – he gamely hung around the outside heading into Les Combes to pick up the inside line for the next left-hander.

This brought the Frenchman into the sphere of Aston Martin's Lance Stroll, who had begun to save tyres as he attempted to complete his own one-stop strategy. But Ocon was too fast to resist amid Stroll's heavy lifting and coasting, yielding an easy move on the 41st lap into Les Combes to claim eighth.



Alfas and Albon battle but miss points

A late lower-midfield battle for supremacy was won by Alfa Romeo's Valtteri Bottas, who moved up to 12th after Alex Albon's rapidly degrading tyres prompted a third stop for the Williams driver.

Bottas had battled with Albon and Kevin Magnussen's Haas, ultimately winning the bout when the Anglo-Thai stopped and the Dane's tyres began to fade. Alfa team-mate Zhou Guanyu then made his way from the back through the rearguard rank and file,

dispatching the Haas pair and Daniel Ricciardo, as Albon followed him through on a fresh set of soft tyres. While Albon homed into DRS range of Zhou by the end, he had run out of time to put a move on the Chinese racer for 13th.

"Today has been a solid race, I was happy with our pace and with the strategy we chose," mused Bottas, despite Alfa Romeo getting nowhere near the points.



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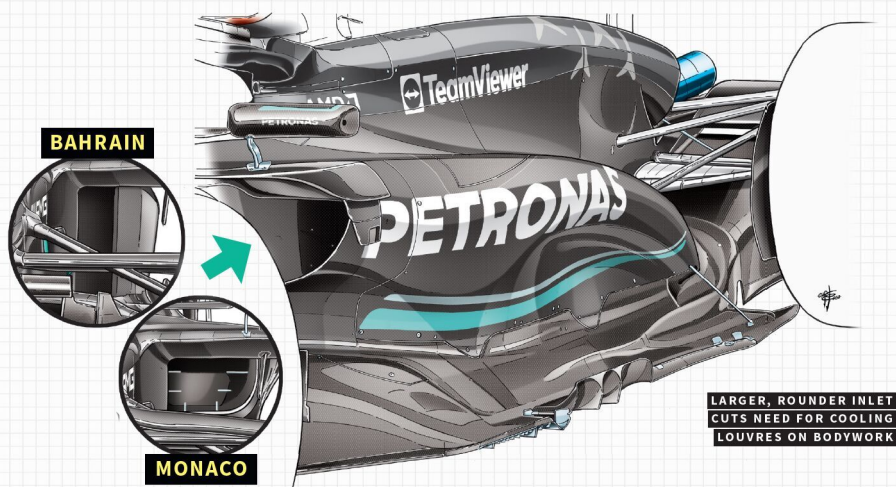


GIORGIO
PIOLA

BELGIAN GP TECH

DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



MORE SIDEPODS AS MERCEDES SEARCHES FOR ANSWERS

Mercedes introduced its third sidepod package of the season for the Belgian Grand Prix, as it moves further away from the 'zero-pod' concept with which it started the year. The W14 now features a larger, rounder inlet, which the team says reduces the need for cooling louvres around the rest of the bodywork. This has allowed the bodywork around the Coke bottle section to be redefined and improved the quality of the airflow moving

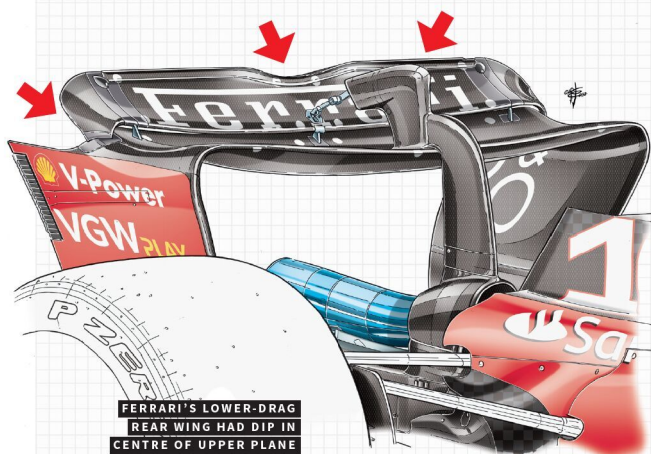
to the rear wing to help efficiency.

For the weekend at Spa, Mercedes took a lower-drag rear wing to boost performance through the Kemmel straight and the Blanchimont section, and reworked its floor volume distribution "to extract more local load from [the] forward floor vortex system, which in turn improves flow to the diffuser".

Although Mercedes continued to show slightly

better performance than during the early part of the season, the car started to bounce in the higher-speed parts of the Belgian circuit. "Even Blanchimont was a corner where Lewis had to lift, and it is an easy-flat normally," explained team principal Toto Wolff. "So, you're bouncing on the straight, you overheat the tyres under braking, and that is a vicious circle."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



FERRARI AND McLAREN GO DIFFERENT WAYS

For the high-speed nature of the Spa circuit, every team except McLaren brought a skinnier version of its rear wing to limit the overall drag produced at high speeds. Reducing the frontal area of the car is the cheapest way to lose drag, although Spa requires more of a trade-off with the low-speed corners than Monza.

Ferrari's lower-drag rear wing featured a top plane set at a lower angle of attack and a shallower mainplane to "depower" it, while the beam wing was reduced in size too. The SF-23 also featured a dip in the centre of the upper plane to bleed off drag slightly further.

McLaren didn't have a full low-drag rear wing configuration and instead elected to focus on its performance in the wet. This assisted Oscar Piastri's path to second in the sprint race, but a dry Sunday hampered the team considerably.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



FREE PRACTICE

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sainz	2m03.207s
2	Piastri	2m03.792s
3	Norris	2m04.484s
4	Leclerc	2m08.148s
5	Perez	2m08.240s
6	Albon	2m08.394s
7	Tsunoda	2m09.067s
8	Magnussen	2m09.229s
9	Ricciardo	2m09.319s
10	Hulkenberg	2m10.042s
11	Alonso	2m10.283s
12	Hamilton	2m10.299s
13	Russell	2m10.475s
14	Bottas	2m12.085s
15	Zhou	2m14.002s
16	Sargeant	no time
17	Stroll	no time
18	Gasly	no time
19	Ocon	no time
20	Verstappen	no time

WEATHER Wet, air 19-22C track 18-19C

RACE QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME
Q3 1	Verstappen	1m46.168s
2	Leclerc	1m46.988s
3	Perez	1m47.045s
4	Hamilton	1m47.087s
5	Sainz	1m47.152s
6	Piastri	1m47.365s
7	Norris	1m47.669s
8	Russell	1m47.805s
9	Alonso	1m47.843s
10	Stroll	1m48.841s
Q2 11	Tsunoda	1m53.148s
12	Gasly	1m53.671s
13	Magnussen	1m54.160s
14	Bottas	1m54.694s
15	Ocon	1m56.372s
Q1 16	Albon	2m00.314s
17	Zhou	2m00.832s
18	Sargeant	2m01.535s
19	Ricciardo	2m02.159s
20	Hulkenberg	2m03.166s

WEATHER Wet then drying, air 19-21C track 24-27C

SPRINT QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME
Q3 1	Verstappen	1m49.056s
2	Piastri	1m49.067s
3	Sainz	1m49.081s
4	Leclerc	1m49.251s
5	Norris	1m49.389s
6	Gasly	1m49.700s
7	Hamilton	1m49.900s
8	Perez	1m49.961s
9	Ocon	1m50.494s
10	Russell	1m55.742s
Q2 11	Ricciardo	1m57.687s
12	Albon	no time
13	Sargeant	no time
14	Stroll	no time
15	Alonso	no time
Q1 16	Tsunoda	2m00.568s
17	Bottas	2m00.951s
18	Magnussen	2m01.079s
19	Zhou	2m01.430s
20	Hulkenberg	no time

WEATHER Wet then drying, air 17-19C track 22-28C

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	314	1	1
2 Perez	189	1	1
3 Alonso	149	2	2
4 Hamilton	148	2	1
5 Leclerc	99	2	1
6 Russell	99	3	2
7 Sainz	92	4	2
8 Norris	69	2	2
9 Stroll	47	4	6
10 Ocon	35	3	4
11 Piastri	34	4	3
12 Gasly	22	7	4
13 Albon	11	7	8
14 Hulkenberg	9	7	2
15 Bottas	5	8	7
16 Zhou	4	9	5
17 Tsunoda	3	10	8
18 Magnussen	2	10	4
19 Sargeant	0	11	14
20 de Vries	0	12	12
21 Ricciardo	0	13	13

SPRINT RACE 11 LAPS - 47.80 MILES

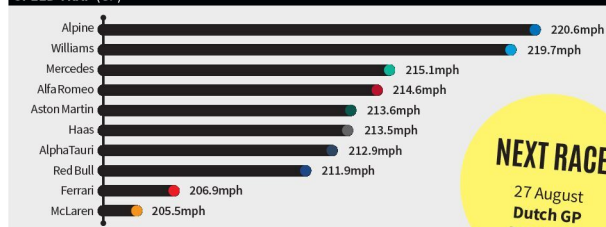
POS	DRIVER	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRE	FASTEST LAPS
1	Verstappen	24m58.433s	7	Wn, In	1m58.943s
2	Piastri	+6.677s	4	Wn, In	2m00.360s
3	Gasly	+10.733s		Wn, In	2m01.857s
4	Sainz	+12.648s		Wn, In	2m01.472s
5	Leclerc	+15.016s		Wn, In	2m02.635s
6	Norris	+16.052s		Wn, In	2m02.085s
7	Hamilton	+16.757s		Wn, In	2m00.920s
8	Russell	+16.822s		Wn, In	2m01.935s
9	Ocon	+22.410s		Wn, In	2m03.061s
10	Ricciardo	+22.806s		Wn, In	2m02.967s
11	Stroll	+25.007s		Wn, In	2m03.356s
12	Albon	+26.303s		Wn, In	2m03.674s
13	Bottas	+27.006s		Wn, In	2m03.595s
14	Magnussen	+32.986s		Wn, In	2m03.965s
15	Zhou	+36.342s		Wn, In	2m04.760s
16	Sargeant	+37.571s		Wn, In	2m03.482s
17	Hulkenberg	+37.827s		Wn, In	2m03.472s
18	Tsunoda	+39.267s		Wn, In	2m02.080s
R	Perez	8 laps-accident damage		Wn, In	2m02.516s
R	Alonso	2 laps-spun off		Wn, In	



WEATHER Wet then drying, air 20-21C track 24-26C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 114.830mph
FASTEST LAP Verstappen
1m58.943s, 131.722mph.

SPEED TRAP (GP)



NEXT RACE

27 August
Dutch GP
Zandvoort

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

	PTS
1 Red Bull	503
2 Mercedes	247
3 Aston Martin	196
4 Ferrari	191
5 McLaren	103
6 Alpine	57
7 Williams	11
8 Haas	11
9 Alfa Romeo	9
10 AlphaTauri	3

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Driver	Q1	Q2	Q3
Verstappen	10	1	Perez
Leclerc	8	4	Sainz
Hamilton	7	5	Russell
Gasly	6	6	Ocon
Norris	10	2	Piastri
Zhou	5	7	Bottas
Alonso	10	2	Stroll
Magnussen	2	9	Hulkenberg
Ricciardo	1	1	Tsunoda
de Vries	2	8	Tsunoda
Sargeant	0	12	Albon

Qualifying head-to-head taken from usual Q1/Q2/Q3 sessions, not the result of sprint qualifying/shootout.
Results excluded when one driver could not set a representative time for reasons outside their control

WINS

Driver	Wins	Fastest Laps
Verstappen	10	Verstappen 6
Perez	2	Hamilton 2
		Perez 2
		Russell 1
		Zhou 1

POLE POSITIONS

Driver	Pole Positions
Verstappen	7
Perez	2
Leclerc	2
Hamilton	1

Pole scores taken based on qualifying results, not the result of any sprint races (official F1 scores would be Verstappen 7, Hamilton 3)

STARTING GRID



RESULTS ROUND 12/22 (44 LAPS - 191.41 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	1h22m30.450s	30	Sr, Mn, Sn
2	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+22.305s	14	Sr, Mn, Sn
3	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+32.259s		Sr, Mn, Sn
4	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+49.671s		Sr, Mn, Sn, Mn
5	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+56.184s		Mn, Mn, Sn
6	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+1m03.101s		Mn, Sn
7	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+1m13.719s		Mn, Mn, Sn
8	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m14.719s		Sr, Mn, Sn
9	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m19.340s		Mn, Sn
10	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	+1m20.221s		Mn, Mn, Sn
11	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m23.084s		Sr, Mn
12	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m25.191s		Sr, Mn, Mn
13	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m35.441s		Sr, Mn, Sn
14	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m36.184s		Sr, Mn, Mn, Sn
15	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m41.754s		Sr, Mn, Mn
16	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	+1m43.071s		Sr, Mn, Mn
17	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m44.476s		Sr, Mn, Mn, Sn
18	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m50.450s		Mn, Sn
R	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	23laps-accident damage		Sr, Mn
R	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	0laps-accident damage		Mn

FASTEST LAPS

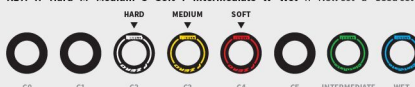
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Hamilton	1m47.305s	-	44
2	Verstappen	1m48.922s	+1.617s	32
3	Albon	1m49.841s	+2.536s	35
4	Hulkenberg	1m49.907s	+2.602s	26
5	Zhou	1m50.188s	+2.883s	27
6	Perez	1m50.308s	+3.003s	31
7	Leclerc	1m50.436s	+3.131s	30
8	Ocon	1m50.439s	+3.134s	27
9	Sargeant	1m50.486s	+3.181s	37
10	Bottas	1m50.515s	+3.210s	26
11	Russell	1m50.603s	+3.298s	25
12	Gasly	1m50.911s	+3.606s	25
13	Alonso	1m50.938s	+3.633s	42
14	Magnussen	1m50.993s	+3.688s	27
15	Ricciardo	1m50.994s	+3.689s	25
16	Stroll	1m51.297s	+3.992s	26
17	Tsunoda	1m51.394s	+4.089s	26
18	Norris	1m51.682s	+4.377s	26
19	Sainz	1m53.138s	+5.833s	9

WEATHER Overcast, brief drizzle, air 20-21C track 25-33C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 139.197mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 146.009mph.

TYRES

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



RACE BRIEFING

SPRINT RACE PENALTIES

HAMILTON 5s penalty, two licence points for causing collision with Perez

SARGEANT 5s penalty for speeding in pitlane

GP GRID PENALTIES

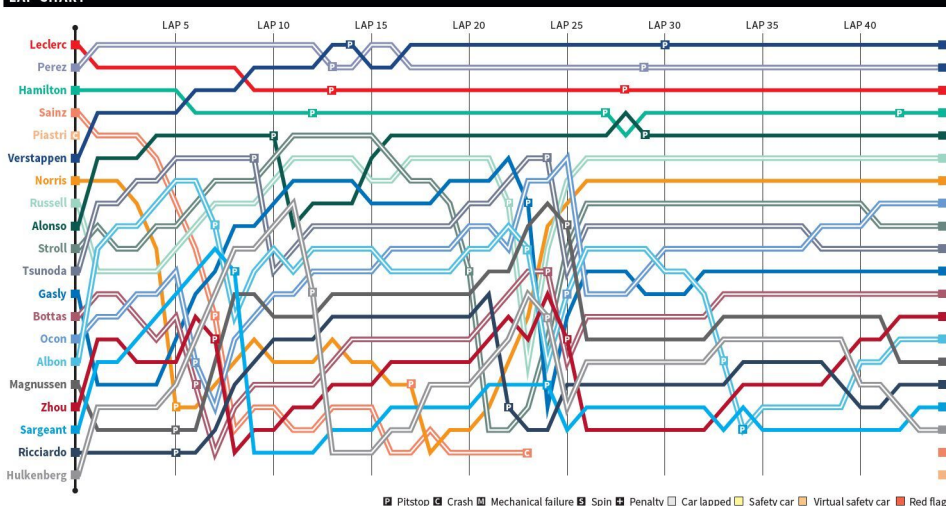
VERSTAPPEN Five-place

penalty for replacement gearbox components
MAGNUSSEN Three-place penalty for impeding Leclerc in qualifying
HULKENBERG Pitlane start, car modified under parc ferme conditions

2325.5

Verstappen is the third F1 driver to surpass the 2300-point barrier

LAP CHART

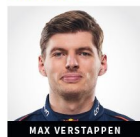


BELGIAN GRAND PRIX DRIVER RATINGS

The world champion's stunning performance at Spa on Sunday deserves nothing less than full marks, while Leclerc and Norris are 'runners-up'

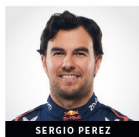
JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

RED BULL



Started 6th — Result 1st

10 Crushing win from sixth on the grid after gearbox penalty. Progress to front less rapid than a year ago, but the speed at which he caught and passed Perez in an identical car was outrageous. Put over 22 seconds on Perez following lap-17 pass after waltzing into the sunset.



Started 2nd — Result 2nd

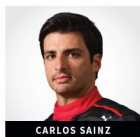
8 Continued solid return to form after Miami-originated loss in confidence. Decisive in wrestling lead from Leclerc, but was on average half a second per lap slower than Verstappen, yielding his 22s deficit by the end. Still a world away from early glimmer of championship-fighting credentials.

FERRARI



Started 1st — Result 3rd

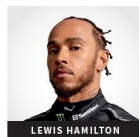
9 Had no chance of living with the pace of the Red Bulls and was usurped by Perez on first lap. Nonetheless, maximised what Ferrari could achieve. Lonely day at Spa was briefly threatened by Hamilton, but Ferrari's pace prompted Mercedes to switch attentions to claiming the fastest lap.



Started 4th — Result R

3 Could have given Piastri more room in La Source clash, having been focused on trying to pass Hamilton. Lost a lot of aero performance with hole in sidepod and eventually retired to save engine mileage. Had plummeted down the order, as damaged Ferrari was "undriveable".

MERCEDES



Started 3rd — Result 4th

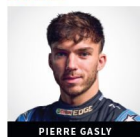
8 Held Verstappen at bay for as long as he could – a low-drag package helped. Built almost a full pitstop over Alonso and had to make decisive pass on track during second-phase offset. Had gap over the Spaniard to pit for medium tyres and collect fastest lap at the end.



Started 8th — Result 6th

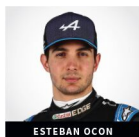
7 Somehow made one-stop strategy work despite dry tyre degradation levels being an unknown. Poor start cost three spots as he was boxed in after La Source by hobbled Piastri, but hung on with mediums until half-distance. Management on softs for second half was strong.

ALPINE



Started 12th — Result 11th

6 Sat ahead of Ocon for opening phase but could not capitalise. Stuck behind slow Piastri and dropped to 16th after a bright initial getaway. Change of tack to go for a one-stop prompted long stint on softs, but pace on mediums wasn't enough to crack the top 10.



Started 14th — Result 8th

8 Outrageous move on Tsunoda at Les Combes highlight of a sensible, canny drive. Early stop allowed him to cycle out in the points before his second pitlane visit for soft tyres. Clearing Gasly was key to breaking into the points, and Albon move at Fagnes was also impressive.

McLAREN



Started 7th — Result 7th

9 Haemorrhaged positions at the start as McLaren was hamstringing by high-downforce wet set-up, and yet somehow pulled seventh out of the bag. Pace when rain began to fall was crucial in climb from the back, and greater grip allowed impressive overtaking moves at unfashionable corners.



Started 5th — Result R

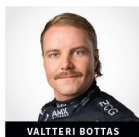
3 Not entirely to blame for La Source crash, but was optimistic in trying to thread McLaren down the inside of Sainz. Six of one, half a dozen of the other, but certainly wrecked each other's races. Incident took the shine off second place in the sprint, which doesn't count in these ratings.

ALFA ROMEO



Started 17th — Result 13th

5 Made solid progress late on to rise through lower midfield. Joined his team-mate step for step early on, but the two diverged ahead of second stops. Moved through Ricciardo and the Haas pair at the end to pick up 13th and was saved by the chequered flag as recovering Albon got closer.



Started 13th — Result 12th

5 Expected to struggle to pace more than in Hungary. Made good progress in the second half once pit phases were over, but never had the pace for anything more than sitting on the cusp of the points. Attempt to pass Tsunoda off the line while hanging on the grass was optimistic at best.



ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started 9th—Result 5th

7 Reckoned AMR23 felt "more normal", and rise to fifth underlines uptick in performance. Made up three places at start before clearing the wounded Ferrari of Sainz, and settled in for fifth having been unable to catch Hamilton. Brief pressure from Russell subsided as Brit's aged tyres required nursing.



LANCE STROLL

Started 10th—Result 9th

6 Did well to cling onto ninth despite heavy tyre-saving efforts towards the end. Patience with one-stop strategy largely paid off, although conceded that two stops was better option. Perhaps should have challenged Norris more given pace differences in cars.

HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started 16th—Result 15th

5 Decision to pit early put him in lower reaches of the points before his second stop, but could not make the same progress in the second half of the race as degradation set in. Dropped behind Zhou and Albon at the end, but did well not to lose too much time battling with them to retain 15th.



NICO HULKENBERG

Started 20th—Result 18th

4 Had to start from pitlane after taking multiple new power unit components. Strong early progress, but reverted to type after opening round of stops. Didn't manage degradation as well as Magnussen, forcing late-race slump to the back of the order after running with his team-mate.

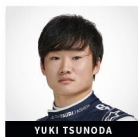
ALPHATAURI



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started 19th—Result 16th

5 After his Hungarian heroics, Belgium was a bigger indication of scale of the task ahead. Made good ground on medium tyres but couldn't move past ailing Haas duo during final stint. Cleared Hulkenberg eventually, but usurped by Zhou and Albon. Outclassed by Tsunoda.

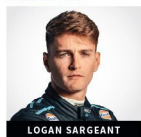


YUKI TSUNODA

Started 11th—Result 10th

8 A very good day at the office. Pounced out of the blocks to make up positions, and avoided Russell on run to Eau Rouge. Rose as high as sixth before each of his two pitstops, but progress stalled in final stint and lost a place to Ocon. Still, a point at Spa in an AlphaTauri is worthy of praise.

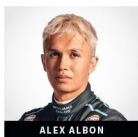
WILLIAMS



LOGAN SARGEANT

Started 18th—Result 17th

5 Like Albon, lost out with three stops but was hurt more by stopping a lap later than his team-mate. Medium-tyre degradation exacerbated by traffic and could only make it past Hulkenberg during final stint on softs. A race that promised much but delivered little.



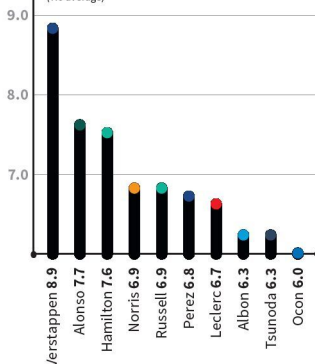
ALEX ALBON

Started 15th—Result 14th

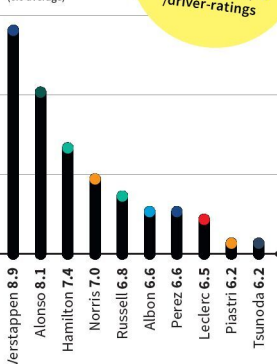
7 Compromised by three-stop strategy, necessitated by tyre overheating, after comfortably holding his own in points for long periods of the race. Straightline pace key component of defensive armoury, but limited cornering ability of his car cost positions to Tsunoda and the Alpines.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS

AUTOSPORT'S RANKING AFTER ROUND 12
*Excludes Ricciardo (7.0 average)



READERS' RANKING AFTER ROUND 12
*Excludes Ricciardo (6.6 average)



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Dennis sealed the title with a race to spare, although he was still made to sweat for it



FORMULA E

Dennis is crowned at home

The London Formula E finale was more dramatic than anyone could have expected, but the Briton held his nerve to become champion

STEFAN MACKLEY

 PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES


If Formula E wanted a blockbuster film made about the championship in a similar fashion to the coming Formula 1 movie, it wouldn't have to look beyond the season-ending London E-Prix double-header for the perfect narrative:

Championship protagonists starting together on the front row, the favourite racing in front of his home crowd, and the other dramatically colliding with his team-mate.

Add in an outsider for the championship taking victory to put the destination of the title on a knife-edge, sprinkle in a few red flags to heighten the drama before the home hero proves triumphant, and you have the perfect script. In fact, the only element missing was that all this took place during the penultimate round of the season rather than the very last race.

But that suited Jake Dennis just fine, as the Briton claimed a title that, on paper, he seemed destined to clinch heading into his home event at the ExCeL London, but which never seemed certain until the final moments. A 24-point buffer to Nick Cassidy meant Andretti Porsche racer Dennis needed to outscore his Envision Racing Jaguar rival by six points to clinch the crown on Saturday, and he duly put himself exactly where he needed to be on the grid, lining up alongside the Kiwi at the front.

But as soon as the race began on the ExCeL's unique indoor/outdoor layout, the balance of the championship began to swing away from Dennis in a race he described as "caving in against me". While Cassidy got the perfect launch, his team-mate Sebastien Buemi managed to draw alongside Dennis into Turn 1 and, after running side by side through the opening corners, he moved ahead. With Buemi essentially acting as a rear-gunner, the Envision masterplan worked to perfection for the opening seven laps and the 2015-16 Formula E champion, who had intentionally run wide in his qualifying duel against Cassidy to ensure his team-mate reached the final, began to back the pack up.

It meant that Cassidy was able to activate both of his Attack Modes and rejoice in the lead each time, the win seemingly in the bag even at that early stage. In contrast, Dennis was beginning to slip back in the pack, first getting demoted to fourth by Mitch Evans's Jaguar, before missing his first Attack Mode activation, which dropped him briefly to fifth.

But things had begun to unravel for Cassidy at the head of the field. He had decided to let his team-mate ahead into Turn 16 in an attempt to allow Buemi to activate his own Attack Modes and still remain in second once he had taken them. But the brief loss of momentum allowed Evans to sneak ahead into Turn 17, and the two title protagonists were now running nose-to-tail. Sensing an opportunity to get into the mix, Dennis launched himself to the outside of Cassidy into the penultimate corner, which gave him the inside – albeit on a tight line – for the final left-hander. The loss of momentum for both drivers allowed McLaren's Rene Rast to move ahead down the start/finish straight, and Cassidy shadowed >>



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Evans resisted pressure (here from Buemi) to hold lead in race one

Dennis over the following two laps.

The pair soon ran side by side again, this time with Cassidy taking the outside line into Turn 1 and, although he and Dennis banged wheels on the exit of Turn 2, the Envision man moved back into fourth.

Buemi was now directly ahead, but any strategic cohesion between the Envision drivers from earlier in the race had gone, with Buemi defending into Turn 1 and suggesting after the race that he'd received no instruction from his team on whether to let Cassidy in front. It proved pivotal. Cassidy went to repeat the same move he had pulled on Dennis in the opening corners, only this time Buemi moved in front of his team-mate into the Turn 4 right-hander. The slightest of contact damaged Cassidy's front wing, which just moments later became lodged under his car. A trip to the pits all but signalled the end of his title challenge. With his main rival out of the running, Dennis seemed on course for the crown, but up stepped Evans.

The Jaguar driver had entered the event 44 points adrift of Dennis, with 58 available over the weekend, and needing something of a miracle to even stand a chance. But he had already made inroads into that gap in qualifying, taking pole from fellow Kiwi Cassidy and, crucially, claiming the three points that went with setting the fastest time. Evans started sixth, a five-place grid penalty from the previous round in Rome he legacy for colliding with Cassidy.

At the time of the Envision debacle, Evans had managed to move into the lead, and led the field following a brief safety car to retrieve

“I asked where do I need to finish, and they said third and I was really thrown off by that”

the remains of Cassidy's front wing. Despite constant pressure throughout the remainder of the race, he never ceded the lead, which meant Dennis was required to finish third to guarantee the title before the final race. “I asked where do I need to finish because I knew Nick was out, and they said third, and I was really thrown off by that because I thought I just needed six points,” related Dennis.

That seemed a tall order after half distance, when Dennis was down in sixth and yet to take either of his Attack Mode activations, after missing it again at the second time of asking.

His composure was pushed to the limits on the radio, as he called for Pascal Wehrlein to not battle him in a bid for some collaboration with the Porsche factory team. Wehrlein had entered the final weekend with a mathematical chance of still winning the championship, and the pair battled side by side through the opening bends at one point, prompting team owner Michael Andretti to march down to the Porsche garage mid-race.

But luck began to smile on Dennis, when Wehrlein was biffed into the Turn 1 barrier by Rast after trying to overtake the McLaren Nissan around the outside. This elevated Dennis back into fifth just before a red flag was deployed on lap 32 after a heavy accident for Sacha Fenestraz. The Nissan driver had hit the rear of Sergio Sette Camara into the braking zone for Turn 16, becoming airborne briefly before hitting the barrier in the run-off area. Fenestraz was uninjured, but repairs were needed to the barrier, which had moved backwards. During this time, Dennis was promoted another position when Rast needed his front wing replacing due to damage from his collision with Wehrlein, putting the McLaren man to the back of the pack.

It put Dennis directly behind Evans, Buemi and the third-placed Porsche of Antonio Felix da Costa, but the leading pair still had one Attack Mode activation to take, which they did at the first time of asking on the rolling restart. While Evans was able to resume in the lead, Buemi crucially dropped behind Dennis into fourth. The Swiss Envision driver also had six minutes of extra power to use over the remaining five laps, which prompted him to back the pack up in an effort to extend his overall race time.

Inevitably, things came to a head at the penultimate corner, >>



Nato's race-one bid to pass Buemi ended in this mess



Title runner-up Cassidy ended season on a high with race-two win

where Nissan's Norman Nato dived to the inside of Buemi, the pair colliding at Turn 19. The closely following Sam Bird was unable to avoid them in his Jaguar, all three cars coming to a stop and blocking the track for almost the entire field. That prompted a second red flag, with only Evans, da Costa and Dennis not held up in the incident, and which set up a three-lap dash to the flag. With no need to save energy, the remaining laps were a flat-out affair, the order remaining unchanged as Dennis finished third, good enough for the title.

"I think nobody expected that race – multiple safety cars, red flags, crashes left, right and centre, and I felt like everything was just thrown at me," bubbled Dennis, who was promoted to second after da Costa was handed a penalty (see right). "It was just a relief of emotions, something I've never experienced ever in my life, and to become world champion is something we all dream of."

With the drivers' title decided, attention switched to the teams' championship on Sunday as Envision and Jaguar entered the season finale tied on points. Cassidy, who had eventually retired from Saturday's race following contact with Edoardo Mortara's Maserati after changing his front wing, gave Envision the edge in qualifying when he beat Evans to pole and the three points on offer by just 0.010 seconds.



Dennis couldn't catch Jag-powered cars in rain-hit race two

"Nobody expected that race – multiple safety cars, red flags, crashes left, right and centre"

In a repeat of the previous day, there were two stoppages for the 16th and final race of the season, although this time it was due to heavy rain that had caused large amounts of water to gather around the outdoor sections of the track. Seven laps were completed behind the safety car across two periods before the red flag was shown each time, with visibility too low and too much standing water.

At the third time of asking, and nearly an hour and 20 minutes after the race had officially started, green-flag running finally got under way with a rolling start, and Cassidy proceeded to put in a masterful performance in the treacherous conditions. He was never headed in a lights-to-flag virtuoso performance, with only Evans able to keep within touching distance over the 38-lap race. The gap fluctuated around the 2.5s mark, before Cassidy stretched that to nearly 5s at the flag.

"I don't know why but I just felt so comfortable – we had so much pace I could play with the race, which in this category is an unreal feeling because you don't get those chances often," related Cassidy, whose win also ensured he took second in the drivers' standings ahead of Evans.

Dennis had quickly moved into third after starting fourth, but was unable to keep pace with the Jaguar-powertrain drivers ahead, finishing more than 16s behind Cassidy. Nato and DS Penske's Stoffel Vandoorne claimed fourth and fifth respectively after lonely races. Buemi, who had finished third the previous day, demoted Bird for sixth into Turn 1 in the latter stages of the race, guaranteeing Envision the teams' title by 12 points, while Nico Muller (Abt Cupra Mahindra), Dan Ticktum (NIO 333) and Wehrlein completed the top 10.

Remarkably, given the treacherous conditions, there was not a single yellow flag once green-flag running got going on lap eight, and all 22 drivers finished the final race of an incredible and unpredictable season. *W*



DA COSTA SLAMS OFFICIALS

Porsche's Antonio Felix da Costa branded Formula E officials as "not good enough" after he was stripped of his runner-up spot in the first London E-Prix. The Portuguese (above) had climbed from 17th on the grid and finished behind winner Mitch Evans but was handed a three-minute penalty for a low tyre pressure, which he claimed was due to a slow puncture. It dropped him to 16th, the same position in which he would go on to finish Sunday's race.

SETTE CAMARA EXCLUDED

Sergio Sette Camara was another driver to fall foul of the officials, when he was disqualified from his fifth-place finish in the same race. This was after his NIO 333 team ignored instructions by the FIA's deputy technical delegate to replace the car's damaged front wing under the second red flag. Sette Camara had already run with the offending part after the first stoppage, it being "deemed safe by the team".

FINAL RACE FOR FRIJNS

Robin Frijns had his final race with Abt Cupra, after it was announced just before the second London E-Prix race that he would be leaving the team. The Dutchman missed four races due to a broken wrist and finished in the points just twice, the highlight being pole in Berlin after a wet qualifying. In London, he retired from the first race due to an accident, and finished the wet finale 17th.

HUGHES'S WORLD RECORD

Jake Hughes set a new world record for the fastest speed achieved by a vehicle indoors, reaching 135.90mph. The McLaren driver (below) went head-to-head with Lucas di Grassi in an uprated version of the Gen3 Formula E car, with the record set along the start/finish straight.



RESULTS ROUND 11/11, LONDON (GBR), 29-30 JULY (37 LAPS - 47.890 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing/ Jaguar I-Type6	1h33m47.300s
2	Jake Dennis (GBR)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+1.116s
3	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Envision Racing/ Jaguar I-Type6	+1.668s
4	Sam Bird (GBR)	Jaguar Racing/ Jaguar I-Type6	+3.054s
5	Edoardo Mortara (CHE)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	+4.263s
6	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Mahindra Racing/ Mahindra M9Electro	+4.769s
7	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 ER9	+5.118s
8	Norman Nato (FRA)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+7.527s
9	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+8.725s
10	Jake Hughes (GBR)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+9.128s
11	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	DS Penske / DS E-TENSE FE23	+10.231s
12	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	+10.568s
13	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+11.094s
14	Rene Rast (DEU)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+11.789s
15	Roberto Merhi (ESP)	Mahindra Racing/ Mahindra M9Electro	+23.472s
16	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+3m00.666s
EX	Sergio Sette Camara (BRA)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 ER9	+3.782s
R	Sacha Fenestraz (FRA)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	27 laps-accident
R	Nick Cassidy (NZL)	Envision Racing/ Jaguar I-Type6	22 laps-accident damage
R	Nico Muller (CHE)	Abt / Mahindra M9Electro	19 laps-accident damage
R	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Penske / DS E-TENSE FE23	9 laps-accident damage
R	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Abt / Mahindra M9Electro	6 laps-accident damage

Winner's average speed 30.637mph. Fastest lap Lotterer 1m12.342s, 64.502mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Cassidy 1m10.604s; 2 Dennis 1m10.806s; 3 Buemi 1m16.765s; 4 Ticktum 1m10.627s; 5 Rast 1m10.893s; 6 Evans 1m10.578s; 7 Wehrlein 1m11.057s; 8 Vandoorne 1m11.071s; 9 Bird 1m11.078s; 10 Nato 1m11.262s; 11 Mortara 1m11.161s; 12 Muller 1m11.299s; 13 Vergne 1m11.275s; 14 Guenther 1m11.305s; 15 Lotterer 1m11.333s; 16 Fenestraz 1m11.343s; 17 da Costa 1m11.403s; 18 Hughes 1m11.405s; 19 Sette Camara 1m11.414s; 20 di Grassi 1m11.823s; 21 Frijns 1m11.613s; 22 Merhi 1m12.205s.

RACE 2 (38 LAPS - 49.187 MILES)

1 Cassidy 2h13m56.532s; 2 Evans +4.934s; 3 Dennis +16.295s; 4 Nato +24.819s; 5 Vandoorne +26.290s; 6 Buemi +27.406s; 7 Bird +29.376s; 8 Muller +30.304s; 9 Ticktum +30.832s; 10 Wehrlein +35.558s; 11 Mortara +36.615s; 12 Rast +38.160s; 13 Sette Camara +40.295s; 14 Guenther +51.140s; 15 Fenestraz +51.918s; 16 da Costa +53.336s; 17 Frijns +56.608s; 18 di Grassi +58.064s; 19 Hughes +59.956s; 20 Merhi +1m02.506s; 21 Lotterer +1m02.890s; 22 Vergne -1lap.

Winner's average speed 22.033mph. Fastest lap Dennis 1m21.554s, 57.216mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Cassidy 1m10.092s; 2 Evans 1m10.102s; 3 Nato 1m10.514s; 4 Dennis 1m10.717s; 5 Vandoorne 1m10.376s; 6 Bird 1m10.519s; 7 Buemi 1m10.604s; 8 Muller 1m10.758s; 9 Ticktum 1m10.815s; 10 Wehrlein 1m11.052s; 11 Vergne 1m10.819s; 12 Mortara 1m11.078s; 13 Rast 1m10.982s; 14 Lotterer 1m11.093s; 15 Sette Camara 1m10.994s; 16 Guenther 1m11.346s; 17 di Grassi 1m11.104s; 18 Fenestraz 1m11.347s; 19 Hughes 1m11.105s; 20 da Costa 1m11.371s; 21 Merhi 1m11.791s; 22 Frijns 1m11.348s. * = grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Dennis 229; 2 Cassidy 199; 3 Evans 197; 4 Wehrlein 149; 5 Vergne 107; 6 Buemi 105; 7 Guenther 101; 8 Bird 95; 9 da Costa 93; 10 Nato 63.



BTCC

Home joy for Cammish, Yorkshire bitter for Sutton

The Motorbase team-mates had mixed fortunes at Croft – Cammish had good reason to smile, while a Sutton DNF meant he couldn't grow his points lead

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  **motorsport**
IMAGES

Ash Sutton crawled towards the Croft pitlane entry before his Ford Focus ST shuddered to a halt, the deranged left-front suspension at least making it across the white line, the rest of the British Touring Car Championship's dominant machine marooned on the track. A day of potentially making a big stride towards his fourth title had ended in disaster, just as it did last time out, on the eve of the summer break, at Oulton Park.

Sutton abandoned ship, stalked towards the Motorbase Performance pit garage, and chirpy Tom Ingram sailed on to second place. The reigning champion and his Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N were, relative to those NAPA-liveried Fords, nowhere on pace last weekend. Yet here was Ingram, completing another of the weekends he so loves to describe as 'pointys' – he arrived in North Yorkshire six points down on Sutton; he left trailing by the exact same deficit. He and the Excelr8 crew can hardly believe their luck that they're still right in it.

Neither Sutton nor Ingram was the big achiever across the weekend in North Yorkshire. That was the Yorkshire-born-and-bred but now Berkshire-domiciled Dan Cammish, Sutton's running mate in the Motorbase bid for domination. Cammish claimed pole, won the opener, finished second to Sutton in the sequel, and rounded out the weekend with a solid reversed-grid fourth. That was despite being part of the shenanigans that led to the championship leader's elimination via contact with Stephen Jelley. Sutton seemed to have done it all perfectly. On a weekend when, like at Snetterton, each of the three Goodyear tyre compounds were mandated for every driver across the trio of races, he had romped home on the soft rubber in race two, 7.682 seconds ahead of the medium-tyred Cammish. He then pulled out the perfect '6' – the most advantageous possible – in the reversed-grid draw for the finale, which each of the top nine would start on the hard tyres.

Jelley started seventh, and benefited from the traction of his rear-wheel-drive West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport to launch



Sutton got the jump on Cammish at the start of the second race to take the win...

ahead of Sutton. But, as they braked for Clervaux, he locked up and nudged Cammish into the back of the sister Motorbase Ford of Dan Rowbottom. Into Hawthorn, Cammish felt another bump from Jelley: "I was sideways on full opposite lock at Turn 1, and then it happened again!" he exclaimed. And then Jelley, the meat in a Ford sandwich, felt contact from behind on the exit of the corner.

A look at the onboard from the pursuing Jake Hill suggests that Sutton appeared to be attempting to chisel a gap on Jelley that wasn't necessarily there. But the man himself had a different take on it. "It was just contact from other cars," offered Sutton. "I was almost a bit of a passenger. All the contact was happening between Jelley and my team-mates, and I avoided that in Turn 1, and then the same thing happened again at Turn 2, and I just found a sideways BMW in front of me, so I made my call to go to the right-hand side to avoid him – the gap opened up but then it soon closed.

"A real shame, because all we needed to do was come home sixth, and a DNF again doesn't help."

Sutton's left-front damage and Jelley's similarly race-ending right-rear derangement told its own story of an instant that had flipped a weekend where the dominance of the Motorbase Fords was as impressive as ever. And, even though Sutton was outqualified by team-mates Cammish and Rowbottom, there were mitigating circumstances and he once again looked to be in ominously good shape for Sunday.

Sutton's deficit to Cammish was 0.193s, and to Rowbottom it was 0.027s, but as series leader he was allowed significantly less hybrid boost than either. "I'm over the moon with that," said Sutton. "We were never going to compete with the other two. Hybrid deployment is a full three tenths around here. That's



a chunk, and we never used new tyres in free practice so we caught ourselves out [on set-up]. When we put new on in qualifying we had a balance move we weren't predicting."

For his part, Cammish was delighted to put an end to a disappointing run of dry-weather qualifying performances, something he worked on during the mid-season Donington test. "All we did at Donington was, 'How do we understand better how we get better performance on one lap?'" he explained. "We came away with more questions than answers because we didn't think we had, but lo and behold maybe we did find something. I feel like some performances have been pretty good on Saturdays but we've been getting fourths-fifths-sixths out of it."

Rowbottom, like Sutton, felt he had his own reasons for missing out on pole. "We know we've got a good baseline, but someone always has to try new things [in free practice], and this time it was me doing the donkey work," smiled the amiable bearded Midlander. "We put the lessons on the car, and the 1-2-3 says it >>>

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Turkington (right) beat Ingram to the flag in the final race

HILL IN A SPIN

From glory at Oulton Park, where he claimed the season's equal highest points tally of any race weekend, Jake Hill fell back to earth with a bump at Croft.

He was a contender for a good grid position in qualifying, and indeed set a time second only to Cammish on theoretical bests – not including a lap that would have hoisted him up the order if not for an ill-timed red flag. Sixth was his reward, pipped by WSR BMW team-mate Colin Turkington. “I’m just not putting my sectors together – there’s the truth of it,” he said.

Hill led the BMW brigade in race one with fifth place, and in the sequel he was running sixth – again ahead of Turkington – while pressuring Josh Cook when he spun at Hawthorn. That dropped him to 11th, which on this occasion was outside the reversed-grid equation. “I just dropped a wheel in the gravel [which has been moved closer to the track since 2022] and that was that,” he grimaced. “I’d already egged three wheels on the kerbs, and now the tyres were gone. I turned it into a drift car – full limiter – and got it going.”

Hill made good progress up to sixth at the start of race three, and was pursuing Dan Rowbottom when he spun again, this time at Sunny In, after getting the left-rear wheel onto the grass. This dropped him to eighth, and he recovered to seventh ahead of Rory Butcher's medium-tyred Toyota, but couldn't catch Aiden Moffat's soft-shod Honda. This time he was in full self-flagellation mode: “I’ve never had to push so hard for anything – it’s like driving a Capri again. We’ve just got no go, mate. You’re having to try super-hard to stay with the leading group, and it just catches you out. We had one of those days where it feels like a lack of talent made the difference.”



Hill found himself in a valley at Croft

all. But the disadvantage of trying new things in practice is you don't get any laps to see what the car will really do.”

Motorbase works as a team collective, and it felt as though there was some orchestration involved when front-row men Cammish and Rowbottom appeared on soft tyres for race one, with Sutton on the mediums. Sure enough, the poleman had a relatively serene run to victory, leaving his team-mates to engage in battle. Sutton slipped through into Tower Bend on the second lap, but ran wide on exit, allowing ‘Rowbo’ back into second at the Jim Clark Esses. Then, on the final lap, there definitely was orchestration, Rowbottom slowing on the run to Tower to gift Sutton the position. “I missed a load of gears on the back straight; what can you do?” quipped Rowbottom.

“It felt like one of the old Carrera Cup races,” harked Cammish back to the series he won three times. “I knew I had a buffer that Ash would have to get through first before he could get to me. Also, we knew the BMWs were on the soft tyres and we didn’t know if they’d come along at the end. I set a steady pace – I didn’t use

“Being as stubborn as I am I thought, ‘No, I can try and sort it with some techniques and stuff’”

hybrid early on, which is kind of the opposite to Ash in race two. I just eked out an advantage; it was a nice race.”

Sutton, indeed, did his Ash Sutton thing in the sequel. Once he’d used his soft rubber to get the advantage into the first turn from Cammish, who was now on the medium tyres, he pressed his boost button and set a monster first flying lap – it was over half a second quicker than anyone else in the race, three quarters of a second faster than Cammish had achieved on that compound in the opener. Something had been unlocked from Saturday, and it was all down to engineer Antonio Carrozza finally getting his way...

“Qualifying was the first time we’d put the new tyres on, so we weren’t sure what the balance was doing, and it did change slightly from FP2,” explained Sutton of tweaks suggested by Carrozza mid-session. “Being as stubborn as I am I thought, ‘No, I can try and sort it myself with some techniques and stuff’, and I managed to mask some of them, but we then overnight made the changes that we needed to do, and it just brought the car alive. You saw the >>

pace we had on the mediums, with the two Dans on softs, was good, and then when we put the softs on we just kind of checked out."

Cammish described his easy second place as "perfect. We'd discussed that Ash would have a performance advantage, and we were conscious that we wanted to bring it home. The performance delta from the softs to the mediums didn't seem that huge. I got a great launch – but not quite an 'Ash Sutton on softs' kind of launch. I could have barrelled in [to Clervaux], but not with him being my team-mate and the championship leader. It was the perfect opportunity to blend out of the throttle and he towed

"Days like these are rare, we know that. I went to bed last night thinking how could it be better?"

me away from everyone else."

'Everyone else' were headed by Rowbottom and Ingram. The Hyundai actually snuck ahead at the end of the fourth lap thanks to a move down the inside of the hairpin, only for the Ford to claim the inside for Clervaux. Ingram stayed on his case until dropping away... "I didn't drop away, he pulled away, which was funny," retorted the reigning champion. "He just seemed to engage another gear. Even when I was deploying hybrid he pulled away – it's like they were playing with us. They let us get close and tease us with it."

As usual, Ingram absolutely maximised race day after qualifying seventh: "I had such a massive off at Barcroft I was nearly at my hotel!" he jested on Saturday evening. "I touched the grass and I was just a passenger."

On Sunday, Ingram felt that the Hyundai was "loads, loads better today, but we know that we've still got a lot more to find". In the opener, he got ahead of Colin Turkington's WSR BMW early doors to claim sixth, just behind fourth-placed Josh Cook's One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R and the WSR BMW of Jake Hill. He then audaciously got past the duelling Cook and Hill on the exit of Hawthorn at the start of race two to latch onto Rowbottom.

In the finale, it was a BMW he was chasing – Turkington took reversed-grid honours for the second successive event and, remarkably, it was his 14th BTCC victory at Croft. This had been a tough weekend chez WSR at a venue that was long regarded as a natural BMW habitat. First, that is no longer necessarily the case (despite the Northern Irishman's 2022 pole); second, there was a feeling that the tightening of the tyre stacks at the Chicane onto the back straight hampered the BMWs – which prefer free-flowing

high-speed stuff – more than their front-wheel-drive opposition.

Turkington pipped Hill to fifth in qualifying, but neither could make much progress in the races, and bemoaned a serious lack of straightline poke. This crystallised when Turkington was able to comfortably hold off Ingram to win the finale. "It's a completely different race when you're in front," he mused. "All day we've been struggling in the pack with the charge temperatures rising [and therefore losing power]."

Apart from fresh air, another factor aided Turkington: an oil leak from Ricky Collard's Toyota on the lap to the grid delayed the start, and then Dan Lloyd, his Team Hard Cupra directly behind the Fords/Jelley drama, lost it on the slippery stuff and shunted at Hawthorn, causing the day's only safety car. "That saved me, because it gave me an extra three laps to generate heat in the [hard] tyres," revealed Turkington. "You could see how hard Josh and Tom were hitting on me – they were straight on my case. That would have continued on laps two and three. But I had a few lengths on Tom in my pocket over the line [at the restart] and that was a key factor."

Cook was the other man to stand on the podium with third in the finale. The arrival in the One camp of the man who led the design on the team's Hondas – ex-Dynamics tech chief Barry Plowman – after a half-season at Team Hard won't do any harm, although Cook remains under the charge of namesake and common-law-father-in-law Mick Cook, with Plowman taking an overseeing role and working more with Aiden Moffat.

It's been a tricky season so far with the ex-Dynamics cars that were delivered on the eve of the campaign, but the red-headed West Countryman took an excellent fourth on medium tyres in race one, although paradoxically faded to fifth on the softs next time out. "We didn't really feel the benefit of the soft," he puzzled. "We've definitely got a better engine this year [the bespoke Neil Brown Engineering Honda unit], but we're just lacking something with the chassis. If [the new-for-2022 ex-Rowbottom Civic] doesn't feel like an old pair of slippers like my old car [which Cook had raced since 2019] did. It's taking me a while to deal with how the car reacts to everything."

Cook threw everything into an attempt to pass Turkington on the opening lap at Tower, but his lost momentum allowed Ingram through at the Jim Clark Esses, and instead he maintained the gap to Cammish, who could bask in the glory. "Days like these are rare, we know that," he smiled. "I went to bed last night thinking how could it be better? What a performance from the team." But that pesky Ingram is still there: "It was a great way to top off a weekend where we were quite average to be honest, quite a beige weekend. I don't really understand how we're only six points back..." ❧

▶ P62 BTCC SUPPORTS REPORT



RESULTS ROUND 6/10, CROFT (GBR), 30 JULY RACE 1 (15 LAPS - 31.502 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST (S)	21m00.551s
2	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST (M)	+0.717s
3	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST (S)	+1.327s
4	Josh Cook (GBR)	One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R (M)	+5.522s
5	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport (S)	+5.907s
6	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N (S)	+7.124s
7	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport (S)	+7.403s
8	Stephen Jelley (GBR)	West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport (M)	+10.482s
9	Sam Osborne (GBR)	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST (S)	+26.129s
10	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra (M)	+28.734s
11	Ricky Collard (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla GR Sport (M)	+29.179s
12	Dan Lloyd (GBR)	Team Hard Cupra Leon (M)	+29.862s
13	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R (H)	+31.888s
14	Milky Doble (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra (S)	+32.482s
15	Tom Chilton (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N (H)	+32.753s
16	Andrew Watson (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra (H)	+32.975s
17	Dexter Patterson (GBR)	Team Hard Cupra Leon (H)	+34.115s
18	George Gamble (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+34.704s
19	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport (H)	+35.145s
20	Jack Butel (GBR)	Team Hard Cupra Leon (H)	+37.502s
21	Michael Crees (GBR)	Team Hard Cupra Leon (H)	+39.896s
22	Nick Halstead (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N (M)	+44.539s
23	Daryl DeLeon (PHL)	Team Hard Cupra Leon (H)	+45.972s
24	Jade Edwards (GBR)	One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R (H)	-1 lap
25	Rory Butcher (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	-2 laps
NC	Ronan Pearson (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N (S)	12 laps

Winner's average speed 89.96mph. **Fastest lap** Sutton 1m22.905s, 91.19mph.

Tyres: (S)=soft; (M)=medium; (H)=hard

QUALIFYING

1 Cammish 1m22.126s; **2 Rowbottom** 1m22.292s; **3 Sutton** 1m22.319s; **4 Cook** 1m22.338s; **5 Turkington** 1m22.406s; **6 Hill** 1m22.447s; **7 Ingram** 1m22.461s; **8 Taylor-Smith** 1m22.839s; **9 Jelley** 1m22.839s; **10 Moffat** 1m22.847s; **11 Lloyd** 1m22.858s; **12 Collard** 1m22.884s; **13 Pearson** 1m22.946s; **14 Morgan** 1m22.987s; **15 Doble** 1m23.120s; **16 Osborne** 1m23.122s; **17 Chilton** 1m23.166s; **18 Butcher** 1m23.181s; **19 Gamble** 1m23.197s; **20 Watson** 1m23.268s; **21 Crees** 1m23.426s; **22 Patterson** 1m23.439s; **23 Butel** 1m23.760s; **24 Edwards** 1m24.323s; **25 DeLeon** 1m24.799s; **26 Halstead** 1m25.280s.

**RACE 2 (15 LAPS - 31.502 MILES)**

1 Sutton (S) 20m50.890s; **2 Cammish** (M) +7.682s; **3 Rowbottom** (M) +9.853s; **4 Ingram** (M) +10.607s; **5 Cook** (S) +13.607s; **6 Turkington** (M) +13.973s; **7 Jelley** (S) +14.292s; **8 Collard** (S) +15.103s; **9 Lloyd** (S) +15.627s; **10 Chilton** (S) +17.122s; **11 Hill** (M) +21.839s; **12 Taylor-Smith** (S) +22.250s; **13 Morgan** (S) +22.776s; **14 Watson** (S) +30.264s; **15 Osborne** (M) +29.827s; **16 Doble** (M) +31.062s; **17 Moffat** (M) +31.441s; **18 Butcher** (S) +33.486s; **19 Crees** (M) +34.783s; **20 Butel** (M) +36.346s; **21 DeLeon** (M) +43.982s; **22 Halstead** (S) +44.221s; **23 Edwards** (M) +45.248s; **24 Pearson** (H) -1 lap; **R Gamble** (S) 7 laps-damaged suspension; **R Patterson** (M) 2 laps-damage. **Winner's average speed** 90.66mph.

Fastest lap Sutton 1m22.180s, 92.00mph.

GRID RACE 2

Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 3 (18 LAPS - 37.802 MILES)

1 Turkington (H) 28m04.098s; **2 Ingram** (H) +3.242s; **3 Cook** (H) +5.287s; **4 Cammish** (H) +5.886s; **5 Rowbottom** (H) +7.192s; **6 Moffat** (S) +10.402s; **7 Hill** (H) +12.336s; **8 Butcher** (M) +13.152s; **9 Taylor-Smith** (H) +21.699s; **10 Gamble** (M) +22.819s; **11 Crees** (S) +23.309s; **12 Doble** (H) +26.774s; **13 Patterson** (S) +27.021s; **14 Watson** (M) +27.721s; **15 Collard** (H) +27.843s; **16 Edwards** (S) +28.425s; **17 Osborne** (H) +32.011s; **18 DeLeon** (S) +36.409s; **19 Pearson** (M) +40.420s; **20 Halstead** (H) +42.603s; **R Butel** (S) 11 laps-damage; **R Chilton** (M) 10 laps-Moffat headlamp debris through radiator; **R Jelley** (H) 3 laps-damaged suspension; **R Morgan** (M) 3 laps-brakes/bonnet pin; **R Sutton** (H) 0 laps-damaged suspension; **R Lloyd** (H) 0 laps-accident. **Winner's average speed** 80.80mph.

Fastest lap Turkington 1m23.302s, 90.76mph.

GRID RACE 3

Decided by result of Race 2, with top six reversed. Also: six-place grid penalty for Taylor-Smith dropping him to 18th

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Sutton 258; **2 Ingram** 252; **3 Turkington** 224; **4 Hill** 217; **5 Cammish** 212; **6 Cook** 164; **7 Rowbottom** 144; **8 Morgan** 126; **9 Butcher** 110; **10 Collard** 104.





Doohan took second straight feature win as Pourchaire (left) took the points lead

Two seconds make a first for Pourchaire as Doohan hits form

FORMULA 2
SPA (BEL)
29-30 JULY
ROUND 10/13

Theo Pourchaire reclaimed the Formula 2 championship lead in dramatic style at Spa, with title rival Frederik Vesti crashing out before the start of the feature race.

The ART driver moved 12 points clear of his Prema rival on Sunday after the Dane, due to start second, spun off on the Kemmel straight on his way to the grid, suffering terminal damage. Pourchaire went on to finish second behind Virtuosi ace Jack Doohan, and reclaimed the points lead with three rounds remaining.

The feature race victory for Alpine F1 protege Doohan was his second in as many weeks, the culmination of a stunning drive from 11th on the grid. After starting on the medium-compound tyres, he ran the alternative strategy as the majority of the field opted for softs. Doohan made steady progress in the early stages, running ninth before the first safety car was deployed

after contact between Ayumu Iwasa (DAMS) and Dennis Hauger (MP Motorsport) at Les Combes, the Japanese suffering terminal suspension damage. Hauger was pushed by the marshals, which resulted in his disqualification for outside assistance.

At the restart, Prema's poleman Ollie Bearman headed Pourchaire and Rodin Carlin pair Zane Maloney and Enzo Fittipaldi. The Brazilian emerged ahead in the intra-team Red Bull Junior squabble and was followed through by Victor Martins (ART), who had survived a spin en route to the grid without damage.

Ferrari protege Bearman and Pourchaire pitted on lap 13, but ART pipped Prema to the quicker tyre change and handed the Frenchman the net lead. But they still had Doohan to factor in, and his well-timed pitstop for softs under the second safety car, deployed when Jak Crawford stopped on track after clashing with Juan Manuel Correa, meant he rejoined second. Doohan finally took Pourchaire for the lead two laps from the end on the Kemmel straight, surviving a close moment between the pair at Les Combes to repeat his win from Hungary the previous weekend.

Fittipaldi passed Maloney on the final lap to take fifth on the road, but was promoted to third after Martins and Bearman were handed post-race penalties for speeding in the pitlane and causing a collision (with Martins at Les Combes) respectively.

The feature race podium capped a strong weekend for Fittipaldi, who took his first F2 win in Saturday's sprint after passing Richard Verschoor on the penultimate lap.

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA 2

SPA (BEL)

Race 1 Enzo Fittipaldi
Rodin Carlin
Race 2 Jack Doohan
Virtuosi Racing

FORMULA 3

SPA (BEL)

Race 1 Caio Collet
Van Amersfoort Racing
Race 2 Taylor Barnard
Jenzer Motorsport



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Fittipaldi claimed maiden win as Pourchaire earned points lead

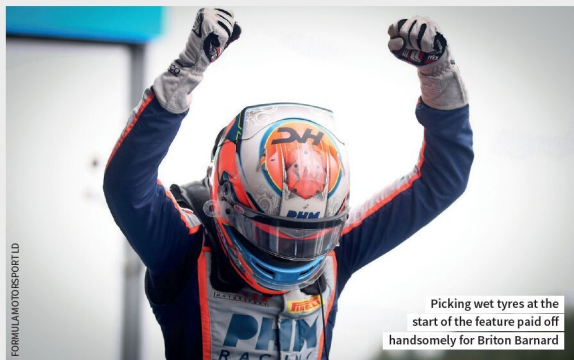
Bortoleto's coronation delayed, Barnard shines

**FORMULA 3
SPA (BEL)
29-30 JULY
ROUND 8/9**

The Formula 3 title battle will go down to the wire after a chaotic weekend at Spa meant Gabriel Bortoleto missed out on sealing the championship a round early. A tricky qualifying, where he ended up 15th, meant the Trident driver's chances would be slim. And although he gained four places in Sunday's race, after being eliminated from the opener due to a puncture, Bortoleto missed out on points.

Fellow Brazilian Caio Collet scored his first win of the season in Saturday's initial-strewn reversed-grid race. On a damp track, the safety car headed the field for much of the 12-lap duration and the race ultimately finished under caution. This led to confusion over whether points would be awarded, given fewer than two whole racing laps were completed. The FIA initially confirmed that no points would be awarded since the race had been shortened by three laps, before a U-turn after it was decided that the two-lap rule didn't apply because it ran to a reduced distance announced on Thursday due to concerns over tyre safety.

From fourth on the grid, Van Amersfoort Racing's Collet took third from Paul Aron (Prema) on the run to Eau Rouge before slotting in front of Campos poleman Hugh Barter to claim second by Les Combes. He then took the lead from Taylor Barnard (Jenzer) at Blanchimont before the first safety car was deployed. Following two restarts, Collet took his first F3 win since



Picking wet tyres at the start of the feature paid off handsomely for Briton Barnard

Zandvoort last year, with F4 graduate Barnard securing second for his maiden F3 podium ahead of Aron.

Barnard went one better the following day in a mixed-up feature race on a damp track. The Brit started 10th, and took advantage of wet tyres as the leaders ran on slicks to make rapid progress from the rolling start. He ended the first lap second behind Aron, who had also chosen grooved rubber and stormed up the inside of La Source to clear three cars in one go. He'd passed Trident's Leonardo Fornaroli and poleman Pepe Marti (Campos) for the lead by the exit of Les Combes.

As the slick-shod runners fell back, Campos driver Christian Mansell scythed through from 23rd to third, ahead of 14th starter Mari Boya (MP Motorsport) and Jenzer's Nikita Bedrin. The safety car was deployed on lap four after Trident driver Oliver Goethe

crashed at the top of Eau Rouge, which prompted Aron and Boya to stop for slick tyres. But the gamble backfired and they ended up eighth and 13th.

Barnard then led from Mansell, whose best attempt at passing ended in a trip through the Les Combes run-off. Barnard remained in control to the flag and established a 1.5s gap to Mansell, while Bedrin and Alex Garcia made it a memorable day for Jenzer by finishing third and fourth.

It was a disappointing race for the title contenders, who with the exception of Aron all started on slicks. Marti finished ninth, with Bortoleto 11th ahead of Prema's Zak O'Sullivan, who lost fourth in the sprint race to a penalty for passing Barter off the track.

Bortoleto remains on 144 points heading to the Monza finale, with Aron on 106 and Marti on 105.

MEGAN WHITE

Collet won the opener ahead of Barnard, who enjoyed a breakout weekend at Spa





Two wins from four races gives ASP's #88 trio an 18-point lead heading to Barcelona finale

Mercedes on a mission as ASP conquers the 'Ring

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
ENDURANCE CUP
NURBURGRING (DEU)
30 JULY
ROUND 4/5**

Raffaele Marciello, Timur Boguslavskiy and Jules Gounon once again proved that they are the crew to beat in GT World Challenge Europe, as the ASP Mercedes trio converted pole position to victory at the Nurburgring. As chaos often reigned behind, the #88 Mercedes-AMG GT3 sat serenely at the top of the pile until the final hour but still had enough in the tank to beat the sister Merc of Team AlManar's Maro Engel, Luca Stolz and Fabian Schiller.

ASP's second Endurance Cup victory of 2023 could not have been better timed. Marciello, Boguslavskiy and Gounon moved ahead of Rowe Racing in the points as BMW largely struggled in the Eifel region. The best it could manage was seventh

with Team WRT's Dries Vanthoor, Sheldon van der Linde and Charles Weerts. Rowe's erstwhile points leaders Philipp Eng, Nick Yelloly and Marco Wittmann took 15th.

"What made the difference is that Akkodis [ASP] knows the Mercedes since six or seven years, Lello six, Timur five and me three years, and when you drive all the time you honestly have a great idea about the set-up," said Gounon. "The car was incredible, my team-mates faultless."

Marciello helped the #88 claim the combined pole during a wet morning qualifying on Sunday and leapt clear at the rolling start as fellow front-row starter Jordan Pepper's Iron Lynx Lamborghini was taken wide by Engel and then thumped by Wittmann's BMW at Turn 1.

The melee in front allowed the Rutronik Racing Porsche of Dennis Olsen, who started 11th, to vault up to second. The Norwegian briefly kept up the chase, but Marciello quickly opened up a 15s margin

before handing over to Boguslavskiy.

Swift pit work by AlManar enabled Schiller to jump past Laurin Heinrich for second and he stayed within 10s of the #88 heading into the final round of stops.

With Gounon at the wheel for the last hour, victory was never truly in any doubt for ASP, although the nerves inside the French camp did raise when Stolz reduced the gap to under a second. But Gounon managed to pull away to the tune of 1.990s by the flag to take a commanding victory.

The Attempto Racing Audi of Dennis Marschall, Ricardo Feller and Mattia Drudi produced a superb recovery drive after losing time in the first-corner drama to complete the podium. Drudi and Marschall moved into the top five, then Feller produced the pass of the race after going side-by-side with Rutronik's Thomas Preining for several corners, eventually completing the move at the Schumacher S.

For Lamborghini, victorious on GTWC's last Nurburgring visit in 2021, it was a bittersweet race. Pepper was out for good inside 20 minutes, following another tangle with Wittmann, this time at Turn 11. The Sant'Agata brand did take two class wins however, with Grasser repeating its Spa 24 Hours success in the Silver Cup, while Dennis Lind and Rob Collard secured Pro-Am honours for Barwell Motorsport.

Winward Racing triumphed in the Gold Cup with a strong top-10 overall finish, as Porsche took Bronze Cup spoils with Herberth Motorsport.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

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Brilliant win for Buescher earns playoff spot

NASCAR CUP
RICHMOND (USA)
30 JULY
ROUND 22/36

RFK Racing had its best performance of the 2023 NASCAR Cup season at Richmond Raceway, but Chris Buescher ended up much happier than team co-owner Brad Keselowski. The Ford pair combined to lead 190 of the 400 laps and both took turns in the lead, but it was Buescher who came away with the team's first win of the year.

Buescher emerged as the leader following the final round of green flag pitstops but saw his big lead over Denny Hamlin's Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota disappear when a late-race caution set up a restart with three laps remaining. Hamlin initially stayed close to Buescher but drifted over the track in Turn 2 with two laps to go and lost momentum, allowing Buescher to hang on for the win by 0.549 seconds.

Keselowski ended up a respectable sixth, but the 2021 Cup champion lost his chance of victory to a mistake



entering the pits during a round of green flag stops, costing track position that he was unable to make up. Still, with the win, Buescher is now locked in the 2023 playoffs while Keselowski remains in a good position to make the 16-driver field on points.

"We've had this one circled since last fall – I was really hopeful this could be the one that would turn the page for us," said Buescher, who admitted his opinions of the track are "changing quite a bit" as "he'd have told you to flood this place three years ago". "Sure enough, right off the truck, I thought it was."

Although disappointed to miss his

chance of a first win since leaving Team Penske at the end of 2021, Keselowski remained upbeat about RFK's progress after advancing from 13th (Keselowski) and 26th (Buescher) in qualifying.

"We are incrementally building," he said. "We led a lot of laps with both cars. Neither car really started up front. Drove through. A lot to be proud of today."

Kyle Busch's Richard Childress Chevrolet ended up third, ahead of Joey Logano (Penske) and Ryan Preece (Stewart-Haas), as Fords claimed three of the top five positions.

JIM UTTER

Garcia gets a glove on the crown

F1 ACADEMY
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
30 JULY
ROUND 6/7

Marta Garcia put herself on the brink of the inaugural F1 Academy title with two wins from three races at Paul Ricard. The Prema driver carries a 48-point advantage to the Formula 1-supporting season finale at Austin over ART rival Lena Buhler with a maximum of 67 available.

The title protagonists had to take a back

seat for the first race as Nerea Marti avenged her 0.032s qualifying defeat to Rodin Carlin's Abbi Pulling by acing the start and taking a lead she held to the flag. The Spaniard became F1 Academy's eighth different winner by 1.125s over Pulling, as Campos team-mate Lola Lovinfosse edged out Buhler to complete the podium.

Garcia had only managed sixth in the opener, but in the reversed-grid race two quickly signalled her intent by moving past Carrie Schreiner at the start and tracking polesitter Amna Al Qubaisi. The MP Motorsport driver was powerless to resist when Garcia attacked after a safety car triggered by mechanical malades stranding Lovinfosse. Buhler moved up to second, but had no answer to the leader's pace as Garcia pulled away to a fifth win of the season.

The top two finished in the same order in race three, Garcia moving past Pulling off the line then deposing polesitter Buhler shortly afterwards. Lovinfosse beat Pulling to third, before the Briton was disqualified for a tyre pressure irregularity.



WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
ENDURANCE CUP
NURBURGRING (DEU)
 Raffaele Marciello/Timur Boguslavskiy/
 Jules Gounon (below)
 ASP (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

NASCAR CUP
RICHMOND (USA)
 Chris Buescher
 RFK Racing (Ford Mustang)

F1 ACADEMY
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
Race 1 Nerea Marti
 Campos Racing
Races 2 & 3 Marta Garcia
 Prema Racing



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Morris causes a minor Spa shock

PORSCHE SUPERCUP

SPA (BEL)

30 JULY

ROUND 5/7

Morris Schuring stunned the established frontrunners of the Porsche Supercup to take his first series victory at Spa.

The 18-year-old Fach Auto Tech-run Dutchman had never finished higher than sixth (in Monaco), but led the entirety of the race from pole, fending off points leader Bastian Buus before rain prompted the red flags to be shown during the

penultimate of 11 scheduled laps.

A measure of Schuring's control on the race was the fact that Buus had only one meaningful attempt at passing. The Dane dived down the inside at La Source on lap eight but, as Buus ran wide, Schuring reclaimed the position on corner exit.

Harry King finished fourth to cement himself as Lechner Racing team-mate Buus's main championship rival. After starting eighth instead of third thanks to a track-limits violation in qualifying, the Brit climbed to sixth on lap one and had made it into fourth by the end of lap three.

From lap six, there were reports of rain on the track but it was not until lap 10 that the weather's true effect began to take hold. There were chaotic scenes at the Bus Stop chicane when Schuring and King ran wide, before the safety car was deployed, shortly followed by the red and chequered flags.

Alessandro Ghirelli (Martini by Almeras) and Aussie Harri Jones (Lechner) topped the rookie order, finishing sixth and seventh, while Marvin Klein was dumped to ninth by a penalty for a jump start.

SAM HALL



PORSCHE SUPERCUP

SPA (BEL)

Morris Schuring (below)

Fach Auto Tech

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

SYDNEY MOTORSPORT PARK (AUS)

Race 1 Brodie Kostecki

Erebus Motorsport (Chevrolet Camaro)

Race 2 Shane van Gisbergen

Triple Eight (Chevrolet Camaro)



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Kostecki edges ahead under the lights

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

SYDNEY MOTORSPORT PARK (AUS)

29-30 JULY

ROUND 7/12

The see-sawing Supercars battle between Chevrolet teams Triple Eight and Erebus Motorsport continued at Sydney Motorsport Park, where Erebus's Brodie Kostecki regained the series lead with victory in the calendar's only night race on Saturday.

Triple Eight made a meal of qualifying, Broc Feeney lacking pace to end up 16th, while Shane van Gisbergen copped a track limits infringement on his critical final run, leaving him 20th on the grid. That made life easy for Kostecki, who got the early jump on Andre Heimgartner's pole-starting Brad Jones Chevy Camaro and put in a flawless drive to victory.

The battle for the remaining podium spots was thrilling. At one point in the closing laps, Cam Waters (Tickford Ford Mustang), the Walkinshaw Andretti United Camaro of Chaz Mostert, Erebus



driver Will Brown and a recovering van Gisbergen were locked in a door-bashing battle. Waters pulled clear on the road but was nursing a five-second penalty for an unsafe release, which demoted him to fifth in the standings and handed second place to Mostert. Van Gisbergen barged past Brown to finish third on the road, but he too was given a five-second penalty for the bump-and-run that dropped him to seventh and elevated Brown to third.

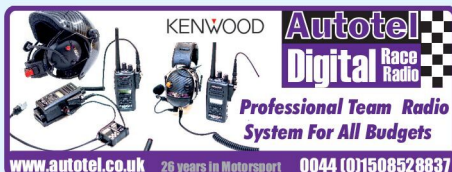
On Sunday van Gisbergen hit back in style, using his very obvious car speed to take pole and then dominate the shorter of the two races. Heimgartner completed a

Kiwi 1-2, while Anton De Pasquale (Dick Johnson Racing Ford) ran down Feeney to finish third. Kostecki looked strong in the early stint but faded to eighth with a faulty clutch. Brown, meanwhile, went off after clashing with De Pasquale and David Reynolds, but recovered from the back to finish 14th.

The title fight remains delicately poised. Kostecki holds a slender 41-point lead over Brown. Van Gisbergen, looking for a fourth title before departing to NASCAR, is 54 points behind, with Feeney another 13 back in fourth.

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Additional attributes our candidates should possess are:

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- Willingness to work in a dynamic and multicultural environment.
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What you will need:

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- Competitor Analysis
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- Successfully completed STEM studies
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- Knowledge of Matlab / Simulink required
- Race strategy and Formula E experience would be advantageous
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TOCA New junior support series confirmed for 2025

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Gow has plans for new category, while guests – like the Legends at Croft (inset) – will feature in 2024



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New BTCC junior support series for 2025

TOCA

British Touring Car Championship promoter TOCA has firmed up its new replacement series for Ginetta Junior, but it won't begin until 2025.

Ginetta left the TOCA package last winter, bringing to an end a 15-year stint supporting the BTCC for the Yorkshire sportscar manufacturer's Junior series for 14 to 17-year-old drivers. But TOCA chief Alan Gow likes the concept of junior racing, and immediately sought a replacement.

"We want an announcement this side of Christmas," said Gow, who would not be

drawn on any details of the new series. "And we want a release of the car in the spring, so that it can be at a few of our rounds. Then the car builds will happen during next year.

"It was always my desire to have a strong junior series as part of the support race package, and we didn't want to do it quickly and not do it right. So we got our expressions of interest and now we're where we are."

Gow always made it clear that the TOCA Junior series would be a completely new championship rather than promoting one of the existing three run for underage drivers in the UK – apart from Ginetta Junior, where the G40 model was introduced for

2010, these include Fiesta Juniors, and Junior Saloons based on the Citroën Saxo.

This means that the 'hole' in the BTCC support package created by the departure of not only Ginetta Junior but the marque's GT4 Supercup, which had been on the bill since 2009, will again be filled by a rotating cast next season. In 2023 that has included Legends, the Radical Cup UK, plus the Mini 7 Racing Club categories. Gow said: "2024 will be the same as this year, but don't ask me what the guest races will be!"

MARCUS SIMMONS

➔ P57 OPINION

North American Radical champion heads to UK

RADICAL CUP UK

Austin Riley made his Radical Cup UK debut at Silverstone last weekend with Tim Gray Motorsport as part of his prize for becoming the 1340 and overall champion in Radical's North American series last year.

Competing in the SR3 class at the wheel of a brand-new car provided by Radical Motorsport, the Canadian bounced back from a non-finish in the opener to take

10th and 13th positions in the other two contests.

"I'm happy to be a part of the Radical UK Cup," he said. "I love this track. This has always been a bucket list track for me to drive.

"Drivers are a lot more competitive here and aggressive. It takes a while to get used to and especially driving on the other side of the car. That's a big challenge as well.

"It's a big achievement," he added of the prize-



OLIVER READ

Riley took a best result of 10th at Silverstone

winning opportunity. "I'm very thankful that Radical invited me out here to race. I'd like to do more rounds in the UK eventually."

Riley, who has autism, is hoping to inspire others with the condition to follow in his footsteps, and represents

Racing for Autism, which is trying to raise awareness.

"Racing for Autism is our team," said Riley. "That's basically what we're about – showing other people that this is what someone with autism is doing."

STEVE WHITFIELD



Reynolds shines in the Oulton Park gloom at wheel of Escort

MICHAEL HOLZEN

CSCC

Globetrotting Ford fanatic Martin Reynolds was a surprise winner of the Tony Sugden Trophy for Special Saloons and Modsports at Oulton Park last weekend as racers braved horrendous conditions at the Gold Cup meeting.

After broadening his horizons this season by competing at Assen in the Netherlands, Hockenheim and the Lausitzring in Germany and Austria's Red Bull Ring to date, Reynolds took the 2.5-litre Millington-engined Ford Escort Mk2 from his

Blue Oval fleet to Cheshire.

Fourth in the dry opener behind Andy Southcott (Lenham Midget-Vauxhall), Simon Allaway (Lotus Esprit-Chevrolet) and Danny Morris (Peugeot-Cosworth 309 turbo), Reynolds was one of 13 intrepid challengers for the Classic Sports Car Club series' finale.

"I was fortunate to find myself on the front row [the previous winner gets a 10-place grid drop, while Allaway and Morris non-started], particularly as my wiper motor packed up after a lap," said Reynolds. "Visibility was terrible, but I kept going,

looking out of the side windows until the rain got heavier, which cleared the screen.

"Tom [Carey] got me down the inside into Old Hall on lap two, then spun at Knickerbrook, by which time Andy was ahead. I tried to stay with him, but that thing's got some grip. I was aquaplaning at 126mph over the top of Clay Hill, but braking for Druids with water running across the track and old wets was horrendous.

"I had no idea Andy had stopped [with an electrical glitch at Old Hall] and thought I was second with Tom back

behind me until I saw the chequered flag and the marshals waving and holding one finger up. For a lower-powered [300bhp] car weighing 960kg plus me to win was just incredible."

Meanwhile, Paul Dolan joined the Special Saloons & Modsports fray at Oulton and was ecstatic to finish third in the second race in his newly acquired Lotus Elan, which had lain dormant for years. Another newcomer was the Mazda 13B rotary-engined Autotune Gemini of Tony Ellis, who took ninth in race one.

MARCUS PYE

Standalone races for Se7en S-Class drivers at Mini Festival

MINI FESTIVAL

The Mini 7 Racing Club will again run two separate standalone races for its Se7en S-Class at this weekend's Brands Hatch Mini Festival after the machines competed on their own for the first time last year.

As Autosport closed for press, 18 drivers had signed up for the S-Class contests, including three newcomers. Former Miglia champion Andrew Jordan's brother Bradley is among those joining the fray to make his debut, alongside Dan Bell, the son of 1997 Miglia conqueror Steve, who was killed

in a crash at Silverstone 20 years ago.

The M7RC's Colin Peacock said the separate grids allow organisers to "shine a light on the class", while a huge field is expected for the more powerful Miglia machines. Regular frontrunners Andrew Jordan, Nick Padmore, Endaf Owens, Jeff Smith and Aaron Smith are among those on the entry for the livestreamed races.

"The Miglia grid is bursting with 34 cars – it's a who's who of club racing and Mini racing," said Peacock, who added there will be a lunchtime grid-walk ahead of the Miglia opener.

In addition to the three M7RC grids,



Races proved popular with drivers last year

GARY HAWKINS

the diverse machines of the Fastest Mini in the World contest will also be in action twice at Sunday's event – with the cars this year being powered by a sustainable fuel from Coryton – as well as a pair of races for the Mighty Minis. There are also due to be parade laps from Mini Car Club members once the racing has concluded.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Drivers support cancellation after heavy rain at Silverstone

GB3/GB4

Heavy rain led to the third GB3 and GB4 races at Silverstone being abandoned last weekend.

The final GB3 encounter was initially run for three laps behind the safety car before being red-flagged due to heavy standing water and poor visibility, with the race pushed back on the timetable in the hope of conditions improving.

But persistent rain eventually led to its cancellation, as well as the subsequent GB4 race. It is the second time this year that a GB4 Silverstone contest has been cancelled due to rain after the same happened at the May event.

Drivers from both series supported

the decision, with the amount of spray and lack of visibility a concern. "Of course safety is always the priority," said John Bennett, who was running second in the cancelled GB3 contest.

Fellow GB3 racer Noah Ping added: "Ultimately I think it's the right decision especially with what's been happening [with the death of Dilano van't Hoff at Spa]. I would have loved to race, but it was definitely a bit scary. It was pretty hard to see behind the safety car."

"It was the right call, safety comes first," said GB4 star Tom Mills. "There's nothing more they could have done, the spray is too bad. I love the wet, but it's safety, especially with what happened at Spa."

STEVE WHITFIELD

American VRD squad expands into GB4

GB4

Velocity Racing Development made its GB4 debut at Silverstone last weekend, fielding cars for Zack Ping and Erik Evans.

The American squad, founded by British race engineer Dan Mitchell and successful in US F4, recently bought the final two Tatuus F4-2014 chassis from series promoter MotorSport Vision as

it looks to provide more opportunities for American drivers in Europe. VRD has partnered the Arden GB3 squad since the start of 2022.

"It was a no-brainer really," said Mitchell. "We only have so many seats in GB3 so we've got to put the young lads somewhere and we want them to learn the British and European scene."

"We'd like to go further in Europe but time will tell. We've

got some good backing from America and some really good talent coming through."

Ping, brother of GB3 race winner Noah, will compete for the remainder of the season ahead of a full campaign in 2024. British GT racer Evans entered as a one-off, with VRD hoping to fill the second seat with another driver at the final two rounds. The team's best result was a ninth for Evans.

STEVE WHITFIELD

PRITCHARD'S BHRC WIN

Jason Pritchard and Phil Clarke were the masters of the Epynt ranges on Sunday as they took their newly built Ford Escort Mk2 to victory on the Tour of Epynt, the fourth round of the British Historic Rally Championship. Pritchard moved ahead of the similar car of early leader Nick Elliott as heavy rain made conditions even more challenging.

RECOVERING AFTER OPS

Veteran Classic Sports Car Club racers Tony Paxman and Mike Chittenden underwent surgical procedures last week. Hillclimber-turned-Historic Sports Car Club competitor Jon Waggett is also on the mend after suffering a heart attack in the paddock at Shelsley Walsh Nostalgia the previous Sunday. Autosport wishes them speedy and complete recoveries.

BUGATTI CIRCUIT BECKONS

The Sports Prototype Cup has announced that it will race on the Le Mans Bugatti circuit at the end of the season. The event will take place on the 10-12 November at the legendary French venue and replaces an originally planned finale at the Algarve circuit. Two formats will be offered for solo and two-driver teams, with two 20-minute sprints and culminating in either a 40-minute or two-hour enduro.

UNIQUE MINI BACK OUT

The Mini Cooper-Buick (below) created by BRT Developments in Lancashire in 1964 was back at Oulton Park last weekend. Built by Jeff Goodliff and BRT principal Harry Ratcliffe, its rear-mounted V8 engine drives 13-inch front wheels via a Jaguar gearbox and inverted E-type diff. Ratcliffe raced it at Oulton, Mallory Park, Silverstone and Croft, and contested a Shelsley Walsh hillclimb, then retired it after finding its dynamics far from ideal for competition. "Its handling is diabolical, with bump steer and torque steer, but I love it," said Goodliff's son Simon, who now owns it.



Menzies wins but then falters at Wiscombe

BRITISH HILLCLIMB

The Wallace Menzies steamroller faltered for the first time this season as the British Hillclimb Championship headed to Wiscombe Park in Devon last weekend.

Menzies was peerless on Saturday in dry conditions when he took his Gould GR59 to his 12th run-off victory of the campaign as he shaved 0.01 seconds from the year-old hill record set by Alex Summers. It was Summers who led the chase, 0.3s adrift in his Cosworth-powered DJ Firestorm, with Matthew Ryder and Scott Moran close behind.

A damp and slippery track delivered another challenge on Sunday, when Summers set the mark at 39.81s. It was left to Menzies, as the last runner, to attack and he was up on split times at the Esses. But he pushed just too hard into Martini Corner and had to take to the escape road, the first time this season that Menzies had failed to score a top-three result. But in championship terms it does him little harm since it's his



Victory for Menzies was followed next day by rare mistake

STUART WING

first dropped score of the year.

Moran was right there too, just 0.06s down on Summers. Ryder, bouncing back from a middling weekend in the Channel Islands, bagged another third place just ahead of Sean Gould in the same car. Trevor Willis, Will Hall and Paul Haimes were all once again in the run-off mix.

But the real star of the weekend was young Alex Coles, who qualified for the

first time in his father's 1600cc OMS 28 and then fired it up the hill in fine style to take eighth on Saturday and 10th on Sunday.

Joining Coles in the run-off points in smaller-engined cars were Lee Griffiths, Adam Greenen, Stuart Bickley and Tom Weaver on a hill and in conditions that favoured some of the giant-killing smaller single-seaters.

PAUL LAWRENCE

Morgan left sheepish as Flock inherits victory



Flock (left) and Morgan came together in JSCC

STEVE JONES

BARC

The opening Junior Saloon Car Championship race at Thruxton last weekend was decided in the officials' room after contact between Daire Flock and CJ Morgan.

Morgan took the win on the road but was handed a five-second penalty for the

incident, which relegated him back behind championship leader Flock. Cameron Pratt-Thompson won the other two bouts to reduce Flock's points advantage.

Tommy Field had his first race since 2016 in the ex-Wayne Crabtree Ford Escort RSR and managed to take victory in the

second of the Classic & Modern Motorsport Club's saloon races. He trailed home Nigel Mustill's Volvo S60 in the opener.

Some of the closest Caterham action came in the 310R division, with Taylor O'Flanagan taking the second win by just 0.19s from race-one victor Tom Wyllys.

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A legendary guest

There was some thrilling action from the Legends Elite Cup at Croft last weekend with the series starring on the British Touring Car support bill

STEPHEN LICKORISH

From the moment it was first announced that the Legends Cars would be making three guest appearances on the British Touring Car support bill this year, there was plenty of excitement. The five-eighths scale imitations of 1930s American machines have a reputation for producing some dramatic racing and seemed like the perfect fit for BTCC events, particularly in the absence of the action-packed Ginetta Junior contests.

Interest built further when it was confirmed a mini Elite Cup championship would be fought over the three BTCC meetings. Yet the Brands Hatch opener in May was a little disappointing. Tricky wet conditions and a stop/start weekend did not truly showcase what the Legends were capable of. But the brilliant sight of Jack Parker, Robert Barrable and Matt Isherwood circulating as one in the second heat at Croft last weekend certainly demonstrated Legends racing at its finest. No inch was given and it was impossible to predict which of the trio would ultimately prevail.

Now, it is important to acknowledge it was far from smooth sailing. Saturday's first final finished behind the safety car after a lengthy recovery job at the hairpin, while the second heat on Sunday was red-flagged with cars scattered and stranded in various places and oil on the track. And then the final did not happen at all, earlier delays being compounded by Callum

circuit racing. The random grid draws out of a hat are also a black mark for some. But these cars are all about entertainment – and the packed field full of quality drivers at the weekend, by my book, delivered that in spades.

Appearing alongside the BTCC also brings plenty of benefits for the series. "It's great – the reaction has been fantastic," says championship owner Phil Cooper, who has noticed a surge of interest since the Brands BTCC debut. "We've had lots and lots of new followers all of a sudden! People have been phoning up asking, 'How much does it cost, how can I get into it?'"

And that interest is already leading to tangible results. "Simon Griffiths [a Caterham racer] saw Brands and said, 'I've got to do it,'" says Cooper. "He couldn't buy a car but did an arrive-and-drive deal." Griffiths even got a podium for his efforts, having finished second in that safety car disrupted final.

There is no disputing the benefits to a club series of the attention that being on the BTCC package brings. And it is not just Legends in the spotlight this year – the Mini 7 Racing Club produced some fantastic battles at Thruxton, the pocket rockets exactly the sort of guest series you would want around the Hampshire speedbowl. The Radical Cup UK has also made two appearances and the top-tier of Caterham's ladder is due to join the fray at Silverstone next month. Yes, there are also a few drawbacks to the TOCA slots, as shown by the Croft Legends finale being cancelled as the BTCC and its established supports understandably take priority – although that was a situation exacerbated by the Yorkshire venue's mandated afternoon starts on Sundays creating little room for officials to manoeuvre.

And the good news for club categories is there will be more opportunities next year. With a proposed new junior series not arriving until 2025 (see page 53), there will again be guest championships at BTCC events. No decisions have yet been made on which series will get the nod but Cooper is keen for the Legends to get another go.

But we are jumping ahead of ourselves. Before talk of next year, there is still one more Elite Cup outing in 2023, at Knockhill next weekend. The Scottish circuit is another ideally suited to the mini machines and, with the title on the line and no shortage of contenders in the mix, it should be another entertaining event.

In these times of economic uncertainty, when many series organisers are scrambling to boost some incredibly thin fields, the sight of a packed 30-car grid is a welcome one. Regardless of whether you are a huge Legends fan or are far more ambivalent, it is a much-needed feel-good story that should be celebrated. Even if things do not always quite go to plan. **W**

"People have been phoning up asking, 'How much does it cost, how can I get into it?'"

Davis destroying the barriers in the preceding Porsche Sprint Challenge GB race. But the other three thrashes provided action aplenty and will live long in the memory.

Barrable certainly enjoyed his part in the heat-two thriller. "It was good, hard, fair racing," he says. "Going two-wide through the Esses is not for the faint-hearted!" And, for the drivers, racing on the BTCC bill gives them a chance to put on a show in front of packed trackside crowds and large live TV audiences. "Look at the number of people here – the spectator banks are full," Barrable continues. "We come here for the racing – if the crowds are enjoying it, then that's an added bonus."

While many did enjoy it, there is not universal praise. Legends are not necessarily everyone's cup of tea and some purists might argue they better resemble short-oval action than traditional

➔ P62 CROFT BTCC SUPPORTS REPORTS

Maers heads the Gold Cup field in a race that celebrated the event's impressive history



Gold Cup revisits Oulton's history in anniversary year

**OULTON PARK
HSCC GOLD CUP
28-30 JULY**

Oulton Park's 70th anniversary year provided a perfect opportunity to reflect on the Cheshire venue's illustrious past, with a colourful three-day retrospective showcasing its most famous contemporary event. First run in 1954, the Gold Cup was principally a non-championship Formula 1 race through the pre-1966 era covered by the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association's members, who turned out in force and raced their heroes' steeds hard, making the celebration memorable for spectators.

The spectacle of John Spiers and Guillermo Fierro Eleta four-wheel-drifting their priceless Maserati 250Fs, twitching

their shapely tails just beyond the limit of adhesion through the corners – particularly on Sunday when rain anointed the surface – was a treat for the throng. Few onlookers would have witnessed Stirling Moss's Gold Cup victories aboard the Modenese masterpieces in 1954 and 1955. That the maestro, whose extraordinary career was in full swing by then, was released by Mercedes-Benz to contest the latter race on home soil, would be unthinkable today.

Moss went on to win the Gold Cup thrice more, back-to-back from 1959-61, aboard Cooper T51, Lotus 18 and four-wheel-drive Ferguson P99 respectively, all powered by Coventry-Climax FPF engines and in whisky heir Rob Walker's blue and white racing colours. While there was no 'blue Fergie' (it's currently for sale), Moss's 1961

Monaco GP-winning 1500cc Lotus 18 and a multitude of Coopers graced the HGPC's magical history tour.

Jack Brabham won the Gold Cup four times, twice in the focal epoch, in Cooper T43 in 1957 and, seven years later, a Ron Tauranac-designed Brabham BT10 in the first of two 1000cc F2 editions. Thus this year's pack contained a T43, a T51 and a fleet of low-line T53s, plus a Tasman BT4 and a pretty InterContinental Formula BT11A, which started favourite.

The 60th anniversary of Jim Clark's second win here was marked by the presentation of a fine painting – by Oulton's media officer Steve Jones – to the Jim Clark Trust, accepted by his racer cousin Doug Niven. Jimmy was represented on track by the works Lotus 18 372 (in which, in F2 guise, he won the Kentish 100 on Brands Hatch's new GP circuit in 1960) and Nick Fennell's F2 Type 32. Compatriot Jackie Stewart, the 1968 victor in Ken Tyrrell's Matra, would doubtless have appreciated the brace of shrill V8 BRM P261s.

Overpowered last year by Charlie Martin (2.5 Cooper T53) when running a 1500cc engine in John Chisholm's Lotus 18, Sam Wilson was back with its full 1960 F1-sized FPF installed and determined to win on Clark's anniversary. A 1m50.882s shot annexed pole from Justin Maers' ex-Charles Vogeles Brabham BT11A and the T53s of Martin and German Rudi Friedrichs (Brabham's 1960 championship mount). With Swiss Philipp Buhofer's BRM P261-2,

Moss won in Maserati in the 1950s, and Spiers starred in one this year



WEEKEND WINNERS

HGPCA HISTORIC GOLD CUP

Races 1 & 2 Justin Maers (Brabham BT11A)

JIM CLARK CUP: HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR

Races 1 & 2 Horatio Fitz-Simon (Lotus 22)

SIR JACKIE STEWART TROPHY: HISTORIC F3

Races 1 & 2 Samuel Harrison (Brabham BT21B)

MRL RAC WOODCOTE & STIRLING MOSS TROPHIES

John Spiers/Nigel Greensall (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly)

VSCC EGERTON CUP

Race 1 Andrew Smith (Frazer Nash Super Sports)

Race 2 Joshua Beebee (Frazer Nash TT Replica)

MRL HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE

Paul Mensley/Michael Lyons

(Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500, below)

HRDC GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY:

PRE-'83 TOURING CARS

Michael Whitaker (Rover SD1)

HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY:

PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

Mike Gardiner/Dan Cox (Ford Lotus Cortina)

CSCC TONY SUGDEN TROPHY:

SPECIAL SALOONS & MODSPORTS

Race 1 Chris Southcott

(MG Lenham Midget-Vauxhall)

Race 2 Martin Reynolds (Ford Escort-Millington Mk2)

HSCC SIR JOHN WHITMORE TROPHY:

HISTORIC TOURING CARS & ROAD SPORTS

Races 1 & 2 Kevin Kivlochan (Shelby Cobra)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Italian Andrea Stortoni's UDT Laystall Lotus 18-917 and Spiers chasing in Jean Behra's 1956 works Maserati, the scene was set for Saturday's Historic Gold Cup opener.

Wilson led superbly for five laps before the crown wheel in the Lotus's final drive failed. "I'm gutted, I really wanted this one," he said. A landmark lap record in 1m49.991s (88.10mph) was minor consolation as he watched Maers comfortably beat Friedrichs from the Cascades/Fosters marshals' post after Martin slipped back without second and third gears. Tony Lees (T53), Buhofer and Tom Waterfield (2.0 Cooper T45/51) completed the top six. Spiers and Fierro gunned their Maserati to eighth and 11th, split by Fennell and Stortoni.

Friedrichs made the best start in Sunday's sequel on a slippery track but, >>



FENNELL DEBUTS F2 LOTUS One-litre Formula 2 cars are rarely raced these days, thus Nick Fennell debuting his Lotus 32 in the HGPCA features was special, taking onlookers back to the 1964 Gold Cup. Powered by Cosworth's Ford-based SCA engines, the works Ron Harris Team Lotus squad ran three Type 32s. Jim Clark was denied a hat-trick by 0.2s, Jack Brabham triumphing in a BT10-SCA. Clark led home team-mates Jackie Stewart and Mike Spence, and Fennell's car is Spence's chassis 32-F2-4.



BATMOBILE BRILLIANCE Richard Bradley put in one of the weekend's stellar performances, bringing Patrick Blakeney-Edwards' BMW 3.0 CSL home fifth in Saturday's HTCC race. "The power, grip and handling are fantastic," enthused Bradley. Built by Schnitzer from a 1969 2800CS, chassis '2572' was first used by European hillclimb champion Ernst Furtmayr. A veteran of the Nurburgring and Spa 24 Hours and Silverstone's TT, drivers included Mario Cabral, Walter Brun and Fredy Schnarwiler.



SWEDISH FIGHTER RETURNS The Brabham BT18 that was second in the 1966 Swedish F3 standings, driven by luxuriantly moustachioed Picko Troberg, and won it with Reine Wisell in 1967, joined the Historic F3 fray. Owned by a customer of Dan and Glenn Eagling's Lifetime Racing, it arrived fresh from restoration, having been a museum exhibit. Dan qualified fourth, despite limited pre-event running, but retired with rolling road time required to unlock performance before the Croft races next month.

with Maers breathing down his neck, spun the sage green Cooper on the apex of Knickerbrook on the opening lap. Alarming, he sat facing the snarling pack, which somehow missed him. Among the near misses, Fierro's was phenomenal for he threw his 250F 2501/2523 – Moss's 1956 Australian GP winner – sideways on reflexes. Unable to refire his engine, Friedrichs was pushed off by marshals before the safety car arrived – thankfully a rare sight this weekend!

Maers and Martin scrapped mightily for the lead upon the resumption, Justin prevailing by 0.405 seconds to earn the coveted trophy on aggregate. Lees, Waterfield, Rod Jolley (T53) and Spiers were next past the chequered flag. Down in mid-pack, Ollie Nuthall completed a 1952-53 two-litre GP class double and was third front-engined car home behind the exotica in one of five Cooper-Bristols. Despite a spin through Cascades, Stephen Banham won his division in his Cooper T45, Jim Russell's 1959 British Empire Trophy winner at Oulton.

The road to F1 was beautifully illustrated by Historic Formula Junior, in which Horatio Fitz-Simon delighted his mentor – period Gemini racer Howden Ganley – with two more accomplished victories in his ex-Tommy Reid Lotus 22. A jammed throttle linkage put Sam Wilson (ex-Dave



Harrison again headed the Historic F3 pack

MICK WALKER

Charlton 20/22) out at Hislop's, promoting Clive Richards (22) to second, pursued by the monocoque 27s of Buhofer and Nick Fennell. Wilson bounced back in the wet second stanza, but couldn't quite match Fitz-Simon. Richards spun at Knickerbrook, but kept third.

Similar domination marked the one-litre Historic F3 races, in which a quarter of the 24-strong field was not among the bumper crop at Brands a fortnight previously. The result was the same, however, 19-year-old Samuel Harrison extending his unbeaten run to eight races this term and grasping the title in locally raised Mike O'Brien's

ex-Peter Westbury Brabham BT21B. Peter de la Roche (Alexis Mk17) snatched second from Jeremy Timms (ex-Reine Wisell Chevron B15) on the line on Saturday.

De la Roche pitted with a vibration on Sunday, when Timms and cousin Jason (BT21) continued their "dust-up" until the latter spun. The battling Andy Jarvis (ex-Peter Deal March 703), Francois Derossi (B17) and Christoph Widmer (BT18A) moved up to fourth, fifth and sixth. Period Oulton F3 winner Mike Walker – at 77 on a year's sabbatical from racing his BT21 – presented the trophies.

MARCUS PYE

GREENSALL AND WARD STAR IN SPORTSCARS

Superlative driving shone elsewhere too. Richard Wilson's Lotus 15 fell before qualifying, precluding a reprise of Roy Salvadori's 1958 Gold Cup victory in Sunday's horribly wet Motor Racing Legends pre-1961 sportscar race. After rear hub failure stopped Shane Brereton's ex-Stirling Moss Cooper Monaco, the ability of Nigel Greensall (Lister-Jaguar) and Chris Ward (Jaguar C-type) to walk on water in John Spiers and the on-form Nigel Webb's cars was awesome to behold on each side of the equation. They finished clear of Dion Kremer, who flew from St Kitts in the Caribbean to get wet in his Lotus 17. Daniel Smith, finishing father Andrew's Monaco, did well to repel Chris Clarkson (Lister) for fourth.

The Vintage Sports-Car Club races entertained royally. Andrew Smith, returning to his roots, beat fellow Fraser Nash chain-ganger Robert Beebee in the first as Ben Maers thundered from the back to third in dad Justin's GN Parker road-burner, powered by a de Havilland Gipsy Moth aero engine. Pat Blakeney-Edwards (Fraser Nash) caught Josh Beebee in the much wetter second one, chased by Maers Sr.

Best of the tin-top races was Saturday's Historic Touring Car Challenge in which a Ford



Greensall and Spiers put in an impressive Moss Trophy display

MICK WALKER

Sierra Cosworth RS500 duel featured former junior kart star Max Goff calmly stalking Paul Mensley's fully-lit example until a cracked wheel forced the retirement of Goff's Watson's Water Guia tribute car. Michael Lyons sizzled Mensley's Ford to victory over the Nissan Skyline of Andy Middlehurst/Jonathan Bailey and Darren Fielding's BMW M3.

One-two in the Tony Dron Trophy section in their Rovers, Michael and Mike Whitaker dominated the Historic Racing Drivers Club

Gerry Marshall Trophy, outrunning the Ford Capris of Skid Scarborough and Tom Waterfield. Mike Gardiner/Dan Cox sealed Jack Sears Trophy honours, after rival David Dickinson slid off at Druids, leaving fellow Irishmen Rod McGovern/David Maguire and Victor and Michael Cullen second and third. Their Lotus Cortinas were omnipresent over the Oulton Park weekend.

MARCUS PYE

Dowler and Dan have double ding-dong battle

CADWELL PARK

MGCC

30 JULY

Both MG Cup races at MG Car Club's Cadwell Park meeting last Sunday had a very private and very intense battle for victory between Iain Dowler and Dan Ludlow as they were glued together in the first two places and left their rivals behind.

Dowler led race one from pole, then – at half-distance – after Dowler understeered entering the start/finish straight, Ludlow dummied Dowler to pass on the outside of Coppice in a brave move for a lead he kept.

The second race was almost an exact role reversal as Ludlow led from pole, but just before halfway Dowler got past when his rival was baulked by a Morgan they were sharing the track with for non-championship Morgan Challenge races.

Dowler won, despite both frontrunners having a scare hitting oil at Barn – Dowler estimated his slide was at a 90-degree angle. John Milbank, meanwhile, won both Morgan races comfortably.

Dowler said after his win: "It was an absolutely fantastic race. It was a case of just keep the pressure on him. Dan drove a great race. He just got baulked and I got a run on him down the long back straight, and I put it up the inside and just stood on the brakes until we nearly stopped. Then it was a case of make sure you do everything right."

Ludlow was also happy: "It was very tight, but it was really good racing. It's great to race against Iain."

The MG Trophy races also featured tight multi-car battles for first place, but with three protagonists. And Sam Meagher –



who graduated to the frontrunning 190 class earlier this season – was the surprise star, taking pole for the opener then bagging his first race win in the second encounter.

He led much of the opener, too. Second-placed starter Graham Ross had got ahead after Meagher missed a gear at the launch, but Meagher reclaimed first halfway round lap one. From there, Ross – joined by Doug Cole – shadowed Meagher, and at two-thirds' distance Ross got on the inside of Meagher at The Mountain. Meagher ran across the grass, meaning Ross grabbed the lead while Meagher resumed third behind Cole – and they ultimately finished in that order.

Meagher had a terrible start in race two, and Cole ran first with Ross then the recovering Meagher behind. At half-distance, Ross spun at Gooseneck, then a lap later Meagher tagged Cole into an off at Park, leaving an apologetic Meagher clear to win. Ross and a frustrated Cole recovered to second and fifth respectively.

The Midget & Sprite Challenge races were held in association with the Midget

& Sprite Club that was celebrating its 40th anniversary with a lunchtime track parade and other activities.

Poleman Stephen Watkins pulled off the starting grid for the first race with an oil pressure problem on his Midget, which kept him out of race two as well. In his absence, Martin Morris dominated race one, but his Midget ran out of fuel late on, to his incredulity, as he reckoned he had plenty to make it to the end and could find no leak. James Hughes's Sprite therefore inherited the win.

Morris was cautious in race two with his fuel worry, and Hughes indeed got past him briefly early on. But Morris regained the lead and cruised clear to make it to the finish in first place this time.

GRAHAM KEILLO

WEEKEND WINNERS

MG CUP/MORGAN CHALLENGE

Race 1 John Milbank (Morgan 4/4, below)
Race 2 Iain Dowler (MG ZR)

MG TROPHY

Race 1 Graham Ross (ZR 190)
Race 2 Sam Meagher (ZR 190)

MIDGET & SPRITE CHALLENGE

Race 1 James Hughes
(Austin-Healey Frogeye Sprite)
Race 2 Martin Morris (MG Midget)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



Morris fought back from fuel woes for Midget & Sprite glory

TOCA SUPPORTS CROFT 29-30 JULY

Legends racers put on a show in Croft thrillers

LEGENDS ELITE CUP

Bump-drafting down the straight from the chicane to Tower, multiple cars running side-by-side through the Esses and unpredictability to the final corner. The combination of a packed field of Legends Cars and Croft circuit is certainly an entertaining one as the series returned to the British Touring Car support bill in style last weekend.

The second heat was particularly thrilling. Frontrunners Matt Isherwood, Robert Barrable and Jack Parker – the star of the previous Elite Cup BTCC-supporting round at Brands Hatch – were all drawn towards the head of the field and put on a magnificent display. The lead changed on most of the six frenetic laps but it all came down to the final tour.

Parker had a great run into Tower and dived inside Isherwood, but Barrable was approaching even faster and attempted to pass them both, although ultimately had to settle for displacing Isherwood for second. “All three of us were battling for the same piece of track,” said Parker. “I didn’t know I was going to win – it was incredible!”



The opener also featured a super scrap between three drivers for the win. Connor Mills, who had a fiery roll out of the Brands finale, was picked on pole and led initially before Marcus Pett dived by at Clervaux on the penultimate tour. Mills sought to fight back on the final lap only for Ben Higgins to sneak ahead of him at the hairpin.

Mills did, however, get his win in Sunday's opening heat, having stormed through from 14th. Isherwood and Chris Needham battled for the lead as rain started to fall and continued their duel after Mills had edged ahead at the hairpin, before the pair tangled through the Esses on the final lap. This enabled Will Gibson – who had won a safety car

disrupted Saturday final after contact in the first two heats – to storm from 17th to second, while Barrable incredibly rose from the back to third!

Barrable's strong event continued in the fifth heat as he charged into a huge lead from Mills but the race was red-flagged early with multiple cars in strife. And, sadly, there was no chance to run the final, with earlier delays and barrier damage preventing one last bout. Instead, the title battle rolls on to Knockhill, another venue perfectly suited to the Legends, with Mills leading the way and Barrable and Parker hot on his heels after a memorable weekend.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Coates tops crazy Cayman finale as Trice is denied

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

The Porsche Sprint Challenge GB drivers had clearly taken some inspiration from the Legends battles. After two fairly tame races at Croft, the Cayman closer had a real bite to it, with ferocious action throughout.

Right from the start, Graves Motorsport

driver Max Coates was all over the back of polesitter Matthew Armstrong. He made an attempt into Clervaux on the second lap but this proved unsuccessful and instead let Joe Warhurst through at the chicane. However, the driver on the charge was Redline's Toby Trice. With Armstrong then slowing with a puncture, Trice pounced and dived inside

Warhurst at Tower, clipping the Team Parker car in the process, to grab the lead. “It was insane – I don’t think they saw me and I thought, ‘I’m going to keep my foot in,’” he said.

Once Coates repassed Warhurst at Tower, after Warhurst's own failed attempt on Trice, he was all over the back of the leader. But Trice defended ferociously until the race was ended early by a huge crash for Callum Davis at Tower.

Yet there was to be more drama as Trice was later penalised for the Warhurst contact and was demoted behind Coates and Warhurst to third.

The two earlier races followed the same pattern, with Warhurst twice missing out on wins and team-mate Armstrong profiting. He won the opener on the road but was later demoted to fourth for an out-of-position start and then ran wide at Sunny In when rain began to intensify in race two.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Ovenden fights back in close scrap

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Another category to display some Legends-style racing was the Mini Challenge Trophy and both Croft contests culminated in close scraps for the win.

Polesitter Tom Ovenden looked set to claim a second victory of the year in the opener but Graves Motorsport duo Jack



Byrne and Nicky Taylor reeled him in during the closing stages and were frantically trying to find a way by. Taylor looked to have snatched it with a dive down the inside of the hairpin on the penultimate tour only for the Excecl8 Motorsport driver to bravely retaliate through the Esses to triumph.

It took two attempts to get the reversed-grid second race under way, with four drivers involved in a clash exiting the chicane as the field concertinaed together at the initial start, which culminated in Jacob Heap rolling onto his side.

Polesitter Ashley Gregory held the lead on the restart but soon had the trio of race-one contenders right behind her. Sure enough Byrne pounced through the Esses at mid-distance. Taylor was later penalised for his robust move at the hairpin, meaning it was Ovenden and Gregory who completed the podium.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Sharp returns to form with double

BRITISH F4

After his remarkable win from 20th on the grid at the Donington Park opener, Louis Sharp went five British Formula 4 weekends without a victory. But the Kiwi was back on form at Croft, taking a double win and almost reclaiming the points lead.

The Rodin Carlin driver did the hard work in qualifying by securing a double pole and proceeded to take lights-to-flag triumphs in races one and three. He benefited from the absence of front-row starter James Higgins when the finale was restarted – following a spectacular off for Pat Heuzenroeder at the chicane when he was launched into the air

having clipped a kerb – with the Fortec driver having also been tipped into a spin at Clerveaux by championship leader Will Macintyre.

Yet it was not quite the perfect weekend for Sharp as his points haul was blunted by being demoted from 11th to 16th for a tangle with Macintyre at the hairpin late in the reversed-grid race, in which JHR's Sonny Smith narrowly kept a charging Gabriel Stip at bay. "I just made a bit of a mistake and I hold my hands up," admitted Sharp.

Macintyre's consistency – third in race one behind Higgins and runner-up in the finale – means the Hitech driver retains a six-point gap over Sharp.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



RACE RESULTS

LEGENDS ELITE CUP

Race 1 (6 laps) 1 Marcus Pett; 2 Ben Higgins +0.359s; 3 Connor Mills; 4 Chris Needham; 5 Peter Barrable; 6 Tyler Read. **Fastest lap** Needham 1m35.182s (79.43mph). **Pole Mills. Starters** 30.

Race 2 (6 laps) 1 Jack Parker; 2 Robert Barrable +0.350s; 3 Matt Isherwood; 4 Oli Schlup; 5 Stephen Treherne; 6 Gareth Sheridan. **FL** Will Gibson 1m35.226s (79.39mph). **P** Isherwood. **\$** 30.

Race 3 (8 laps) 1 Gibson; 2 Simon Griffiths +0.524s; 3 Nathan Anthony; 4 Kieran Beatty; 5 Andy Bird; 6 Declan Burke. **FL** Gibson 1m36.608s (78.26mph). **P** Paul Musselle. **\$** 30.

Race 4 (6 laps) 1 Mills; 2 Gibson +0.156s; 3 R Barrable; 4 Bird; 5 Nick Bridgeman; 6 Beatty. **FL** Higgins 1m35.685s (79.01mph). **P** Bridgeman. **\$** 30.

Race 5 (3 laps) 1 R Barrable; 2 Mills +6.271s; 3 Treherne; 4 Higgins; 5 Parker; 6 Needham. **FL** R Barrable 1m35.412s (79.24mph). **P** Musselle. **\$** 30. **Points 1 Mills 1240;** 2 R Barrable 1310; 3 Parker 1225; 4 Gibson 1160; 5 Higgins 1150; 6 Pett 1120.

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Matthew Armstrong; 2 Max Coates +1.071s; 3 Steve Roberts; 4 Joe Warhurst; 5 Toby Trice; 6 Marc Warren. **FL** Roberts 1m24.012s (89.99mph). **P** Warhurst. **\$** 17.

Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Armstrong; 2 Coates +2.682s; 3 Will Jenkins; 4 Roberts; 5 Warhurst; 6 Robert Cronin. **FL** Warhurst 1m23.518s (90.52mph). **P** Armstrong. **\$** 17.

Race 3 (9 laps) 1 Coates; 2 Warhurst +0.358s; 3 Trice; 4 Cronin; 5 Warren; 6 Matt Kyle-Henney. **FL** Armstrong 1m24.591s (89.37mph). **P** Armstrong. **\$** 17.

Points 1 Roberts 65; 2 Armstrong 54; 3 Warhurst 54; 4 Trice 53; 5 Coates 52; 6 Jenkins 30.

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Tom Ovenden; 2 Nicky Taylor +0.263s; 3 Jack Byrne; 4 Ashley Gregory; 5 James Black; 6 Alex Keens. **FL** Byrne 1m40.567s (75.17mph). **P** Ovenden. **\$** 31.

Race 2 (8 laps) 1 Byrne; 2 Ovenden +1.298s; 3 Gregory; 4 Taylor; 5 Nathan Edwards; 6 Rhys Hurd. **FL** Edwards 1m40.282s (75.39mph). **P** Gregory. **\$** 30.

Points 1 Ovenden 443; 2 Taylor 427; 3 Byrne 403; 4 Alex Solley 372; 5 Hurd 323; 6 Maximus Hall 316.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (16 laps) 1 Louis Sharp; 2 James Higgins +3.768s; 3 Will Macintyre; 4 Josh Irfan; 5 Deagan Fairclough; 6 Dion Gowda. **FL** Sharp 1m18.203s (96.68mph). **P** Sharp. **\$** 19.

Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Sonny Smith; 2 Gabriel Stip +0.359s; 3 Isaac Barashi; 4 Jack Sherwood; 5 Jimmy Piszczyk; 6 Kai Daryanani. **FL** Stip 1m18.093s (96.81mph). **P** Daryanani. **\$** 19.

Race 3 (12 laps) 1 Sharp; 2 Macintyre +1.962s; 3 Fairclough; 4 Gowda; 5 Irfan; 6 Kanato Le. **FL** Sharp 1m17.824s (97.15mph). **P** Sharp. **\$** 19. **Points 1 Macintyre 243;** 2 Sharp 237; 3 Gowda 188; 4 Fairclough 175; 5 Piszczyk 159; 6 Le 154.



Victories at last for Rees and Cresswell in GB3

SILVERSTONE
GB3
29-30 JULY

Callum Voisin reclaimed the lead of the GB3 Championship from Alex Dunne, but the title rivals were put in the shade by Matthew Rees and McKenzie Cresswell during the latest round at Silverstone last weekend.

Rees took a double pole in qualifying ahead of Cresswell and Tymek Kucharczyk, with the championship's top three of Voisin, Joseph Loake and Dunne directly behind. JHR Developments driver Rees maintained his advantage at the start of Saturday's opening contest and had already built a one-second advantage over Cresswell at the end of the first lap, and continued to pull clear to take his second GB3 victory – his first of 2023 – by 4.4s.

"I just got off the line well and I controlled the race, we had the pace all the way through," said Rees. "It's little tweaks to me [as well as set-up]. We've always had the pace, we've just lacked execution a bit."

Rodin Carlin driver Voisin moved ahead of the Douglas Motorsport car of Kucharczyk at the start into third, where he remained until the finish to close to one point off Dunne, who took fifth. Loake lost out to Dunne off the line, having briefly ended up on the grass, and came home sixth.

Fortec's Max Esterson was the biggest mover of the race, the American bouncing back from engine struggles in qualifying to climb eight places to 10th ahead of title contender James Hedley.

After matching his best-ever GB3 result of second in the first contest, Elite Motorsport driver Cresswell made the better start from the inside of the



front row in Sunday's sequel to beat Rees into Copse.

The safety car was deployed at the end of the first lap after Oliver Stewart stopped with suspension damage, with Cresswell holding off Rees at the restart. Thereafter he controlled proceedings to finish 1.1s ahead of Rees and claim his maiden victory.

"A big weight off my shoulders," said Cresswell. "It only took me a year and a half but I'm pleased to get it. I didn't want another second. All the work that has gone on behind the scenes has really put me in good stead."

Kucharczyk maintained third throughout, while Voisin lost out to Loake at the start, finishing fifth and one place ahead of Hitech racer Dunne to claim the championship lead by a solitary point. Nico Christodoulou pressured Dunne late in the race before a mistake dropped him to eighth behind Jarrod Waberski. Esterson produced another strong recovery to prevail in the battle for ninth with Noah Ping.

Daniel Mavlyutov was due to line up at the front for the full reversed-grid race, but headed for the pitlane before the start. That left Shawn Rashid to lead John Bennett behind the safety car in heavy rain for three laps before the race was red-flagged due to standing water and poor visibility. With the bad weather persisting, the decision was eventually taken to abandon the race, with drivers agreeing that conditions had been too dangerous to continue.

STEVE WHITFIELD

RACE RESULTS

GB3

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 Matthew Rees; 2 McKenzie Cresswell +4.442s; 3 Callum Voisin; 4 Tymek Kucharczyk; 5 Alex Dunne; 6 Joseph Loake. **Fastest lap** Rees 1m53.575s (116.02mph).

Pole Rees. Starters 23.

Race 2 (10 laps) 1 Cresswell; 2 Rees +1.130s; 3 Kucharczyk; 4 Loake; 5 Voisin; 6 Dunne. **FL Cresswell** 1m53.520s (116.08mph). **P Rees. S 23.**

Points 1 Voisin 278 (below); 2 Dunne 277; 3 Loake 265; 4 James Hedley 231; 5 Cresswell 222; 6 Rees 222.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



GT Cup tussle for
Orange/Roche (leading)
and Kakad/Cook

Audi, McLaren and Ferrari come to the fore in frenetic GT Cup battles

SILVERSTONE
MSVR
29-30 JULY

Hugo Cook scored a GT Cup brace during a weekend of mixed weather at Silverstone.

Tom Roche jumped the start to lead Cook's Audi R8 in Saturday's sprint contest, eventually incurring a 10-second penalty, and spun the McLaren from first place after colliding with Orange Racing team-mate Russ Lindsay's Porsche. Cook profited to win by 8.8s from James Wallis in the 7TSIX McLaren, while GTC honours went to FF Corse Ferrari driver James Owen, who edged the RAM Racing Mercedes of Adam Knight to third overall.

Roche made amends in the pitstop race with a comfortable victory alongside Simon Orange, who built a 7s lead following an early safety-car period before handing over the 720S GT3. Cook, sharing with Sacha Kakad, finished second, while Wallis and Paul Rogers were a distant third. Owen again took GTC spoils, this

time alongside Tom Fleming.

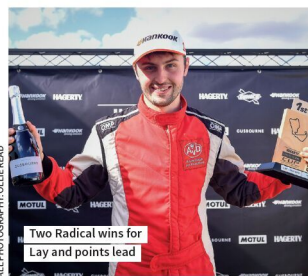
The two slick-shod Ferrari 488s of Fleming and Dan de Zille headed Sunday's slippery sprint race early on. Fleming eventually pulled clear for a comfortable win, but de Zille fell into the clutches of Chris Hart, who benefited from wet tyres to seal a remarkable second place in his GTH-class Mercedes GT4. After pitting for wets on the formation lap, Kakad climbed through the field to snatch third from de Zille on the final tour.

The second pitstop race took place in monsoon conditions, with the Greystone McLaren of Andrey Borodin leading following a safety-car start. Gilbert Yates soon moved his Lamborghini ahead, while de Zille outdragged Borodin and Kakad on the Hangar Straight into second. Borodin eventually spun, while Yates came in with 20 minutes remaining to hand over to Charlotte Gilbert, who slipped down the order.

After taking over from his son, Graham de Zille led by 17s, but he was reeled in and passed within two laps by Cook – in for Kakad – who remained ahead until the finish. Roche closed to within 1.5s of Cook in the final two laps, but had to settle for second, while Fleming passed de Zille Sr for third and another GTC win. Paul Bailey and Ross Wylie maintained their overall championship lead with four GTO class wins in a Lamborghini.

A 51-car field contested Porsche Club GB's combined opener. Archie Hamilton took another Open Cup win, but he was powerless to stop Chris Dymond's superior machine in the sequel.

James Caley sealed his first Porsche Club Championship triumph of the season,



Two Radical wins for
Lay and points lead

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT CUP

Race 1 Hugo Cook (Audi R8 GT3 Evo)

Race 2 Simon Orange/Tom Roche

(McLaren 720S GT3 Evo)

Race 3 Tom Fleming (Ferrari Challenge 488)

Race 4 Sacha Kakad/Hugo Cook

(Audi R8 GT3 Evo)

PORSCHE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP/BOXSTER CUP/OPEN CUP & 911 CHALLENGE

Race 1 Archie Hamilton (992)

Race 2 Chris Dymond (991)

RADICAL CUP UK

Races 1 & 2 James Lay (SR3)

Race 3 Chris Preen (SR3)

GB4

Races 1 & 2 Tom Mills

7 RACE SERIES

Race 1 Anthony Barnes (Caterham 420R)

Race 2 Harry Senior (Caterham 420R)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

while Mark McAleer recovered from a bad start to third in class behind fellow double champion Peter Morris. McAleer prevailed in race two ahead of Kevin Harrison and Caley. Jonathan Lovell won the Boxster Cup opener but was beaten to victory by Mike Thompson second time around.

With Daryl DeLeon switching to British Touring Cars, James Lay took over the lead of the Radical Cup UK standings with two victories, climbing from 21st in the opener. Chris Preen denied Lay a clean sweep by edging him in the finale.

Tom Mills extended his GB4 season win tally to eight with two dominant victories before the third contest succumbed to bad weather.

STEVE WHITFIELD

Higginson leads Gadd and Pollard. They were in the thick of the F1000 action all weekend



F1000 contenders among the high-speed battlers

SNETTERTON
750MC
29-30 JULY

A high-speed air demo from a passing RAF Typhoon inspired some strong competition during last weekend's 750 Motor Club event at Snetterton.

The first F1000 race was a straight battle between eventual winner Matthew Higginson and Dan Gore. Championship leader Thomas Gadd, meanwhile, was lucky to finish after tangling with Murfie Aldridge and did well to recover to seventh.

This misfortune stood Gadd in good stead for the partially reversed-grid race,

which he won from pole. Both Higginson and Craig Pollard attempted to catch him, with second-placed Higginson coming closest. Pollard's Jedi developed a radiator problem late on and he dropped back slightly, but was still an impressive third despite his car leaking fluid.

The third race was another two-way battle between winner Higginson and Gadd, who was the early leader. A spin for the encroaching Pollard helped take the pressure off Higginson, who had got closer and closer to Gadd until the duo were trading places at the front. The lead switched several times before Higginson made it stick when it mattered and took

the win. Aldridge was third and Pollard fifth, behind Robert Welham.

Matthew Hyde had to work hard for the first Formula Vee win, making the most of a last-moment spin by leader Craig Bell to take victory on the line. The AHS Dominator pair had separated themselves from a bigger group that included polesitter Matt Harbot, Peter Belsey and a returning Martin Farmer.

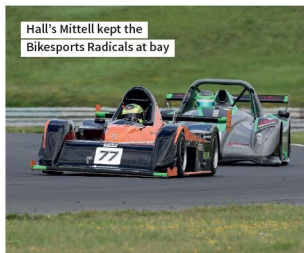
Hyde prevailed again in race two after continuing his stand-off with Bell. He made sure that he didn't have to depend on a Bell mishap this time and held the lead throughout, with Bell usually snapping at his heels. Belsey's Spyder Mk2 was the best of the chasing group in third, while Harbot's AHS had gear linkage problems and he slipped down the order at the start to fifth, although he caught Peter Studer towards the end to claim fourth.

The Locost opener also featured multiple lead changes, with reigning champion Craig Land weathering challenges from Shaun Brame, who led briefly, David Hitchin and Martin West, bringing his championship-winning Locost out for the first time this year. West also led, despite a couple of hairy moments, one of which came at exactly the wrong time to let Hitchin past into second on the final tour.

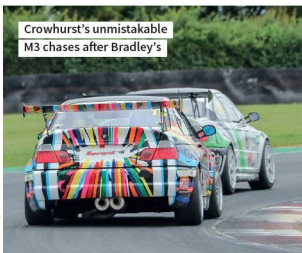
The second race resulted in a second win for Land. His chief rival this time was Paul Clark, who held the lead for a short time



Hyde (right) pounced on final-lap Vee spin for Bell



Hall's Mittell kept the Bikesports Radicals at bay



Crowhurst's unmistakable M3 chases after Bradley's



Johnston narrowly defeated Traynor (left) despite penalty

mid-race and was still half a second behind Land when the flag came out. A very close chasing group was led home by Brame, who deposed West and Tom Parker in a spurt of last-lap speed.

Both 116 Sprint Trophy races were red-flagged and both were won by Louis Woodward, although the two facts are not connected. Woodward, in the 120 Coupe Cup class, was only briefly challenged each time. The tougher competition came among the 116s, where Mack Priestwood and Theo Millward grabbed one win apiece. It was Priestwood's first victory and he followed it with another in the 90-minute 116 Trophy enduro, driving solo. His decision to pit early and take advantage of any safety car situations or rain paid off, and the quicker cars of Millward and Matthew Highcock could not catch him.

Paul Cook became an honorary military man for the Armed Forces Challenge, electing to start from the pitlane in his BMW M3 and cutting through the 40-second grid. Mark White was almost as dominant over the rest of the field in his Honda Civic, finishing second to Cook in the opener and winning the sequel by an impressive 18.87s from Alexander Smith's Integra.

Cook could not repeat his heroics in the BMW Car Club Championship's races because his car was losing water and he pulled out of race two. Neither did Jasver Sapra, whose M3 had ignition problems

and had to start from the pitlane. As this was unauthorised, he was recorded as a non-starter. Instead, Niall Bradley, in another M3, prevailed in race one from Graham Crowhurst's Jeff Koons-inspired M3, with the pair increasingly close towards the end of the race. Oliver Neaves was third while Cook was fourth.

Rain made the second race far less predictable. Crowhurst won despite a dramatic spin at Oggies when running neck and neck with Mark Burton's 330i. Burton found himself leading as the more powerful cars struggled for grip, but Crowhurst didn't waste much time in regaining his lost places, bringing Bradley and Bryan Bransom's M3 with him. Bradley briefly passed him on the penultimate lap, but Crowhurst was having none of it and took the win, ahead of Bradley, Bransom and Burton.

Penalties nearly caused a big upset in the MR2 Championship's first race. Karl Johnston had led convincingly from Shaun Traynor all the way through, but a five-second track-limits addition dropped him to within 0.15s of a Traynor win. Traynor himself made up for it with a commanding win in the rain later on, as a struggling Johnston limped off after the first lap.

The first two MX-5 Cup contests went the way of reigning champion Ben Short, although George King did challenge at the start of the second. A reversed grid and,

WEEKEND WINNERS

F1000

Races 1 & 3 Matthew Higginson
Race 2 Thomas Gadd

FORMULA VEE

Races 1 & 2 Matthew Hyde (AHS Dominator)

LOCOST

Races 1 & 2 Craig Land

116 SPRINT TROPHY & 120 COUPE CUP

Races 1 & 2 Louis Woodward (120i)

116 TROPHY

Mack Priestwood

ARMED FORCES RACE CHALLENGE

Race 1 Paul Cook (BMW E46 M3)
Race 2 Mark White (Honda Civic Type R)

BMW CAR CLUB RACING

Race 1 Niall Bradley (E46 M3)
Race 2 Graham Crowhurst (E46 M3)

TOYOTA MR2s

Race 1 Karl Johnston (Roadster)
Race 2 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

MX-5 CUP

Races 1 & 2 Ben Short
Race 3 George King

BIKESPORTS

Races 1 & 2 Charles Hall (Mittell MC-41R)

RENAULT CLIO SPORT CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1 & 2 Jack Dwane (197, below)



For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

more importantly, the retirement of Short with broken suspension, left the way for King to cruise home in the finale.

Bikesports in turn was dominated by Charles Hall, who won both races by a healthy margin. He was the only Mittell racer on the grid and defeated a pack of Radicals, including that of Leon Morrell, who had qualified on pole. Hall got the better of Morrell in the opening corners both times and kept the advantage, despite Morrell's counter-attacks.

There were two protagonists in the Clios as well, with Jack Dwane and Jack Kingsbury's 197s scrapping for the lead. Dwane won both times, although Kingsbury pushed him hard in race two before going off and dropping to seventh.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER

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Kelly was one of three FF1600 winners after close contests



GARY CLARK

National FF1600 stars at Kirkistown

KIRKISTOWN
500MRCI
28-29 JULY

A trio of excellent races featuring the combined efforts of the British Racing & Sports Car Club National contenders and most of the local stars topped last weekend's Kirkistown bill, and represented the return of Formula Ford 1600 to the limelight at the Northern Ireland circuit.

The National Championship provided the much-needed shot in the arm, and the FFords opened proceedings on Friday evening after qualifying with a close-fought battle involving Brandon McCaughan, Jordan Kelly and Lucas Romanek. They stayed together for a while before McCaughan managed to pull out a smallish lead as the other two squabbled. Towards the end they closed in again, but McCaughan held on to take his first win since April at Oulton Park.

It was Kelly's turn to take the flag first in race two with Romanek and McCaughan next, pursued by Jordan Dempsey and Elliott Budzinski, the top five covered by just 1.2 seconds after some proper racing. A sprinkling of rain in the closing laps failed to prevent the third race producing yet another sizzler. For much of the 16-lap battle, there were 10 cars in a crazy, slipstreaming train and, at the end of 15 breathless minutes, it was Romanek who took victory – and the Ulster Trophy – by just 0.02s from McCaughan, with Budzinski a further 0.2s back.

Elsewhere in a packed programme, there were some equally fierce battles. Richard Kearney scored back-to-back victories

among the Formula Sheane brigade, with Keith Hogg and Brendan Carr sharing runner-up and third places between them.

Among the growing band of Irish Mini Cooper folk, it was Kian O'Brien who continued the winning streak he began earlier in the year. His main opposition in both races came from Jack Irvine, and the pair even took some time out to swap a little paint on occasion. Wayne Owens completed the opening podium, while Jack Conachy took that position in the sequel.

The Mazda MX-5 brigade produced another double winner, in this case Francis Allen. David Cousins and Damian Moran followed him home in the first race, Rob Kennedy and Moran in the second. The concurrent Fiesta encounters concluded with Michael Graham leading the pack over the line pursued by Emma Dempsey and Megan Campbell each time.

Roadsports featured Jim Larkham and his Radical in front both times, although Mike Ward's similar car crept up on him in the closing stages of the second contest. Concurrent races for NI Sevens and Global Lights produced double victories for Graham Moore and Cameron Fenton respectively.

It might have been the same among the Historic Racing Car Association machines but for the weather. David Kelly's Crossle-BMW cantered away from the later S2000 Crossles of John Benson and Bernard Foley in race one. But the heavens opened as the second bout started, and the Crossles elected to sit it out. Gareth Thompson's MGB V8 stayed ahead to the finish, although Steven Kelly's Mallock closed late on. Wolfgang Schnitter and his trusty MG

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA FORD 1600

Race 1 Brandon McCaughan (Van Diemen JL13)
Race 2 Jordan Kelly (Van Diemen RF06)
Race 3 Lucas Romanek (Van Diemen JL13)

FORMULA SHEANE

Races 1 & 2 Richard Kearney

MINI COOPERS

Races 1 & 2 Kian O'Brien

MAZDA MODI-5-CUP/FIESTA ZETECs

Races 1 & 2 Francis Allen (MX-5, below)

ROADSPORTS/GLOBAL GT/NI SEVENS

Races 1 & 2 Jim Larkham (Radical PR6)

HRCA HISTORIC SPORTS CARS

Race 1 David Kelly (Crossle BMW 9S)
Race 2 Gareth Thompson (MGB GT V8)

LIBRE SALOONS

Gavin Stanfield (Subaru Impreza)



GARY CLARK

For full results visit: speedhive.mylaps.com

Midget were a hard-charging third.

Gavin Stanfield's Subaru Impreza was the class of the field in the first Saloon/GT affair, ahead of the SEATs of Gareth Blaine and David McMin. The second was abandoned after Stephen Conn's SHP Supercar attacked a marshals' post, happily without injury. The damage to the post meant the race could not be restarted.

RICHARD YOUNG

FINISHING STRAIGHT



Welcome updates for game where you make the big calls



GAME
F1 MANAGER 2023
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Last year, we enjoyed our time with *F1 Manager 2022*. It had all the sheen of an officially

licensed Formula 1 product, combining approachability for the *Drive to Survive* generation with just enough depth to satisfy veteran F1 fans.

Was it a perfect game? Far from it, but '22 represented an encouraging first outing for Frontier Developments, building a solid foundation for this year's entry. The question is, is *F1 Manager 2023* a big enough improvement to justify another purchase?

The latest derivation sees you assume the role of an F1 team principal responsible for recruitment, facility management and car research and development. You're also tasked with overseeing the team's race day performance, making strategy calls that can shape your team's season.

The current roster of F1 drivers, teams

and circuits are present and correct as expected (including the new Las Vegas Strip Street Circuit), with Frontier Developments increasing the F1 fever by adding more nuanced game mechanics like pitcrew training regimes, the immersive helmet cam angle and an intriguing Race Replay mode.

Don't expect to see Daniel Ricciardo driving for AlphaTauri from the outset – Nyck de Vries still has the seat. Of course, whether you choose to give him a full season's drive is entirely up to you, Helmut Marko's not going to stride into your living room to tell you off, is he? (*Is he?*)

The Formula 2 and Formula 3 paddocks are also embraced more tightly this time around, with feeder series results simulated in the game's career mode, making it much simpler for players to scout future driving talent.

Deja vu sums up initial impressions of '23, seeing as it retains the same music, fonts and menu layouts as '22. It feels like an authentic F1 experience from the outset, however, retaining its predecessor's tidy presentation.

Team 'Exclusive Scenarios' also throw up entertaining race situations

with outlandish themes, including races with equalised car performance. These add a little more intrigue to the *F1 Manager* formula, providing short, sharp hits of race day action. They allow players to forgo the minutiae of day-to-day team management and focus on orchestrating the perfect race strategy.

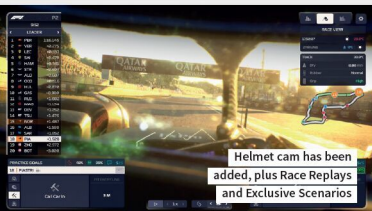
The Race Replays operate similarly, but are grounded within real-world F1 storylines, ranging from simple starting grid scenarios (where the aim is to beat a team's real-world performances) to the snappier mid-race moments, pertaining to a specific flashpoint from this season.

One example of this is 'Fernando's Gamble', based on this year's Monaco Grand Prix lead battle. If Fernando Alonso had switched to intermediates instead of mediums as the rain intensified, could he have won? You can attempt it yourself in-game, and new scenarios will be available after every grand prix throughout the year.

Although the game was mostly a smooth experience, we encountered several bugs in our playthrough, which Frontier has partially addressed by releasing an update in time for the game's release. It still rains

Unleash your inner Toto Wolff, Christian Horner or Guenther Steiner...

F1 MANAGER 23



Helmet cam has been added, plus Race Replays and Exclusive Scenarios

inside the Monaco tunnel, however, and drivers wear gloves on the podium...

Another bugbear is you still can't skip to the end of a session if both of your cars have retired. Would Toto Wolff hang around to watch if both his cars were out of the race? No, so why should we?

Even though *F1 Manager 2023* represents a slight improvement on its predecessor, it still inherits much of '22's structure and feel, with increases in difficulty and complexity. The big takeaway is the intriguing Race Replay and Exclusive Scenario modes, both of which add an interesting new way to play the game in bite-size form.

Is it a big enough improvement over '22, though? It's a couple of sandwiches short of a Red Bull catering budget for us, but if you missed out the first time around, *F1 Manager 2023* is the definitive way to unleash your inner Guenther Steiner.

ROSS MCGREGOR

For daily racing game news, visit traxion.gg



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



Belgian Grand Prix review

Max Verstappen easily overcame his grid penalty to take his 10th Formula 1 victory of the season at Spa, just before the summer break. Host Martyn Lee is joined by Matt Kew, Filip Cleeren and Jake Boxall-Legge to pick out the best and worst of the Belgian Grand Prix.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Rally Finland

World Rally Championship

Round 9/13

Jyväskylä, Finland

3-6 August

TV Live TNT Sport 1, Thur 1800, TNT Sport 1, Fri 0600, 0815, 0930, TNT Sport 4, 1230, TNT Sport 3, 1425, 1600, 1815, TNT Sport 1, Sat 0600, 0900, TNT Sport 3, Sat 1330, 1630, TNT Sports 1, 0700, 1100

TV Highlights TNT Sport 2, Fri 2230, TNT Sport 1, Sat 2230, TNT Sport 4, Sun 2230 Red Bull TV, Fri 2000, Sat 2000, Sun 2000

IndyCar

Round 13/17

Nashville, USA

6 August

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 2000

Indy NXT

Round 8/12

Nashville, USA

6 August

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1655

Super GT

Round 4/8

Fuji, Japan

6 August

TV Livestream via Motorsport.tv, Sun 0430

IMSA SportsCar

Round 8/11

Road America, USA

6 August

DTM

Round 4/8

Nürburgring, Germany

5-6 August

TV Live Viaplay, Sat 1215, Sun TBA

NASCAR Cup

Round 23/36

Michigan, USA

6 August

TV Live Viaplay, Sun 1900

NASCAR Xfinity

Round 21/33

Michigan, USA

5 August

TV Live Viaplay, Sat 2000

World Rallycross

Round 5/8

Mettet, Belgium

5-6 August

TV Live TNT Sport 3, Sat 1500

MotoGP

Round 9/20

Silverstone, UK

6 August

TV Live TNT Sport 2, Sun 1230

TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park

MSVR/ECR

5 August

BCV8, Cockshoot Cup, Equipe GTS, Equipe Libre, Equipe Pre-'70s/'63/'50s

Donington Park CSCC

5-6 August

Classic K, Future Classics, Magnificent Sevens, Modern Classics, New Millennium, Open Series, Slicks Series, Swinging '60s, Tin Tops, Turbo Tin Tops

Snetterton MSVR

5-6 August

EnduroKa, Miata, MSVR Allcomers, United FF1600

Angeley SMRC

5-6 August

Classics, Formula Vee Ireland, Irish Legends, ITCC, Scottish C1 Cup, Scottish Fiesta ST, Scottish Mini Cooper Cup, SEAT Supercup Ireland

Brands Hatch MSVR

6 August

Fastest Mini in the World, Mini Miglia, Mini Se7en, Super Mighty Minis/ Mighty Minis



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Johnny Herbert sits in the cockpit of his Lotus 102D during the 1992 Spanish Grand Prix at Barcelona. The Brentwood-born racer qualified 26th and last in a car originally introduced

at the start of the 1990 season (it was replaced next time out, round five at Imola, by the 107). After an entertaining fightback, he spun off the wet track into retirement on lap 14. During a season blighted by bad

luck and reliability issues – he was classified in just five of the 16 rounds – Herbert had some moments in the sun, scoring two sixth places and starting from the third row of the grid twice.



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Donington Park

Despite his 17 starts in the Bathurst 1000, yielding a pair of second places, many of Paul Radisich's fondest memories are rooted in the British Touring Car Championship's 1990s Super Touring era. A couple of massive accidents in Australia's Great Race, where the Kiwi sustained multiple injuries in 2006 and 2008 that ended his professional career, probably don't help the fearsome Mount Panorama circuit's cause.

Instead, it is the venue where Radisich claimed a second consecutive Touring Car World Cup triumph in 1994 that he selects as his favourite. "For challenging tracks, I would say Donington," he says. "But not just for that [win]. It was always a delight to run there."

Four wins and four second places from nine starts across the BTCC, World Cup and non-championship TOCA Shootout made the 2.5-mile Grand Prix circuit an incredibly successful venue for Radisich in 1993-94. He cites the swooping downhill bends of the Craner Curves as a highlight, "particularly in those cars". "Through there it was always a challenge, getting the temperature

in those rear tyres," he says. "And it's such a fast, big flowing track."

Radisich shot to prominence by taking his Andy Rouse Engineering-run Ford Mondeo to third in the 1993 BTCC standings, despite missing the first seven of 17 races that year. He



then went to Monza and upset the locals by winning the inaugural end-of-season World Cup.

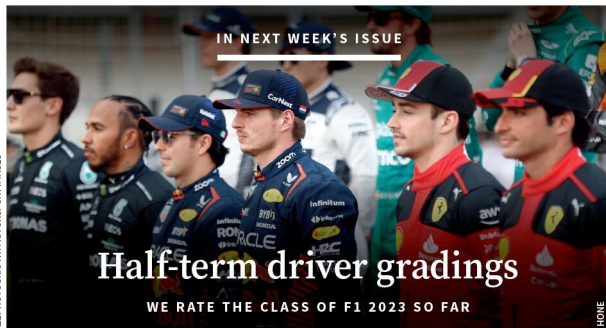
Against Gabriele Tarquini in Alfa Romeo's bewinged homologation special, Radisich couldn't live up to his tag of BTCC pre-season favourite in 1994 as

he placed third once more. But he was on song when the World Cup went to Leicestershire. The Mondeo's Achilles' heel – its V6 engine hanging over the front axle, which meant "it just chewed the tyres up" – would increasingly hamper it in years to come. But Radisich made his rubber last on that October afternoon to hold off Steve Soper's BMW.

"Michelin developed a carbon-fibre-sidewalled tyre and I did most of the testing," says Radisich. "Instead of dropping away I was able to just keep belting out record laps."

MARK PAULSON

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE



Half-term driver gradings

WE RATE THE CLASS OF F1 2023 SO FAR

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