

Evans closes gap to Roovanpera with Finland **WRC** glory

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F1 half-term report – who measures up, who falls short?

It's summer-break time in Formula 1 – not that the staff of the seven UK-based teams would recognise it as they crank the heating up and gaze out at the latest dismal rainy day – so it's time to present our half-term wrap-up of the season so far. Beginning on page 18, Alex Kalinauckas takes a look at the running themes of 2023 and how they might play out between now and the end of the season. Meanwhile, Jake Boxall-Legge – that's Mr Boxall-Legge to you! – brings you his driver reports. Who does 'Sir' rank as top of the class, and who's staying behind for extra tuition?

One driver who was undoubtedly on top of the sport was Tazio Nuvolari. Pre-eminent motorsport historian Doug Nye returns to these pages to tell the tale of the great Italian, who bestrode the pre-war era. You can read that on p34. Talking of Italians, the new Isotta Fraschini Le Mans Hypercar project is delved into by Gary Watkins, who talks to the programme's key players, on p30.

F1 action may be on hiatus but the sport as a whole is in full flow. Tom Howard was in Finland to see Elfyn Evans produce arguably his greatest drive to date (p40), Lewis Duncan donned his waterproofs at Silverstone as a thrilling British GP for motorcycles warmed up the crowd (p50), and Charles Bradley brings you the latest IndyCar action from the streets of Nashville (p46).

Sadly, the sport lost a key player last week in the form of Neil Brown. The engine maestro leaves behind a huge legacy in such fields as the BTCC, DTM, F3 and historics. We pay tribute on p11.



MS

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PIT + PADDOCK

Sulayem wants American, Chinese car giants in F1

FORMULA 1

FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem is pressing on with his plan to expand the Formula 1 grid and says he wants to attract works teams from the US and China.

As motor racing's governing body continues its evaluation of potential new entries from 2025, Ben Sulayem thinks that the arrival of manufacturers from the world's two largest economies would deliver a huge uplift for F1's commercial appeal. "My dream is a full American team from an OEM and I would like to also see an OEM from China," Ben Sulayem explained in an interview with Autosport's sister website *Motorsport-Total.com*. "You have 1.4 billion people in China, and over 50% of your electric vehicles on the road are Chinese. That's facts. It is a big market."

Ben Sulayem believes that F1's modified 2026 hybrid rules, which will have a simplified 50/50 power split between the internal combustion engine and electric power, is exactly the sort of formula that could help attract the OEMs he is targeting.

"The Chinese are serious when it comes to EV and hybrid," he said. "The power unit was the right thing to do. If we didn't do it, do you really think Audi [which will enter with Sauber in 2026] would have come and joined? That happened only after the power unit was approved and all the teams signed it."

China has not yet had any major involvement from one of its manufacturers in F1, although since 2022 it has had its first driver from the mainland on the grid – Alfa Romeo's Zhou Guanyu.

Ben Sulayem thinks it is the FIA's duty to attract as many teams as the rules allow, which is 12, but his enthusiasm isn't widely shared in the paddock. F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali and his boss, Liberty Media chief Greg Maffei, have repeatedly expressed scepticism about the added value of having more cars on the grid.

Most existing teams are also hesitant to welcome a new rival, including Michael Andretti's tie-up with American giant GM, since it would mean that they would have to share their slice of F1's prize pool with an additional entrant.

F1's unprecedented popularity boom and its budget cap have



Sulayem (left) and Domenicali disagree on extra teams

SUTTON

turned teams into profitable franchises, meaning that the existing \$200million anti-dilution fee that a new entrant would have to fork out is seen as nowhere near enough to represent the loss of income for existing squads. It has been suggested that this figure could be at least tripled in the next Concorde Agreement.

Some F1 team bosses, including Mercedes' Toto Wolff, also voiced safety concerns over being able to fit in an 11th team at some of the F1 calendar's most cramped pitlanes and paddocks.

Speaking to Wall Street analysts, Maffei said: "We have 10 great teams, and we're very excited about what they're doing. There was a process to add more teams, but the bar is very high and it's unclear what value an 11th team would add. There is a lot of uncertainty among the other teams about an 11th team."

FILIP CLEEREN



F1 tentacles have already stretched further into US with extra grands prix

TRINITY



SBLOXHAM

‘Trivial things’ holding up Hamilton contract

FORMULA 1

Lewis Hamilton’s Mercedes Formula 1 contract renewal is said to be in its final phase, with lawyers from both parties now poring over the finer details before it can be signed.

The new agreement will commit the seven-time world champion to Mercedes for the next few years. But delays in

putting pen to paper have prompted speculation on any last-minute hurdles for both parties to overcome.

One suggestion was that Hamilton wanted to finalise some kind of ambassadorial role with Mercedes for his life after retirement. But Mercedes F1 chief Toto Wolff has said that the focus of the new contract is entirely related to Hamilton

being a driver and that the renewal is now a matter of “cleaning up” the fine print.

“We’re not talking about an ambassadorial role post his retirement, nor is that part of the contract negotiations,” Wolff explained at the recent Belgian Grand Prix. “I think he has many years to go as a driver within this team, and therefore it’s only about cleaning things

up in the contract.

“I know it looks a little bit [uncertain] and this not being done and dusted. But it’s simply down to trivial things. I don’t want to give you a date, because it’s lawyers speaking to lawyers. It’s not material things anymore, but you’ve got to give it time and I don’t want to commit to a date.”

JONATHAN NOBLE

F2 star Vesti given Merc FP1 debut

FORMULA 1

Mercedes junior and Formula 2 title contender Frederik Vesti will take over George Russell’s car for his Formula 1 free practice debut at October’s Mexican Grand Prix.

Mercedes has handed the 21-year-old Dane the run in the W14 at Mexico City as the first of its two mandatory FP1 rookie runs of the season.

“I’m incredibly proud to be doing the FP1 session in Mexico City with the team – it’s a dream come true,” said Vesti, who is second in the F2 points.

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff added: “Fred has executed an impressive Formula 2 campaign so far this season. Driving in an FP1 session is the next step in his development and we’re looking forward to giving him that opportunity.”



Vesti drove Mercedes in Abu Dhabi last year

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POTTS

It will be the second session in an F1 car for Vesti, who ran for Mercedes in last year’s Abu Dhabi young driver test. He also conducts simulator work for Mercedes at its Brackley headquarters.

Vesti, who is competing with Prema

Racing in his second season of F2, headed into the summer break in the runner-up spot after losing the series lead to Theo Pourchaire in Spa. He has so far snared four wins in 2023.

FILIP CLEEREN

AlphaTauri new name to have Boss formula?

FORMULA 1

Fashion house Hugo Boss is in talks with Red Bull over a title sponsorship deal for the AlphaTauri Formula 1 team from 2024.

The Faenza squad is to undergo a complete overhaul for next year, overseen by new Red Bull investments chief Oliver Mintzlaff. He has opted against a sale, but instead wants the Italian team to be more competitive and commercially viable.

As part of the overhaul, the team will increase its ties to its Red Bull parent operation with an expanded UK presence. It is also set for a rebrand, with its naming rights sold to become more financially sustainable.

The team plans to drop its current name from 2024 and replace it with a new team and car title with Red Bull connections, although a return to its previous Toro Rosso identity has been ruled out.



As reported by Autosport sister site *it.motorsport.com*, it has now emerged that Hugo Boss has entered negotiations over a potential lucrative title sponsorship deal. The current Aston Martin partner and ex-McLaren sponsor is seeking greater F1 exposure.

Should the deal go through, AlphaTauri will likely be rebranded as 'Boss' – the guise of its

Aston backing, which is contracted until 2025 – or 'Boss Orange' in deference to the specific clothing line.

Current AlphaTauri sponsor Orlen, whose logos feature prominently on the rear wing, mirrors and halo of the AT04 machine, has also been linked with a naming takeover.

Alongside the infrastructure and identity changes, Ferrari sporting

director Laurent Mekies has been hired as team principal and former FIA secretary general Peter Bayer has taken up the role of CEO.

Bayer told Autosport: "We are discussing with several companies who are very interested in working with us but at this time there is no information to be released."

MATT KEW

➔ P13 OPINION

Cassidy joins old pal Evans in Jag's Kiwi superteam

FORMULA E

Multiple Formula E race winner Nick Cassidy will compete for Jaguar next season alongside childhood friend Mitch Evans after moving across from customer team Envision Racing on a multi-year contract.

Kiwi Cassidy finished runner-up to Jake Dennis in this year's drivers'

standings after taking four wins across the season. The last of those victories, in the London finale, helped Envision snatch the teams' title from the works Jaguar squad.

Cassidy has raced for Envision across three seasons in FE, but spent 2023 working closely alongside Jaguar, with the teams using the same powertrain in the Gen3 cars. "We always saw his capability and then obviously we've seen that closely

now this year with him being in our customer team," Jaguar team principal James Barclay told Autosport.

"I've seen in Nick a driver who is absolutely dedicated to his craft, who is laser-focused on wanting to be successful, and we love that spirit, we love that attitude. We're real racers, we just want to fight for race wins and championships, and I think Nick has got that character, as does Mitch. We're really excited. I think they'll be a strong pairing and I can't wait to go racing."

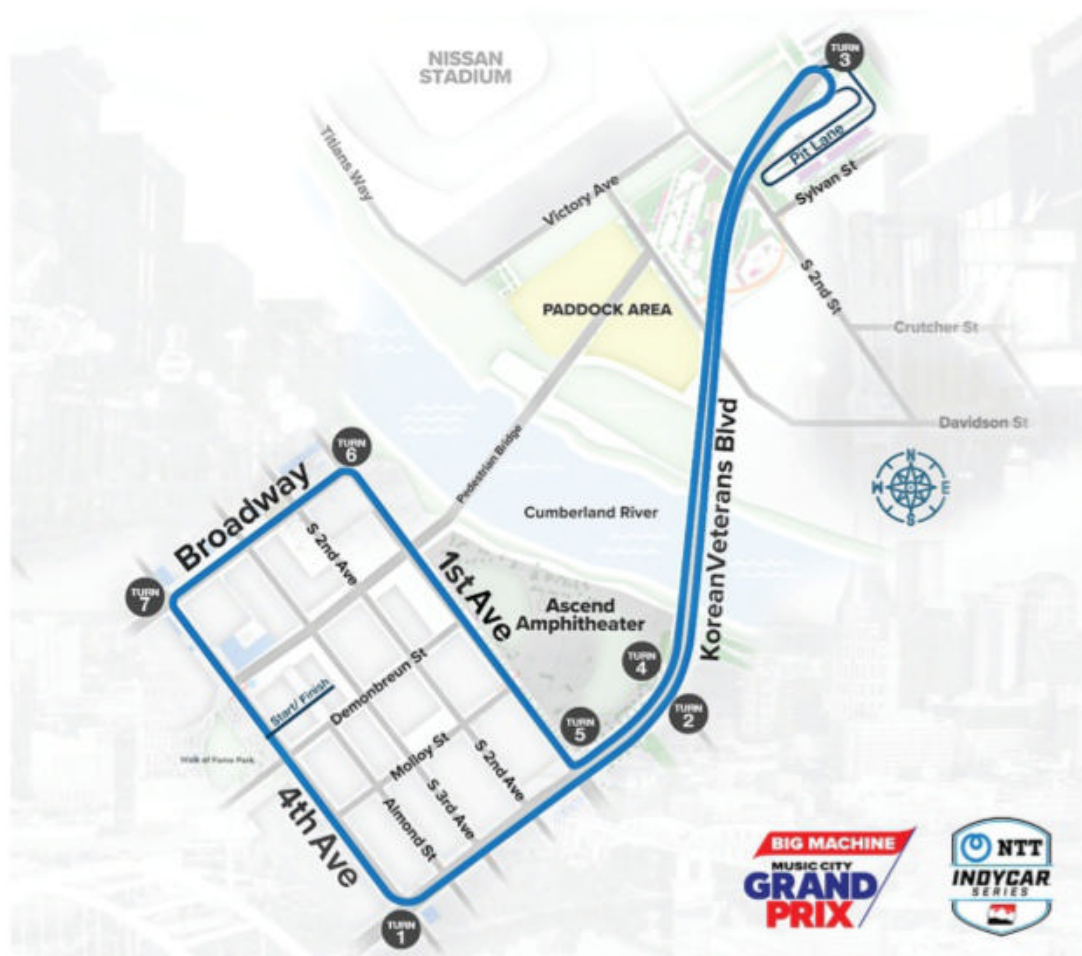
Cassidy replaces Sam Bird, with the British FE veteran expected to land a seat at McLaren for next season.

Evans was confirmed last week to have re-signed with the team on a multi-year contract that extends a seven-season relationship, during which time they have taken 10 wins together. It is not the first time the two Kiwis will have been teammates – they raced alongside each other at Giles Motorsport in the 2011 Toyota Racing Series, when Evans beat Cassidy to the title.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Cassidy (right) joins Evans in Jag line-up



New downtown track for Nashville move to finale slot

INDYCAR

The Nashville IndyCar track will get a new street circuit design next year, transferring most of its current layout from near the Tennessee Titans NFL team's Nissan Stadium across the river to the downtown district.

The Tennessean city, world-famous for its country music venues and bars, has signed a new three-year deal with IndyCar that includes a 2.17-mile, seven-turn track design. This was required because the Titans are to move to a new, \$2.1-billion, 60,000-seat stadium to be built along the east bank of the Cumberland River.

"We had the situation where I think necessity is the mother of invention, the situation where the Nissan Stadium developed," said Mark Miles, president and CEO of IndyCar Series owner Penske Entertainment Corp. "They came to us with a plan that just blew us away. I think it might be the best entertainment city in

the United States. The epicentre of it is right here on Broadway."

The event also moves to the season finale slot, replacing Laguna Seca on the weekend of 13-15 September, and will host the post-season banquet at its famous Schermerhorn Symphony Center. "This track is going to be fast with great passing zones," added Miles. "We know it's going to be a super-entertaining, fun place to have the finale."

Hometown hero Josef Newgarden, who won this year's Indianapolis 500, said of the move: "You're going to hope for a tight championship finale. For us [drivers] it's stressful, but the fans are the winners in this thing. It's going to be a great show."

The route will take the cars directly past the Country Music Hall of Fame and runs through an entertainment district that is home to bars owned by the biggest names in country music, such as Dierks Bentley, Garth Brooks, Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton.

CHARLES BRADLEY

ZANDVOORT DROPPED FOR QATAR ON 'MORE BALANCED' CALENDAR

FORMULA 2

Formula 2 has dropped its Dutch Grand Prix support slot at Zandvoort in favour of a round on the Qatar GP bill at Losail on its 2024 calendar.

That's the only change to the 14-round schedule that was put in place for 2023, and has been made partly because this season's penultimate round at Monza in early September is followed by a two-and-a-half-month gap before the finale at Yas Marina.

"For next year, we will race in Qatar, which is a very exciting new venue," said F2 CEO Bruno Michel. "The final leg of the season will see Baku, Qatar and Abu Dhabi after the race weekend in Monza, making the 2024 calendar more balanced. It's great that we can add new tracks every season."

The absence of Zandvoort from the schedule means that the two Dutch F2 teams will not get the chance to race on their home territory.

Meanwhile, the sister Formula 3 championship features an unchanged 10-round calendar for 2024. Like F2, it made its debut in Melbourne this season and also joined the senior category on the Monaco GP supporting card. Both series kick off at the Bahrain GP.



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GALLOWAY

Frijns tipped for Hypercar seat as he joins BMW

WEC

Robin Frijns has joined BMW's roster of factory drivers for 2024. His programme has yet to be announced, but it can be taken as read that he will race an M Hybrid V8 LMDh for the WRT squad in the World Endurance Championship.

The announcement from BMW made last week confirmed only that Frijns, who won the Formula BMW Europe title in 2010, will be part of WRT's test programme as it gears up for its graduation to the Hypercar class in the WEC next year. But the Dutchman is already part of WRT's prototype squad in LMP2 and their relationship goes right back to the start of his sportscar career

in 2015: he won the overall title in the GT World Challenge Europe (then known as the Blancpain GT Series) in his first year with the team, and then claimed the WEC P2 title and Le Mans 24 Hours class honours in 2021.

On confirming Frijns's involvement in WRT's test programme, BMW M Motorsport head Andreas Roos said: "He knows the team and the race series very well and can certainly make a valuable contribution to a successful preparation for the 2024 season.

"A glance at his previous successes shows that Frijns is also an extremely good GT driver," added Roos. "However, we will make a decision regarding any

possible race outings at a later date. First of all, we are very pleased to have him with us in the BMW M Motorsport family."

Frijns, who left long-term employer Audi last winter, said: "It is fantastic to return to BMW M Motorsport after so many years – the place it all started for me in Formula BMW Europe. I am looking forward to the new challenges."

The announcement that Frijns has become BMW's 22nd factory driver was made in the wake of the climax of the 2023 Formula E season in which he raced with Abt Cupra. It was subsequently revealed that he will return to Envision Racing to replace Jaguar-bound Nick Cassidy (see p6).

GARY WATKINS

Six-hour Indy race added to IMSA Endurance Cup



GALSTAD

IMSA

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway IMSA SportsCar Championship fixture will be a six-hour race on its second season back on the calendar in 2024. The new duration for the event on the combined oval-road course was announced when next year's 11-race calendar was announced last week.

The Indianapolis 6 Hours, scheduled for 22 September,

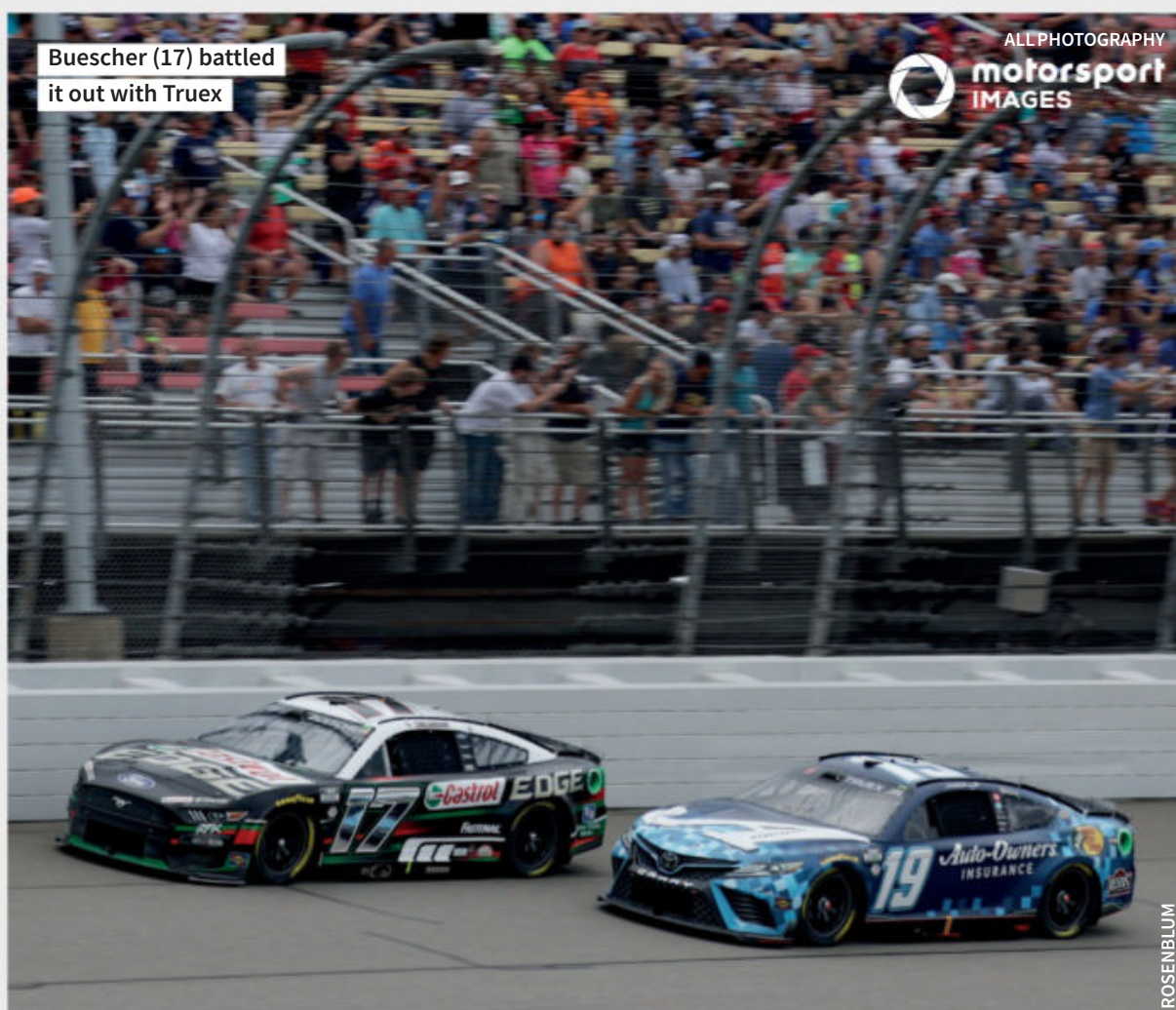
will become a fifth race counting towards the North American Endurance Cup segment of the IMSA series alongside Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta. They add up to a combined total of 58 hours of racing.

The Detroit fixture, formerly held at the Belle Isle venue, will return on the revived street circuit used for the first time by IndyCar this year as part

of a double-header weekend with the single-seater series. The 100-minute race for GTP and GT Daytona Pro class cars is set for 1 June.

The return of Detroit after a year's absence has resulted in Lime Rock being canned. The calendar includes clashes with three World Endurance Championship rounds, and the Spa and Nurburgring 24-hour GT3 blue ribands.

GARY WATKINS



Buescher makes it two in a row

NASCAR

Chris Buescher sent a strong message of his playoff potential with his win in Monday's rain-delayed NASCAR Cup race at Michigan International Speedway. Not only did Buescher win consecutive Cup races for the first time in his career, but he outduelled current series points leader Martin Truex Jr to do it.

Buescher's RFK Racing Ford emerged from a final round of green-flag pitstops in the lead with 18 of 200 laps remaining. The Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota of Truex, who won the first two stages, was close behind and gaining ground.

With about 12 laps to go, Truex went to Buescher's inside and edged ahead briefly for the lead. Buescher, however, used a lapped car as a pick and side-drafted Truex to pull back into the lead with 10 laps remaining. He then cleared Truex by a scant 0.152 seconds to pick up his

fourth career victory. It's the first time since 2010 that Roush Fenway Keselowski Racing has won back-to-back races.

"Guys gave me a great car again," said Buescher. "Had to work for that one too, hard racing at the end. Martin was very clean with me. I appreciate that."

Denny Hamlin ended up third, Buescher's team-mate Brad Keselowski was fourth and Kyle Larson rounded out the top five as the only Hendrick Motorsports driver to finish the race.

Only 75 laps were completed on Sunday before the race was halted due to persistent rain, but it was long enough for three contenders – Kyle Busch, Chase Elliott and William Byron – to be knocked out in incidents. Elliott, who missed several races this season due to injury and a one-race suspension, now must win one of the three regular-season races to qualify for the 16-driver playoff field.

JIM UTTER

ISOTTA FRASCHINI WON'T RACE UNTIL 2024 SEASON

WEC

The revived Isotta Fraschini marque has abandoned plans to race its new Le Mans Hypercar in the World Endurance Championship this year. It had targeted racing its Tipo 6 LMH Competizione at the Bahrain finale in November together with the Vector Sport team on an invitational basis, but will now concentrate on development and the homologation of the car ahead of its full-season entry in 2024.

Isotta motorsport boss Claudio Berro explained that contesting the Bahrain 8 Hours on 4 November would prove problematical. It falls just before the dates it has been given for the Tipo 6 to undergo final homologation in the Sauber windtunnel and then the FIA logistic and technical centre in France.

"It is now 100% we will not do Bahrain," he said. "The homologation is now fixed for mid-November, so it is not possible. We will continue testing until the end of October and then concentrate on preparing for homologation."

Vector has now fully joined the test programme with the Tipo 6 developed by Michelotto Engineering. It was fully integrated into the programme from a test at Vallerlunga last month, and Gabriel Aubry and Ryan Cullen were part of the driving squad when the car went to Monza last weekend.

Berro didn't rule out Isotta travelling to Qatar to take part in a WEC group test at Losail in early December.

GARY WATKINS

P30 ISOTTA'S CHALLENGE

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Huff makes shock BTCC return as Hamilton replacement

BTCC

What do you do when the brother of a world champion has left your team? Why, you call up a world champion of course. That's what Team Hard has done, with 2012 World Touring Car title winner Rob Huff set to return to the British Touring Car Championship in place of Nic Hamilton at Knockhill this weekend.

Hamilton quit the Kent squad before free practice for the most recent round at Croft, too late for a replacement to be found that weekend, and Team Hard chief Tony Gilham needed to fill the seat of the vacant Cupra Leon for the visit to Scotland in order not to be at risk of forfeiting a TBL entrants' licence. Huff, who lies fourth in the TCR World Tour in an Audi, was free to make his first BTCC appearance since he took second place in a 2017 outing at Silverstone at the wheel of a Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra, and only his second since his rookie season of touring car racing with the RML-run works SEAT team in 2004.

"Tony and I have a bit of a joke – for 10 years he's been trying to get me in one of his cars," said 43-year-old Huff. "Tony's been in contact with me to see if it's possible to drive, I know the engineering team and people he's drafted in. I wasn't racing this weekend, I love the BTCC, and I'd probably have been watching it on TV, and he gave me an offer I can't refuse."

"I'm a racer at heart, I love touring cars, and when an opportunity comes up you've got to take it."

Huff hasn't driven an NGTC car since that 2017 outing, "but the



fundamentals are very similar to what I drove then. There'll be no shakedown, no testing, I'll just jump in the hot seat and give it a whirl."

Huff has indicated that he would be available to contest the final two BTCC rounds at Silverstone and Brands Hatch, albeit not the late August event at Donington Park, which clashes with the TCR World Tour round at San Luis in Argentina, with a trip to Uruguayan circuit El Pinar in between.

"I'll be travelling from Cambridge to Knockhill to Uruguay in the space of four days!" Huff laughed. "I'm at the age where no doors are going to close from doing this, but you never know, some doors might open. Let's see financially if the team can have a breakthrough. I'm really excited, really looking forward to it. Hopefully I can give something to the team with my experience and knowledge and have some fun in the wonderful championship that is the BTCC."

MARCUS SIMMONS

Verstappen in GT3 team plan

GT3

Formula 1 world champion Max Verstappen says he is putting together his own GT3 team with the goal of reaching the highest level of endurance racing, with a two-car team under the Verstappen.com Racing name.

"The first step is our own GT3 team and then we'll see where we end up," Verstappen said in an interview with Dutch magazine *Formule 1*. "Next year will be tight, but I would like to have it as soon as possible. Having a GT3 team in 2025 with a minimum of two cars should be possible."

Verstappen, who is a keen sim racer, is hoping to create a platform that can pick up talented Esport drivers and prepare them for a career in GT racing. "If I do something, I want to do it right," he added. "I want to win with this as well. It's about creating a stepping stone from sim racing to GT3, so that you don't have to only go through karting to get into motorsports, because that costs a lot of money at the moment."

Verstappen previously flagged his interest in switching to sportscars after his F1 career, with the World Endurance Championship adopting GT3 machinery from next year. But it remains to be seen in which timeframe he will make it to Le Mans, and whether his 2008 LMP2 class winning father Jos will be part of it.

"I am not in a hurry," he told Autosport at the end of last season. "A lot of things are changing in endurance racing and it's better to wait and see how everything turns out."

Verstappen.com Racing already has a motorsport presence as a sponsor of Verstappen Sr's rallying exploits, as well as supporting the DTM and GT World Challenge Europe Ferrari campaign (below) of Thierry Vermeulen, son of Verstappen's manager Raymond.

FILIP CLEEREN





Brown (right) with Colin Turkington, who has won three BTCC titles with NBE

Neil Brown 1948-2023

OBITUARY

Engine builder Neil Brown, who has died just a few days short of his 75th birthday after suffering a stroke, was a figure of colossal importance in motorsport.

After his early days at BRM and Vegantune, he set up the Lincolnshire-based Neil Brown Engineering in 1973. The company became inextricably linked with Formula Ford 2000 from the category's inception in 1975, winning numerous British and European titles, and was also contracted by Ford in the late 1970s to prepare the 3.0-litre V6 engines in the Group 1 Capri, claiming class crowns in the British Saloon Car Championship.

As FF2000 faded, Brown moved into British Formula 3, preparing the Toyota engine with which JJ Lehto and Pacific Racing won the 1988 title. NBE was then chosen by Mugen Honda as the company's European motorsport base. Its Mugen powerplants won 15 British F3 crowns and also powered Formula 3000 winners.

With Mugen and Honda taking stakes in the company, NBE entered the Super Touring arena with the Accord in 1995. That gave Brown more success in what was now known as the British Touring Car Championship, and this has continued in the 21st century. NBE-built engines have won six drivers' titles in Team Dynamics Hondas, and three in West Surrey Racing BMWs – the latter team was the company's first Mugen F3 customer and also ran the works BTCC Hondas in 1999-2000. NBE

today supplies 10 cars in the series, with BMW, Honda and Toyota powerplants. In the support paddock, it picked up the service contract for the British F4 Ford EcoBoost engines in 2018, and this has continued into the series' new Abarth era.

NBE also enjoyed tremendous tin-top success in the DTM, commissioned in 2001 by Abt Sportsline to build 4.0-litre, V8 motivation for its Audi project and winning multiple titles for the marque.

The company is long back in the ownership of the Brown family, with daughter Fiona on full-time duty and son Matt on engine mapping. Brown himself, an ever-sprightly and twinkle-eyed presence in paddocks into 2023, "was still there [at NBE] every day", says long-time pal and fellow Lincolnshire man Richard Dutton, the Fortec Motorsport principal who Brown engaged to help him transition into the cockpit at the age of 63!

Together with Dutton and on his own, Brown became a noted helmsman at the wheel of Lotus Cortinas – and a top tuner of the twin-cam powerplants, going back to his BRM and Vegantune roots. "Every quick Cortina has a Neil Brown engine," adds Dutton. "He would stay late and work on the engines himself."

"With my background in engines, Neil and I had a good rapport together," says WSR chief Dick Bennetts. "He was very clever, with a good understanding on how engines work and the development side. He was a good bloke."

MARCUS SIMMONS

RINS IN FOR MORBIDELLI

LCR Honda rider Alex Rins is to replace Franco Morbidelli at Yamaha for the 2024 MotoGP season, it was confirmed in the build-up to last weekend's British Grand Prix. Spaniard Rins is the only winner this season on a Honda – he took victory in the Americas GP at Austin – but has been sidelined since June's Italian GP with a broken leg. His current stand-in Iker Lecuona is thought to be under evaluation by Honda for a full-time ride next season.

DTM'S 2024 CALENDAR

The DTM has released an eight-round calendar for 2024. While the venues are unchanged from this year, it will feature an earlier start at Oschersleben at the end of April, with the traditional mid-October Hockenheim finale. ADAC motorsport boss Thomas Voss hinted that it may not yet be complete. "We are also currently looking into the option of adding another European event outside of Germany to the 2024 calendar," he said.

GRAGSON SUSPENDED

NASCAR Cup rookie Noah Gragson has been indefinitely suspended by both the series and his Jimmie Johnson-co-owned team, Legacy Motor Club. Gragson recently liked an Instagram post, which appeared to make fun of the 2020 murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police. The 25-year-old, last year's Xfinity Series runner-up, was replaced by Josh Berry for last weekend's Michigan round.

KRISTOFFERSSON WINS

World Rallycross Championship king Johan Kristoffersson was one of four drivers from the top flight to take part in last weekend's RX2e round at Mettet after the Belgian circuit's WRX event was cancelled while last month's Lydden fire continues to be investigated. The Swede took victory (below) from Ole Henry Steinsholt, but a penalty for Steinsholt elevated Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky to second place. Timmy and Kevin Hansen plus Ole Christian Veiby also competed.





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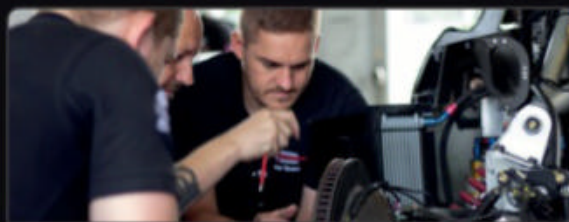
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A team with an identity crisis

With a rebrand looming for AlphaTauri, it looks set to shift still further from its original, standout purpose of talent tester for Red Bull and be just another F1 squad

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

When Red Bull bought out Minardi at the end of 2005, it did so with a clear identity and goal as it metamorphosed into Scuderia Toro Rosso. In his official capacity as talentspotter-in-chief, Helmut Marko had put together a band of a few junior drivers who he thought could be worth a punt in Formula 1, but there weren't enough seats on the grid for them all.

By buying up Minardi, he had a ready-made 'junior team' that could serve as an apprenticeship for the drivers next on the conveyor belt with a view to moving up to the parent Red Bull Racing squad. Although the 2006 pairing of Vitantonio Liuzzi (who'd shared the second Red Bull drive with Christian Klien) and Scott Speed never made the move from Toro Rosso to Red Bull, the ladder eventually began to work. Sebastian Vettel, Daniel Ricciardo, Daniil Kvyat, Max Verstappen, Pierre Gasly and Alex Albon all embarked upon the expected trajectory with mixed results, as Toro Rosso offered a chance to show their mettle and be competitive in the midfield.

Now AlphaTauri, the team is functionally somewhat different to those Toro Rosso years, and it will continue to change as the team tweaks its philosophy. It's no longer going to be about giving young drivers a leg-up to the full Red Bull squad, provided they can impress; the team will likely opt for an experienced hand alongside a younger driver in its future driving line-ups,

“Surely the likes of Andretti and Hitech have more to offer than some of the existing teams”

something it has inadvertently carried out already. Thirty-four-year-old Daniel Ricciardo was manoeuvred into the team at the expense of Nyck de Vries who, at 28, was hardly considered a particularly youthful future prospect. If the team plumps for the same pairing of Ricciardo and Yuki Tsunoda again in 2024, it will freeze out the likes of the most recently successful juniors in Liam Lawson and Ayumu Iwasa.

The Red Bull junior operation also looks set to jettison a few of its talents who have arguably failed to reach Marko's lofty standards. The likes of Dennis Hauger and Enzo Fittipaldi have won races in Formula 2, but have been solid rather than spectacular in a field that has been missing a sprinkling of star quality. Top junior Iwasa has lost ground to Theo Pourchaire and Frederik Vesti in the title race of late, while Zane Maloney

and Jak Crawford likely need another year in the second tier. Still, the Toro Rosso of old would have likely given Lawson, Iwasa and co a shot at the big time. But conservatism has arguably beset the team in its line-up choices, and the recent firing of de Vries suggested that it preferred to have a known quantity in the seat alongside third-year Tsunoda. Would the team have taken a punt on a 17-year-old Verstappen with its current mentality? You would be hard pressed to say yes...

The squad is to undergo a change in management next season with team principal Franz Tost making way for Laurent Mekies, who has recently left his Ferrari post. Ex-FIA executive director Peter Bayer has joined as CEO, and has been tasked with creating a fresh image for the team. One of the first changes will be in scratching the AlphaTauri name off next year's entry list, with strong rumours that fashion giant Hugo Boss will lend its name to the team. The German brand, or indeed any other wealthy businesses looking to put their name to a team, is hardly going to sanction the idea of posing as nothing more than a finishing school for Red Bull's wealth of younglings. It will want to win races, and drafting in experienced names with an F1 track record is likely going to be a stronger pull for the marketing department.

One of the aspects of the team's reworking that should not be criticised is a further alignment with the Red Bull technical foundry. After all, the team ran Red Bull chassis until 2009 with minor updates to fit a Ferrari engine rather than a Renault. Given the declining fortunes of AlphaTauri's designs over the past two seasons, it makes sense to take as many transferable parts permitted by the FIA and reassign personnel to patch any other holes.

So, what's the point in AlphaTauri? It has not stayed true to the tenets it outlined on its entry to F1, and the team is about to sell its identity off to the highest bidder. It's all very well to make progress, and the ethos around which it marketed itself in 2006 may not be entirely relevant in 2023, but there's no clear hook to the team if it stops funneling young drivers into F1. It becomes just another team on the grid, one that Red Bull owns purely to have two votes in discussions and little else. If this was part of the deal with new Red Bull GmbH CEO Oliver Mintzlaff to keep hold of the team, then it probably should have been sold to an entity that actually wants to do something different with its F1 entry.

Most F1 teams have voiced their opposition to the FIA's growing interest in an 11th team, suggesting that they'd only be welcome if they add value, but surely the likes of Andretti and Hitech have more to offer than some of the existing teams on the grid. AlphaTauri, or whatever it ends up being called, should have its motives called into question if it ceases to be a place where future race-winning talent can shine. 🏆

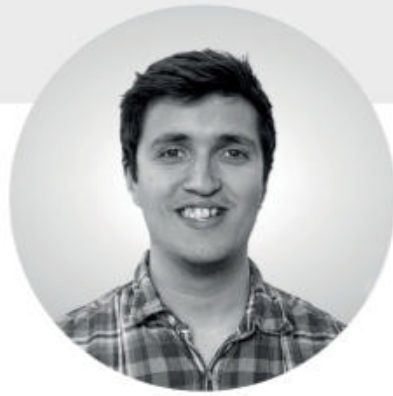


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American rivalry goes global

The influx of manufacturers has injected interest into the WEC and brought a new dimension to the competition between the best US squads

JAMES NEWBOLD

Sport is built on rivalries. Think of Liverpool versus Manchester United. Federer versus Nadal. Senna versus Prost. In motorsport it's harder to pick out defining rivalries between teams given the constantly changing competitive landscape.

But not so in the US, where the tussle for supremacy between two of IndyCar's most successful operations has taken on a new dimension in an altogether different arena this year.

Team Penske and Chip Ganassi Racing have been the dominant forces for the past 30 years and more. Over a decade has passed since anyone else won the IndyCar title, and this year a second crown for Alex Palou would put Ganassi equal with Penske on 15 open-wheel championships.

Now the rivalry is staged on three fronts as they combine the World Endurance Championship with North America's IMSA SportsCar Championship, each alongside grandee manufacturer partners lured back to the top class of sportscar racing by the cost-effective LMDh ruleset. Ganassi teamed up with Cadillac to run two V-Series.Rs, one in each series, while Penske Porsche Motorsport runs four factory 963s split evenly across both.

"Did we plan it that way? No!" chuckles Ganassi managing director Mike Hull. "We don't ask each other what we're doing next, we just happen to be in the same location at the same time, so we're going to compare ourselves to them, they're going to compare themselves to us."

Doing so is only natural, concedes PPM managing director Jonathan Diuguid, who worked in IndyCar as recently as 2021 as Scott McLaughlin's race engineer. "We always have a consistent benchmark [in Ganassi]," he says. "They're the team we're always competing against for marquee wins and championships."

Each side derives great satisfaction when it's their turn to come out on top. And both recognise the rivalry's benefits for driving their respective organisations forward. But they're equally wary of letting it become a distraction since, Hull says, "we don't want to get in the way of ourselves in the process of understanding how to get the most out of today. I'm sure they look at it the same way."

This is a new era for a rivalry Diuguid describes as "a healthy competition, but it's a respectful one too". Both have distinctive records in sportscars – Penske won IMSA titles in 2019 and 2020, and Ganassi notched five in Grand-Am – but have only spent the 2009 Grand-Am campaign playing in the same sandpit.

This year Penske has won twice in IMSA, Ganassi once, but in the WEC neither has bettered third. The situation here is complicated by Balance of Performance, more specifically the competing technical platforms that rulemakers the FIA and Automobile Club de l'Ouest have to equalise. Cars built to the Le Mans Hypercar regulations have so far dominated.

As sole members of the WEC's LMDh club – which will swell to five in 2024 when BMW, Alpine and Lamborghini enter – the US adversaries have found common ground as they seek to optimise their platform. Both are clear that fighting for the honour of the best LMDh manufacturer isn't enough.

"We're there to win and be successful," Diuguid says. "It suits both of us to have open, healthy discussions about balancing the two technical platforms. There's healthy open communication to

"We're there to win and be successful. It suits both of us to have open, healthy discussions"

say, 'Hey, how do you guys see it, how do you guys feel the balance is?' and we can have a common and consistent feedback to the sanctioning bodies that benefits the series as a whole."

The unexpected cooperation extends beyond lobbying too. As both are simultaneously setting up new facilities in Germany, practical assistance isn't off the table. Diuguid adds: "We look to help each other out too when we get in tight situations, whether it's composites or glue or whatever we need at a given time."

But that can only last for so long given the depth of competition, while the steep learning curve both are on with the new breed of LMDh machinery will eventually even out. The added complexity due to the hybrid element, as Hull puts it, "requires extra thinkers" to unlock potential, and both squads have taken to alternating staff between the respective programmes, but Diuguid recognises there's a light at the end of the tunnel.

He's clear that opportunities exist to learn any time a car runs in either series as both use identical Michelin tyres. And even if the fight isn't as straightforward as in IndyCar, where each has the same basic Dallara chassis only differentiated by their choice of engine partner (Honda for Ganassi, Chevrolet for Penske), the desire to come out on top in sportscars is the same. Both teams recognise that there can be no excuse for not accessing the best potential of their respective packages. "Regardless of the BoP or where you are in a given weekend, it's still up to the racing teams to execute," says Diuguid. "That's the one consistency that we can expect from our team and also from Ganassi."

It's fitting that the two leading US giants are on hand to elevate the best sportscar racing spectacle we've seen for years. "This is the tip of the iceberg for the next few years," says Hull. It's all the more so for the two rivals' involvement. ✱



The making of a McLaren ace

The British Racing Drivers' Club SuperStar on car development, disappointment at Le Mans, a dream race at Spa, and the transformative effect of good dietary advice

TOM GAMBLE

When it was announced in March that I was going to be a McLaren factory driver, I was already in full swing doing testing and development. And I'd already done my first race of the year in the Asian Le Mans Series when I filled in

for Marvin Kirchhofer.

It was a few weeks before the announcement when I found out I was going to be racing, and I was doing a shakedown at Dunsfold airfield on a Friday in February. I was checking the car was OK when the engineers told me to pit. When I got out of the car they said, "You need to go to Dubai now" because Marvin was ill. I got on a plane that night, landed in Dubai the next morning and headed straight to the racetrack. It was annoying because we should have had a podium in the Sunday race, but we were wrongly given a track-limit penalty and ended up finishing fourth. It was super-frustrating. It would have been nice to turn up and get a podium, nevertheless it was a cool experience.

This year has been interesting because McLaren have two new cars – the Artura GT4 and the 720 Evo. It has been busy because they're always looking at ways to make them faster. There is also the McLaren Trophy – it's nice to have a series that rivals the Porsche Carrera Cups and Lamborghini Super Trofeo series.

We've been trying hard, especially with the Artura Trophy, to make it as good a car as possible. I think a lot of customers are enjoying it. The biggest difference is the improved power on it, which is where most of the lap times come from. It's a really good car for an amateur to take a step into racing and hopefully one day step into the McLaren GT3. It sits in the middle in terms of performance between the GT4 and GT3. The power in a straight line isn't far behind the GT3 at all, it's just not as quick through the corners because it doesn't have as much aero. They've made a cool car, which makes for quite good racing.

The 720 Evo is the car that I've done the most racing in, and that car has been having a strong season so far. I've been fortunate enough to have driven quite a few GT3s and I'm going to sound biased, but it is a mega car to drive. It handles incredibly, especially with the new Evo kit; it's a pleasure to drive it.

I also did the Le Mans 24 Hours in the LMP2 class, but that was a tough one. We had a good line-up and a good team around us. We didn't have a smooth start to the week because things didn't go to plan. In qualifying my Racing Team Turkey team-mate Dries Vanthoor got an unlucky penalty, which put us back a little bit. During the race, the conditions were horrible for the first eight hours – it rained, then dried, and then it rained, so a lot of people got caught out. We were doing a decent job and then unfortunately had an incident, which meant the car was unrepairable. We had to retire, which was a massive shame



because I thought the team had a package to go for the class win.

Back with McLaren, the Spa 24 Hours with Optimum Motorsport went a lot smoother. Qualifying was like a fairytale as I ended up qualifying second in the session and fifth in the Super Pole. In the race our plan was just to stay out of trouble and not get any track limits. We kept the car clean and won the Gold Cup class – it was a dream race.

The rest of the year is just development work for me. I have a few tests and then I'll be on standby if they need a driver. I'll just be keeping my training up and trying to keep in decent shape in case anything does come up. I haven't got any concrete plans for next year. There will be a few meetings going on where they will be trying to put something together. I've missed having a full programme a lot, so I'm determined to get that sorted for next year. I can imagine in the next few months things will be starting to get put in place, so I'm looking forward to that.

I'm a member of the BRDC SuperStars programme, but this is the first time in three years that I haven't been in the same team as Andy [Meyrick – Programme Director], so I haven't seen as much of him lately. We've become close friends and we speak on the phone a lot, and he's always there whenever I need advice. He has been an immense help and so has the whole programme.

They helped me out with some dietary stuff at the start of the year. I'm quite a tall driver and, due to my height, one of the hardest things is trying to keep slim. I wanted to drop some weight and give myself the best opportunity to be as fast as possible. It was amazing the effect it had because normally I would just guess my way around it, so it was good to have some proper advice and it was amazing how much better I felt as well. We have an event at the University of Bath this week, so I'm really looking forward to seeing how everyone is getting on there. 🍌

YOUR SAY

The real low point was when they closed an access/exit point on Saturday evening with no suggestion or advice at all on how a wheelchair user could exit the circuit

DAVID CLOUGH

Unhappy with lack of accessibility at Spa

I have just returned from three days at the Belgian Formula 1 Grand Prix with my son who's in a wheelchair, and have to say that the help and assistance offered and given by the Spa-Francorchamps circuit was non-existent. In this day and age it is simply unacceptable to exclude due to disability, especially when Belgium claims to be inclusive to wheelchair users and travellers with limited mobility.

We got no help from anyone at the circuit, despite asking – the Belgian Red Cross; other first aiders on site; the security people at the circuit; circuit staff; and the Belgian police.

The real low point was when they closed an access/exit point on Saturday evening – after we had been using it for two days – with no suggestion or advice at all on how a wheelchair user could exit the circuit. We eventually found our way out with help from very kind members of the public and endured a 2km detour to return to our coach.

Belgium accepts that every person with a disability has the right to full inclusion in society and have included this in their recent update to the constitution in 2021. Unfortunately, for us this was not borne out in practice.

David Clough

By email

BBC needs to reword its headlines

Am I the only fan who finds it most frustrating that the first words the BBC uses when reporting race results is the name of the winner? It spoils my enjoyment when I watch it later on catch-up. There is no warning as there is for football, and all it would take is a change in the order of the words – “Today's Formula 1 Grand Prix in Belgium was won by Max Verstappen” – which would give us time to hit the off button on the radio.

If enough of us complain to the BBC – bbc.co.uk/contact/complaints – then we might get them to change, notwithstanding the fact that the winner has lately been entirely predictable...

Steve Marsh

Stamford, Lincs

Level the playing field to show who's best

To find out who is the best Formula 1 driver both over one lap and racing you need to put them all in go-karts. Same maker and specs. It would be particularly interesting to see how Sergio Perez would do against Max Verstappen, no?

Robert Futcher

Vicars Cross, Chester

What's behind backing for engine equalisation?

Regarding F1 engine equalisation, does one think Christian Horner is being magnanimous, even altruistic, in supporting the idea, or is it just that he is *really* satisfied with Red Bull's margins over the opposition? And, heaven forfend, be playing a little bit of the old mind games?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone

Elland



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FORMULA 1

THE THEMES TO WATCH FOR THE REST OF 2023

Formula 1 is now into its summer break, with 12 of the 22 races already done.

Here are the key storylines to keep an eye on for the rest of the season

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



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RED BULL'S CLEAN SWEEP

The 2023 Formula 1 title battles in both championships have long been over. Barring total and unforeseen disaster, Max Verstappen will take his third successive crown in the coming months. His latest coronation could come as early as Singapore in three races' time. Red Bull will also surely wrap up the constructors' title. The team holds a 256-point over Mercedes – 174 more than it enjoyed over Ferrari at this 12-race stage a year ago.

Although a gripping title fight is always preferable, there's something to be admired in watching excellence, and the Red Bull RB19 is surely destined to go down as one F1's great cars.

Its gap to the field was revealed as so big in the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix that George Russell quipped: "They should win every single race." And after Aston Martin blew its chance to get Fernando Alonso ahead of Verstappen in Monaco, there is every chance Russell could be proved right. In doing so, Red Bull would topple Mercedes' most wins in a season (19 from 2016), plus McLaren's highest winning percentage from 1988 (93.8%, 15 of 16 wins that year).

The team is refusing to get carried away, but that unique piece of F1 history is within its grasp, and Red Bull's rivals need it to err to have a victory sniff. "How long can we keep this going?" team boss Christian Horner said after Verstappen's Hungary win. "Who knows? We're just taking it one event at a time..."



PEREZ, RICCIARDO AND TSUNODA BATTLE FOR THEIR FUTURES

Although Red Bull's march towards the championship is stifling interest levels even among hardcore fans, the team still provides plenty of subplots worth watching.

In 2023, one storyline impacts the careers of three F1 racers. Sergio Perez, Daniel Ricciardo and Yuki Tsunoda are the focus, with Max Verstappen tied to Red Bull's top team until the end of 2028.

Perez has been so far off Verstappen's level this term that Red Bull fears it could lose another constructors' crown if another team can produce a better car in 2024. That, and the regretting of its decision to hire Nyck de Vries at AlphaTauri, led to Ricciardo's recall, and the next 10 races are the first real stage of his audition to replace Perez for 2025. But should Ricciardo ace it and Perez's slide continue, it would be no surprise to hear calls for that decision to come a year ahead of time.

Balanced against that is Red Bull's desire to promote the rebranded AlphaTauri squad, with Ricciardo's obvious marketing clout. And Perez could indeed turn things around. If Ricciardo is kept at the sister team for 2024, he may have a new team-mate, with Tsunoda yet to earn another extension and Liam Lawson excelling in the Super Formula title fight.

Helmut Marko may be 80, but there's a sense in the paddock that he's got more than one big call left in him, even with Red Bull under new overall management following Dietrich Mateschitz's death last year.



GALLOWAY



RESULTS OF THE 2022 COST CAP REVEALED

When the 2022 title fight fizzled out following the summer break, F1 was still transfixed by news leaking of potential breaches to the 2021 cost cap. Red Bull was later found to have committed a serious breach, while there were procedural breaches from Aston Martin and Williams.

In the coming months, the FIA's Cost Cap Administration division will release its findings related to the 2022 cap. This time around, the investigations are understood to have been beefed up, with more detailed examination

and staff interviews required, plus the closing of a loophole where teams could possibly game the system using special projects divisions via Technical Directive 45.

In the races that preceded the summer break, reports emerged that several teams are suspected of being in potential trouble in regard to last year's cost cap. But the FIA firmly rebuffed these, saying via a spokesperson that "we'd like to reiterate the ongoing process preceding financial regulation certification for the teams – none of which have been informed of their

certification certificates".

Essentially, the auditing is still ongoing, although it is expected to be completed in the coming weeks. Then a period of review will follow. The FIA has been at pains to stress that the cost cap rules don't demand a set annual announcement deadline to not "prejudice the robustness and the effectiveness of the review".

But when the results are soon revealed, especially when they're released to the teams, expect news to flow quickly. Particularly if there have been any further breaches.



FERRARI'S ADJUSTMENTS CONTINUE

Ferrari has now been led by Fred Vasseur for seven months, following the manufacturer's decision to sack Mattia Binotto. And it's simply no better now. If anything, things are worse for Ferrari. It now has 191 constructors' points versus 314 at this stage in 2022. It started the season with yet more unreliability, and it still hasn't solved its tyre management weakness compared to Red Bull. It has a car that can compete for poles in Charles Leclerc's hands, but is yet to even threaten a race win. Ferrari did

appear to have made a step forward on tyre management at the Hungaroring and Spa, but Leclerc reckons "it's a bit too early" to say whether it has finally solved its conundrum.

Other issues remain unsolved too. There have been yet more calamitous pitstops this term, while Leclerc and Carlos Sainz have made driving errors. In Leclerc's case, this was down to overdriving in the early rounds to try to make up for the SF-23's deficiencies.

Vasseur is working to improve Ferrari's core

structures, but his first big hire – Loic Serra, Mercedes' performance director – can't start work until 2025. And sporting manager Laurent Mekies and senior design engineer David Sanchez are off for AlphaTauri and McLaren respectively.

Ferrari's record gap between drivers' titles – 21 years between 1979 and 2000 – suddenly doesn't seem so far away; its current run is about to hit 16 since Kimi Raikkonen's 2007 crown.

TEE



TEE

MERCEDES MUST DEAL WITH AN UNEXPECTED WEAKNESS BEFORE 2024

In abandoning its 'zeropod' design and swapping James Allison and Mike Elliott in its technical director and chief technical officer roles, Mercedes has essentially already committed its focus to 2024. And those decisions came in March and April respectively.

The W14 may now look like a black Red Bull in terms of its sidepod shape, but it retains elements of the W13's striking concept that can't be engineered out until the winter reset and the next campaign. Therefore, the rest of Mercedes' 2023 season is about pinpointing changes for the W15 that will unlock lap time gains, as Aston Martin and McLaren have managed in recent months. It also must adjust its recent set-up approach in response to its bouncing problem reappearing at Spa, but that undulating layout really meant a 2022 problem resurfaced at other teams too. But also at Spa, George Russell and Lewis Hamilton twice got in each other's way, with the second incident in sprint shootout qualifying leaving the seven-time champ feeling that he'd missed a pole shot.

Elliott explained after Spa that Mercedes is set to "review the radio communications and we will see what learnings we can extract" – it is understood that such messages left Russell in particular feeling he had less time to set a lap than he did. This, plus another mistake in getting cooling calculations wrong in Hungary, is very un-Mercedes-like. Ensuring that these errors are not repeated for the rest of 2023 is an important part of the team's ongoing recovery.

ASTON ADDRESSING ITS DEVELOPMENT MISTAKE

While Ferrari and Mercedes again failed to get anywhere near Red Bull following the 2022-23 winter reset, Aston Martin gained considerable praise and attention for its stunning rise from seventh in last year's constructors' to being Red Bull's closest challenger in the early races.

It needed Charles Leclerc's Bahrain retirement for Fernando Alonso to get a podium in green at the first attempt, but he has since gone on to secure five more. Only Aston not fitting intermediate tyres to the Spaniard's car at his first pitstop in the late wet-Monaco madness meant it missed a first win in its new guise.

But since the early summer, Aston's form has slipped backwards. Initially, this was thought to be aligned with the fluctuations between the four teams in Red Bull's wake, as Alonso secured another second in Canada. But Aston has since revealed that making one or possibly two key decisions on its development path have backfired. Reversing its mistakes will be Aston's next chapter of 2023, alongside getting Lance Stroll to anywhere near Alonso's level.

Further down the grid, Haas has shone in qualifying – mainly with new signing Nico Hulkenberg – but has an awful in-race tyre wear problem it can't solve. The team is evaluating finally adopting Red Bull-style sidepods in the hope that this will help the situation.



HAMILTON HEADLINES ONGOING SILLY SEASON

Back in early June, Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said he expected Lewis Hamilton's post-2023 contract to be signed in a matter of "days, not weeks". But over two months have since passed and still the explanation is that minor (or indeed, major) legal wranglings must first be addressed. As things drag on, it gives rise to speculation that a spectacular change could still be in the offing for Hamilton's F1 future.

That remains extremely unlikely, with another Mercedes extension still expected to come some time soon – possibly with an update on George Russell's long-term future to boot. But there are four more drivers who face uncertain futures beyond 2023, excluding the specific challenges facing Daniel Ricciardo and Yuki Tsunoda.

Zhou Guanyu is still yet to be handed another contract extension at Alfa Romeo, while Logan Sargeant needs the same thing at Williams. Then there's the Haas duo, with Kevin Magnussen coming to the end of his contract and Nico Hulkenberg only formally confirmed for 2023. Given the calm environment at Haas with two seasoned pros, plus Hulkenberg likely possessing a 1+1 deal to cover 2024, it would be no shock to see them continuing together.

Well-backed 2022 Formula 2 champion Felipe Drugovich (who has also been linked with a move to Formula E for next year) is also thought to be in the mix of what sources suggest could be a certain amount of upheaval for the other teams at the back of the grid with potential 2024 slots.



ALPINE'S SEARCH FOR ITS NEW TEAM BOSS

Alpine was a team in turmoil as it headed into the summer break. In Hungary it endured its disastrous third double DNF of the season, its drivers unfortunate victims of Zhou Guanyu's bowling escapade, while CEO Laurent Rossi was shuffled off to look after unspecified 'special projects' at Renault. Then team principal Otmar Szafnauer and sporting director Alan Permane were also axed.

Although there was a substantial difference in their length of service at Enstone – Szafnauer just 18 months into his position as team boss, with Permane considered a lifer after 34 years – they were apparently united in believing that it would take a long time to get the team winning regularly again in F1. The inertia needed to correct a team's course has often been massive in the modern era. It's even harder in the cost-cap age, as Mercedes and Ferrari are discovering.

But Renault's upper management and others at Alpine – apparently including newly installed VP of Alpine Motorsport and now acting team principal Bruno Famin (above) – feel it can be done much faster. That goes against the grain of the paddock, which suggests further problems to come if Alpine continues to miss its targets.

It could install Famin as Enstone's permanent team boss, or bring in someone new. Mattia Binotto has been mentioned, but why would he want to return to such a board-level-meddlesome arrangement that he was just forced out of at Ferrari? Nothing, it seems, is a quick fix for Alpine at present.



EFFORTS TO ENACT ENGINE EQUALISATION

One thing that could boost Alpine – although perhaps not immediately – is the move to equalise engines that is currently under way. This could end up closing an apparent 30bhp deficit that its Renault engine is facing to Honda, Mercedes and Ferrari.

At the recent F1 Commission meeting at Spa, it was decided that since the FIA has concluded there is indeed a "notable performance gap between competitors", the Power Unit Advisory Committee (comprising staff from the FIA, FOM and the engine builders) will now look at ways to address the imbalance. It will bring proposals back to an unspecified future F1 Commission Meeting.

The current thinking is that, because engine development is frozen bar in very limited circumstances, including reliability,

those more powerful power units will have to be brought down. If this doesn't happen, the Renault/Alpine's disadvantage is locked in until the simplified engine requirements arrive for 2026. The disparagement of the development of those was also a big topic in a similar area as the first half of 2023 ended, and this is surely set to continue, particularly if manufacturers feel their development is not going well.

But the engine equalisation move is a much easier fix and even has Red Bull's early backing. It has the current class-leading engine with Honda, but recognises it also called for such a move when it ran Renault power early in the turbo-hybrid era – and the freeze was brought in to help Red Bull after Honda initially pulled out of F1 in 2021.

LAS VEGAS MAKES LONG-AWAITED RETURN - AT NIGHT

The season run-in is set to look rather different in 2023, as two events return to the calendar.

First up, the Qatar GP will take place before F1's only (thanks to the Imola cancellation) triple-header of the season. The Losail circuit layout is unchanged to the one that has hosted MotoGP races for 19 years and stepped in as a pandemic replacement round back in 2021, although it has been resurfaced ahead of the October race. The first year of a 10-year agreement for Qatar F1 races will debut the newly constructed pits and paddock, as well as new access tunnels and car parks.

But by far the more exciting prospect is F1's return to Las Vegas after an absence of 41 years. The penultimate round of 2023 will take place on the city's famous Strip

and is a Saturday night race at 10pm local time.

It's F1 commercial rights holder Liberty Media's biggest project to date – essentially its first in-house GP (the race's CEO, Renee Wilm, is Liberty's chief legal and administrative officer). Liberty has spent approximately \$500million on land and construction work near Vegas's famous Bellagio fountains, and it will receive no hosting fee for its own event.

This is a massive statement of intent, not seen since F1 became a global superpower sport. This is no race around Caesars Palace's car park – although the 3.8-mile layout does lack technical challenge – and may set new standards other events will have to emulate. That's if F1 gets the outcome it so badly wants.





MAX VERSTAPPEN

#1 Red Bull

Championship position: **1st**

Top of the class. Searing pace and scarce mistakes have led to Verstappen's domination of proceedings in 2023, and only unfortunate circumstances have cost him victories this season. Without the driveshaft issue in qualifying for Saudi Arabia and a poorly timed pitstop in Azerbaijan, he could have very realistically headed for his summer holidays with the full collection of (slightly broken) winner's trophies. Recent victories in Hungary and Belgium were comprehensive, as he grew in power during the first 12 races. Qualifying performances have been comparatively close to the rest, but that has generally mattered little during his Sunday drives into the sunset.



FERNANDO ALONSO

#14 Aston Martin

Championship position: **3rd**

Reborn at the wheel of the most competitive car he's driven in years, the veteran Spaniard embarked on an impressive run of podium finishes in the opening rounds. Recent results have slipped slightly as Aston Martin initially struggled to get its head around updates, but the AMR23 appears to be in the ascendancy again, with Alonso leading the line. There have been slim opportunities to win, although the mistimed tyre call in Monaco arguably snatched away Alonso's best chance of the year so far; further shots at victory will depend on continued progress... and a lot of luck.



LEWIS HAMILTON

#44 Mercedes

Championship position: **4th**

A lack of a noticeable step in Mercedes' fortunes frustrated Hamilton, but he has pulled out big results when the car is capable of doing so. By his own admission, he threw everything at his pole lap in Hungary to narrowly beat Verstappen, but the Mercedes is still leagues apart from the Red Bull in race trim. Beyond that pole, dragging his car with floor damage – sustained in a clash with Norris – to second at Barcelona must be a highlight. The Mercedes W14 has fluctuated between the second and fourth-fastest package, but Hamilton got the best out of it regardless and hasn't finished a grand prix outside the top eight all year.



LANDO NORRIS

#4 McLaren

Championship position: **8th**

When the McLaren MCL60 was struggling for pace, Norris knew how to get results out of it despite its clear limitations. Now that the car has been retooled, he's chalked up podiums and dug results out when conditions haven't been favourable. Australia had been the season highlight until the first phase of wide-ranging upgrades arrived in Austria, which allowed Norris to dice with the Ferraris and Mercedes. He claimed two consecutive second-place finishes at Silverstone and the Hungaroring, and was every bit a contender for pole for both races, but Spa showed that he must learn to deal with the growing threat of team-mate Piastri.



ALEX ALBON

#23 Williams

Championship position: **13th**

The Anglo-Thai has been working wonders in a Williams that, beyond straightline speed, is lacking compared to some of the teams around it on the grid. A savvy dry-tyre call in qualifying at Montreal set up his race day defensive efforts, where he held off the faster cars of Ocon and Norris. He was equally impressive at Silverstone, trying to attack Alonso's Aston Martin and defend from Leclerc's Ferrari in the dying stages of the race. His crash from sixth at the Australian GP can be forgiven for a reported spike in tyre temperatures, but a Baku underperformance was of his own making. He must make the most of the FW45 at Monza.



CHARLES LECLERC

#16 Ferrari

Championship position: **5th**

Misfortune and early-season mistakes cost points, but the Monegasque bounced back with an impressive weekend at Baku to break Red Bull's hegemony over pole positions. Austria and Belgium yielded further podiums on days when Ferrari tyre mismanagement was less obvious, and he's had the measure of Sainz over most of the opening 12 races. But old habits die hard, and Leclerc has made mistakes: he threw the car off the road in Miami qualifying to cost himself a second successive pole, and leaned on Stroll too much at the start of the Australian GP, yielding a first-lap retirement. He really must stop blotting his copybook.

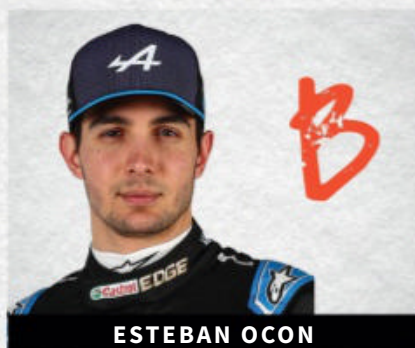


YUKI TSUNODA

#22 AlphaTauri

Championship position: 17th

Most improved student of the season. Tsunoda looked down and out at this stage last year, but the departure of Gasly to Alpine has done the Japanese the world of good. A willingness to accept more responsibility as a team leader has helped Tsunoda mature. He has therefore raised his game and brushed away de Vries during their 10 races together as team-mates. His drives at Baku and Spa were worthy of more than a point apiece, and he's cut unforced errors out of his game over 2023 so far. He probably underestimated the Ricciardo challenge when the Australian joined in Hungary, but Tsunoda's response next time out in Belgium was immaculate.

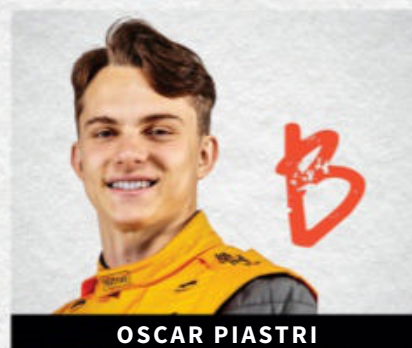


ESTEBAN OCON

#31 Alpine

Championship position: 10th

Has been genuinely impressive in a congested midfield, but Alpine unreliability has sapped away at results too many times this year. Third place finish in Monaco was exemplary, as he mastered the difficult conditions to successfully convert his strong qualifying result. Fine drives in Spain and Canada followed, but recent races have been difficult for reasons beyond his control. He loses marks for horror-show weekends in Saudi Arabia and Austria, where he racked up an unprecedented number of time penalties, but was largely blameless in both Alpine-on-Alpine clashes this season. A late-race charge to eighth at Spa showed Ocon's ability and cerebral approach.



OSCAR PIASTRİ

#81 McLaren

Championship position: 11th

Could be forgiven for a slightly slow start to life in F1, given difficulties of early-season McLaren package and having done no racing in 2022. Eighth in his home race at Melbourne was impressive, and he grabbed a point at Monaco in difficult conditions. Things have picked up with McLaren's improvements, with podium near-misses at Silverstone and the Hungaroring, and then he managed second in the Spa sprint race after outpacing Norris through the weekend. Qualifying performances have largely been impressive, although has shown signs of race-rustiness over the year: his Belgian GP clash with Sainz was 50-50. An impressive first half-term in F1.



CARLOS SAINZ

#55 Ferrari

Championship position: 7th

Sainz is yet to show the heights of performance that Leclerc has managed over the opening 12 races, and has alarmingly failed to reach the podium this term. For comparison, Leclerc has managed three trips to the rostrum. The Spaniard appears to have lost all trust in the strategic decision-making at Ferrari and has been more inclined to call the shots himself. Is definitely the more amenable of the two Ferrari drivers with tyre struggles, although a harsh Australian GP penalty for clashing with Alonso puts Sainz below Leclerc in the points standings. His year so far is the definition of 'solid, but unspectacular'.



GEORGE RUSSELL

#63 Mercedes

Championship position: 6th

Recent rounds have been middling for Russell as struggles to get on top of the revised Mercedes mean he has looked less of a challenge for Hamilton this season. His overall consistency has remained, but at a lower level. The opening races have produced just one podium finish, at Barcelona, where he recovered well from a lowly grid position after squabbling with Hamilton in qualifying. His trip to the wall in Montreal cost a possible podium finish and, although he recovered to eighth, the damage to his car was ultimately terminal. Russell is in dire need of a reset over the summer.



SERGIO PEREZ

#11 Red Bull

Championship position: 2nd

Started the season in great form, but his head dropped significantly after being passed by Verstappen in Miami. A subsequent allergy to reaching Q3 in the following races eventually came to an end at Silverstone, after needing to pull off too many recovery drives in the preceding events. His wins in Jeddah and Baku, while aided by Verstappen's misfortune, looked assured and hinted at championship credentials. From there, it all went south; a Monaco Q1 crash yielded a disastrous weekend and he missed the mark in subsequent races despite having the best car. His second place at Spa showed that the slide had been somewhat arrested.





PIERRE GASLY

#10 Alpine

Championship position: **12th**

Gasly has endured more than his fair share of bad luck but has been altogether less consistent than Ocon in their first season as team-mates. He had impressive Q3 performances in Miami and Spain, and both races rewarded him with points, but there have been some alarming no-shows too. He wasted a strong Melbourne race at the final restart by skittering across the grass, bringing him into contact with Ocon, while his strong sprint race last time out at Spa during drying conditions was not followed up on in the full-fat grand prix. If the Alpine package wasn't so mercurial, Gasly might have a chance to settle...



NICO HULKENBERG

#27 Haas

Championship position: **14th**

On his full-time return, Hulkenberg's qualifying performances have been stunning despite the clear limitations of this year's Haas. Great opportunism in Q3 in Canada handed the German second place in qualifying, although a penalty snatched away his front-row start. Qualifying fourth for the Austria sprint also offered three points in the shorter race, vital for Haas's constructors' championship position. Aside from there and his stunning defensive efforts in Australia, races have been more anonymous, and Hulkenberg invariably slides back into the lower third of the field. That's not of his own making, but rather his car's predilection for tyre rubber.

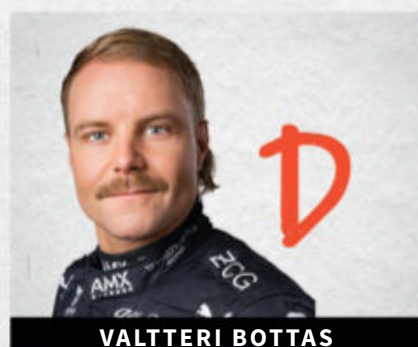


DANIEL RICCIARDO

#3 AlphaTauri

Championship position: **21st**

After the expulsion of Nyck de Vries before the end of term, Ricciardo was handed the unenviable task of getting acquainted with a difficult AlphaTauri car with zero testing. His performance to outqualify and outrace Yuki Tsunoda at the first time of asking in Hungary was remarkable, although the Belgian Grand Prix brought difficulties in racing with the backmarkers. It's clear that the half-year away from racing has done Ricciardo the world of good, after his McLaren stint proved to be a bruising two seasons. Support from Red Bull has helped to realign his ambitions; now he must simply try his best in a tricky AT04 car.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

#77 Alfa Romeo

Championship position: **15th**

A very quiet year so far as Alfa Romeo's 2023 expectations have fallen short. Eighth in Bahrain was a stellar drive which to open the year, but nothing has been able to reach that height since. The C43 has, according to Bottas, struggled in the straightline speed stakes, with drag proving to be an issue; although recent updates have helped, the team needs another push to break it out of its inertia. Bottas has impressed on occasion but seems too content with the current mediocrity, and seems like a man waiting for the future. Has been sent to the headmaster having been repeatedly told that mullets are not school uniform.



ZHOU GUANYU

#24 Alfa Romeo

Championship position: **16th**

Like Bottas, has been offered few chances to prove his worth in a disappointing car. Fifth place on the grid for the Hungarian Grand Prix was the highlight, but the frustration produced by a starting issue triggered the Turn 1 clash that claimed both Alpines. An assured drive in Spain unlocked one of two points finishes; the other was when he kept his head at a chaotic Melbourne. Has largely been on a par with Bottas's pace, but one senses that the Finn isn't currently in the form of his life. Needs to kick on in the second half, particularly since academy prospect – and F2 title hopeful – Theo Pourchaire remains a threat to his seat for 2024.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

#20 Haas

Championship position: **18th**

After redefining himself as the clear team leader last year, Magnussen has been overshadowed by new team-mate Hulkenberg. The Dane has struggled to apply his driving style to the VF-23, which is poor in its management of tyres over a race distance, leading to a lack of confidence in qualifying trim. But Magnussen must try to work around the issues for the time being and unlock sprint race form as they are currently Haas's best hope for points. Two 10th places, in Saudi Arabia and Miami, are the current high points, as well as his qualifying in fourth place for that race in the US.

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#2 Williams
Championship position: **19th**

The American has quietly got on with the job of adapting to the rigours of F1 but has yet to show anything particularly impressive, while his team-mate does all the heavy lifting in the constructors' championship stakes. Sargeant kicked off the year with a solid 12th in the Bahrain opener, but a silly qualifying crash in Jeddah undid a bright start and he narrowly avoided a penalty for taking out Nyck de Vries in Melbourne. His 11th at Silverstone is the highlight of his season so far, but the Floridian must get much closer to Albon over the second half of the season to earn a second year with Williams.



#18 Aston Martin
Championship position: **9th**

Escapes an F purely because of his heroics in Bahrain with a broken hand. Otherwise, Stroll has been too far away from Alonso's pace overall and has failed to make the most of a competitive AMR23 chassis, which may yet set the team back in the constructors' championship. He got lucky with fourth in Australia when the Alpines took themselves out, and managed to finish outside the points while Alonso got a podium in Miami. Sixth in Spain was solid when Aston Martin wasn't firing on all cylinders, but otherwise has not taken advantage of the machinery at his disposal. Must do better.



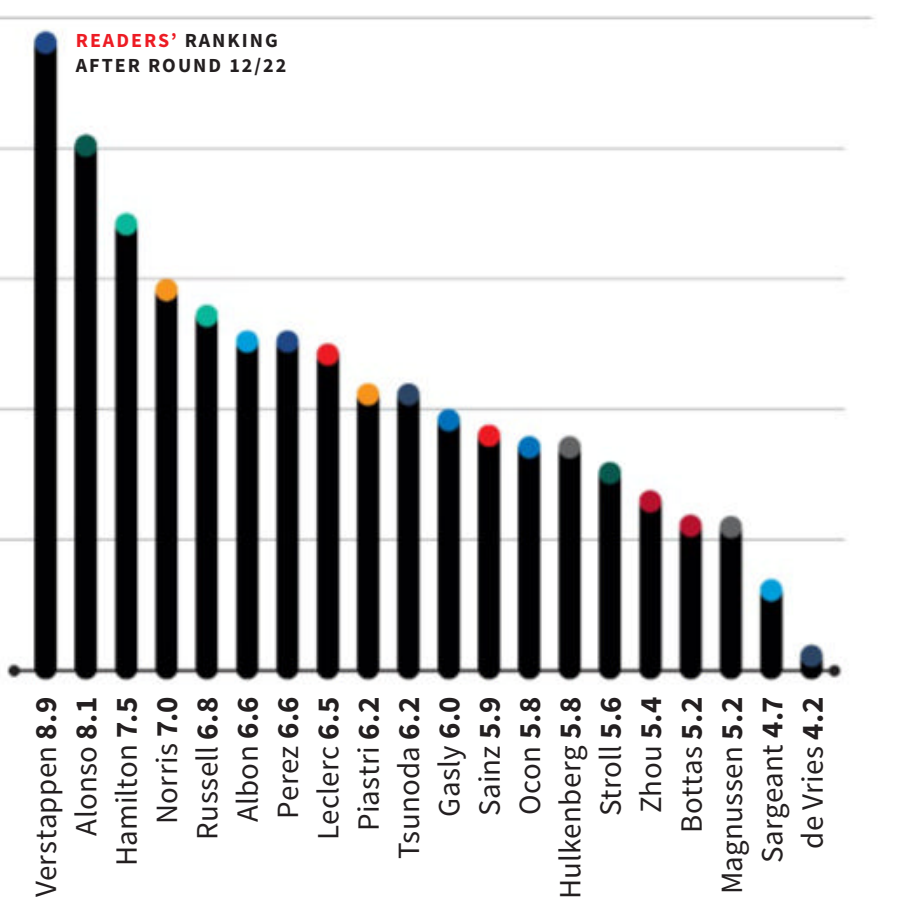
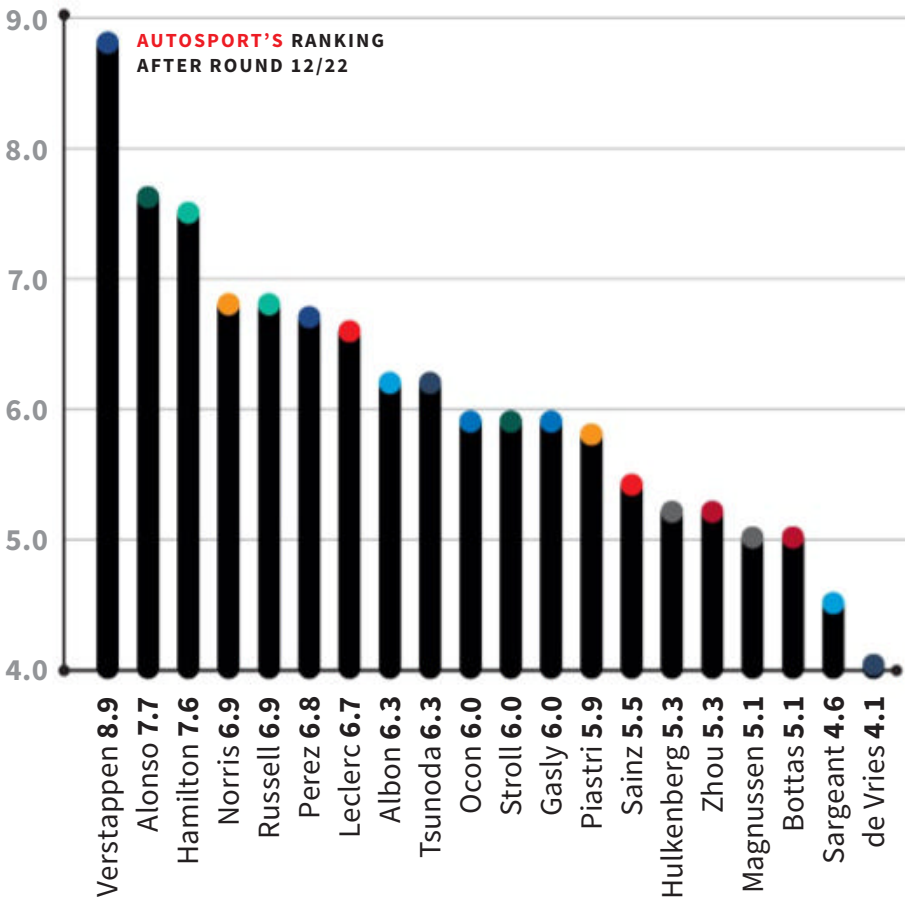
AVERAGE DRIVER RATINGS

AUTOSPORT RATINGS

After every grand prix we rate each driver out of 10 for their race performances. Readers on autosport.com are also able to give their scores and these two graphs show how things have gone so far in 2022. In the event of a tie, the place is awarded to the driver with the higher top score, or more top scores if the drivers also share the same best mark. New AlphaTauri racer Daniel Ricciardo (7.0 and 6.6 on the Autosport and reader ratings respectively) is excluded.

READER RATINGS

Autosport Plus readers on autosport.com can give their rating on every Formula 1 racer following each grand prix. Although those scores are averaged to 0.01 marks online, we have rounded them up or down to the nearest 0.1 for this table, to bring scores in line with those on the Autosport graph. Reader scores are normally within one point of the Autosport ratings and the overall lists are similar, though there are some noticeable differences, though not currently right at the top...



PORSCHE

CARRERA CUP GREAT BRITAIN



— THE 2024/25 — PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB JUNIOR PROGRAMME

There can be no denying the success of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB Junior scheme at identifying talented sportscar stars of the future. Not only have each of the past four Juniors gone on to win the Carrera Cup GB title – and current Junior Adam Smalley (right) is heading this year's standings, too – but they have continued to impress beyond the UK series. Two are now factory drivers with major GT manufacturers while another is firmly in the Porsche Supercup championship hunt after an impressive start to the campaign.

It is certainly no coincidence these former Juniors are now enjoying flourishing careers. The entire selection process is meticulous – right from considering the initial applications, to interviewing candidates, selecting finalists and then assessing the shootout itself. Nothing is left to chance when it comes to choosing Porsche GB's next rising star. "It's a proven Junior programme that really does set them up for the future as a racing driver," says Porsche GB Motorsport Manager James MacNaughton. "Every time we go through the process we learn more as well."

And now that process is beginning again as applications are open for the 2024-25 Junior programme. The key features of the scheme



that have made it such a success remain: £85,000 towards the Junior's budget across each of the two seasons, access to experienced Porsche engineers on race weekends, a bespoke fitness schedule with Porsche Human Performance, and extensive media training.

"It's been life-changing," says Smalley, who

urges drivers aged between 16 and 21 on 1 February 2024 to apply to become the next Junior. "I have to say a massive thank you to Porsche GB for giving me the opportunity – without them, I wouldn't be where I am today. As the Junior driver, you're given financial support each year towards your racing as well as being trained in all the different aspects of what is required to be a professional racing driver.

"Starting off, you have the technical aspect of the programme. Each weekend you're given help and advice from the Porsche engineers on how to maximise your on-track performance. It helped me massively to get up to speed with the car as it was very different from any car that I'd driven before. They helped me to understand how different components work, which massively expanded my technical knowledge.

"One of the most important aspects of the programme is the media training and support. Porsche are very good at showcasing the Junior driver and putting them in the spotlight. Over the course of the two years, I've had lots of different interviews but, with the help from the media training, it made me feel much more comfortable and confident in those situations.

"You also spend a lot of time working with the



HOW TO APPLY

If you will be aged between 16 and 21 on 1 February 2024, hold a National race licence, and have competed in no more than one Porsche Carrera Cup GB race weekend, you are eligible to enter the 2024-25 Porsche GB Junior programme. To apply, head to porsche.com/uk/motorsportandevents/porschecarreracupgreatbritain/features/junior-programme/ and complete the application form. You will also need to submit a 300-word covering letter explaining why you should be considered as the next Junior.

The final deadline for applications is 21 August 2023.



Porsche Human Performance team. Before the Junior programme, I went to the gym but did generic exercises, but now I know what's required to be racing fit. Working with those guys who are fully motorsport based makes you understand which muscle groups to work to be strong in the car. They tailor a fitness programme specifically around me, which includes a training, diet and sleep programme to make sure I'm performing at the best of my ability."

A newer element of the support the chosen Junior receives is the chance to work alongside a sports psychologist to help them cope with motorsport's

highly demanding nature, and this highlights just how wide-reaching the scheme is. "The thing we all as a team really enjoy is seeing the development of the full racing driver," adds MacNaughton. "The difference between what they're like at the end of the two years compared to the start is huge."

Away from the Carrera Cup, the Junior also gets the chance to represent Porsche at a variety of high-profile events. Smalley, for example, was a class winner in the hillclimb shootout at the Goodwood Festival of Speed recently and also completed hot laps in a Porsche Taycan at the London Formula E weekend. "Driving the

1987 Le Mans-winning Porsche 962C at the Goodwood Members' Meeting was amazing – I never thought I would be able to drive cars that I grew up dreaming of driving," says Smalley.

With Porsche expanding its racing commitment this year with the launch of its LMDh programme – with customer teams also seeking Porsche-backed drivers for their 963 LMDhs, too – there has never been a better time to enter the Porsche pyramid. If you're an aspiring sportscar star and want to follow in Smalley's footsteps, benefiting from the huge range of experiences available to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB Junior, apply today.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND APPLYING

porsche.com/uk/motorsportandevents/porschecarreracupgreatbritain/features/junior-programme

BLAST FROM THE PAST RE-ENTERS THE FRAY

An Isotta Fraschini-branded Hypercar will race in the WEC next year. The ambition for this revival of a historic name is to be nothing less than a credible player

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

A new name will join the Hypercar grid in the World Endurance Championship next year, and you probably hadn't even heard of it until quite recently. Unless, that is, you are a cinema aficionado. There hasn't been an Isotta Fraschini road car built since the early 1950s, but its luxury limousines were once commonplace in Hollywood, on screen and off. One featured in the 1950 classic *Sunset Boulevard* and they were also the transport of choice of the likes of silent movie star Rudolph Valentino in the 1920s.

The return of a marque whose racing heritage is buried in the mists of time – it won the Targa Florio in 1908 – with the new Tipo 6 LMH Competizione is a complicated one. But at its heart is a decision by a much more famous name in Italian motorsport. The catalyst for a car that has been testing since April and will be raced in the WEC in 2024 with the British Vector Sport team came from Ferrari. The Le Mans Hypercar project that has resulted in the Tipo 6 hybrid was initiated when the Italian marque opted not to continue its long-standing relationship with Michelotto Engineering in the design, development and build of the line of GT racers that stretches back to the 360 Modena GT2 car of 2000.

Ferrari took the design of this year's 296 GT3 in-house at the new Attivita Sportive GT facility opened in early 2021, while the tender for the assembly for the cars was won by French constructor ORECA. That left Michelotto, which is headquartered in Padua near Venice, with a hole to fill. The LMH project was the result.

"We couldn't just stop and lose our technical ability while we waited for the next project," says company founder Giuliano Michelotto, who stresses that the relationship with Ferrari that stretches back 45 years isn't over, just that it is more focused on >>



Tipo 6 LMH Competizione
had its first run at
Vallelunga in April

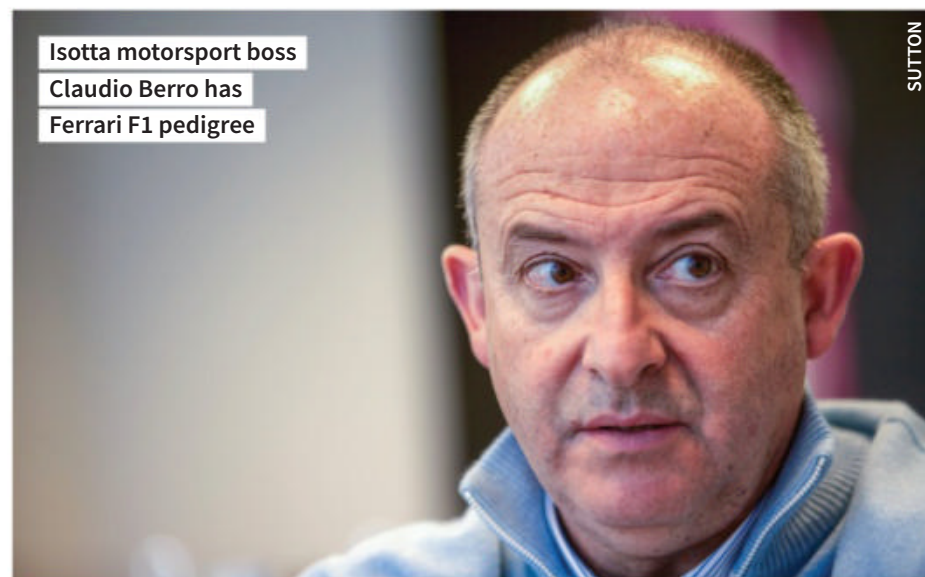
FULVIO CAVICCHI



"The return of a marque whose racing heritage is buried in the mists of time is complicated"



Tipo 6 plus a trackday version were demoed at last month's Monza WEC round



road cars these days. “Endurance racing is the best form of racing, so the best way to show how good you are is to build an endurance racing car. Developing an LMH shows our abilities by working on the most complicated car possible.”

Luigi Dindo, who is heading up the LMH programme in his role as Michelotto technical director, describes it as “the company’s antennae” and a “project to keep our people together – the people are the most important part of any company”.

The conception and initial design work of the LMH pre-dates the link-up with Isotta, explains Dindo. Michelotto got in touch with the owners of the brand, who were planning a relaunch, because it was one of the partners it needed: it is demanded of participants in Hypercar that they are either a manufacturer or have a firmly established link with one. Glickenhaus’s aspirations to become a fully fledged manufacturer are well known, while ByKolles-run Vanwall Racing has shown a road-going version of its LMH and can sell you an electric cross-over five-door hatchback known as the Vandervell S.

Dindo describes the link-up between a marque in the early throes of a relaunch and Michelotto as a “natural marriage”. The owners of the Isotta Fraschini Milano trademarks for road and race cars, which had been separated in the 1990s from the state-owned parent company that now builds (among other things) engines for ships, had plans for a luxury limousine in the spirit of its pre-war machinery, though fully electric. New investors were assembled to work with Frank Kanayet, who became Isotta’s majority shareholder in the late 2010s. He was one of the first backers of both Croatian electric sportscar marque Rimac, now partnered with Bugatti within the Volkswagen group, and Formula E. A new holding company has been established, though the details and those involved remain secret for now.

The link-up with Isotta was formalised in late 2021, which allowed Michelotto to press on with the project. Aero development started in October of that year at Williams Advanced Engineering, one of a number of heavyweight technical partners assembled by Michelotto for the project. The offshoot of the Williams Formula 1 team also supplies the battery for the car’s front-axle hybrid system, while another British organisation, Hexis, produces the motor generator unit (MGU). The bespoke three-litre single-turbo V6 has been developed by HWA, formerly Mercedes’ partner in the DTM.

“We went looking for the best partners,” says Dindo. “This is the first car like this for us; in the past we have always built cars based on production machinery. We needed experienced partners because we didn’t have time to lose.”

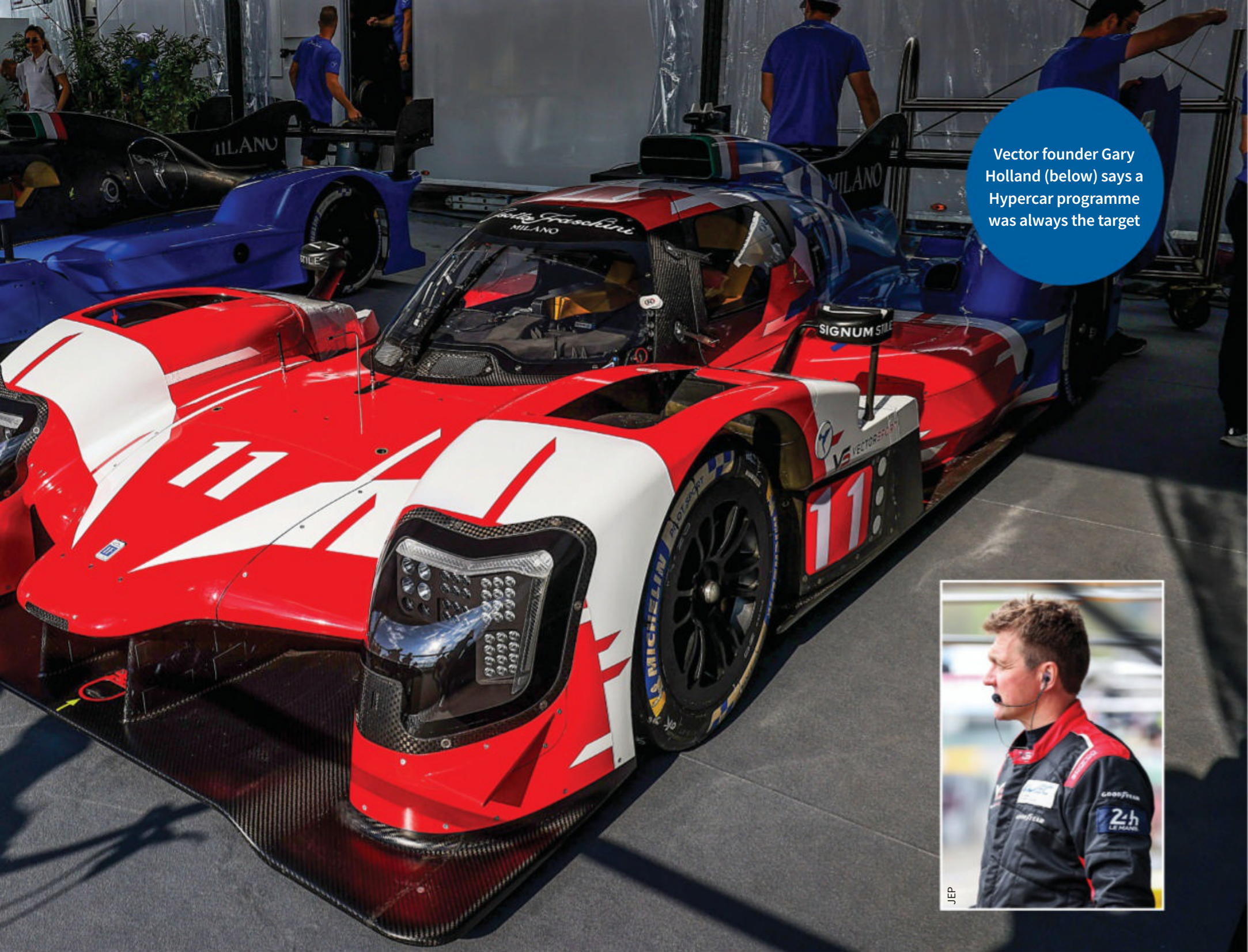
Isotta announced its programme in October 2022, declaring an intent to race in this year’s WEC, starting at the Spa 6 Hours round at the end of April. Given that the car wasn’t due to run for the first time until the end of February, it appeared an overly ambitious target.



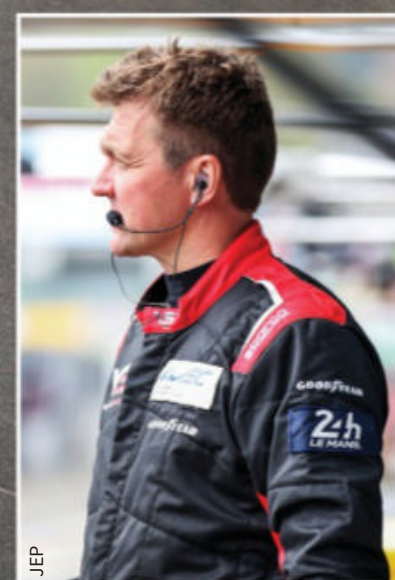
Former Ferrari Formula 1 team manager Claudio Berro, who joined the Isotta board as its motorsport boss last September, admits as much. The marque’s entry was turned down by series organisers the FIA and the Automobile Club de l’Ouest, but it was part of a process he felt Isotta had to go through, he says. “It was important for Isotta to send a message to the FIA and the ACO that we were serious,” explains Berro, whose long and storied motorsport career has also included stints heading up Peugeot Italia’s motorsport programmes and masterminding Maserati’s return to racing with the MC12 GT1 car. “We had to show them our programme and go through all the procedures.”

By the time it became clear that Isotta wouldn’t be getting a full-season entry for a solo LMH in 2023, it had announced Vector as the team that would run the car on the ground. The British operation, based in Stratford-upon-Avon, had been established in 2021, initially to run an ORECA-Gibson 07 LMP2 under the Risi Competizione banner at the Le Mans 24 Hours. That led into a full P2 season under the Vector banner last year. From the outset it had made its aspirations to graduate to Hypercar clear – both verbally and with its choice of drivers; Sebastien Bourdais and Nico Muller were the full-season pros in the ORECA for its maiden campaign in 2022.

“We always said we wanted to grow into a Hypercar programme,” says Vector team principal and founder Gary Holland, previously team manager at the Dragon FE and Jota P2 and Krohn Racing



Vector founder Gary Holland (below) says a Hypercar programme was always the target



“Developing an LMH shows our abilities by working on the most complicated car possible”

IMSA teams. “We were positioning ourselves for that from the outset with our driver line-up when we entered the WEC.

“There were really only two options to go to Hypercar: buy a Porsche [963] LMDh, because they are the only manufacturer pushing out customer cars, or join forces with someone who wanted to go the LMH route. We preferred working with someone in LMH and actively sought that, because as a team you can have a really big involvement in the development phase.”

Holland knew Michelotto well. Krohn ran Ferraris in IMSA out of Risi’s Houston workshops (which explains the link that led to the team’s entree into P2), and before that he had worked at RAM Racing as chief mechanic when it won the European Le Mans Series in 2013 with the Ferrari 458 GTE. “There was an obvious connection there with Michelotto,” he says. “I always got on well with everyone there and obviously they did a fantastic job with Ferrari.”

Vector describes itself as Isotta’s “partner team”. It is more than a pure customer, but is not a funded factory operation – it is bringing something to the table financially. Berro will only say that the arrangement is a “good deal for them and a good deal for us”.

Vector, which for the moment plans to run a single Tipo 6 next year, has been fully integrated in the Isotta development programme since a test at Vallelunga late last month, and two thirds of its P2 driving squad – Gabriel Aubry and Ryan Cullen – drove the car in subsequent tests at Monza last week and Mugello this week.

They joined the two drivers who have handled testing duties since Maurizio Mediani took the wheel at the initial roll-out at Vallelunga in April: sometime Audi LMP1 driver Marco Bonanomi and Jean-Karl Vernay, who was Peugeot’s test and reserve back in 2011. Who will be in Vector’s Isotta car when the car races for the first time isn’t clear. Both Bonanomi and Vernay have declared their desire to drive the car in competition. Holland will only say that the choice will “be a joint decision with Isotta”. The first race appearance of the Tipo 6 will now be next season’s opening WEC round in Qatar in March 2024.

Plans to blood the car in competition this season on a non-points, invitational basis – last month’s Monza race and then the Bahrain finale in November were both touted as possible debuts – have had to be abandoned in order to focus on the development and homologation of the car (see Pit & Paddock). Isotta did have a presence on home ground when the WEC visited Italy. It demonstrated the LMH as well as a trackday version, known as the Pista, and also revealed a model of a road-going Tipo 6 known as the Stradale. Showing the Pista and the Stradale was important to demonstrate that the marque is on the path to becoming a bona fide manufacturer as demanded by the rules. Plans for an EV limousine remain, while there is also the intent to build some kind of high-end sports car, though Isotta is keeping its cards close to its chest for now.

Racing will be the main focus for 2024, however. Both Michelotto and Isotta believe they have everything in place to hit the ground running and be a credible player against Toyota, Ferrari *et al* in Hypercar. “Isotta and ourselves wouldn’t be going into this if we didn’t think we can be somewhere in the mix,” says Holland. “The rules are pretty tight with the performance windows laid down and then you have the Balance of Performance on top of that, so you can’t be a million miles away. I’m confident because Isotta and Michelotto are confident.”

THE FIRST 'GREATEST OF ALL TIME'

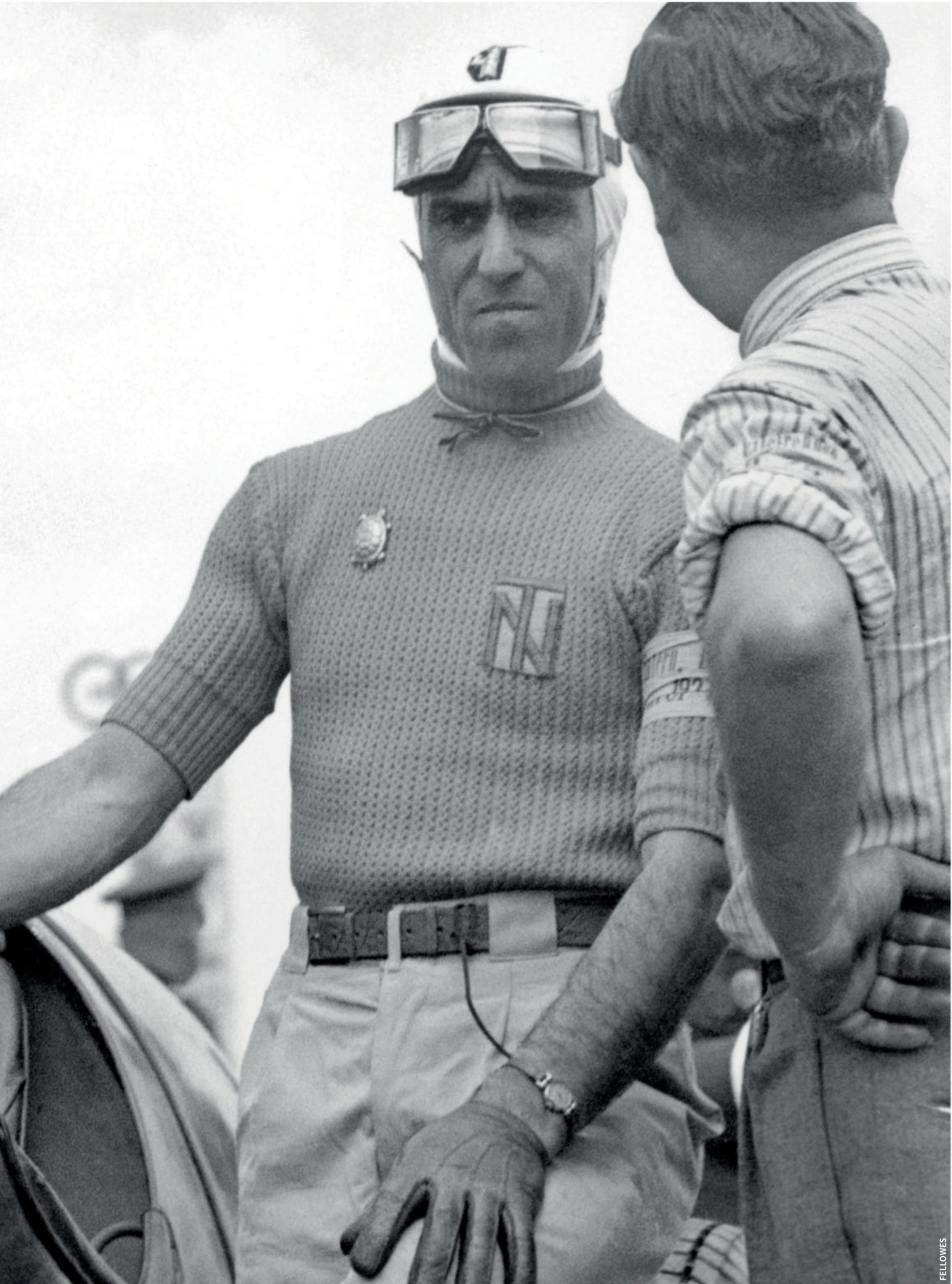
Tazio Nuvolari died 70 years ago this week. One of the world's pre-eminent motorsport historians recalls a true legend...

DOUG NYE

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

For any older-generation enthusiast, it's pretty boring these days to see animated debate about what racing driver is the GOAT. That's right, the so-called 'Greatest Of All Time'. It's particularly irksome when one sees a probably perfectly well-meaning fan, deeply immersed in internet racing history, loftily quoting irrefutable statistical evidence to support whatever case they might have to prove that Lewis Hamilton, Max Verstappen, Alain Prost, Niki Lauda is that very man – standing there on that unique point of the all-time pyramid. In reality, of course such debate as a serious concern is effectively unprovable; modern sport is so different an activity »





FELLOWES

from what it was even one generation ago, never mind more than a century and a quarter's worth.

But way back when I was a school kid, I remember something I'd written about the British Commonwealth being entered for a national competition. Nobody was more astonished than I when told I'd won the darned thing. Big deal – as the prize I was told I could select any book I wanted (up to 30 shillings in price). Being – even then – nuts about motor racing, I chose a rev'em and race'em driver biography entitled *Nuvolari: Legendary Champion of International Auto Racing*. It was written by the always enthusiastic Italian Count Johnny Lurani, who had actually known the great Nuvolari well from the mid-1930s forward.

Some lofty educationalist presented the prizes at our end of term school bash. When my name was called to accept my prize, this luminary unsmilingly studied the book cover, shook my hand (limply as I recall), and said: "Well done. There you are..." – and then he added "...for what good it will do you."

Well, over 60 years later I'm still involved in motorsport, still scribbling about it, and your editor has just asked me to tell something of the tale of Tazio Giorgio Nuvolari, most definitely a candidate for having been 'The Greatest' we have seen.

Why should that be so? Well, Nuvolari – known popularly to Italian tifosi as 'Nivola' or 'Il Mantovano Volante' ('The Flying Mantuan') was much more than just a racing driver. His always spectacular exploits made him a Grade A celebrity within Italian society, while within the international motorsporting scene his name became revered. He was slight of stature, older than many of his rivals, hyper-competitive (of course), apparently utterly fearless and, like all the greats, he could extract more sheer speed and performance from any given car than almost any contemporary. He wore his heart on his sleeve. If he was unhappy with a car, a rival driver, or his team, then everybody would hear about it. If happy, his euphoria would embrace all associated with a success. Again, everyone would hear about it.

His long racing career through a period in which danger was absolutely pre-eminent had endowed him with a fatalistic acceptance that probable death and disaster lay around the very next corner. Yet as all his contemporaries would do, he simply filed such fears into part of his mind labelled 'Do Not Reopen' and got on with either confronting, or ignoring, such fears and hammering on regardless.

Time and again he would end a race being extracted from underneath, adjacent to, or trapped within his racing car. At various times he broke arms, legs, shoulders, collar bones, ribs

“Time and again he would end a race being extracted from underneath, adjacent to, or trapped within his car. He broke arms, legs, shoulders, collar bones, ribs and vertebrae”

and vertebrae. In his almost thoughtlessly exposed car cockpits, usually with only a smaller-than-A4 aero screen to break the direct airstream, he was burned and scalded, blasted by rain and wind, dust and grit, broiled by Mediterranean and desert sun... and indefatigably, with Tour de France cyclist-style unbelievable endurance and stamina, he would just relentlessly race on – and do so at a pace very few rivals could either approach, or dare.

And his laurels grew faster even than his battered and beaten medical history. During his long career as a racing driver his four-wheeler wins included not just 24 grand prix races, but also a slew of toweringly important sportscar classics. He won not just one but two editions of the 1000-mile round-Italy Mille Miglia sportscar race, plus two Targa Florios around the Madonie mountains of northern Sicily, two RAC Tourist Trophies in Ulster, the Le Mans 24 Hours, and he was even a recipient of

the Formula 1 drivers' world championship title of his era, the European Championship.

Nuvolari was born in November 1892 to a middle-class land-owning family in the village of Castel d'Ario near Mantua in eastern Lombardy, on the flat Po valley plain. The area was ideal for the developing sport of cycle racing. Father Arturo became an established racing cyclist and Tazio's elder brother Giuseppe followed, to become multiple Italian champion. Tazio idolised his brother, and tried cycling too, but craved more speed, always more speed. The answer – inevitably – was a motorcycle.

He acquired a competition licence in the midst of the First World War, in 1915. He was no spring chicken, already 23, but had to wait for peacetime before his first race, at Cremona in 1920. He became a prominent racing motorcyclist riding for the Bianchi team, and in 1925 took the 350cc European Championship title by winning the European Grand Prix. Between 1925 and 1928, Nuvolari won the two-wheeled Grand Prix des Nations no fewer than four consecutive times, and the nationally important Circuito del Lario race five times, 1925 to 1929.

He had always been interested in trying his hand seriously at four-wheeled racing, and from 1924 had appeared quite frequently in a 1500cc Chiribiri. The car was no ball of fire but he made it competitive in his class. One rival, driving for Alfa Romeo, was Enzo Ferrari, six years the Mantuan's junior...

Nuvolari had made sufficient impression with his combined two and four-wheeled results to be invited to test an Alfa Romeo GP car, as a potential team addition after the great Antonio Ascari had been killed when leading the 1925 French GP at Montlhery. A drive in the Italian GP at Monza was on offer, but Nuvolari's test ended in a massive accident after the car's gearbox seized. He was seriously battered with multiple lacerations and muscle and ligament damage. Just six days later, bandaged into a riding position with a cushion taped to his midriff, lifted onto his motorcycle, he won the GP des Nations at Monza. Who needs Alfa Romeo?

That ride alone began to confer upon 'Nivola' the almost mythic status he would enjoy into the 1930s. He drove a Bugatti in the 1928 Mille Miglia, an OM in 1929, then was teamed with Alfa Romeo test driver Gianbattista Guidotti in a works Alfa 6C-1750 in the 1930 race. During his motorcycling career a leading rival had been fellow Italian Achille Varzi. Where Nuvolari was renowned for his fiery, expressive, noisy nature, Varzi was almost his total opposite. Of slightly higher social class, introverted, very seldom known to smile (possibly from a facial nerve damage), Varzi was portrayed by the Italian press as a kind of unexpressive Kimi Raikkonen... with knobs on.

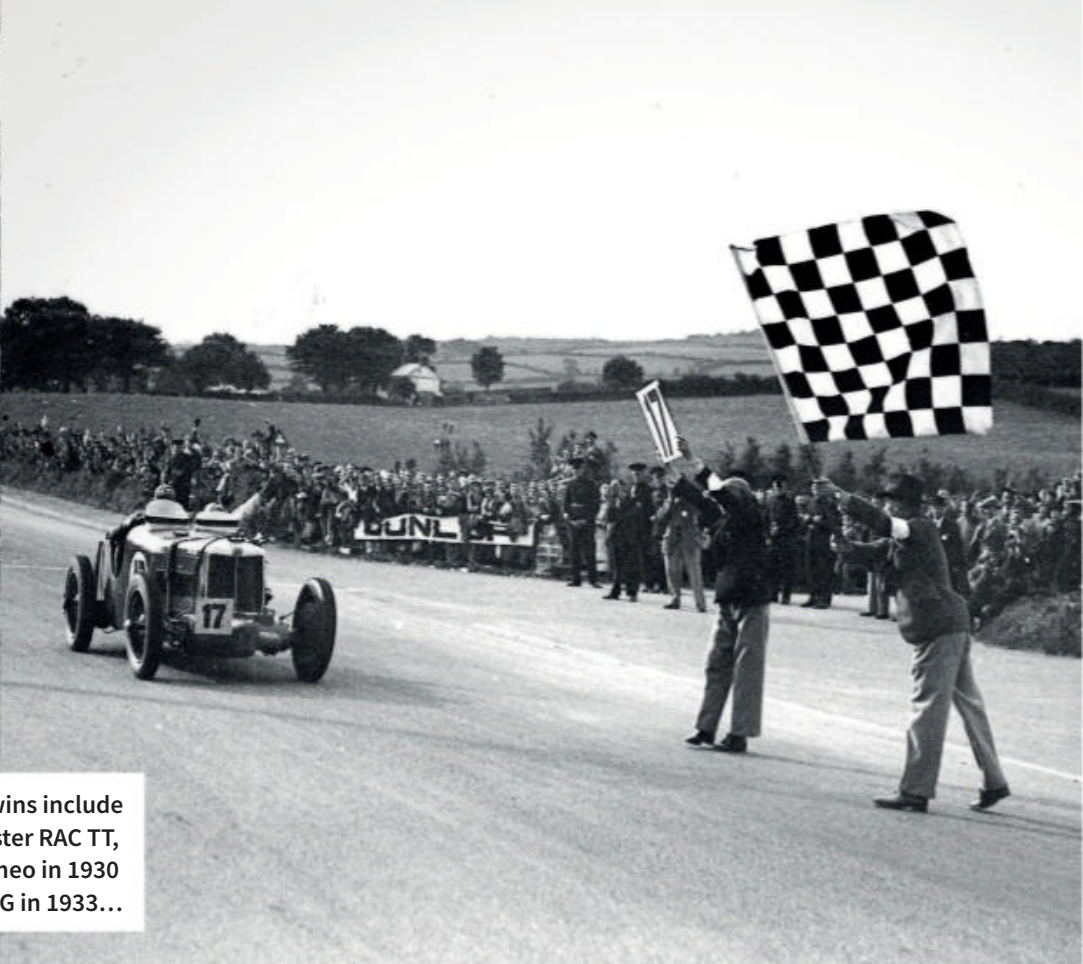
In that 1930 Mille Miglia, Nuvolari and Varzi were team-mates, both driving works Alfa 1750s. From the staggered start, Nuvolari got away after Varzi but was leading on corrected time on the 1000-mile route when he sighted his team-mate's tail lights ahead. Guidotti once told me how Nuvolari switched off his headlights, to steal up – stealth-style – on Varzi's tail, unseen. On the fast roads approaching the finish at Brescia he finally flicked his lights back on and ducked out of the slipstream to assert his victory in public view. Varzi was unamused, and in coming years the pair would fight some tremendous battles both on circuit and off it, vying for Italian public support.

The Mille Miglia win made Nuvolari a national hero on both two wheels and four. Later that same year, 1930, he won the RAC Tourist Trophy race at Ards in Ulster for Alfa Romeo. It was an internationally important, high-profile success. 'Nivola' was an international star.

His name and that of the Alfa Romeo works team became inseparable. He won two more important Italian races in 1931 – the Targa Florio and Coppa Ciano – and in 1932 he made the most of the trend-setting new centrally disposed single-seat Alfa Romeo Tipo B Monoposto, winning the Italian and French GPs, the Coppa Ciano at Livorno and the Coppa Acerbo at Pescara (and had already won the Monaco GP in an Alfa Monza). Already 39, here was a true champion racing driver in his pomp. >>



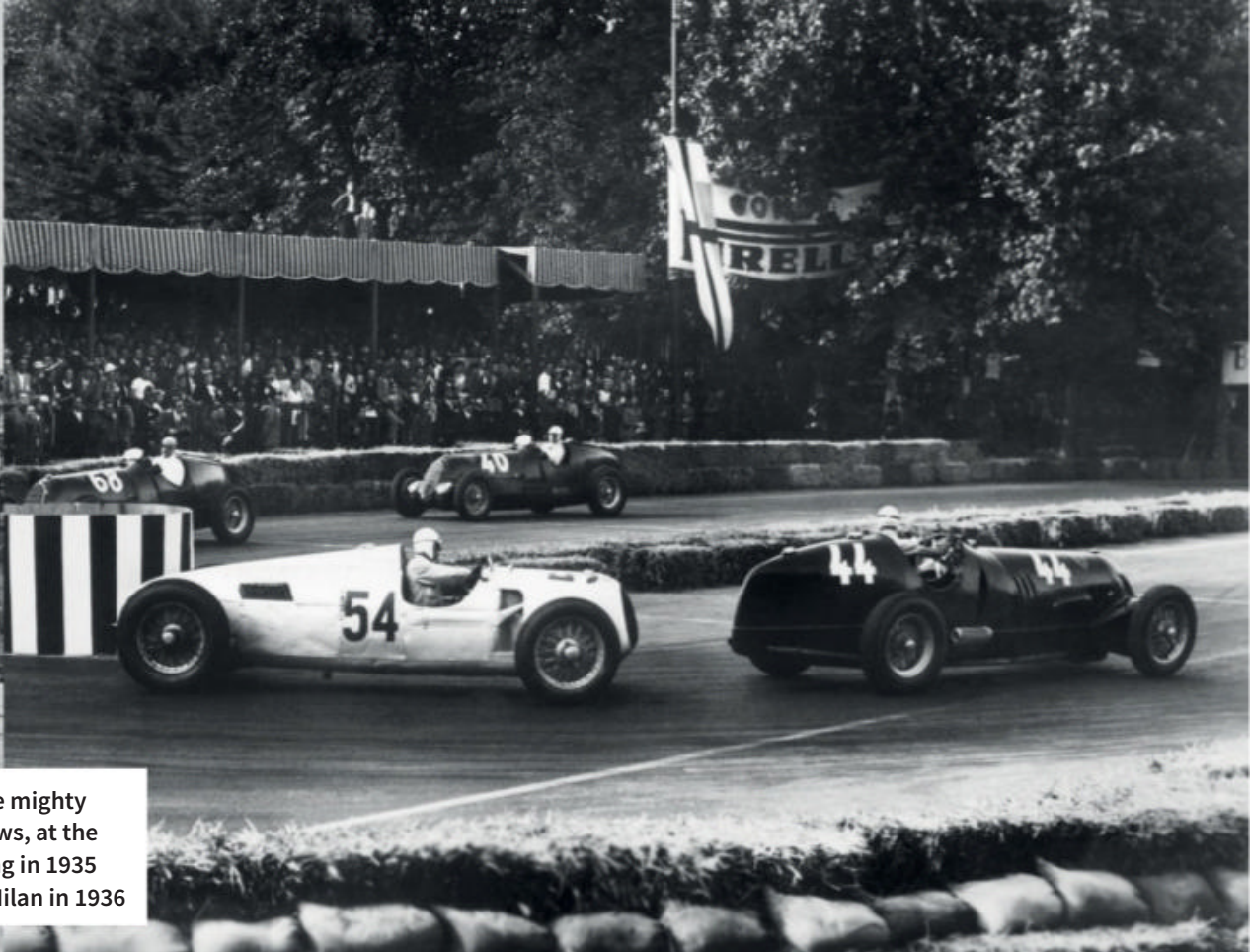
Sportscar wins include a pair in Ulster RAC TT, for Alfa Romeo in 1930 (left) and MG in 1933...



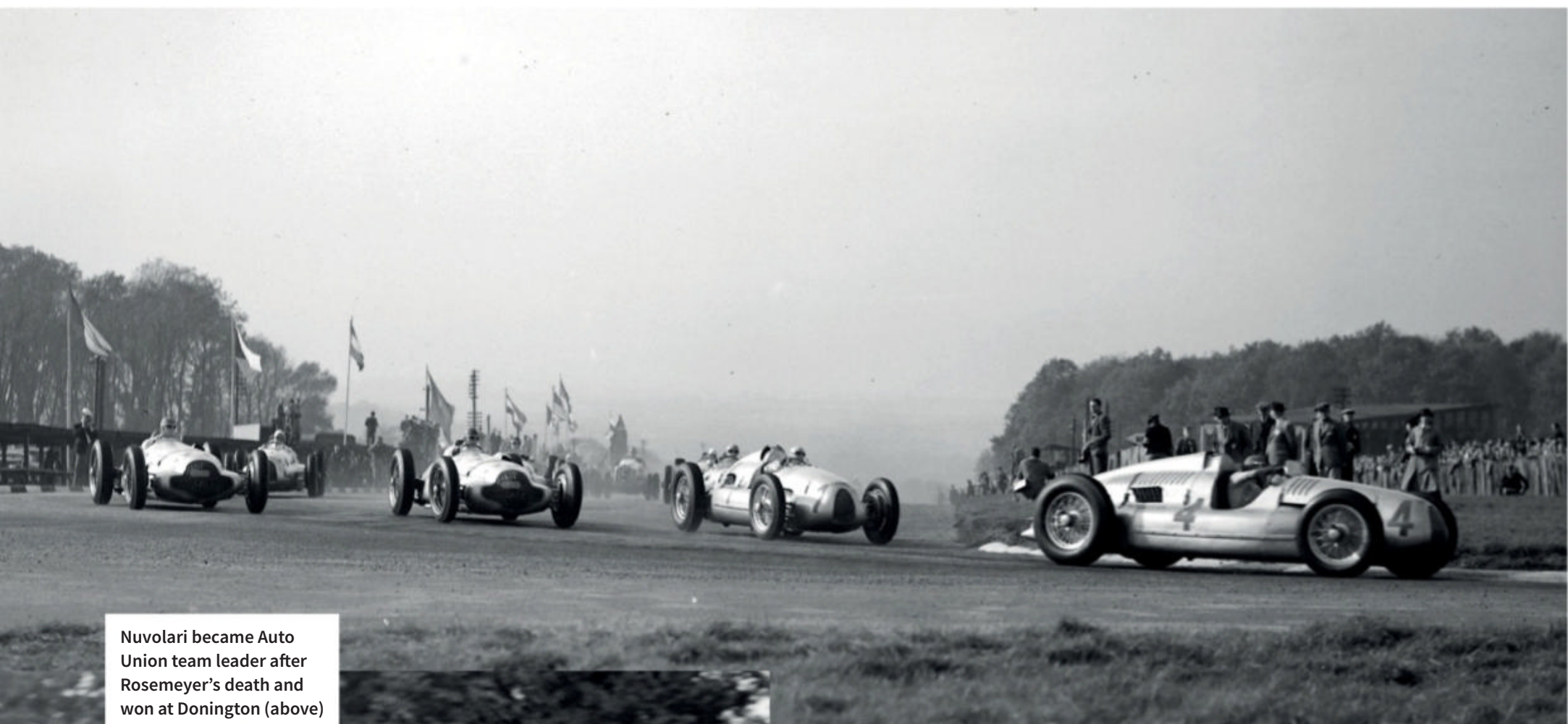
...while sole outing in the Le Mans 24 Hours (in 1933) brought victory alongside Raymond Sommer



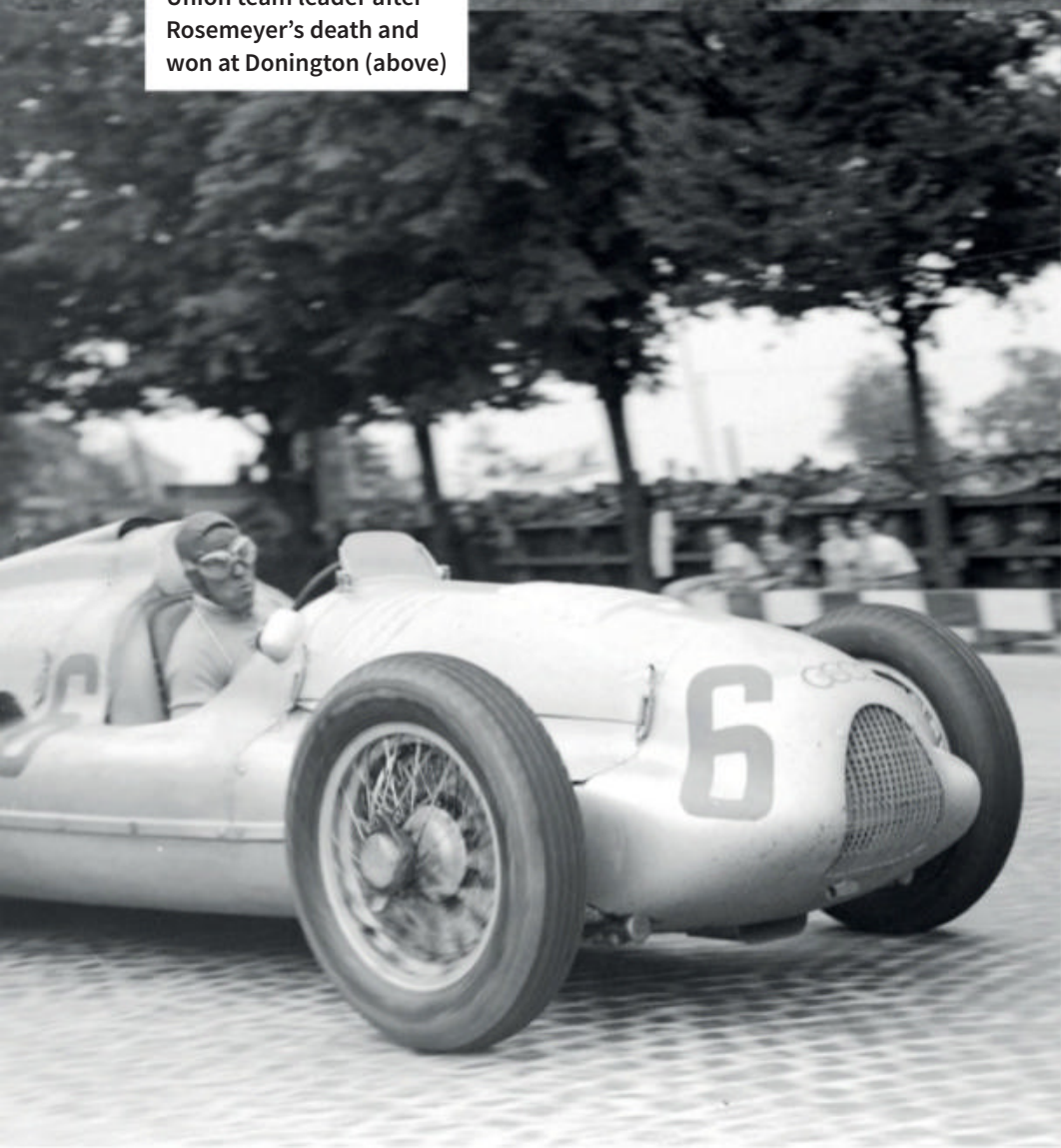
Nuvolari jumped ship to Maserati in 1933 and won Nice GP



Beating the mighty Silver Arrows, at the Nurburgring in 1935 (left) and Milan in 1936



Nuvolari became Auto Union team leader after Rosemeyer's death and won at Donington (above)



Tomb inscription reads: 'You will race even faster along the roads of heaven'

And his racing antics could be truly spectacular. Guidotti told me how he in extremis and under pressure to regain time, short-cut a corner on the Livorno circuit not just by diving through a filling station forecourt, but by diving through between a wall and the back of the fuel pumps. “We measure the gap after – four centimetres more space, no more!”

In driving terms, ‘Nivola’ loudly proclaimed his distaste for brakes, declaring “they just make you go slower”. Of course he used them, but more to unbalance his car than retard it, throwing it into a drift which he then balanced on throttle against steering. The narrow-tread iron-hard Pirelli and Englebert tyres on which he ran could survive such treatment. He is one claimant for having invented ‘the drift’.

And then there was the Scuderia Ferrari. Former Alfa Romeo driver-turned-marque concessionaire Enzo Ferrari had created his private team as a cooperative gentleman’s club to race effectively as a private entrant. Ferrari talked ‘Nivola’ into driving a Scuderia entry in events ignored by the increasingly cash-strapped factory. The champion was delighted to secure those extra earning opportunities and, into 1933 with the factory’s works racing operation virtually defunct, he signed near full-time for Ferrari.

But Alfa Romeo kept its state-of-the-art Tipo B GP cars from Ferrari, ‘Nivola’ and his team-mates having to do the best they could with two-seat-width Monza cars fitted with uprated engines, which broke the drivetrain... repeatedly. The Mantuan was enraged, and struck a highly publicised alternative deal to drive Maseratis. Mr Ferrari was equally outraged at such duplicity, but the move was a *fait accompli*. The Maserati became an unwanted, Alfa-embarrassing, entry as the little man won the major Belgian and minor Nice GPs plus the important Coppa Ciano for the Bolognese marque. But what a year Nuvolari was enjoying – he won his second Mille Miglia and the Le Mans 24 Hours, both for Alfa Romeo, and then his second RAC TT at Ards, this time for MG.

Into 1934 he drove a Bugatti at Monaco, hit a tree in his Maserati at rain-swept Alessandria and broke a leg. Four weeks later he was racing again, at Berlin’s AVUS track, with his Maserati modified for right-foot clutch operation. Cramping badly, he finished fifth. It was a bad year as his leg was slow to heal.

For 1935, Varzi had been signed up by the German Auto Union team. Nuvolari was keen to join him there. Varzi said “No way”. Friends then brokered a rapprochement between ‘Nivola’ and Ferrari. Driving the latest version of the Tipo B and the latest Alfa Romeo 8C-35s the little man bounced back, winning at Pau, Bergamo, Biella, Turin, the Coppa Ciano (yet again), Nice and Modena. What’s more, in the obsolescent Tipo B, he outfumbled the might of Germany’s Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz Silver Arrows to steal victory in the German GP at the Nurburgring Nordschleife. Nazi officialdom was unamused, Mussolini’s Fascisti overjoyed...

For Alfa Romeo with 8C-35 and 12C-36 GP cars he then scored five more prestigious victories through 1936, including the American Vanderbilt Cup on Long Island. The Cup itself was so big that little, battle-scarred, near-44-year-old ‘Nivola’ was photographed sitting comfortably in it. However, through 1937 winning became difficult against the full-fledged might of the money-rich German teams with their state backing. In an Alfa 12C-36 he won the Milan GP, but lack of success really rankled.

He railed against poor Alfa Romeo capability, but more so against what he perceived as poor preparation. As the Scuderia Ferrari operation was absorbed in-house by Alfa Romeo for 1938 he gave them one last chance, in the Pau GP. But during practice his car’s fuel tank split, exploded into flames and he was dragged from the cockpit, painfully burned. It was the last straw. After recovering quickly, he accepted Auto Union’s invitation to join them as replacement for their lost leader, Bernd Rosemeyer – killed in a class speed record attempt that January.

‘Nivola’ adapted rapidly to the Germans’ latest so-called D-Type rear-engined V12 GP car, and he won both his home Italian GP at Monza, and the Donington GP in England. Through 1939 the rival

Mercedes-Benz W154s dominated, but the diminutive, battered yet rugged Italian won the final race of peacetime, the Belgrade GP on 3 September 1939.

Come the return of peace, ‘Nivola’ was in his 54th year. But ‘Il Mantovano Volante’ remained revered. He was prominent in Piero Dusio’s Cisitalia race circus, and won the Albi GP for Maserati. But his breathing was laboured, his lungs damaged, not least by years of inhaling corrosive fuel and combustion fumes. He took to driving with a face mask over nose and mouth. He was seen to dab away blood. What little extra weight he carried fell from him. You might have heard of the respect and reverence in which his team-mates and rivals would hold Juan Manuel Fangio late in his career. There are many photos of ‘Nivola’ similarly honoured, seated on a trackside wall or pit counter, attentive young drivers gathered around, hanging on his every word. Of course, they all longed just to beat him, to knock off

“‘Nivola’ loudly proclaimed his distaste for brakes, declaring ‘they just make you go slower’. Of course he used them, but more to unbalance his car than retard it”

the old champion. And while on track he would do his darndest to make it difficult for them, off track he had mellowed into offering often sage (and free) advice.

Above all, Nuvolari was firmly rooted, with a very happy marriage – to Carolina Perina – which produced two sons, of whom he was immensely proud. The older, Giorgio, had been born in 1918, even before Papa began racing seriously, while the younger, Alberto, had followed in 1928. But stark tragedy intervened, Giorgio dying in 1937, at 19, from the heart condition myocarditis, while Alberto died in 1946, aged 18, from nephritic kidney failure. Tazio and Carolina Nuvolari survived as an inseparable unit, but this justifiably proud sportsman hungered for one last great hurrah in racing – or perhaps a warrior’s death on track... like so many he had seen.

Always one for a prestigious public gesture, Enzo Ferrari offered him a drive in one last Mille Miglia, in 1948. ‘Nivola’ was given what seems to have been private owner Prince Igor’s cycle-fendered Ferrari 166 Spider Corsa – unknown to the owner, who thought his agent had merely sent the car to the Maranello factory ‘for service’. Well, ‘Nivola’ literally drove the fenders – and the bonnet – off the car in the 1000 miles, passengered by fearless race mechanic Sergio Scapinelli. He led on corrected time from the Brescia start and had built his lead in the disintegrating Ferrari to 27 minutes by the time the car finally failed at Reggio-Emilia, with only 70 miles to run.

‘Nivola’ was exhausted, and took many days to recover from this superb, final, defining, legend-confirming, drive. On 10 April 1950 he reappeared on the startline for the Monte Pellegrino hillclimb at Palermo, Sicily, driving a Cisitalia-Abarth sportscar. He won his class – of course – and set fifth fastest time overall. That May saw his gaunt figure in England, a special guest at Silverstone.

Old friends began visiting him more frequently at his Mantuan home. None could be certain it would not be the last time. His obstructive lung disease worsened. In 1952 a stroke left him partially paralysed. On 11 August 1953 a second ended the champion’s extraordinary life. He had been quite simply the standard-setting racing driver of a long, long era. Above the door of his family tomb the famous inscription reads: ‘Correrai Ancor Più Veloce Per Le Vie Del Cielo’ – ‘You will race even faster along the roads of heaven’.

For all aspiring racing drivers here was an example. For Nuvolari, definitively, was not merely A Racer – he was, undeniably, The Man. 🏆



WRC

Evans seizes his chance for glory in Finland

When points leader Roivanpera crashed out on his home event, his Toyota team-mate reignited the title fight with a dominant charge to victory

TOM HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN

Two years ago, Elfyn Evans joined an exclusive club of eight drivers heralding from outside the Nordic nations to have conquered the revered Rally Finland. Last weekend, the Welsh Toyota star proved that was no fluke as he ignited his World Rally Championship title aspirations with a dominant victory to sit alongside Finnish rallying royalty Ari Vatanen and Timo Salonen as two-time winners of the event.

After reigning world champion and points leader Kalle Roivanpera had delivered a Sebastien Loeb-like domination in Rally Estonia a fortnight before the 'Grand Prix on Gravel', the script seemed set, and maybe the title race over. Surely Finland's first world champion for 20 years would end a six-year wait for a home-grown Rally Finland winner and take another step in his WRC title defence... That prospect looked likely after seven stages. But, as history has proved, the high-speed rollercoaster gravel stages are tough to crack and can catch out the best. While Roivanpera reminded everyone that he is human, Evans avoided the pitfalls. A blistering dose of speed and precision, in challenging wet conditions, resulted in his best showing yet in a Rally1 car to win a rally of attrition.

As much as this was a victory for Evans and co-driver Scott Martin, it was redemption for Toyota. The team based in the rally's host city of Jyväskylä was beaten in its own backyard by Hyundai 12 months ago when Ott Tänak defeated Roivanpera. As if there wasn't enough expectation on the team's and Roivanpera's



shoulders, Toyota chairman Akio Toyoda was in town acting as team principal, or 'cheerleader' as he put it. The self-confessed WRC fan stood in for Jari-Matti Latvala as the Finn made a special one-off comeback outing in a fourth GR Yaris, his first start since 2020.

Last year's defeat to Hyundai left a bitter taste in the mouth, prompting a thorough event preparation that included Evans and Roivanpera competing in a national rally the weekend prior. Those eight stages in wet conditions were perhaps worth their weight in gold. "We did a lot of work," related Latvala. "I think that Tampere



Evans was in control – and enjoying himself: “It’s such a joy to be behind the wheel on these roads”



Latvala’s “phenomenal” return to the cockpit rewarded with fifth place

rally in the wet was very important for this event as I think the biggest differences were made in the slippery wet conditions.”

While Rovannerperä attempted to downplay the importance of a home victory by simply saying that he wants to win all rallies, the wall of airhorns from a huge crowd that greeted him in Thursday night’s super special in downtown Jyväskylä reminded him what was at stake. “An amazing feeling – I can almost hear the people from inside of the car, I know how loud it is,” said Rovannerperä, who clipped a kerb on his way to setting the third fastest time. “It feels

“An amazing feeling – I can almost hear the people from inside of the car, I know how loud it is”

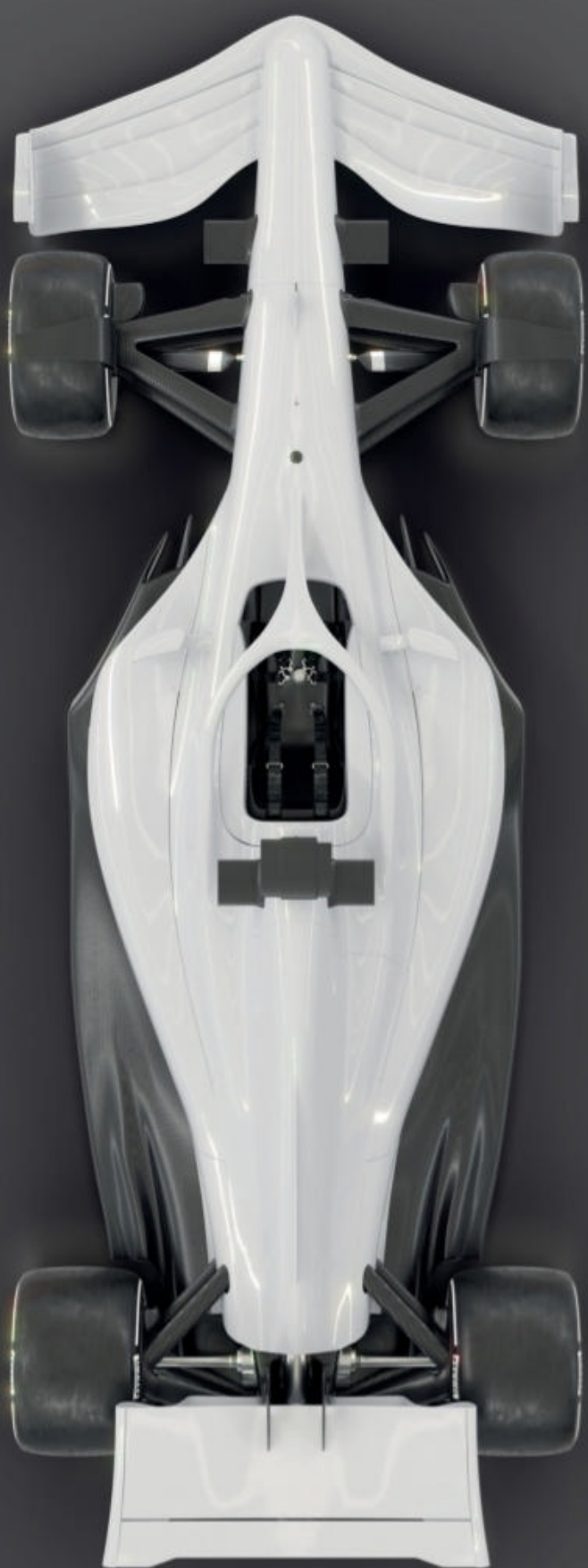
so amazing in the car when you know the atmosphere is so great.”

The M-Sport Ford of Tanak upset the homecoming by taking the stage win to grab an early lead, but bad luck seems to be following the Estonian. For the second event in succession, his rally ended before it really got started. Bedrock pierced through his Puma’s sump guard, punching a hole in the engine in stage three (Lankamaa), resulting in a loss of power and a fire breaking out. Luckily, Tanak and co-driver Martin Jarveoja were able to prevent the car from going up in flames completely, but their rally was over. “It was not a little [fire], and it was a critical situation to be honest as we were alone in the forest,” recounted Tanak. “We drove as long as EV mode allowed us to cool it [the car] down, but when we stopped it was full of fire. We were lucky to have two extinguishers there.”

To compound M-Sport’s misery, Pierre-Louis Loubet in the sister Puma clipped a rock, destroying his left-rear suspension in the same stage just minutes after Tanak trundled to a halt. Loubet was able to rejoin the rally on Saturday, but had to battle an engine issue on Sunday. Crestfallen team principal Richard Millener »



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summed up the mood in the Blue Oval camp: “It’s pretty challenging at the moment for us all, and these guys [the mechanics] have been out here for three weeks. They’ve not gone home since Estonia. So for them to put all this effort in and for us to be where we are, it’s really sad for everyone.”

The M-Sport double exit was just the start of a dramatic Friday. Two tests later another rally contender fell when heavy rain hit stage five. Esapekka Lappi had struggled to find grip on the damp roads, admitting he couldn’t “drive any faster”. In stage five, an optimistic pacenote caught the Finn out, sending his Hyundai into the trees at a frightening speed. Lappi and co-driver Janne Ferme were lucky to avoid serious injury. “OK, over here it feels bad [to retire] but the first sentence from my mouth when I saw Janne was that ‘it is good that we are alive’ because it was really scary when I saw the trees,” said a wide-eyed Lappi. “In stage four, I pushed really hard and I had some moments there and still the time was not really there. The Toyotas were just too fast. I didn’t come here to fight for the third position. I have no answers, I thought we were at a good level, but it seems like we are behind.”

As Tanak and Lappi grabbed the headlines, Roanperä assumed the rally lead on stage two and was seemingly in control, with speed in reserve. The championship leader rattled off five consecutive stage wins but was kept on his toes by Evans, who trailed the Finn by a mere 5.7s after seven stages.

But stage eight, the second pass through the legendary Myhinpää test – back in the rally for 2023 – crushed the dreams of thousands of expectant Finns for another year. The sight of Roanperä’s GR Yaris on its roof shocked onlookers and the drivers



Katsuta delighted to take fourth career WRC podium in Finland



Neuville was fired up by sniff of victory, but he just couldn't catch Evans

“My first sentence was ‘it is good that we are alive’ because it was really scary when I saw the trees”

as they passed the wreckage, such has been the world champion's form this year. Roanperä had clipped a rock, which sent the car into a spectacular end-over-end roll, causing terminal chassis damage. “It was quite a, let's say, stupid crash,” he admitted. “Normally you go through somewhere fast and you know you made a mistake, but it went and that was it. I tried to correct it and couldn't do it. It is disappointing because the lead was going quite well and the driving was quite easy and I didn't overpush.”

Unusually for Latvala, he witnessed one of his drivers retire from the cockpit rather than the service park. “It was very sad to see this,” said Latvala, who climbed to fifth after almost half the Rally1 field had retired after eight of 22 stages. “But Kalle has had a fantastic season and it is his first mistake of the season. When you drive at the level he does, everyone will have at least one mistake. Nobody will have a season without mistakes.”

Roanperä's exit handed the lead to Evans, an opportunity he didn't waste. But the first objective was to ensure he completed Friday, not an easy task considering the slippery conditions. He also had to deal with a fired up Thierry Neuville as Roanperä's retirement gave the Belgian Hyundai star a sniff of victory. Now Neuville pushed, winning the final three stages of the day to close to 6.9s off Evans.

Toyota's Takamoto Katsuta held third, 12.4s ahead of the Hyundai of Teemu Suninen, but it was Latvala who had the biggest smile, relishing the chance to tackle Rally Finland once again. His fifth place was accomplishing the fourth-to-eighth pre-event target set for him by four-time world champion Juha Kankkunen. Latvala and co-driver Juho Hanninen even allowed themselves time to wave to fans at points during their runs.

Any hopes Neuville had of overhauling Evans were extinguished on Saturday. This will be remembered as Evans's most dominant day of his WRC career to date. Despite facing challenging slippery wet gravel, he seemed to be at ease and the fastest stage times flowed. He was simply untouchable. A streak of seven consecutive stage wins extended his advantage to 32.1s as Neuville fought with his i20 N. As ever, the understated Evans refused to get too excited. “I hate to say that it comes easy because it doesn't come easy,” he reckoned, “but when things just click and work, you >>



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are not forcing yourself and you don't feel uncomfortable, and you don't feel like you are taking crazy risks, it just sort of happens."

For Neuville, the game was up and the focus switched to taking home a decent haul of points for second with Roanperä absent. "There was nothing more we could have done to catch P1," he declared. "We are struggling with the rear and with the traction and the movement of the car. They are small things we need to work on."

With Evans on course for a comfortable victory, the focus switched to an intense battle for third between Katsuta and Suninen. The Finn inherited the podium spot after Katsuta's wild spin on stage 12. But the Japanese fought back to produce a stunning fastest time on the sodden and rutted stage 18, the

"It's a big relief to be on the podium in Finland again after 10 years of, I would say, a struggle"

test more reminiscent of the mud baths seen at the Safari Rally. It was a result he felt was partly down to the advice from his now fallen team-mate Roanperä, after he sat in the car with the reigning world champion during a pre-event test. "I was scared so much to be honest," revealed Katsuta. "Kalle is very good in these conditions and he has been teaching me a lot. I tried drifting and I was pushing like hell."

Evans's confidence behind the wheel of the GR Yaris was outlined on Sunday. He opted to take the commitment levels back a notch, but still claimed two of the three morning stages to extend his lead to 38.2s over a beaten Neuville, who was already thinking about the Power Stage. But the Walloon was to be denied the five bonus points here too – Evans put the icing on the cake of a standout display to record a second win of the season with a margin of 39.1s. "It's been a pretty good weekend," he smiled. "Of course we're sorry for the loss of Kalle at the start of the rally but, after that, it's been really fantastic to drive this car – it's such a joy to be behind the wheel on these roads and we're really happy with this one."

Neuville was happy too after scoring his first Finland podium in a decade. "It's a big relief to be on the podium in Finland again after 10 years of, I would say, a struggle," he said. "It shows that together with the team and the changes that are ongoing we are going in the right way."

Third place went to Katsuta after seeing off a valiant challenge from Suninen. After a confidence-destroying Estonia, a fourth



career WRC podium was just the tonic, made even better with the success coming in front of an overjoyed Mr Toyoda. "My first podium in Europe and I didn't expect it in Finland! I am very happy," enthused Katsuta. "Akio-san is here this weekend and it's been very special for me because he has been supporting me since the beginning."

Toyoda joined the crews on the podium, where he was doused in champagne to the point where he joked that he felt drunk. For a man who said over the weekend that he "loves WRC like a kid loves ice cream", it was a dream result.

Just as dream-like was Latvala's run to fifth as the last of the Rally1 runners to complete the full distance, and the Finnish veteran even claimed the final Power Stage point. "It's been something really phenomenal that I will remember for the rest of my life," sighed Latvala. "We could just drive with our own rhythm and to end up fifth overall and even score in the Power Stage, it's just fantastic."

Oliver Solberg emerged as the top Rally2 runner in sixth, but elected not to score WRC2 points for this round, which meant the WRC2 win went to fellow Skoda driver Sami Pajari, who is touted as Finland's next star.

Finland's current star now has an advantage of just 25 points to Evans, who undoubtedly found something in both himself and the GR Yaris last weekend. Could Roanperä have more of a fight on his hands to repeat his world title? 🏆



MODEST EVANS DOWNPLAYS
FINNISH DOUBLE



Elfyn Evans is now the most successful British driver in Rally Finland’s 72-year history, with his second win on the event last weekend arriving after his 2021 success.

“It’s quite mad when you think of it like that,” admitted the Toyota ace. “It’s quite a cool thing to have [being the most successful British driver in Finland], but it doesn’t change anything either in a way. I’m sure one day I will look back and be proud. It’s quite similar to how I felt here in 2021, although the risk was probably a bit higher then as there was a massive three-way fight going on with Ott [Tanak] and Craig [Breen]. I had an equally good feeling in the car this weekend.”

While Evans was modest about the achievement, the enormity was not lost on co-driver Scott Martin.

“It was like it was written in the stars that it was going happen,” he said. “Elfyn was driving well and the team were fantastic. At the end I did say to Elfyn, ‘My God, to win this event once is a big thing, but to win it twice is pretty massive.’ It takes a while for it to sink in and realise what we’ve done.”



RESULTS ROUND 9/13, RALLY FINLAND, 3-6 AUGUST

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Elfyn Evans (GBR) Scott Martin (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	2h33m11.3s
2	Thierry Neuville (BEL) Martijn Wydaeghe (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+39.1s
3	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN) Aaron Johnston (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1m36.7s
4	Teemu Suninen (FIN) Mikko Markkula (FIN)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+1m41.0s
5	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN) Juho Hanninen (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+4m09.4s
6	Oliver Solberg (SWE) Elliott Edmondson (GBR)	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+9m33.6s
7	Sami Pajari (FIN) Enni Malkonen (FIN)	Toksport WRT 2 / Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+10m03.7s
8	Adrien Fourmaux (FRA) Alexandre Coria (FRA)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta Rally2 Mk II	+10m37.5s
9	Nikolay Gryazin (RUS) Konstantin Aleksandrov (RUS)	Toksport WRT 2 / Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+11m11.5s
10	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) Torstein Eriksen (NOR)	Toksport WRT 3 / Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+11m35.2s

OTHERS

45	Pierre-Louis Loubet (FRA) Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+1h25m56.8s
R	Kalle Rovanpera (FIN) Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	SS8-accident
R	Esapekka Lappi (FIN) Janne Ferm (FIN)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	SS5-accident
R	Ott Tanak (EST) Martin Jarveoja (EST)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	SS3-engine

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Harju 1 (2.16 miles)	Tanak 2m39.0s	Tanak	Neuville +0.6s
SS2 Laukaa 1 (7.32 miles)	Katsuta 5m36.1s	Rovanpera	Tanak +0.4s
SS3 Lankamaa 1 (8.83 miles)	Rovanpera 5m57.8s	Rovanpera	Evans +2.2s
SS4 Myhinpaa 1 (9.64 miles)	Rovanpera 6m55.7s	Rovanpera	Evans +3.6s
SS5 Halttula 1 (5.68 miles)	Rovanpera 4m21.0s	Rovanpera	Evans +3.9s
SS6 Laukaa 2 (7.32 miles)	Rovanpera 5m40.5s	Rovanpera	Evans +5.3s
SS7 Lankamaa 2 (8.83 miles)	Rovanpera 6m05.7s	Rovanpera	Evans +5.7s
SS8 Myhinpaa 2 (9.64 miles)	Neuville 6m59.6s	Evans	Neuville +10.9s
SS9 Halttula 2 (5.68 miles)	Neuville 4m20.7s	Evans	Neuville +9.7s
SS10 Harju 2 (2.16 miles)	Neuville 2m44.5s	Evans	Neuville +6.9s
SS11 Vastila 1 (11.77 miles)	Evans 8m29.5s	Evans	Neuville +11.5s
SS12 Pajala 1 (12.55 miles)	Evans 9m39.0s	Evans	Neuville +11.9s
SS13 Rapsula 1 (12.78 miles)	Evans 9m55.2s	Evans	Neuville +15.3s
SS14 Vekkula 1 (12.83 miles)	Evans 10m09.4s	Evans	Neuville +17.7s
SS15 Vastila 2 (11.77 miles)	Evans 8m23.4s	Evans	Neuville +25.5s
SS16 Pajala 2 (12.55 miles)	Evans 9m32.0s	Evans	Neuville +30.0s
SS17 Rapsula 2 (12.78 miles)	Evans 9m49.0s	Evans	Neuville +32.8s
SS18 Vekkula 2 (12.83 miles)	Katsuta 10m32.8s	Evans	Neuville +32.1s
SS19 Moksi-Sahloinen 1 (10.29 miles)	Evans 7m34.9s	Evans	Neuville +36.6s
SS20 Himos-Jamsa 1 (5.75 miles)	Katsuta 5m04.4s	Evans	Neuville +33.7s
SS21 Moksi-Sahloinen 2 (10.29 miles)	Evans 7m26.7s	Evans	Neuville +38.2s
SS22 Himos-Jamsa 2 (5.75 miles)	Evans 4m54.1s	Evans	Neuville +39.1s



Solberg was top
Rally2 runner

- DRIVERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP**
1 Rovanpera 170; 2 Evans 145;
3 Neuville 134; 4 Tanak 104;
5 Sebastien Ogier 98; 6 Lappi 87;
7 Katsuta 58; 8 Dani Sordo 46;
9 Suninen 34; 10 Loubet 28.
- MANUFACTURERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP**
1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 378;
2 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 311;
3 M-Sport Ford WRT 205.



Kirkwood claimed his second IndyCar race victory in style in Nashville...

INDYCAR

Nashville's streets are Kirkwood's country

The young Andretti Autosport star backed up his Long Beach GP win with victory on the streets of 'Music City', but he needed some help to do it

CHARLES BRADLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY



Lightning struck twice for Scott McLaughlin on the streets of Nashville last Sunday, when the three-time Supercars champion failed to convert a race win here for Team Penske from pole position by a tiny margin once again. This time, it was Andretti Autosport's young star Kyle Kirkwood who got the better of him, by 0.7633 seconds, meaning McLaughlin's cumulative losing deficit across two years here is 0.87s!

And, while there was an intriguing battle for the win between those two, intensified by a late red flag and sprint to the finish, standout championship performers Alex Palou and Josef Newgarden battled to the chequered flag behind them too.

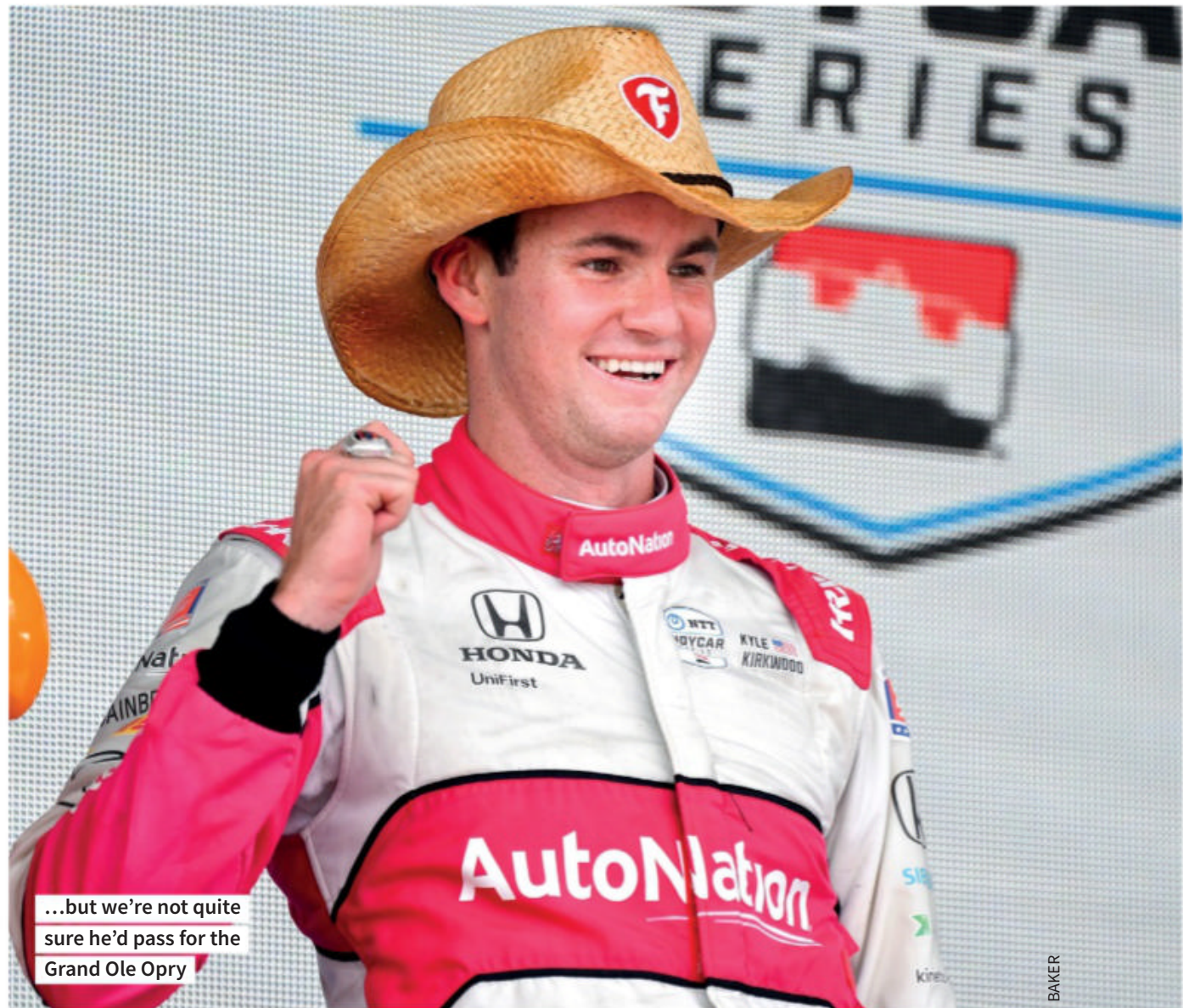
McLaughlin repeated his pole position of 2022 in qualifying, which was delayed due to heavy rain by over three and a half hours, beating Arrow McLaren's Pato O'Ward by 0.3s and Andretti's Colton Herta by a further 0.3s. Kirkwood didn't even

make the Fast Six shootout and would start eighth.

The top five began on Firestone's softer alternate tyre, with degradation a step into the unknown after only one dry practice session around the 2.1-mile street circuit, which is situated in the shadow of the Tennessee Titans NFL stadium.

The drivers label this track 'Crashville' for a reason, but this wasn't a race that truly lived up to that well-earned reputation. The majority of passes were clean, after McLaughlin led the field to green from O'Ward and Herta, with an aggressive David Malukas (Dale Coyne Racing) quickly grabbing fourth from a tentative Palou. His title rival Newgarden, who could only qualify ninth, made a strong start but was soon bundled back to 10th after a handful of laps as he "got used up, typical street course stuff".

Kirkwood's first move of the race was to pass Penske's Will Power, the Australian almost failing to take his place on the starting grid after misplacing his earbuds(!) and scrambling to



...but we're not quite
sure he'd pass for the
Grand Ole Opry

BAKER

find his spares. Palou repassed Malukas on lap seven, and the young American got freight-trained by Romain Grosjean and Kirkwood. Two spots gained by Kirkwood, five to go.

Malukas was the first frontrunner to pit but suffered a bizarre failure on his out-lap. Out of sight of the TV cameras, an explosion of some kind caused his rear wing to collapse at over 170mph. Amazingly, he brought the car to a smoky halt with no further damage, but the race's first caution flag flew: "I dunno what happened, if it was the rear wing that failed, but I lost the gearbox, couldn't shift, lost everything. There was a big fire, a lot of heat."

Palou was the only one of the leaders to take advantage of the caution, getting rid of his alternate tyres for primaries, but consigning himself to a three-stop strategy if the race stayed green throughout. "It was a really aggressive call," admitted the Chip Ganassi Racing star. "But it was the plan, honestly." This is Crashville, right? So, surely, there'd be lots of yellows...

The restart was a messy affair, with O'Ward getting into the back of McLaughlin. That set off a chain of events behind, in which Herta got shoved wide into the wall, tumbling to sixth after being barged by Kirkwood and Power, and then heading for the pits reporting damage. Kirkwood was now up to fourth and, along with team-mate Grosjean, they reeled in O'Ward as McLaughlin scampered away up front by 4s, keen to gap those who'd started on primary rubber. O'Ward was in huge tyre trouble, his car fishtailing under braking and acceleration, and he lost the battle for control at Turn 9 as the race hit one-quarter distance, allowing the primary-shod Grosjean and Kirkwood to hustle past him.

McLaughlin pitted on lap 25, switching his alternates for primaries. Grosjean inherited the lead until he stopped on lap 28, and, crucially, Kirkwood went a lap longer. "It worked out in my favour that I saved some more fuel," Kirkwood said. "And I was able to overcut [Grosjean] and put in a really good lap on that [in-lap]. It worked out super-well for us."

It certainly did. While Palou's big undercut meant he was the net leader, he'd have to pay the piper later. The real key to this phase was Kirkwood jumping Grosjean, as he could afford to short-fill the

"It's pretty much a track position race. It's tough to pass. I'm bummed we went backwards"

least, both gaining track position on McLaughlin, who knew he was in trouble. "I knew when the yellow came out, that's kind of the time where we didn't want it," McLaughlin rued. "We knew it would put us in an awkward spot. Kyle just had that little, shorter stop that he could do, and away they went. It's hard to plan for this stuff."

Besides Herta, the big loser of that first stint was O'Ward, who slumped from second to the bottom end of the top 10 after staying out too long on his alternate tyres. "We lost a lot of time there," he admitted. "It's pretty much a track position race. It's tough to pass, especially when you have [to drive to] fuel numbers and you can't really use the push to pass. I'm bummed we went backwards."

And while Palou was sitting pretty at the front of the pack at half distance, there was a dark shadow looming over his strategy. "We had a little bit of fuel error on the first stop, sometimes the meter isn't exactly accurate on the car," revealed his strategist Barry Wanser. Behind him, Kirkwood – who switched to alternates, while Grosjean opted for primaries – was happy to bide his time, save fuel and ensure his delicate rubber made the next pitstop window.

Palou pitted for the second time on lap 45, almost catching a yellow when Devlin DeFrancesco overshot a corner, but – much to his Andretti team's huge relief – he hooked reverse and went on his way again. For the championship leader to reach the finish without stopping again was a big ask from here.

McLaughlin's day went from bad to worse when he got stuck behind Grosjean. They clashed here 12 months ago, and again in the St Petersburg season opener when duelling for the win. Grosjean stubbornly rejected his advances until he made a mistake at Turn 9 with 30 laps remaining, and McLaughlin sprinted past into second, behind Kirkwood. >>



The leader proved he'd short-filled in his first stop by pitting before McLaughlin this time, on lap 51, and rejoined ahead of the cruising Palou. McLaughlin went a lap later, but couldn't overcut Kirkwood, slotting in behind him but ahead of Palou.

After making his error, Grosjean's pace plunged at the end of his second stint. "I ran out of black tyres much earlier than I wanted to," he reflected. "We just lost too many positions there, the strategy wasn't on our side today. So that meant a long stint to the end on the greens [alternates], but I think with a couple of small differences today we could've won the race."

Grosjean rejoined mired in a knot of cars and had to battle past Power and O'Ward to salvage seventh.

Kirkwood held a 2.5s lead over McLaughlin at three-quarter distance, with Palou clinging to third but now desperate for a yellow – a third stop would consign him to a finish outside the top 15, and hemorrhage a huge amount of points to Newgarden. As the laps ticked down, his radio messages became more negative about hitting the required fuel number to make the finish, and he was given the order to go hard. "We were counting on yellows based on our strategy," said Wanser. "Obviously, we bailed on waiting to get a yellow." And then... it finally happened!

Series debutant Linus Lundqvist, subbing for the still-sidelined Simon Pagenaud at Meyer Shank Racing, was enjoying a fabulous

weekend. The 2022 Indy Lights champion qualified 11th and ran as high as third, surviving a scare when his mandatory 'airscoop' driver cooler fell off the top of his aeroscreen at 170mph.

But Lundqvist's day ended in the Turn 11 wall with 10 laps to go, saving Palou's *tocino*. As the yellows flew, Jack Harvey hit the wall for good measure at Turn 8. "That's what I was praying for," said Palou. "It was a very stressful race. I think I lost like five years of my life just trying to save a lot of fuel and praying for a yellow. It finally came. Today we were, like, done. We couldn't really save that much fuel. It was impossible. We were already losing two seconds a lap, 2.5s."

The second restart lasted for just a few seconds, as Herta clipped the wall at Turn 11, followed by Felix Rosenqvist, whose car was collected by Agustin Canapino and Benjamin Pedersen. IndyCar threw the red flag to ensure a race to the finish. But there had been time for Marcus Ericsson to be called for a blocking penalty on his old F1 sparring partner Grosjean, who was gifted sixth.

After a spell in the pits, the race restarted with a four-lap sprint to the finish. Kirkwood pulled out a 1.3s gap on the opening tour and was soon over 2s clear. "I just had a poor restart," said McLaughlin. "I had no temp in my rear tyres for some reason. So annoying. I don't know what happened. I'm normally pretty good on restarts, but I was terrible."

Once he got his tyre temperatures in order, McLaughlin carved into Kirkwood's lead in the closing laps, but was denied by 0.7s: "I think if I was a little bit closer, I might have been able to maybe throw a little divebomb at him. Unfortunately, I couldn't."

Kirkwood said in Victory Lane: "We were really good on the initial lap [of the restart] but right there at the end, man, they were so fast and they ran me down on that last lap."

Palou had enough fuel to put McLaughlin under pressure initially, and finished a second behind him in a relieved third position to extend his points lead to 84 over fourth-placed Newgarden, who was "disappointed with fourth, we ran a really good race, I felt there was a little more opportunity that didn't materialise". Last year's winner Scott Dixon finished fifth for Ganassi, ahead of Grosjean, the Frenchman's best result since April, and Ericsson, who was far from happy with the blocking call against him. O'Ward was miffed about eighth, but he beat Toronto winner Christian Lundgaard and Power. ❧



SCOTTY NOT BEAMING OVER RESTART CHAOS



It's fair to say that Scott McLaughlin was very hot, tired and emotional after a hard day in the office of his Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet when he launched into a spectacular tirade in the post-race press conference about restart standards.

"I just think from a sport perspective, the restarts are a joke," he declared. "I think we need to restart on the start/finish line. So, you cannot pass until the start/finish line.

"You're always going to have these yellows. You're always going to have these clusters that cause red flags and make us look like... There's no cadence. Once there's a yellow flag on a street circuit, it's just a free-for-all. People bomb. We're well within our rights to do that. If we want to have a pure race, we could've had a 10-lap shootout, me and Kyle [Kirkwood], at the end. Instead, we're stop-start, stop-start. The action is fantastic. We just have no race."

McLaughlin gave short shrift to the suggestion of a gentlemen's agreement between drivers. "I think when it goes green, there's kamikazes at the back and [they] don't care," he fizzed. "Well within their right to throw it inside when it turns green. That's fine. But we have this terrible stop-start, amateurish-looking finish to races.

"We just need to go apex last corner or start/finish line. Make a point where you can't pass, just to get it going. I've done it in Supercars. Formula 1 does it. It just gets the race going."

The restart zone at Nashville was moved between Turns 9 and 10 this year, but McLaughlin was nonplussed. "We move restarts, we do this, we do that," he added. "Nothing works until we, like, police it. It pisses me off, it really does."



McLaughlin leads
O'Ward and Herta
at start of the race

RESULTS ROUND 13/17, NASHVILLE (USA), 6 AUGUST 80 LAPS – 168.000 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Kyle Kirkwood (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	1h58m02.3028s
2	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+0.7633s
3	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+1.7221s
4	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+3.1416s
5	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+4.1655s
6	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+5.9518s
7	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+6.4148s
8	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+6.6966s
9	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+8.0168s
10	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.0456s
11	Helio Castroneves (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.8718s
12	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.6859s
13	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+11.4056s
14	Rinus van Kalmthout (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+11.8172s
15	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+14.2271s
16	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+14.6874s
17	Sting Ray Robb (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR / Dallara-Honda	+15.1158s
18	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+16.5253s
19	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
20	Agustin Canapino (ARG)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	77 laps-accident
21	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	76 laps-steering
22	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	73 laps-accident
23	Benjamin Pedersen (DNK)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	73 laps-accident
24	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	71 laps-accident
25	Linus Lundqvist (SWE)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	69 laps-accident
26	Devlin DeFrancesco (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	65 laps-accident
27	David Malukas (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with HMD / Dallara-Honda	11 laps-rear wing/fire

Winner's average speed 85.396mph. Fastest lap Lundqvist 1m16.7115s, 98.551mph.

Q3 1 McLaughlin 1m14.6099s; 2 O'Ward 1m14.9395s; 3 Herta 1m15.2416s; 4 Palou 1m15.2462s; 5 Malukas 1m15.8703s; 6 Grosjean 1m15.9921s.

Q2 O'Ward 1m14.5944s; Herta 1m14.7128s; Palou 1m14.7218s; McLaughlin 1m14.7484s; Grosjean 1m14.7695s; Malukas 1m15.0519s; 7 Power 1m15.1384s; 8 Kirkwood 1m15.1641s; 9 Newgarden 1m15.4862s; 10 Rossi 1m15.5711s; 11 Lundqvist 1m16.0715s; 12 Dixon 1m16.7692s.

Q1 – GROUP 1 McLaughlin 1m15.1629s; Dixon 1m15.7094s; Malukas 1m15.7943s; Rossi 1m15.8303s; Newgarden 1m15.9347s; Lundqvist 1m16.0892s; 13 Lundgaard 1m16.0985s; 15 Rahal 1m16.1825s; 17 Castroneves 1m16.2203s; 19 van Kalmthout

1m16.3356s; 21 Ferrucci 1m16.6416s; 23 Canapino 1m16.6900s; 25 Pedersen no time.

Q1 – GROUP 2 Herta 1m15.0030s; Kirkwood 1m15.0561s; Palou 1m15.0849s; O'Ward 1m15.1251s; Grosjean 1m15.1570s; Power 1m15.4599s; 14 Rosenqvist 1m15.4638s; 16 Armstrong 1m15.5631s; 18 Ilott 1m16.0170s; 20 Ericsson 1m16.0420s; 22 Harvey 1m16.1193s; 24 Robb 1m16.3907s; 26 DeFrancesco 1m16.4369s; 27 Hunter-Reay 1m17.2417s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Palou 513; **2** Newgarden 429; **3** Dixon 387; **4** McLaughlin 371; **5** Ericsson 357; **6** O'Ward 353; **7** Power 337; **8** Lundgaard 297; **9** Kirkwood 290; **10** Herta 285.

MOTOGP

Last-lap Espargaro and Aprilia finally come good

It was an exciting British Grand Prix, with the Spaniard passing Francesco Bagnaia at the death to claim the victory

LEWIS DUNCAN

PHOTOGRAPHY GOLD AND GOOSE



After a five-week hiatus in the 2023 MotoGP world championship, the British Grand Prix proved that predictability has yet to invade the series. Two years on from his breakthrough Aprilia MotoGP podium at Silverstone, Aleix Espargaro breathtakingly held his nerve during a late rain shower and executed a daring raid for the lead on the last lap to secure a second career victory.

Little had gone right for Aprilia or Espargaro during the first half of the 2023 season. After becoming race winners in 2022 and challenging for the title almost to the end, expectations were considered high on the veteran Spaniard taking this a step further. As he sat, flanked by championship leader Francesco Bagnaia and Brad Binder, in the post-GP press conference, he conceded that, perhaps, he was too ambitious, and thus mistakes were bred.

"At the beginning of the season the expectation was too high, on myself and on the team," he said. "So, I made too many mistakes; I crashed in Argentina, I crashed in America, I lost a lot of points. I had good speed, many Fridays, many sessions in the dry I was close to 'Pecco' [Bagnaia], leading. But it doesn't matter, you have to be fast on Sunday. So, for one reason or another, I was not able to really match my speed with the results. And obviously we don't have the points we deserve."

British summertime popped off in a typically wet fashion on Saturday, rendering final practice and qualifying the Royal Regatta on Michelin rubber. Many riders, not least Espargaro, were fuming that no red flags were thrown. Espargaro's anger was compounded further by the fact that he could do no more than 12th on the grid.

A recovery to fifth in the drying sprint was a solid effort, but the nature of the new weekend format meant he had to repeat that in the full-length 20-lap grand prix on Sunday. Espargaro had been one of the quickest riders in the only dry running of the event on Friday, and rocketed up to sixth on the opening lap. He was third at the end of the fifth tour.

Silverstone is a good track for Aprilia's RS-GP. Its fast and flowing nature suits the agile bike, while the oft-experienced cooler temperatures batted away tyre pressure fears – not least on the first weekend of the newly enforced regulation (see panel, p53) on the matter causing further frustrations. But key for Espargaro was a new aero fairing Aprilia deployed at Silverstone, which increased turning and had a positive knock-on effect on his ability to pick the bike up and drive out of the corners.

When poleman Marco Bezzecchi crashed his VR46 Ducati on the sixth lap at Stowe Corner while chasing Bagnaia, who had taken the lead on lap two, Espargaro found himself in second.



Espargaro got ahead of Bagnaia when it mattered...



...and it was
a very happy
Spaniard with the
reigning champion
on the podium

That improved cornering performance proved critical in keeping the works Ducati of last year's British GP winner Bagnaia in sight. Fastest lap of the race went to Espargaro on the fourth tour at 2m00.286s, and fell to the Aprilia man again on lap seven at 2m00.208s. This proved to be 0.329s quicker than Bagnaia's best.

But the gap continued to hover around 0.5s. When a sprinkling of rain around the back part of the circuit emerged on lap 13, the leading duo had Maverick Vinales on the sister factory Aprilia and the KTM of Binder close on them, while RNF Aprilia rider Miguel Oliveira, who had risen from 16th on the grid and would ultimately end up fourth, was quickly creeping up behind.

Binder, Vinales and Espargaro traded places as the conditions marginally worsened, Bagnaia holding the fort in the lead. In MotoGP's previous wet contest, Bagnaia crashed while running in second. A mistake-prone, flawed genius, Bagnaia already has three non-scores to his credit in 2023 – all of them in full-point Sunday races. If there was ever a time when the wheels could come off the Bologna-made wagon, it was from lap 13 onwards at Silverstone.

To his credit, Bagnaia did not make a mistake, but his tyres just didn't have the same life in them as Espargaro's. Once the battle for second had shaken out in favour of the Aprilia rider, Espargaro made plans to get a move for the lead done into Village on the final lap. "I was a lot faster in corners two and three, so my plan was to overtake Pecco in two and three," Espargaro said. "But in corner two, preparing to go on the outside of Pecco, I did a highside.

"In corner two, preparing to go on the outside, I did a highside. I was very close to crashing"

I was very close to crashing, and I lost ground."

This forced him to recall how he was stronger than Bagnaia through Woodcote in 2022. He confirmed this theory, killing metres between himself and the Ducati. Then, out of Copse, he used his superior traction to draw alongside on the run to Maggotts, completing the overtaking move as he dared to brake just fractionally later. Espargaro shut down any options for retaliation, and took the chequered flag 0.215s clear, running his hand across his chest to underline the point that Aprilia was the one victorious. And Silverstone could represent a new start for the Noale marque, with more upgrades on the way in the coming rounds.

Even so, the 107-point gap to Bagnaia will be tough to close, and the Ducati rider's 20-point haul on Sunday following a mystifying slump to 14th in the sprint has put him 41 clear of Pramac Ducati man Jorge Martin, who was sixth in the GP behind Vinales. That Martin was the next-best Ducati rider behind Bagnaia in a generally tough GP for the Italian marque goes some way to showing how difficult the world champion will be to dethrone. »

There was no joy for Alex Marquez on Sunday. After he took his first MotoGP win in the sprint race, an unidentified gearshift problem on his Gresini Ducati brought his race to an early end on lap five. He would be joined by brother Marc 10 laps later. A moment for Enea Bastianini at Maggotts put his Ducati slightly wide on the change of direction and into the path of Marquez. It was an “unlucky” moment that belied the strangely positive tone the eight-time world champion held when speaking to the media.

After his crash-strewn opening eight rounds, Marquez rode to the limit of the troubled Honda. Results mattered little; getting miles on the bike and developing a base setting, which he says he is yet to do, is key now in Honda’s pursuit of digging itself out of the hole it lies cold in. He was 10th before the crash, so a solid result went begging. But at least he “rebuilt the confidence” he has been missing.

“I’m happy about the weekend because the target was try to rebuild a bit the confidence and try to find the base,” Marquez explained. “I rebuilt the confidence but, to find the base, we need more races, more race tracks, different situations. But the weekend was solid, stable, also I controlled myself. The approach of the weekend was very different. I forget the times, forget everything. I was riding with my feeling. If I didn’t feel [good], like in the sprint race, I did not push. If I felt [good] like today, I pushed more. My target was try to do a weekend without crashes from overriding. Today’s crash was not for overriding. I was not riding over the limits of the bike. So, it’s the correct approach to build the base.”

The same cannot be said of Fabio Quartararo at MotoGP’s other struggling Japanese marque. Myriad errors in qualifying left the 2021 world champion’s Yamaha last on the grid, with 21st in the sprint the best on offer as five of the six riders on Japanese bikes occupied those final places. Asked if he felt that now those riders were being embarrassed by those Japanese factories, he replied: “Well, of course.”

The underpowered Yamaha is little use in its current state. So Quartararo chucked a radical set-up onto his M1 – with new aero, rear shock and rear set-ups – to just try something for the GP. He told the media afterwards that he didn’t feel better on the bike, but was able to get as high as seventh before colliding with VR46’s



Luca Marini at the Loop on lap 18. It ripped the Yamaha’s front fairing off, Quartararo later noting that it wasn’t a mistake he had made – it was just the reality of racing with the M1. He pitted to take his wet-shod bike to score a point in 15th behind team-mate Franco Morbidelli, who chucked away a top-eight result when he swapped bikes on lap 15 when the rain began.

That proved a massive boost for Pol Espargaro. The Tech3 rider had been out of action since a violent accident at March’s Portuguese GP left him with multiple fractures to his back and jaw. He endured a month with his jaw wired shut and a painful recovery, and his racing comeback was a “bad moment” necessary to go through. Espargaro finished 16th in the sprint, and the mentally and physically exhausted Spaniard was moments away from pulling into his garage in the GP when he saw Morbidelli, Fabio Di Giannantonio and LCR stand-in Iker Lecuona come in for their wet bikes. The allure of points was enough to keep Espargaro on track through to the chequered flag, and he was 12th in the end, adding to the family emotion of the day as perhaps the biggest hurdle of his recovery has been overcome. ❄



RULEMAKERS PUT THE PRESSURE ON



Taramasso lifted lid on tyre ruling

From last weekend's British GP onwards, MotoGP riders must run to minimum tyre pressures of 1.9 bar for the front and 1.7 for the rear in races.

This rule has been in place since the start of the year, but was only officially regulated at Silverstone. It has been a point of concern all year, with riders noting during the British round that they have around a 0.1-bar window to play with before the front balloons too much and causes grip issues.

The system is supposed to be fully automated, but isn't for the time being. The race director therefore selects bikes at random after the sprint and the GP to check the spec Tyre Pressure Management System. Any transgression results first in a warning, then a three-second, six-second and 12-second penalty. Eventually, any rulebreaker will be disqualified if they are found to have run below the minimum front and rear pressure for more than 50% of a GP and 30% of a sprint.

The system is set to be fully automated in the coming races, but the clunky integration has begged the question: why was this not fully developed and introduced at the start of next season? That is a question without an official answer. As is why the explanation of implementing the rules only became fully known during a live interview with Michelin motorsport boss Piero Taramasso in FP1.

Ultimately, with the wet weather conditions across the Silverstone weekend, the tyre pressure rule didn't apply.



Binder prefers tyre not to touch track

RESULTS ROUND 9/20, SILVERSTONE (GBR), 6 AUGUST (20 LAPS – 73.322 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	40m40.367s
2	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	+0.215s
3	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+0.680s
4	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	RNF Aprilia	+0.750s
5	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+2.101s
6	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+7.903s
7	Luca Marini (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+9.099s
8	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	+9.298s
9	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	+9.958s
10	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	RNF Aprilia	+19.947s
11	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	GasGas Tech3 KTM	+20.296s
12	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	GasGas Tech3 KTM	+1m06.120s
13	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+1m27.605s
14	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Yamaha	+1m28.913s
15	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+1m29.075s
16	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+1m38.573s
17	Iker Lecuona (ESP)	LCR Honda	+1m49.674s
R	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	16 laps-accident
R	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	14 laps-collision
R	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	5 laps-accident
R	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	5 laps-gearshift
R	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	2 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 108.163mph. **Fastest lap** A Espargaro 2m00.208s, 109.792mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 **Bezzecchi** 2m15.359s; 2 **Miller** 2m15.629s; 3 **A Marquez** 2m15.771s; 4 **Bagnaia** 2m16.095s; 5 **A Fernandez** 2m16.101s; 6 **Marini** 2m16.152s; 7 **Martin** 2m16.272s; 8 **Vinales** 2m16.317s; 9 **Zarco** 2m16.661s; 10 **Binder** 2m16.677s; 11 **Morbidelli** 2m16.885s; 12 **A Espargaro** 2m17.406s.

QUALIFYING 1 **Morbidelli** 2m15.884s; **A Fernandez** 2m16.885s; 13 **Bastianini** 2m16.972s; 14 **M Marquez** 2m17.343s; 15 **P Espargaro** 2m18.118s; 16 **Oliveira** 2m18.264s; 17 **Lecuona** 2m18.833s; 18 **Di Giannantonio** 2m19.182s; 19 **Mir** 2m19.367s; 20 **R Fernandez** 2m21.128s; 21 **Nakagami** 2m22.341s; 22 **Quartararo** 2m22.931s.

SPRINT RACE (10 LAPS – 36.661 MILES)

1 **A Marquez** 21m52.317s; 2 **Bezzecchi** +0.366s; 3 **Vinales** +3.374s; 4 **Zarco** +5.671s; 5 **A Espargaro** +6.068s; 6 **Martin** +7.294s; 7 **Miller** +9.415s; 8 **A Fernandez** +9.850s; 9 **Binder** +10.435s; 10 **Oliveira** +11.247s; 11 **Marini** +17.365s; 12 **Di Giannantonio** +20.063s; 13 **Bastianini** +24.352s; 14 **Bagnaia** +25.527s; 15 **Morbidelli** +27.191s; 16 **P Espargaro** +27.693s; 17 **Mir** +29.062s; 18 **M Marquez** +29.326s; 19 **R Fernandez** +29.627s; 20 **Nakagami** +29.909s; 21 **Quartararo** +30.326s; 22 **Lecuona** +47.674s.

Winner's average speed 100.569mph. **Fastest lap** A Marquez 2m10.415s, 101.199mph.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 **Bagnaia** 214; 2 **Martin** 173; 3 **Bezzecchi** 167; 4 **Binder** 131; 5 **Zarco** 122; 6 **A Espargaro** 107; 7 **Marini** 107; 8 **Miller** 90; 9 **A Marquez** 75; 10 **Vinales** 74.

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 **Ducati** 317; 2 **KTM** 172; 3 **Aprilia** 153; 4 **Honda** 89; 5 **Yamaha** 84.



Alex Marquez won the sprint race

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

SILVERSTONE (GBR)

Fermin Aldeguer (below)

Speed Up Racing (Boscoscuro)

MOTO3

SILVERSTONE (GBR)

David Alonso

GasGas Aspar Team (GasGas)

Winning Porsche passes through. It was the biggest crowd at the track for a sportscar race since 1979



Nasr Porsche untroubled in IMSA

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**IMSA SPORTSCAR
ROAD AMERICA (USA)
6 AUGUST
ROUND 8/11**

Unpredictability has become a theme in this year's IMSA SportsCar Championship, and it was prevalent once again during Sunday's two-hour-and-40-minute race at Road America, where two of the top three GTP championship contenders hit trouble even before the green flag. Ultimately, the Porsche Penske Motorsport 963 of Matt Campbell and Felipe Nasr bounced back from a mediocre couple of practice sessions on Friday to claim an emphatic first victory of the season.

The Action Express Cadillac V-Series.R of Pipo Derani and Alexander Sims had seemed likely to extend its championship lead after Derani took full advantage of a productive test at the newly repaved 4.048-mile venue to claim pole position on Saturday afternoon. But their hopes seemed to have been dashed when Sims

lost control on his first lap in the brief warm-up session on race morning and backed the car heavily into the retaining wall at Turn 13. The damage was extensive and, with the race less than two hours away, the team faced an uphill battle to repair the car in time for the start. Remarkably, they did, although Derani had to start from the tail of the 10-car GTP field. They did well to salvage a sixth-place finish.

Second-in-points BMW M Team RLL's Connor De Phillippi qualified a respectable fifth, only to spin off at the Carousel on the first of two pace laps. The American's BMW M Hybrid V8 was rescued from the gravel trap by the efficient AMR Safety Team and duly took the start from the tail of the 45-car field, only for De Phillippi to lose control again at the infamous Kink a couple of laps later and cause serious damage to the car's left-hand side.

In their absence, Campbell – after turning an impressive lap to qualify second fastest – leapt into the lead at the

start and was never seriously challenged. Sebastien Bourdais led the chase initially in his Chip Ganassi-run Cadillac, but co-driver Renger van der Zande flat-spotted a tyre shortly after relieving the Frenchman and struggled for the remainder of the race. The pair eventually finished fourth.

The Meyer-Shank Acura ARX-06 of Colin Braun and Tom Blomqvist moved into second place after 42 laps, just after the halfway point, but was already 10 seconds in arrears of the leading Porsche. A charging Blomqvist reduced the deficit to a little under 2s inside the final 15 minutes, but two-time champion Nasr was up to the challenge and managed to extend the margin to a little over 4s at the completion of an 80-lap race that, against the odds, ran caution free from lap seven until the end.

Filipe Albuquerque and Ricky Taylor combined to finish third aboard Wayne Taylor's Acura, which boosted them into a slender 14-point lead with only two GTP races remaining.

Ben Keating qualified down in fourth in LMP2, but the American soon moved into the lead, and Frenchman Paul-Loup Chatin completed the task to earn the pair's first win of the season for the PR1-Mathiasen Motorsports team. Australian Josh Burdon filled in admirably for an absent Felipe Fraga to maintain Gar Robinson's unbeaten record this year in LMP3 for the Riley team.

The Heart of Racing Team's Alex Riberas and Ross Gunn earned a second straight GTD Pro victory in their Aston Martin Vantage, while Madison Snow and Bryan Sellers took their fourth win of 2023 in GTD with Paul Miller Racing's BMW M4 GT3.

JEREMY SHAW



Huracans blow them away in wet and dry

DTM
NURBURGRING (DEU)
5-6 AUGUST
ROUND 4/8

Lamborghini scored a double DTM victory at the Nurburgring, with factory driver Mirko Bortolotti and junior racer Maximilian Paul sharing the spoils on a weekend affected by intermittent rain.

It was Bortolotti who drew first blood in Saturday's opening race, the 33-year-old finally scoring his maiden win after a 2022 season in which he challenged for the championship but never stood on the top step of the podium. The SSR Performance driver made a clean start from pole position and never looked back, taking the chequered flag by over a second.

Although the Italian didn't face any direct competition from his rivals, he had to overcome several hurdles along the way, including some light rain that caught out Christian Engelhart going into Turn 1, with his out-of-control Porsche slamming into the back of the similar 911 of Ayhan Guven. Two safety car periods, first for the intra-Porsche collision and a second for Alessio Deledda's crash at the same



Bortolotti leads team-mate
Perera on Saturday

ADAC MOTORSPORT

corner, also left Bortolotti vulnerable, but he perfected the restart each time to take a comfortable win.

Second place went to Winward Mercedes driver Lucas Auer, who made a brilliant launch from eighth on the grid to run fourth early on, before passing the Abt Audi of Ricardo Feller and Manthey EMA Porsche driver Thomas Preining in quick succession at the second restart to secure the runner-up spot, with Preining third.

Bortolotti had to withdraw from Sunday's race after the SSR mechanics failed to fix the issues that first emerged in qualifying and had already left him facing a back-of-the-grid start. But Grasser driver Paul, replacing Mick Wishofer on a one-off basis for the Nurburgring, put in a heroic drive from 13th on the grid to ensure Lamborghini remained on top in the absence of its biggest star.

On a track that was only partly wet, Paul jumped to seventh in just two laps on his grooved Pirelli tyres, while polesitter Feller held the lead from Winward duo David Schumacher and Auer. When rain began to fall, Paul made some rapid strides to move up to second behind Auer, who had already cleared both Schumacher and Feller to take the lead.

Auer and Paul, along with Team Bernhard Porsche driver Laurin Heinrich, extended their first stint until the VSC was deployed for Deledda's stranded SSR Lamborghini at Turn 1, setting up a three-way fight for victory.

Although Auer had the edge over the

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR

ROAD AMERICA (USA)

- GTP** Matt Campbell/Felipe Nasr
Porsche Penske M'sport (Porsche 963)
- LMP2** Ben Keating/Paul-Loup Chatin
PR1/Mathiasen M'sports (ORECA 07)
- LMP3** Gar Robinson/Josh Burdon
Riley Motorsports (Ligier JSP320)
- GTD Pro** Ross Gunn/Alex Riberas
Heart of Racing (Aston Martin Vantage)
- GTD** Bryan Sellers/Madison Snow
Paul Miller Racing (BMW M4 GT3)

DTM

NURBURGRING (DEU)

- Race 1** Mirko Bortolotti
SSR (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo2)
- Race 2** Maximilian Paul
GRT (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo2)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com



Paul won on just
his second DTM
race weekend

ADAC MOTORSPORT

rest of the field before the pitstops, it was Paul who had the upper hand in the second stint, and he rapidly closed in on the Austrian with every single lap. A thrilling duel ensued, with Auer trying his best to defend his position, but Paul finally found a way past on lap 27 of 35 with a brilliant move at the hairpin. It made the 23-year-old the eighth different driver to score a victory in 2023, as the trend of a new winner in every race continued. Auer eventually had to settle for third after being passed by the Porsche of Heinrich.

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More rain, more chaos, another Nissan victory

SUPER GT
FUJI (JPN)
6 AUGUST
ROUND 4/8

Nissan scored its second win of the Super GT season in another chaotic race at Fuji featuring mixed conditions and a red flag. This time it was the NISMO-run NDDP Racing Z of Katsumasa Chiyo and Mitsunori Takaboshi that prevailed, taking advantage of the superiority of their Michelin tyres in the wet.

The pair had won the previous race at Suzuka on the road, only to be later penalised for having not completed their second mandatory pitstop when the race was abandoned, but this time there was no doubting who the rightful winners were.



Takaboshi, who took over from Chiyo for the third and final stint, was already looking in a strong position when the race was suspended on lap 68 of 100 following a dramatic fire for the Tsuchiya Engineering GT300 Toyota that took marshals some time to control. When the race was about to resume, a sudden downpour soaked the track, and Takaboshi made short work of the three Bridgestone-shod Toyota GR Supras that had started ahead of him when it got back under way.

Once out front, Takaboshi was unstoppable, going on to take the chequered flag 45 seconds ahead of the ARTA Honda NSX-GT of Nirei Fukuzumi and Hiroki Otsu. This pairing was penalised post-race for refuelling and changing tyres at the same time, dropping them to third and promoting the Nakajima Racing Honda, the only GT500 car on Dunlop tyres, of Takuya Izawa and Kakunoshin Ota to second. Ota had finished fourth on the road

behind the Team Kunimitsu Honda shared by Naoki Yamamoto and Tadasuke Makino, who suffered the same penalty as the ARTA team. That dropped the Kunimitsu drivers to sixth behind two Toyota crews – the TOM'S car of Sho Tsuboi and Ritomo Miyata that led the standings coming into the race, and the Cerumo Supra of Yuji Tachikawa and Hiroaki Ishiura. Tsuboi and Miyata qualified last owing to their heavy success handicap, but are now only five points behind new leaders Chiyo and Takaboshi at the halfway point of the season.

The early part of the race was also held in wet conditions before the track dried out. The Kondo Racing Nissan led the field away from pole, but appeared uncompetitive in the wet and ended up with just a single point for 10th place.

JAMIE KLEIN

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WEEKEND WINNERS

SUPER GT
FUJI (JPN)
Katsumasa Chiyo/Mitsunori Takaboshi
NDDP Racing (Nissan Fairlady Z)

INDY NXT
NASHVILLE (USA)
Christian Rasmussen
HMD Motorsports



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Rasmussen holds off McElrea

INDY NXT
NASHVILLE (USA)
6 AUGUST
ROUND 8/12

Christian Rasmussen dominated last Sunday's Indy NXT race at Nashville via multiple late-race restarts to extend his points lead.

After qualifying was rained out, Rasmussen started from pole thanks to the grid being set by championship order. Title rival Nolan Siegel, who suffered a hefty crash in the sole practice session on Friday, fell back from second place to fifth in the early stages, passed by Hunter McElrea, Jacob Abel and Louis Foster.

Rasmussen raced into a big lead from McElrea, while Abel and Foster clashed twice on the high-speed approach to Turn 4. The first full-course yellow flew after half distance, the first of a sequence of cautions for crashes that led to a four-lap sprint to the finish.

Rasmussen held off McElrea's late challenge to win by a second. "We were really good on the restarts and always managed to pull a gap," said the Dane.

Behind them, the Foster/Abel duel got physical on two more occasions. It eventually led to British racer Foster going down the Turn 1 escape road, dropping him to 11th. He made a remarkable recovery to finish sixth.

Abel was handed a blocking penalty,



losing him a spot to Siegel that he immediately regained at the next corner to finish third. James Roe charged through the pack to fourth, passing Siegel on the final lap. Behind Foster, who remonstrated with Abel on the slowing-down lap, Rasmus Lindh took seventh ahead of Jamie Chadwick.

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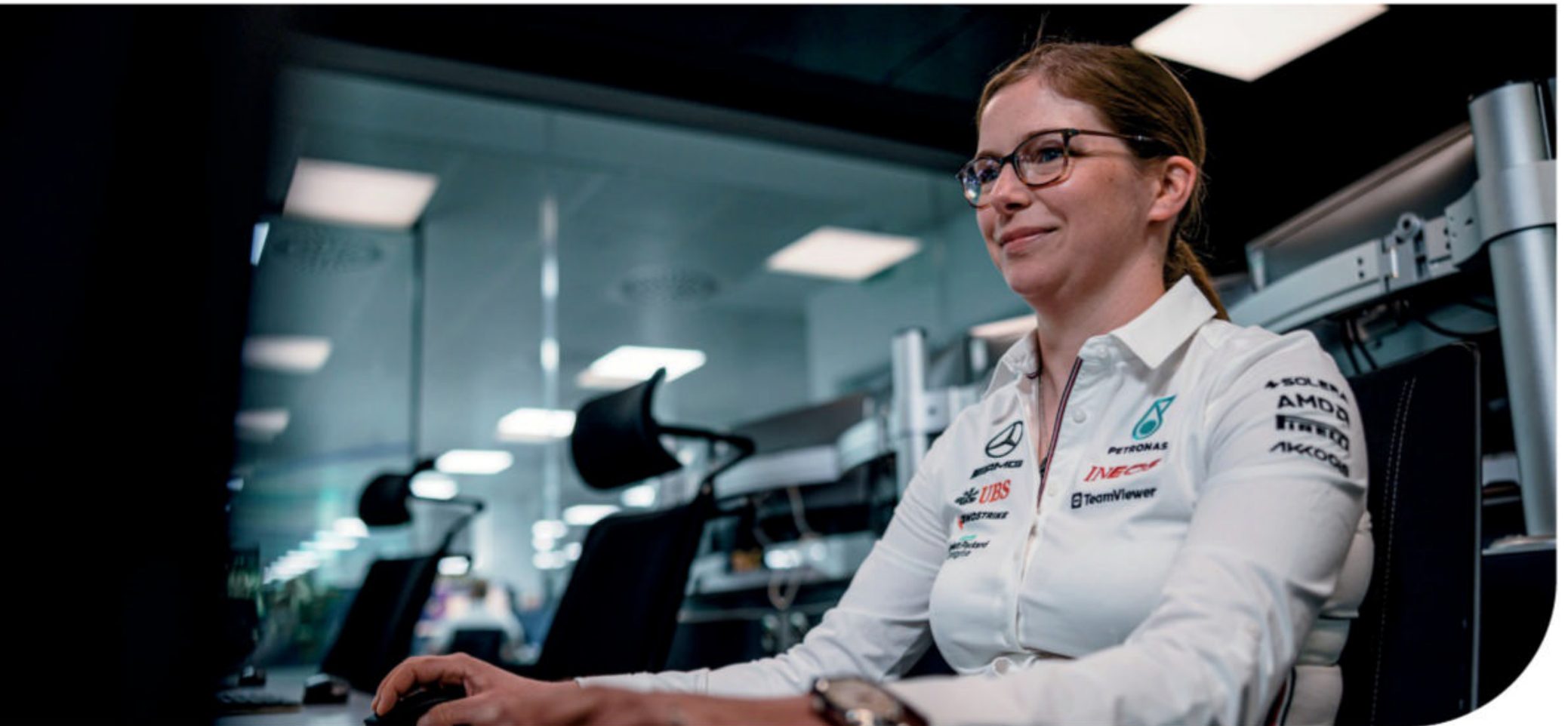
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- Contribution of innovation and improvements to continuously expand the service portfolio and the service quality
- Control of the operational implementation and preparation of reports and documentation throughout the entire project process
- Leading and overall responsibility of the project team

Requirements

- Industry-specific successfully completed apprenticeship, a university degree or comparable relevant professional experience
- Several years of professional experience as a programme manager with overall responsibility in the event industry within an international environment, plus live broadcast experience including on-air responsibility
- Very good written and spoken German and English skills

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Requirements

- Excellent CAD skills in Catia V5, V6 or 3Dx
- Experience in designing complex surface models
- Strong technical understanding
- Possess good spatial imagination, are innovative and you have a flair for new approaches to solutions
- Can perform and deliver under time pressure and to strict deadlines
- A team-player who can work be given a project lead with minimal supervision
- You are organised and you have a structured workflow
- Experience in design of wind tunnel models and aero surfaces would be an advantage
- A degree in mechanical engineering or equivalent would be an advantage.

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The ideal candidate will have experience in a similar role within F2, F3, Touring car or other high level Motorsport series and be used to working in a fast-paced & high-pressured environment. This role requires frequent travel to events, so flexibility is a key attribute in the successful No 2 Mechanic. This is a physically demanding position, and we take functional fitness and attitude to health very seriously.

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WIND TUNNEL PROJECT ENGINEER
Alpine F1 Team

Alpine F1 Team are looking to strengthen our team with a Wind Tunnel Project Engineer to carry out tests and analyse data at weekends.

The Role

Reporting to a Principal Aerodynamicist in our Wind Tunnel Operations group, you will work independently at weekends to complete test programmes using the wind tunnel and other test rigs to support the development and validation of our experimental tools.

An excellent written and verbal communicator, you will ensure that your weekend and weekday colleagues in Aerodynamics and other departments are kept up to date on progress, lessons learned, and actions required. As a great team player, you will proactively engage in other activities such as the installation and extraction of the wind tunnel model, diagnosis of faults, and supporting the maintenance of the tunnel and related facilities.

This is a weekend role with core hours consisting of three 12-hour shifts, with appropriate breaks, typically on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. However, some weekday working may be required at pre-planned points during the year.

Requirements

The primary requirement for this role is to have experience in the operation of wind tunnels or test rigs, and the subsequent analysis and validation of the data acquired. A degree in an engineering discipline would be an advantage.

You must be proactive and a good communicator, comfortable working independently and making decisions based on information acquired.

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- Understands and supports the package constraints for the components.
- Working with suppliers, concept teams & DMU to ensure components and systems meet technical and package target.
- Ensures design solutions are optimised to support vehicle assembly & service requirements.
- Works with other team members to develop component and system specifications.
- Ensure design solutions deliver systems that meet attribute targets in NVH, thermal, durability, visibility & performance related attributes.
- Ensures the components interface seamlessly to the wider car including structural interfaces & body panels.
- Support cross functional design reviews
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SENIOR ELECTRONICS BUYER
Xtrac

Xtrac are looking for a Senior Electronics Buyer to develop and own the Electronics Supply Chain strategy in a busy and expanding department.

The Role

This role will provide purchasing support across all projects and products to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery from the supply chain. Taking ownership of all subcontract procurement across both hardware and software, the ideal candidate will need to have experience in sourcing electronics within the automotive or motorsport sector.

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To be successful in this role, you will be:

- CIPS qualified and/or related degree in Electronics Engineering
- Able to work to tight deadlines and manage multiple priorities
- Organised and proactive
- Resilient and able to work under pressure
- Able to resolve quality issues

Requirements

- Extensive and proven experience in sourcing Electronic Components and Services
- Excellent communication skills
- An innovative approach to problem solving
- Understanding of technical manufacturing queries

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McGuinness to make **Trucks** debut at Donington

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Mini maestros

Double delight for Padmore,
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Prize money for **Equipe's**
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has a test outing



Cook and Gardiner shine
in the **Donington** gloom



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Convoy in the Park
will run this weekend
at Donington Park

OLLIEREAD

McGuinness set for Trucks debut at Donington Park

TRUCK RACING

Isle of Man TT legend John McGuinness is due to make his Truck racing debut at Donington Park this weekend.

McGuinness, a 23-time TT winner, will compete in four races in the International Truck Prix during the Convoy in the Park meeting for Team Oliver Racing. The 51-year-old, who has competed on four wheels in the Fun Cup and Ginetta GT Academy, recently acquired a Scania truck that he will use this weekend.

"I've been watching a bit on YouTube, there's a bit going on," said McGuinness of Truck racing. "It's quite aggressive at times. I've done plenty of racing but bike racing isn't really a contact sport.

"I'll give as good as we get, I'm going to be a rookie so I'll have a target on my back.

As long as I hold my own and enjoy it.

"I want to do a decent job, I know I'm not going to get anywhere near the front with them guys who've been doing it for donkey's years but, as long as I make a good fist of it and enjoy it, it might open a few more doors in the future. I can't race bikes forever.

"I'll be there early, for any track time I want to be in the truck. I want to look at the data, look at what the other drivers are doing and get out on track as much as I can to learn as much as I can. I don't want to go there to bumble around at the back, I want to mix it up a bit."

The International Truck Prix will make its debut at Donington, with two races to be held on both Saturday and Sunday.

The races are open to British and international competitors, with McGuinness set to be joined by John Newell and Mark Taylor, who both compete in the FIA European Truck Racing Championship. Three-time British Truck Racing Division 2 champion Luke Garrett will also line up on the grid in a brand-new MAN truck among many more familiar Truck racing names, including Brad Smith, Jamie Anderson, Martin Gibson, Terry Gibbon, Ray Coleman and John Bowler.

As well as Trucks, a number of other racing categories will be in action in the form of the CNC Heads Sports/Saloons, Intermarque Silhouettes, Kumho BMWs, MG Owners' Club and Pickups.



McGuinness has already
raced on four wheels

GOLD AND GOOSE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

SPEEDFEST DATE SET

The date for the 2024 American SpeedFest meeting has been announced, with the popular event due to take place on 8-9 June next year. The 11th running of the event at Brands Hatch is once again set to be headlined by the NASCAR Euro Series and feature other on-track supports. The full details, including ticket information, will be announced later this year.

LOCAL LEGENDS JOIN IN

Three Scottish Legends drivers will join the Elite Cup when it races on the British Touring Car Championship support bill at Knockhill this weekend. Ryan McLeish, Ben McNeice and Brent Bowie are set to join the field with a 30-car-plus entry expected for the final six races of the season. Connor Mills heads into the finale with a lead of 30 points over Robert Barrable.

FIRST TIME OUT AT BRANDS

Making his first appearance at Brands Hatch on Sunday was Sri Lankan Ashan Silva at the wheel of his two-litre Mini Spaceframe. After qualifying on the front row for the opening Fastest Mini in the World race, Silva claimed a podium in race one with third behind race regulars Bill Richards (Maguire Mini Duratec Traveller) and winner Richard Billingham in his two-litre Vauxhall VXR turbo-powered Clubman.

NEW JORDAN GOES RACING

Bradley Jordan, son of successful racer Mike and younger brother of 2013 British Touring Car champion Andrew, made his racing debut in the Mini Festival at Brands Hatch last weekend. After a blown engine in Saturday testing prevented him from taking part in the S-Class races as planned, a spare engine borrowed from his father's car meant he participated in the Mini Se7en double-header instead (below), where he recorded a best result of 10th in race one.



GARY HAWKINS



Prize money for final winners at Equipe's Super Sprint event

MICK WALKER

EQUIPE CLASSIC RACING

Equipe Classic Racing is introducing prize money for the final winners of its innovative Super Sprint event at Silverstone in October.

The meeting's unique format was first used in 2021 and features a series of short 10-lap sprint races – in contrast to the mini-enduros that make up the majority of Equipe's regular calendar – open to pre-1966 GT

and tin-top machinery. From each of these races, the top half of the drivers progress in one direction and the bottom half in another. After a series of such heats, four finals will be held with the intention that each of these will comprise a group of cars and drivers that are evenly matched. But it is not a knockout competition, so each driver gets the chance of plenty of track time throughout the day.

For this year, the winner of each final will receive £500, the second-placed finishers £250 and third position £125.

"We think this will be a fantastic way to end the season," said Equipe partner Rob Cull. "The first 10 laps of any race are the most exciting and we have 16 track events across the day. Drivers will get a different mix of cars and competitors as the day goes on. We are always looking to create

new and exciting experiences and we believe adding prize money will make this event even more fun and competitive! The sprint brings genuine fresh energy and fun to our end-of-season Silverstone meeting."

The Super Sprint returns to Silverstone after being held at Donington Park last season. Jamie Boot's TVR Griffith won the quickest final in 2022. Tony Bianchi's Farrallac prevailed in the inaugural edition.

Demo laps for roaring BRM V16 at Silverstone Festival

SILVERSTONE FESTIVAL

A V16-engined BRM will return to Silverstone at this year's Festival, 70 years after one of the cars last raced at the Northamptonshire circuit in period.

The Silverstone Festival is the latest destination for the first of three continuation models of the BRM Type 15 V16, with the Hall & Hall-built car set to conduct demonstration laps on the Sunday of the event. It has already appeared at Shelsley Walsh, Prescott and last year's Goodwood Revival.

The notorious V16 has plenty of history at Silverstone, where it was

due to make its debut in the British Grand Prix in 1950. After unsuccessful subsequent appearances, Juan Manuel Fangio and Ken Wharton finished second and third in the machines in a Formula Libre race held at the 1953 British GP.

"No one who hears one of these awe-inspiring BRM V16 engines will ever forget the experience – the remarkable noise never fails to raise the hairs on the back of your neck," said event director Nick Wigley. "The car's history is inescapably linked to Silverstone during the early 1950s and we are thrilled to



be bringing that story back to life as part of our special 75th birthday celebrations at this year's Festival."

In addition to celebrating the circuit's 75th, the 25-27 August event represents the same milestone for NASCAR, while other new displays for this year include a selection of dragsters.

A total of 21 other GT40s will be challenging last year's Dutch victors



Record 22 GT40s among the entry for September's Spa Six Hours

SPA SIX HOURS

A record 22 Ford GT40s – comprising a fifth of the 109-strong entry, eight with previous winners aboard – will make for a spectacular start to the 30th Spa Six Hours race for pre-1966 cars on 30 September.

Sixteen of the 29 editions run since 1993 have been won by GT40s. Indeed, in what has become an increasingly one-sided battle, the past 11 have finished that way.

Belgian veterans Jean 'Beurlys' Blaton and Willy Braillard, anchored by Pierre Dieudonne, took the chequer in 1994. Germany's Christian Glaesel, victorious in 2003 and 2011, is the earliest of the GT40 winners saddling them again this year, sharing with Seb Perez.

Dutchmen David and Olivier Hart, with Nicky Pastorelli, defend their 2022 crown, but immediate predecessors Olly Bryant/

James Cottingham, Miles Griffiths/Gordon Shedden and German Marcus Graf von Oeynhausen with Belgium's Nico Verdonck are out to deny them.

Triple World Touring Car champion Andy Priaulx, a World Endurance race winner in modern Ford GTs, strengthens the Griffiths/Shedden duo in Philip Walker's car. NASCAR legend Jimmie Johnson makes his Spa debut alongside Dario and Marino Franchitti in another.

Local hero Eric van de Poele, partnering American Ford CEO Jim Farley once more, quadruple race winner Martin Stretton (with Nic Minassian and Historic F1 pilot Kyle Tilley), and Gary Pearson alongside Alex Brundle join other stars in GT40s.

Similarly powered TVR Griffiths and Shelby Cobras, plus Jaguar E-types and 26R-spec Lotus Elan, head the opposition.

MARCUS PYE

Coyne spends money on a Mustang

HISTORIC TOURING CARS

Former single-seater ace Dave Coyne says that his half share in the Ford Mustang he jointly owns with Mark Wright is the first time he's owned a racing car since his early



Formula Ford days in the 1980s.

Wright and Coyne have bought the car built and raced by the late John Miles and are contesting a range of pre-'66 touring car races with the Mustang (left).

Coyne previously raced it with Miles and said: "We were going to race it as a three-man team in the Spa Six Hours before John became unwell. It was put away for two years, so we're just getting it sorted now. I'd only ever owned two racing cars before this – my first Merlyn Mk20 Formula Ford and then the ex-Roberto Moreno Royale RP26!"

PAUL LAWRENCE

PARRY'S HISTORICS MOVE

Mazda MX-5 frontrunner Beau Parry has joined the ranks of historic racing in a Ford Escort and a Ford Mustang owned by his father Nigel. Parry has raced extensively in Mazdas but has only done a couple of historic races so far and ran both cars at the Oulton Park Gold Cup. "I wanted to get some experience racing and then move up to this," said Parry. "But I do enjoy the Mazdas. I've done a lot of races so far, but this is very different and I love it. The plan is to do four or five big events with the historics each year and continue with the Mazdas."

PRICE CUTS AT COMBE

The new management team at Castle Combe circuit has revealed a reduction in ticket prices for the remaining events at the Wiltshire circuit this year. For regular race meetings, it will now cost an adult £15 in advance and all on-the-gate prices have also been reduced by £5, while concession passes have additionally been reintroduced.

BEVAN STANDS DOWN

The Historic Sports Car Club has revealed that its chairman Roger Bevan has stood down with immediate effect for "personal reasons". Bevan, who has played a key role coordinating the Historic Formula 2 series, took over as chairman from Frank Lyons three years ago. In a statement, the HSCC said: "The board and members of the club thank Roger for his work in his time as chairman and wish both him and his wife Mo the very best for the future."

OLD TIN-TOP FOR DICK

Toyota Gazoo Racing UK boss Christian Dick made a one-off race return at Oulton Park last weekend. The British Touring Car team owner shared a Ford Capri (below) with historic racer Neil Merry in the Equipe 70s race, run in challenging weather conditions, finishing fifth overall and second in class. Dick has raced only occasionally since his 2010 British GT Championship G4-class campaign at the wheel of a Ginetta G50.





NASAMAX BACK IN ACTION Last raced at Spa in 2004, the Nasamax LMP1 car, which originally competed as a Reynard 01Q, had a test run at Donington Park at the end of last month in Sam Hancock’s hands. The car tackled the 2003 Le Mans 24 Hours with Robbie Stirling, Romain Dumas and Werner Lupberger using bioethanol, and set the fastest time of the weekend through the Mulsanne speed trap. The car was the first ever to be homologated for LMP1 in 2004 and now sports a 5.5-litre, 650bhp, Judd V10. Stirling still owns the car, which was also driven by his son Dean later in the test. Hancock also had a run out in the ex-DAMS Lola B98/10 that took four wins in the 1999 Sports Racing World Cup, and has been in a museum since 2002. **Photograph by Peter Scherer**

Summer break ‘reset’ helped Sharp return to form

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Sharp was back at the head of F4 field at Croft

BRITISH F4

British Formula 4 frontrunner Louis Sharp says he used the summer break as a “reset” to get his title ambitions back on track, an approach that immediately yielded a return to winning ways.

The Rodin Carlin driver, who was fourth in last year’s standings despite missing the first event, had headed the leaderboard from the opening round

this season. But he had failed to win a race since the first Donington Park weekend, and lost the points lead before the series resumed at Croft at the end of last month.

Although his double success was not enough to wrestle the advantage back from Hitech’s Will Macintyre, the gap now stands at six points with three events remaining, beginning with Knockhill this weekend.

“We started off the year really well and then the last couple of rounds [before Croft] we haven’t quite had the pace,” said Sharp. “I feel like I’ve been driving really well all year but I’m not too sure why we seemed to lose a little bit of pace.

“We’ve worked really hard over the last few weeks and for us to bounce back and get a double win and pole is great.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

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Khera escapes serious injury in Donington New Millennium crash

NEW MILLENNIUM

Versatile GT and touring car racer Lucky Khera spent Sunday night in hospital following a second heavy impact of the day in team-mate Jasver Sapra's BMW M3 E36 during the Classic Sports Car Club's New Millennium race at Donington Park.

The 48-year-old was disputing fourth place with Dominic Malone on lap 19 of the 40-minute event when they arrived abreast at the left-handed Goddard corner onto the start/finish straight.

There was no contact between the cars but Khera's, on the outside, did not slow as expected and slammed into the barrier driver's side first. The chequered flag was flown a lap early as marshals tended the shaken Khera, who reportedly

climbed out unaided.

Three hours earlier, Khera's qualifying ended abruptly with the grey M3 embedded in the tyre wall at the Melbourne Hairpin due to a suspected brake switch failure. Its rear bumper and wing were damaged but, after repairs, the car was re-scrutineered and given a ticket to compete.

Khera was taken to the circuit's medical centre post-race, then transferred to hospital for precautionary scans. He was discharged on Monday afternoon and phoned the CSCC on Tuesday morning to confirm that he was OK and on the mend. Until that call, Motorsport UK, which had routinely impounded the badly damaged car, could not release it to the team for further investigation.

MARCUS PYE



Dates revealed for Goodwood events

GOODWOOD

Goodwood has confirmed the dates for two of its three main motorsport events next year. The Members' Meeting will be held on 13-14 April, while the Festival of Speed is scheduled for 11-14 July – and tickets for this are due to go on sale on 6 November, with Goodwood members able to buy them a week earlier.

Spectators who held tickets for the Saturday of this year's event, which was cancelled due to heavy rain, have had their passes rolled over to the equivalent day next year, meaning there will be limited new tickets available.



Next year's Members' Meeting, meanwhile, will represent a decade since the event was first revived and details of the celebrations are due to be announced in the coming months.

Before then, the 2023 Revival, celebrating 25 years since the Goodwood circuit was reopened, is scheduled for 8-10 September.

SUPERKARTS GO DUTCH

The annual running of the Dutch GP Superkarts is taking place at Assen this weekend with British and Irish drivers making up over half of the 57-kart entry. Topping the Division 1 list is Liam Morley, the current leader of the BSRC Super Series. He will be joined by Carl Hulme, Matt Robinson, Sam Moss and Andy Gulliford. They will have stiff opposition from reigning European Superkart champion Peter Elkmann and French championship protagonists Richard van de Nes and Julien Goullancourt.

TAYLOR'S COPENHAGEN WIN

Briton Nick Taylor won Sunday's Copenhagen GP for Historic Formula Junior, repeating his 2016 victory in the Danish capital's Bellahøj Park in his front-engined Elva-BMC 100. After a race-long scrap, the Briton beat Norwegian Petter Huse (Swedish-built Focus IV) and Saturday winner Robin Longdon (Lola Mk5A).

HOUR-LONG PENALTY

Driving infringements kept clerks and stewards busy at last weekend's Classic Sports Car Club Donington Park event. Among a litany of penalties, Tin Tops debutant Lee Bull was excluded and had his licence endorsed with six points for causing a collision, driving in a manner incompatible with general safety. Elsewhere, a New Millennium novice received a 5204-second penalty (the difference between the Code 60 speed limit and his 132km/h squared)! His time for his seven laps completed was thus 1h41m58.142s!

PORSCHE JUNIOR WANTED

Applications are open for drivers interested in becoming the 2024-25 Porsche Carrera Cup GB Junior, following in current points leader Adam Smalley's (below) footsteps. The chosen driver will receive £85,000 towards each of their two Carrera Cup campaigns as well as a wealth of support and opportunities from Porsche. Drivers must be aged between 16 and 21 on 1 February 2024 to be eligible and applications close on 21 August.



One day or two, that is the question

The majority of race meetings last a whole weekend, but there are arguments for and against these events being better than those held over a single day



TWO DAYS
STEPHEN LICKORISH

One of the numerous ways in which club racing has evolved over the years has been the proliferation of two-day meetings. In previous decades, single-day events were very much the norm, two-dayers the outlier – now it's the other way around. And, unsurprisingly, there are both positives and negatives to this.

Take last Sunday's Mini Festival at Brands Hatch as an example. That event, which attracts thousands of spectators through the gates, has traditionally been held over a weekend but was this year condensed into one non-stop day of classic Mini action. Brilliant for those spectating – and the absence of interloping non-Mini support series made it feel more focused – but not always quite so good for those taking part. Having qualifying and two races in the space of a few hours on one day can be very hectic and leaves little margin for error if things go wrong. While some prefer such fast pace and reduced hanging around between track activity, for those very much interested in the social side it leaves less chance to catch up.

Some organisers, such as the Mini 7 Racing Club, pride themselves on creating a great, relaxed atmosphere at events, such as having a barbecue in the evening. That's far harder to achieve at single-day meetings, particularly if the circuit is in use by others the day before and drivers may not travel down in advance.

Another key benefit of weekend-long fixtures surrounds more distant events. Rather than competitors travelling miles and possibly still needing to stay overnight anyway, a full weekend of racing – particularly if it's a triple-header – better justifies the long journey. A single-day Anglesey clubbie would likely prove less attractive than a full weekend, for instance.

And all of these factors do have a significant impact. Time and money have never been so precious for so many than at present, and therefore having enjoyable race events where competitors are able to get the most from their time away from home is important. Ultimately, two-day meetings are difficult to organise at venues such as Oulton Park with strict noise restrictions, and do not work in all circumstances, but there are some clear benefits to having longer events.

“Those interested in the social side have less chance to catch up”



ONE DAY
STEFAN MACKLEY

One-day events may not be the norm anymore, but they most certainly still have a place on the national calendar, and it's noticeable how many have been taking place over the past few weeks.

There are several reasons for this, not least that the vast majority of competitors taking up motorsport do so as a hobby rather than on a professional basis. It means managing family life can be a tricky balancing act and, although many drivers do take their families to race meetings, not all wish to be away for an entire weekend. Not only that, but many have full-time jobs during the week, which means an event that only runs on a Saturday, for example, gives competitors the chance to travel home and rest ahead of work on the Monday.

Work/life balance aside, there's also a reduced cost to only racing over one day, with clubs not having to charge as much money for track time, and with less being spent on

accommodation and food by competitors in general. Given the cost of living is only going in one direction, anything that can be done to keep expenditure down can only be a good thing.

From a logistical point of view, it's also easier for clubs to organise one-day events than a full weekend of action. It goes

“Work/life balance aside, racing over one day has a reduced cost”

without saying that there are fewer races and championships to worry about – including less chance of filling the timetable with depleted grids – but it also means that less strain is placed on trying to find enough marshals to cover a two-day meeting.

The orange army is the lifeblood of the sport, and having only one day of racing means less of a commitment for them and other volunteers at a time when marshals are already spread thin.

It's a business model that has worked for a number of circuits over the years, including Castle Combe, Oulton Park and Mallory Park, which are impacted by noise restrictions more than other venues. No doubt many competitors do prefer the two-day format, but there's still a demand for one-day meetings to remain a fixture on calendars.

Collier battles with Wright for the lead in the Cockshoot Cup



Cockshoot Cup double winner is made of the Wright stuff

**OULTON PARK
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5 AUGUST**

Mark Wright took both victories as the MG Car Club's Cockshoot Cup returned to home territory at Oulton Park for the second and final time this season.

Wright – campaigning the ex-Vince Martin MGF Cup car, complete with a recreation of its period livery – did not have complete control over proceedings, however. In the opening race, David Morrison made a sensational start from row three in his Midget to get alongside the polesitting MGF, but narrowly lost out into Old Hall.

Ray Collier's MG ZR 190 pushed Morrison back to third at the start of the second lap, before he took the lead on lap three. Wright narrowed the gap before retaking the place at Cascades on lap six of 10 and easing out a six-second margin over Collier, with Morrison finishing third. The battle of the race, for fourth, was claimed by Chris Greenbank's F machine over Rhys Higginbotham's class-winning ZR 160.

Wright's task in race two was made

somewhat easier by Collier finding the Cascades gravel on the first lap, which heralded a brief caution period. When racing resumed, Wright charged away from Greenbank and David Coulthard's ZR 190. Meanwhile, Phil Rigby continued his perfect season in the roadgoing MGF class, therefore maintaining his points lead.

Rob Cull made the best start to the Equipe GTS race in his TVR Grantura Mk3 but, although Tom Smith was slow away in his MGB, he didn't drop lower than second. Multiple race winner Smith reeled Cull in and seized the lead at Hislops on lap three as both had a moment on the exit.

The frontrunners took their mandatory stops at the earliest opportunity, with the ever-spectacular Smith stretching his lead to almost half a minute in the second phase even in spite of a grassy moment at Knickerbrook. Ali Topley held third in his Elva Courier initially but, after the pitstops, Lewis Saunders surged onto his tail in his MGB and moved ahead at Hislops. Simon Ashworth's Grantura was fifth – he was challenged by Andrew Wenman before the Morgan +4 driver went off at Lakeside.

The combined Equipe Pre-'63 and 70s race was one of fluctuating fortunes for Wenman, who switched to his yellow Morgan +8. As rain started to fall, conditions favoured the Ford Capri RS2600 of Nick Matthews and he took the lead after passing John Shaw's +8 and Wenman.

As the brollies went down, Wenman started to take time out of Matthews, and he emerged from the compulsory stops with a 14s lead. But it started to rain again near the end, tipping the balance back in favour of Matthews – especially when Wenman went off into the gravel at Lodge, bringing

WEEKEND WINNERS

MGCC COCKSHOOT CUP

Races 1 & 2 Mark Wright (MGF)

EQUIPE GTS

Tom Smith (MGB Roadster)

EQUIPE 70s/PRE-'63/50s

Nick Matthews (Ford Capri RS2600)

EQUIPE LIBRE

Danny Winstanley (Jaguar E-type, below)

MGCC BCV8s

Race 1 Ian Prior (MGB GT V8)

Race 2 Simon Cripps (MGB)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

out red flags. With Wenman removed from the results, Matthews claimed a 7s win from Shaw, while Mark Lucock's Ford Escort Mk1 completed the podium.

Brian Caudwell was fastest off the line in the Equipe Libre race in his AC Cobra but Danny Winstanley took just a lap to reclaim the advantage in his semi-lightweight Jaguar E-type. The pair drove side by side up the pitlane after their mandatory stops – taken amid a safety-car period – but Winstanley eased to a big win.

Ian Prior took the first MG BCV8 victory and contended for the second but, in the wet, his beefy V8 could not find a way past the more wieldy four-cylinder car of Simon Cripps, who took a rare overall win.

IAN SOWMAN



Prior leads Cripps in BCV8 contest

Padmore defies Jordan's attack for Miglia wins

**BRANDS HATCH
MSVR MINI FESTIVAL
6 AUGUST**

Historic Formula 1 ace Nick Padmore emerged as the star of the show in the Mini Miglia double-header that headlined Brands Hatch's annual Mini Festival last weekend, claiming two hard-fought wins in a pair of races that look set to be his final appearance in the series this season.

A huge field of 32 cars took to the grid for the opening race on Sunday as Padmore lined up on pole ahead of Andrew Jordan, but it was the 2013 British Touring Car champion who led the field into Paddock after Padmore "screwed up the start". Padmore seized back the initiative on the run up to Druids on lap four, but Jordan's attempt to regain the lead at Paddock just after half distance resulted in contact. Both drivers were able to continue, despite Jordan's car briefly getting airborne.

Ashley Davies took advantage of the clash to move into a short-lived lead before he was usurped by Padmore seconds prior to a caution period to retrieve Les Stanton's beached Libre. After racing resumed, Davies tried an audacious move around the outside of Paddock on the final lap to reclaim the lead, but Padmore held on.

Race two began dramatically when series leader Aaron Smith spun off at Paddock, causing a safety-car interruption. Padmore eventually came through to seal his second win of the day after he worked his way ahead of early pacesetter Ben Colburn and Jordan was forced to make an unscheduled pitstop. Reigning champion Rupert Deeth claimed second ahead of Kane Astin and Colburn after a typically fraught struggle.

A brilliant launch in the opening Mini Se7en race helped Spencer Wanstall grab an early advantage from poleman Mike



Jordan and the slow-starting Ross Billison, but Billison took over the lead by the third tour. After passing Wanstall for second at Clearways two laps later, Jordan set off in pursuit of Billison, while Wanstall was left to battle for third with reigning champion Connor O'Brien.

Jordan then took advantage of a wobble for Billison at Graham Hill Bend to grab a lead he would not surrender, but the tussle for third remained in doubt right to the finish. After spending the best part of a lap running side by side in the closing stages, Wanstall eventually claimed the position.

Jordan, who dedicated his first race success to the late engine builder Neil Brown, also had to battle his way up to the front in the reversed-grid second encounter before sealing a double triumph. Wanstall again made another rapid start to take an early lead, but Jordan and Billison were soon able to work their way to the front

again before Jordan pulled out a winning margin of over four seconds. O'Brien secured third, while Glen Woodbridge and Joe Thompson pushed Wanstall back to sixth as they headed towards the line.

For the second year in succession, the Mini Festival event hosted two standalone Se7en S-Class races and both included their fair share of excitement. Jonathon Page claimed the race-one win, but not before his brother Matthew was penalised for a jumped start and a tangle at Paddock eliminated Andy Hack and Chris Prior. Hack's son Frazer battled his way through to second ahead of Matt Ayres.

Hack Sr's day failed to improve in race two when both he and his son were caught up in a first-corner shunt with Arnold Duncan and Lee Poolman that led to a race stoppage. At the restart, 2021 champion Michael Winkworth led early on, but Matthew Page moved to the front by Druids



Kirkpatrick won Super Mighty Minis opener as Mighty cars scrapped behind



Jordan Sr fought through to win both Mini Se7en contests over Billison



Somehow both Jordan (left) and Padmore continued after this Paddock tangle

WEEKEND WINNERS

MINI MIGLIA

Races 1 & 2 Nick Padmore

MINI SE7EN

Races 1 & 2 Mike Jordan

MINI SE7EN S-CLASS

Race 1 Jonathon Page

Race 2 Matthew Page

SUPER MIGHTY MINIS/MIGHTY MINIS

Race 1 Neven Kirkpatrick (Super)

Race 2 Ian Slark (Super)

FASTEST MINI IN THE WORLD

Races 1 & 2 Richard Billingham
(Austin Mini Clubman)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

on the third tour and was not headed thereafter. Winkworth also had to give best to Jonathon Page and Ayres before the flag.

Neven Kirkpatrick left his rivals trailing in the opening Super Mighty Minis encounter, dominating from lights to flag. Ian Slark ran second for much of the race, only to be overhauled by Steven Rideout and David Kirkpatrick as the trio threaded their way through traffic. Slark then won race two from Neven Kirkpatrick.

Olly Samways and Ben Butler provided plenty of entertainment in the Mighty Minis class as they shared the victory spoils between them. Samways won race one after a superb race-long duel, but fine opportunism from Butler at Druids helped him claim the second race victory after Samways punctured and spun following a clash with Graham Sheppard.

MARK LIBBETER

NEW CAR LANDS FASTEST MINI IN THE WORLD TITLE

Plenty of anticipation and intrigue surrounded the ever-popular Fastest Mini in the World event at Brands Hatch last Sunday as competitors in the double-header meeting would not only be using synthetic fuels in their cars for the first time, but the absence of Harvey Death's 380bhp, Rollcentre-built Cooper S V8 from the entry meant there would be a first new name claiming the title since 2018.

In an agreement that is seen as a crucial step in securing the long-term future of motorsport, race organisers struck a deal with Coryton to supply drivers with around 40 litres of SUSTAIN Classic Racing 50 fuel for the race. The fuel is believed to produce 50% fewer carbon emissions than fossil fuels. Additionally, the fuel contains less than 1% ethanol and is reported to deliver superior performance.

Producing a strong performance of his own on race day was Richard Billingham at the wheel of his Austin Mini Clubman, a car powered with a two-litre Vauxhall Astra VXR turbo engine. In qualifying, Billingham set a time that was over a second faster than Sri Lankan newcomer Ashan Silva in his two-litre Mini Spaceframe. Third was claimed by the evergreen Bill Richards in his iconic Maguire Mini Duratec Traveller ahead of the Class B Mini Classic Saloon of former hot rod racer Fabio Luffarelli.

Billingham blasted into an immediate lead at the start of the first race, while Richards powered his way ahead of Silva for second at the start of lap two. Silva and Luffarelli then indulged in a brief battle for third before Luffarelli spun onto the infield at Paddock and retired. Silva kept Richards honest thereafter, but neither had an answer for Billingham, who duly claimed a lights-to-flag success. "It's just like driving



Billingham was the Mini master

a fast go-kart," said the delighted winner.

"Our car is one of the oldest and most delicate on the grid," Richards added after securing second, "but the biggest mistake we've made is we've not done any major work on our car since last year. It's still very enjoyable to drive, though."

Billingham drove away from the opposition again in race two, and another dominant display enabled him to claim the title of being the driver of the Fastest Mini in the World, despite losing fifth gear as the race progressed. A dropped cylinder hampered Richards, but he was able to claim another runner-up finish.

Behind the leading duo, eyes were concentrated on the progress from the back of the grid by Luffarelli, whose car had been equipped with a new clutch. After starting 14th, Luffarelli rapidly moved up to third and was homing in on Richards before a concerning vibration towards the end of the race convinced him to settle for the final podium spot.

Richard Morris, who had enjoyed a close battle with Jamie Billingham's Austin Mini Clubman in race one, brought his similar car home fourth in the sequel, while Jim Lyons took fifth in his Austin Mini Maxi Turbo after a gearbox problem forced him to sit out the opener.

MARK LIBBETER



Losing fifth gear in race two briefly brought Richards (left) into range

Cook mastered the Classic K conditions to take a win alongside Gardiner



Cook finds ingredients from Gardiner's produce

DONINGTON PARK
CSCC
5-6 AUGUST

"There's nothing quite like racing a Lotus Cortina in the wet at Donington – it's so much fun," beamed Josh Cook after planting Mike Gardiner's on pole for Saturday's one-hour Classic K race on the Grand Prix circuit. "The Craner Curves were fine one lap, but had a river running across them the next," added the touring car ace, who had pipped Michael Simpson in Peter Smith's machine.

First-lap leader Gardiner could not keep the Jaguar E-types of Steve Osborne and Mark Russell behind, but made his compulsory stop as the window opened, relaying Cook from third. But Osborne spun into the Coppice gravel on lap 12 of 26 and needed towing under safety car cover. When Russell completed the pit sequence, still under caution, his lead was gone.

Cook pounced at the green and,

demonstrating uncanny car control, powered to a 28-second win over Russell and Smith/Simpson, the latter pair dedicating their result to late engine guru Neil Brown. Simon Ham (E-type), Luke Wos (Reliant Sabre Six) and Sam Smith, in Mark Cousins's Lotus Elan, chased them.

A Tin Tops caution fell perfectly for leader Danny Cassar, carrying 90s of extra stoppage 'ballast' for three previous wins in Nigel Ainge's fabulous Honda Integra. With two cars entangled at Goddard, the safety car was deployed as Cassar exited the corner, so he dived for the pits. The crocodile circulated for seven laps. Adam Brown's clutchless Ford Fiesta and Richard Bethell's new Renault Clio led at the green, but Cassar screamed past to victory. First to Redgate at the start, Andrew Windmill's Civic was tapped into the gravel by Bethell, but escaped to finish fourth.

Front-wheel drive reigned in the Swinging Sixties Group 1 finale. The battle between Chris Watkinson (Cooper S) and

Sam Polley (Mini Marcos) was resolved as they traversed the Melbourne Hairpin for the final time. Polley nosed back ahead under braking, but Watkinson hogged the inside and found the vital traction to win. "That was awesome," said Watkinson. Polley added: "The Marcos is really good changing direction in the Craner Curves, but the Mini pulled a few lengths at McLeans and into Coppice." Their fastest laps were 0.054s apart.

TVR Tuscan V8s won the dreich day one's other races. Tony and Aston Blake piloted their Challenge car to Modern Classics gold, from poleman Tom Barley's BMW 328i and the whomping Porsche 993 RSR Cup of Aidan Farrell/David Whelan. Early leader Alex Taylor clipped a Mazda at Goddard, bandaged his TVR's headlight, then retired with screen fogged.

Taylor switched to his Mazda RX-7 turbo for Future Classics, but "friends and nemeses" the Blakes trumped him again. Matt Ellis zapped fellow Talbot Sunbeam Lotus driver Geoff Beale for third at the hairpin on the last lap. Jon Wolfe's mighty early Tuscan trounced Dean Halsey (Datsun 240Z) and Stephen Pickering (Sunbeam Tiger) in Swinging Sixties Gp2.

Dylan Popovic built his Ginetta G50 V8's tyre temperature before controlling Sunday's Open Series race. Despite a (meatball) stop, Lucky Khera was second on the road in Jas Sapra's dishevelled BMW M3 E36, shunted in qualifying following brake failure. Track-limits penalties dropped them behind Tommy Grout's E36 and Harry and Chris Petch's G50 V6.

Supported by proud dad Flaviano, Michael Vitulli's speed and consistency negated a 20s imposition for a second



Taylor (66) was twice thwarted by the Blakes

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

CLASSIC K

Mike Gardiner/Josh Cook (Lotus Cortina)

TIN TOPS

Danny Cassar (Honda Integra Type R)

SWINGING SIXTIES

Group 1 Chris Watkinson (Austin Cooper S)**Group 2** Jon Wolfe (TVR Tuscan V8)

MODERN CLASSICS

Aston & Tony Blake (TVR Tuscan Challenge)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Aston & Tony Blake (TVR Tuscan Challenge)

OPEN SERIES

Dylan Popovic (Ginetta-Chevrolet G50)

NEW MILLENNIUM

Michael Vitulli (BMW M3 E46)

TURBO TIN TOPS

Phiroze Bilimoria (VW Scirocco)

SLICKS SERIES

Race 1 Rob Fenn (Lotus Motorsport Elise)**Race 2** Steve Osborne (Porsche 991.2 Cup)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Race 1 Christian Pittard (Caterham 7 CSR)**Race 2** Jonny Pittard (Caterham 7 CSR s/c)For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

successive New Millennium win. Short-stop penalties dropped the Amspeed M3s of Mark Smith/Arran Moulton-Smith and Dominic Malone to third and fifth, handing second to Cassar/Adam Brown's Integra. Nathan Wells, whose M3 E46 GTR punctured while leading, recovered to fourth while Khera sideswiped the Goddard wall heavily.

Phiroze Bilimoria dominated Turbo Tin Tops from Carl Chambers – who ended his Peugeot 208 GTI's run of non-finishes – by annulling a 30s winner's penalty. John Hammersley, VW Scirocco-mounted like Bilimoria, got his elbows out to top a frenetic scrap for third.

Maxing his Ford Duratec-powered Lotus Elise's dynamics, Rob Fenn beat the sensational Slicks Series grid's heavy-hitters first time out. Track-limits and short-stop penalties shuffled the order behind. Australian David Harrison (Porsche 991.1 GT3), Smith/AM-S and second-past-the-chequer Andy Christopher (Ferrari 488 Challenge) were reclassified thus.

It was neck and neck between short-stopper Christopher and Fenn in the second bout until "something gearboxy" stopped the Lotus. The Smiths shaded Christopher on corrected times and were hailed victors. Post-race, however, Steve Osborne's Porsche – untimed per regulations since its transponder, inactive in race one, remained inert – was reinstated with an 0.862s margin!

MARCUS PYE



BY GEORGE, HE'S BACK Johnny Herbert's 1992-93 Formula 1 Lotus engineer George Howard-Chappell raced his Esprit Turbo for the first time since 750 Motor Club Roadsports in 1994 in Modern Classics. Bought back from Nick Olson, it was rebuilt during COVID's lockdowns. "The rain didn't help us [he spun out after touching a McLeans kerb] but we'd give anybody a run for their money in the dry," he said. George's stellar CV also includes 14 years at Prodrive and he now works for Multimatic.



RARE ALFA Homologated in 1969, Nick Edmond's Alfa Romeo Junior Zagato 1300 is one of four known *competizione* JZs in the world and unique to the UK. Based on a shortened Spider chassis with Zagato-designed body, the model was twice the price of a Jaguar E-type when launched! It was found as a shell in Germany, and Edmond rebuilt it into a racer over 10 years at N-Sport Racing. He was a national rally champion in the 1980s, driving a Rover Vitesse, and contested world championship events.



ONE-ALL FOR PITTARDS Brothers Christian and Jonny Pittard are difficult to beat in Magnificent Sevens. On Sunday, they won a race apiece in their 2.5-litre Caterham CSRs, Jonny's supercharged. After retiring last time out, Christian (above) avoided a grid drop and beat Jonny by 4.139s in the opener. From 11th in the sequel, Christian spun to the back at Goddards on the first tour, but charged up to second behind Jonny. Only Colin Watson and Robert Forsdike remained on the same lap.

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Exciting action that falls flat off track



FILM REVIEW GRAN TURISMO: BASED ON A TRUE STORY

The relentless push for Sony to turn its PlayStation franchises into TV programmes and films continues unabated. Hot on the heels of HBO's *The Last of Us* rendition and the *Uncharted* adaptation follows, perhaps surprisingly, the *Gran Turismo* movie.

Directed by Neill Blomkamp (*District 9*), this is not the story of laser scanning tracks or recording the V10 gargle of a Lamborghini Huracan, although a Netflix-style documentary in that vein wouldn't go amiss.

Instead, the exposition is based on the true story of aspiring racing driver Jann Mardenborough – played here by Archie Madekwe (*Midsommar*) – who, in 2011, won the GT Academy competition that took *Gran Turismo* drivers from their consoles to the real-world Nissan motor racing team.

"These are the fastest sim racers in the world," intones Orlando Bloom's (*Pirates of the Caribbean*) cocksure Danny Moore character, who is credited with the creation of the programme. Once the



car manufacturer is on board with the idea, he's trying to convince grizzled former racer Jack Salter, played by David Harbour (*Stranger Things*), to join in.

"You really think you're gonna take a kid who plays video games in their bedroom and strap them to a 200mph rocket? It'll tear them to pieces," warns Salter.

Eventually, fed up with trying to coach talentless millionaires, he signs on. His task is to train the wannabe Tom Kristensens of the world, and help pick out a winner, before guiding them to the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Mardenborough is the main focus of your attention, the plucky teenager

incongruously listening to saxophonist Kenny G and Enya pre-race. Moments of character development, be that concerned parents or love interests, are often interrupted by someone striving to explain the importance of cars driving on track or close-ups of paddle shifters or camshafts.

Challenging topics are discussed with irreverence and, in the latter third, the justification for going racing again following a harrowing incident is weaker than a rusted exhaust. "This is not a game, this is reality," chimes in Slater. Yes, well aware, thank you.

Still, the sense of speed and video-game-aping camera angles are captivating. Cars slew sideways in a dramatic style. As a pack of Nissan GT-Rs hit 150mph, you almost feel the disturbed air.

Madekwe successfully conveys someone with determination, initially a little out of his depth, in a relatable fashion. It's not quite the visceral acting seen in *Top Gun Maverick*'s fighter jet scenes, but you rarely feel like the lead character isn't actually driving.

There's a sprinkling of clever nods to the gaming franchise throughout, be that characters watching *Gran Turismo* content creators such as Super GT on YouTube or on-screen displays and menu noises straight from Polyphony Digital.

But then we cut back to the story and, if you think of recent successful motorsport films such as *Rush* and *Le Mans '66*, they hinge on a clash of personalities. Here, on-track rivals haven't been developed enough outside of the circuit, and it robs *Gran Turismo*'s final furlong of much-needed impact. Also like the Niki Lauda and James Hunt biopic, which used Brands Hatch





Spectacular action scenes mimic video-game camera angles



extensively, motorsport fans will notice the overuse of the Hungaroring here.

It doesn't delve deep into the relationship between parent and child as they strive to pursue dreams, or explore the pressures of expectation on young minds. The only message you gain from a Nurburgring crash scene is that motorsport is dangerous, which is hardly ground-breaking.

"This entire thing is a marketing extravaganza," proclaims Moore. At times it's hard to tell whether he means the GT Academy programme or the film itself as we are treated to another obvious product placement.

A likeable central character and visceral racing scenes are mixed with over-simplification and an unessential supporting cast. But it shines a light on the possibilities of sim racing, which in turn hopefully inspires a new generation of potential racing hopefuls.

THOMAS HARRISON-LORD

For daily racing game news, visit **traxion.gg**



Chasing the dream: Jake Dennis's road to becoming Formula E World Champion

Autosport's Stefan Mackley sits down with newly crowned Formula E champion Jake Dennis. They delve into the heart-pounding moments of the 2022-23 season as Dennis takes us on a journey from the opening round in Mexico City to the final moments at the London E-Prix, where he fulfilled his dream of becoming Britain's first Formula E champion.

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

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

IndyCar Series

Round 14/17

Indianapolis, USA

12 August

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 1900

Indy NXT

Round 9/12

Indianapolis, USA

11 August

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Fri 2150

NASCAR Cup Series

Round 24/36

Indianapolis, USA

13 August

TV Live Viaplay, Sun 1900

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 22/33

Indianapolis, USA

12 August

TV Live Viaplay, Sat 2200

NASCAR Truck Series

Round 17/23

Indianapolis, USA

11 August

TV Live Viaplay, Sat 0130

UK MOTORSPORT

Knockhill BARC

12-13 August

BTCC, British F4, Legends,

Mini Challenge, Porsche Carrera Cup
TV Live ITV4, Sun 1115

Oulton Park MSVR

12 August

7 Race Series (420R, 310R), Clubmans Sports Prototypes, MSVT Trackday Championship, MSVT Trackday Trophy, Z Cars & Production GTIs

Silverstone BDC

12 August

Allcomers, AMOC, BDC Classic Challenge, Ecurie Classic, FISCAR, Handicap, Morgan Challenge, Pre-War Challenge

Snetterton 750MC

12-13 August

750 Formula, CALM Porsche, Classic Stock Hatch, Club Enduro, Historic 750 Formula, Hot Hatch, Roadsports, Sport Specials, Sports 1000

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

Croft BARC

12-13 August

Caterham Graduates (Sigma 135, Sigma 150, Sigmax), CTCRC (Jaguars, Pre-'66/Pre-'83, Super Tourers/Pre-'03/Pre-'93, Thunder/BOSS), JSCC

TV Livestream via [barc.net](https://www.barc.net)

Cadwell Park BRSCC

12-13 August

Audi TT Cup, BMW Compact Cup, Civic Cup, Evolution Trophy, Fiesta ST150s, Mazda MX-5 (Championship, Clubman, Supercup), MG Metro Cup, Modified Fords

Donington Park BARC

12-13 August

British Trucks, Sports Saloons, Intermarque Silhouettes, International Truck Prix, Kumho BMWs, MG Owners Club, Pickups

TV Livestream via [barc.net](https://www.barc.net)

Mondello Park MPSC

12-13 August

FF2000, Future Classics, Guards Trophy, HRCA (Historics, Pre-'55s)

Brands Hatch MSVR

13 August

Alfa Romeos, Bell Sport Challenge, Ferrari Classic, HRDC Allstars/Classic Alfa Challenge

British Hillclimb Championship

Round 11/14

Shelsley Walsh

12-13 August

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WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

WHEN A CAREER-CHANGING MOVE GOES BEGGING

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motorsport
IMAGES

Pantano impressed on two outings with Ganassi in 2005. Then Dan Wheldon came on the market...



Pantano in IndyCar

Two promising showings with one of American racing's grandee names in 2005 hinted at a bright IndyCar future for ex-Formula 1 driver Giorgio Pantano. The former Jordan racer did turn out again for Chip Ganassi Racing, but had to wait seven years to do so for what proved to be his sixth and final outing in the series. Pantano shone in 2005 despite Ganassi being saddled with uncompetitive Toyota engines, and the Italian is baffled that "after what I showed, I didn't have a proposal for 2006".

"I think I did something well in two races without knowing any circuits over there, without knowing the cars," reflects Pantano, now a successful kart constructor.

Ganassi had dropped Darren Manning midway through 2005, the first season the Indy Racing League had incorporated road courses on its previously oval-only schedule. That explains the call to sign Pantano (whose manager David Sears had also placed Juan Pablo Montoya and Bruno Junqueira at Ganassi) for Sonoma and Watkins Glen. Long-serving managing director Mike Hull recalls that Pantano "did a heck of a job for us".

"WE HAD TO RUN WITH A LOT LESS DOWNFORCE AND AT WATKINS GLEN, THAT WAS A FUN RIDE!"

Despite finding the Panoz chassis "hard to drive, especially physically", Pantano was in team-mate Scott Dixon's wheeltracks, running eighth, on his debut when Vitor Meira's final-lap lunge punted him out. At The Glen, Pantano was denied pole by just 0.0215 seconds by Helio Castroneves, and finished fourth after serving a penalty for running over a wheelgun in the pits. It was overshadowed by Dixon ending Ganassi's 40-race win drought, but Hull was impressed.

"We had to run with a lot less downforce to be competitive and at Watkins Glen, that was a fun ride for the driver!" says Hull. "Considering the circumstance, people probably didn't understand what that actually meant for him to finish fourth."

Pantano expected offers to follow for 2006 and "was prepared to do" the ovals, but reigning champion Dan Wheldon's unexpected availability and the oval-heavy calendar meant Ganassi overlooked him. Few teams were in the same financial situation of taking drivers without hefty backing and so Pantano returned to Europe, becoming GP2 champion in 2008.

But he didn't give up on his American dream and spent 2012 Stateside travelling to races hoping to pick up an off-the-cuff drive, as he had the previous year when Dreyer & Reinbold Racing's Justin Wilson was injured. Charlie Kimball's Mid-Ohio test accident provided a route back into a Ganassi seat and, although Pantano had driven neither the track nor IndyCar's new-for-2012 Dallara DW12, he posted the second-fastest race lap



on his way to finishing 14th. "You have to imagine, one year I was not driving," he reflects. "I was really quick in the race, but I didn't have enough practice to understand how to have the maximum from the tyres."

No further opportunities were forthcoming at Ganassi, and "the only opportunity was to find minimum €1.5million" afterwards. But Hull maintains "he was really a terrific driver" and has no doubt he'd be a hit in IndyCar today: "If he could come out of the time machine to today in IndyCar racing at 24 years old, with the ability he possessed, he'd be right there."

JAMES NEWBOLD



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Appearing as if marooned in a sea of super-enthusiastic humanity are Jackie Oliver and Jacky Ickx, winners of the 1969 Le Mans 24 Hours. Those crowds had just witnessed one of the

most exciting races in the event's history. For the final three hours the Oliver/Ickx JW Automotive Ford GT40 fought the Porsche 908 of Hans Herrmann/Gerard Larrousse – the winning margin just 120 metres.

Twenty-four hours earlier Ickx had walked instead of run to his car, taking his time to fasten his safety belts in protest at the lethally antiquated start procedure, and as a result began the race in last place.



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Harry Tincknell

Compared with his earlier career in touring cars that yielded titles in four consecutive seasons, the four World Endurance Championship GTE Pro class race wins Andy Priaulx scored as part of the Ford GT programme appear small fry. Yet the Gurnseyman regards the first three and a bit years of his ongoing relationship with Multimatic as one of the most enjoyable periods of his career, citing the “non-political environment”. It was refreshing after the relentless pressure Priaulx experienced during his 12-year BMW stint, which yielded a hat-trick of World Touring Car Championship titles after snaring the 2004 European crown. That goes some way to explaining Priaulx’s choice of Harry Tincknell as his favourite team-mate. Priaulx knew “the longest part of the career was behind me” when he arrived at Larry Holt’s organisation, which built and ran the Ford GT, for 2016. There he found in Tincknell a driver who was “an absolute pleasure” to race with. “I don’t think I could have been with a better team-mate,” says Priaulx, 18 years Tincknell’s senior, which contributed to him adopting a “father-figure role”. “I was able to teach him a thing or two and he also showed me a good level as well. It was a mutually enjoyable, performance-enhancing environment.” The continuity with Tincknell meant



Priaulx headed into every weekend confident “we would perform to a good level”. As well as their WEC victories, they finished second at Le Mans in 2017, while a consistent 2018-19 ‘superseason’ yielded four podium finishes. Priaulx feels the project was “one or two years too early to finish because we were in such a good place”, with the pair desiring “a very similar” car set-up. “Often towards the end, we were just looking at each other and we knew what we wanted,” adds Priaulx. Priaulx’s son Seb, also a Multimatic-contracted driver, raced a Porsche with Tincknell during his first WEC campaign in 2022, winning twice in GTE Am. Priaulx Sr hopes it’s a partnership that can be reprised: “If there’s one team-mate that I could choose for Seb to be with, it would be Harry”. **JAMES NEWBOLD**



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