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A refreshing grand prix from an alternative F1 universe

Many have suggested that, without Red Bull, we'd have a tight and exciting battle at the front in Formula 1 this year. And last weekend's Singapore Grand Prix proved it. Just 1.3 seconds covered the top three teams and the result was still in doubt on the final lap.

Congratulations to Ferrari and, in particular, Carlos Sainz for a beautifully managed race. As Jake Boxall-Legge explains in our report on page 20, Sainz's tactic to keep Lando Norris in DRS range so that the McLaren acted as a buffer to the charging Mercedes was crucial – and smart in a way reminiscent of Jackie Stewart or Alain Prost.

There were some murmurings that the recent technical directives have hurt Red Bull (p4), but that seems rather unlikely. Singapore has often thrown up odd problems for otherwise dominant teams (remember 2015?), and Max Verstappen's pace in the closing stages on Sunday suggests there's not a lot wrong with the RB19. Expect normal service to resume at Suzuka this weekend...

Norris and George Russell were two of the stars in Singapore, despite the Mercedes driver's late error, and this week we reveal the four young British drivers who will try to follow in their footsteps by winning the 2023 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award. Turn to p13 to hear from the chosen four, who will be put through fitness, simulator and driving tests before the winner is revealed at the Autosport Awards on 3 December. At stake is an F1 test drive, £200,000 and the chance to join a list of winners that also includes Jenson Button, David Coulthard and Anthony Davidson.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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Special deals for
Autosport p52



Cover image

Mark Sutton/Motorsport Images

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DUNBAR

Red Bull denies tech clampdowns at root

FORMULA 1

Red Bull is adamant that correlation does not equal causation. The team's perfect 2023 win record came to a grinding halt last weekend in the Singapore Grand Prix, which happened to be the first round for one new and one revised Technical Directive from the FIA coming into force.

New TD18 seeks to expel flexible wings, with teams having worked masterfully to conceal moveable mechanisms that rotated around the nose cone. The governing body also tightened up TD39, which was introduced for the 2022 Canadian GP in a push to eliminate porpoising. The original wording was aimed at outlawing the flexibility of the floor around the skid block holes amid suspicion that some teams were running moveable skid-block designs that retreated into the plank area. This sucked their floor closer to the ground at high speed without the blocks being worn away beyond the prescribed limits.

While the matter died down initially, this season it emerged that designers were now treating the plank itself as a moveable component to exploit a 2mm deflection tolerance in the rules. As such, the plank and floor could flex to increase ground effects to boost downforce, but the skid blocks remain static and so mitigated the



risk of being worn and failing scrutineering.

An updated TD39 reads: "We have become aware of design details in the region of the skids... that aim to take maximum advantage of the permitted stiffness in these regions. Whilst these designs may comply with the deflection requirements... we would like to remind teams that designs must still comply with the relevant bodywork dimensional constraints."

"Designs must not utilise breaks in this surface to facilitate differences in vertical

stiffness across the break or to facilitate differential motion across the break that lead to discontinuities in the surface."

Given the Red Bull struggles throughout the Marina Bay event, many wondered whether the key to the RB19 had just been outlawed. But the flexi-wing trick is thought to be worth only 0.1 seconds per lap, and other teams were reckoned to have pushed the boundaries far more. While Red Bull's drop-off, with Max Verstappen 11th in qualifying, might align with potentially having to relearn an approach to the floor to comply with the tweaked TD, team principal Christian Horner insists that any such theory is nonsense.

Asked to explain the details about what went wrong, Horner said: "It's all engineering stuff. There are no silver bullets in this business. I know all of you would love to blame the TD but, unfortunately, we can't even blame that. It's not changed a single component on our car... zero."

McLaren boss Andrea Stella seemingly agreed, saying Red Bull's drop-off was beyond what the TDs might create. The Italian engineer said: "I don't know whether Red Bull had been affected or not by the TD. But I would say that even if there was an effect, this effect wouldn't be as large as the deficit of performance that meant they were out of Q3. So, I would exclude that

Verstappen
found himself
battling in the
midfield



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MARKO TOLD OFF FOR PEREZ REMARKS

FORMULA 1

Red Bull Formula 1 advisor Helmut Marko received a written warning over the Singapore Grand Prix weekend from the FIA following his remarks about Sergio Perez. Amid the Mexican's fluctuating form, Marko told Red Bull's own ServusTV channel: "He is South American [sic] and he is just not as completely focused in his head as Max [Verstappen] is or as Sebastian [Vettel]."

Aside from the fact that Mexico is not in South America, the stereotyping drew significant backlash. Marko did apologise to



TRIENITZ

his driver over the phone and publicly via the same TV channel. The FIA governing body also commented: "We can confirm that Helmut Marko has received a written warning and been reminded of his responsibilities as a public figure in motor sport in line with the FIA Code of Ethics."

Team boss Christian Horner said that the Red Bull team chose not to

issue a statement of its own on the grounds that Marko "is not an employee of Red Bull Racing". He restressed this point when it was put to him that Marko is listed as a director of the operation. Horner added: "Firstly those comments weren't right. He spoke directly to Sergio about it and I think you're always learning in life, even at 80 years of age."

MATT KEW



POTTS

FIA ramps up spray testing

FORMULA 1

The FIA will experiment with more aggressive spray guards that completely cover the wheels on a Formula 1 car in the next step of its quest to improve wet-weather visibility. A trial of smaller wheel fairings was carried out at Silverstone in July, but the design proved largely ineffective. Nevertheless, the governing body will persist with the idea, even though 60% of the spray is kicked up by the fully exposed diffuser.

FIA single-seater director Nikolas Tombazis explained: "The spray guards covered too little of the wheel.

I was quite sceptical and imagined that we wouldn't see important results. In the next tests we will carry out, we will test complete coverage of the wheel, going even beyond what would be needed to understand what the threshold is at which the spray forms."

Tombazis batted away concerns that enclosed wheels would wreak havoc with airflow. He reckons it wouldn't be an issue since all teams would lose the same amount of downforce points if the standardised devices were fitted. Covering some elements of the diffuser will be considered in due course.

JONATHAN NOBLE & FRANCO NUGNES

of form loss

that's the sole reason, if it's a reason at all."

Instead, it is thought that the bumpy, partially resurfaced Singapore lap and its aggressive kerbs forced the team to jack up the RB19 and disrupt its hitherto supreme ride control, which struck a near-perfect balance between banishing bouncing but running low enough to the ground at high speed to maximise downforce, resulting in a predictable aerodynamic platform and consistent behaviour through most corner profiles.

Red Bull was adamant that its Friday and Saturday woes could instead be attributed to poor set-up. That tallies with the team subsequently making changes under the restrictive parc ferme regulations – sufficient to enable Verstappen to display race pace similar to the frontrunners as he recovered to fifth place.

Rivals expect Red Bull to return to power for this weekend's Japanese GP at Suzuka, where the team could feasibly win its sixth constructors' championship title. But should it endure further struggles, and Aston Martin also repeat its poor Singapore form, then perhaps a clearer picture of the true impact of the two TDs might well be being painted.

JONATHAN NOBLE

➔ P17 OPINION

Bottas and Zhou freeze out Pourchaire at Alfa

FORMULA 1

Sauber is evaluating race programmes and splashing the cash on a private Formula 1 testing plan to placate Theo Pourchaire. The Formula 2 points leader must remain in his reserve role for the Alfa Romeo-branded grand prix team in 2024, because its top brass have exercised a contract extension option for Valtteri Bottas and agreed a new one-year deal for Zhou Guanyu to leave no room on the Swiss squad's frontline for the Frenchman.

The 2020 Formula 3 and 2022 F2 runner-up is poised to seal the 2023 F2 title at the Abu Dhabi finale, which he will enter 25 points ahead of Mercedes junior Frederik Vesti. But he looks set to join the past two F2 champions, Felipe Drugovich and Oscar Piastri, in missing out on an immediate F1 promotion. As

such, Sauber is weighing up race seats – Japan's ultra-competitive Super Formula championship, which Pourchaire was linked with for 2023, is often used as a finishing school for top-flight hopefuls.

But should the team see fit to dip into its savings, handily bolstered by Audi's takeover, a Testing of Previous Cars programme could be created for Pourchaire. Team managing director Alessandro Alunni Bravi said: "We are ready to make a deal. We are discussing together which will be the best racing programme for him to be ready to jump into the F1 car. No doors are closed for him in the future.

"We want him to stay close to the F1 team because this year, we asked him to be fully focused in Formula 2 and he's doing well. I think and I hope that he will win the championship in Abu



Dhabi. We don't have an old car... to do a proper testing programme. This is a big limitation. Maybe this will be available for him next year. We are discussing internally." To fulfil F1 teams'

requirement to field a rookie in at least two practice sessions, Pourchaire will likely drive the 2023 Alfa machine in FP1 in Mexico and Abu Dhabi.

MATT KEW

FIA to green-light Andretti bid as teams dig in heels

FORMULA 1

The FIA is expected to announce imminently that Andretti Global has been successful in the first stage of its bid to join the Formula 1 grid in time for the 2025 or 2026 season. The recently rebranded American organisation has backing from General Motors in the

form of its Cadillac marque, and is expected to get the green light to create an 11th team. But this acceptance is on a technical basis only, for the time being.

While Andretti's entry process has satisfied the requirements of the FIA, the matter will then go to F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali for further debate. At this stage, the current teams are expected

to maintain their cold stance towards a new entry amid fears that it could impact their business models. While a new squad would have to pay a \$200million anti-dilution fee to each incumbent, FOM and its stakeholders have discussed at least tripling the total payout, so it ranges from \$600m to \$1billion. Should the Andretti bid then fail at this point, legal action may be sought.

Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff said: "I think why F1 and the teams have survived in the last years is because we all stuck together. The FIA, FOM and the 10 teams, we need to protect the sport. We're holding this sensitive sport that's growing at the moment in our hands.

"That's why the right decisions need to be taken by all of us together when it comes to, let's say, a mindset and then obviously the FIA and F1 when it comes to these decisions, because it's out of the teams' hands. But I would hope that Mohammed Ben Sulayem [FIA president] and Stefano will take the right decisions for F1."

MATT KEW



The last time an Andretti brought an American team to F1. This is Mario in the Parnelli; Canada 1974

ROKiT Williams case delayed by Obama history

FORMULA 1

ROKiT intends to persist with its \$149million legal action against the Williams Formula 1 team despite its case in Florida being dismissed because the technology company hired a lawyer who was suspended from practising in the state's District Court.

The whole dispute relates to a title sponsorship deal. ROKiT paid the Grove squad \$19m in 2019 before COVID hit. Then Williams dropped the stickers, having also supposedly made "fraudulent statements" about its potential competitiveness.

The case will restart in California after it was thrown out by Judge Beth Blood on the grounds that ROKiT's chosen lawyer, Larry Klayman, is unable to operate in the Southern Florida District Court. Klayman says this restriction, which he is challenging, is because of a 15-year-old matter from when he "took on [President Barack] Obama and it just so happens the judge who dismissed the case is an Obama appointee".



Williams won't want to waste a penny on legal fees since it needs to convince driver Alex Albon to commit his future to the squad beyond 2024. The team talisman has paperwork in place until the end of next year and insists that, under new boss James Vowles, Williams has a bright future. But Albon's impressive performances have made him a contender for top teams, including Red Bull and Ferrari, who theoretically have vacancies for 2025.

Albon is aware of this interest, so will bide his time before deciding whether to renew vows with Vowles. The Thai-Brit said: "I think I have the confidence in myself to keep myself open. I want to give myself the chance to be able to fight for wins and fight for podiums. And what it comes down to is, at that time and in that time, can we bring [Williams] to be that team?"

ADAM COOPER & JONATHAN NOBLE



Nato signs treaty with Americans

FORMULA E

Norman Nato has joined the rebranded Andretti Global Formula E squad to partner new champion Jake Dennis.

The 31-year-old Frenchman spent the 2023 campaign, his second in FE, with Nissan and finished 10th in the points with one podium. He raced with Venturi in 2021, scoring a win in Berlin.

"It's highly exciting to be given the opportunity to have a car capable of winning," said Nato (left), who replaces Andre Lotterer at the Porsche-powered Andretti team. "I'm looking forward to working with the team and contributing

to the team's long history of success."

Meanwhile, Edoardo Mortara has parted company with Maserati MSG after six years with the squad. The Swiss-Italian, who was a top-liner in the DTM with Audi and then Mercedes, joined the team in 2017 under its guise of Venturi and took to the podium in only his second outing in Hong Kong.

A further 12 podiums followed during his tenure with the squad. These included six wins, and he was in championship contention in 2021 and 2022. Mortara has yet to confirm his plans for 2024 and whether he will remain in Formula E.

STEFAN MACKLEY

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Schumacher tipped for Alpine Hypercar programme

WEC

Mick Schumacher is in talks to drive for Alpine in the World Endurance Championship next season. The German could race sportscars alongside a continuing test and reserve role in Formula 1 with Mercedes.

Speculation about the 24-year-old son of Formula 1 legend Michael, a race winner in the old world sportscar championship in 1990-91 as a Mercedes junior, joining the Renault marque was fuelled by Toto Wolff last weekend in Singapore. The Merc F1 team boss suggested that a dual role for Schumacher was a real possibility for 2024.

"Mick has a place here as our reserve driver and is part of the family," said Wolff.

"We hope that he stays with us in that role. We will give him time in the car, and if he can get a works seat with another manufacturer in WEC or sportscars or wherever, we will always have this home here for him."

It is understood that Schumacher could be given a test imminently aboard the Alpine A424 LMDh developed in conjunction with ORECA. The French manufacturer kicked off its test programme last month with a car launched during Le Mans 24 Hours week in June.

Alpine is remaining tight-lipped about its driver line-up for the moment and has chosen not to comment on the talks with Schumacher. But a bid for an ex-F1 racer with a famous name fits with a known

desire to bring in a high-profile driver. It wants to do what Porsche did on its return to the top flight of sportscar racing in 2014 when it signed Mark Webber.

Nicolas Lapierre, a three-time Le Mans LMP2 class winner with the marque and its Signatech squad, is leading development of the A424 and looks a shoo-in for a race seat in year one. Matthieu Vaxiviere, who won two WEC races in 2022 alongside Lapierre aboard the team's grandfathered LMP1 ORECA, also appears to be a certainty.

Charles Milesi, who came into the Alpine WEC squad this season on its temporary return to the LMP2 class, was the other driver to try the A424 on its first proper test at Paul Ricard.

GARY WATKINS & MATT KEW

Huff: no more BTCC in 2023, but keen for next year



BTCC

Former World Touring Car champion Rob Huff has decided not to return to the Team Hard Cupra squad for the final two rounds of the British Touring Car Championship, but is eyeing a full-time seat in the series for 2024.

Huff, whose only full BTCC season came in 2004, occupied the ex-Nic Hamilton Cupra for last

month's round at Knockhill (left) in between his Audi commitments in the TCR World Tour, and was expected to compete this weekend at Silverstone and in next month's finale at Brands Hatch.

"It was great for Tony [Gilham, Hard boss] to get me in the car at Knockhill, but unfortunately the stars haven't aligned for the rest of the season," said 43-year-old Huff. "I will

be attending Silverstone to speak to teams about potential opportunities for next year. The BTCC is where I grew up and it's where I'd love to finish my career off."

As Autosport went to press, it had just been confirmed that Bobby Thompson will return to the Hard line-up in place of Huff, two months after being forced out of a seat.

MARCUS SIMMONS

De Vries first joined
up with Toyota in
2020 as reserve



De Vries set for Lopez's Toyota seat

WEC

Ousted AlphaTauri Formula 1 driver Nyck de Vries is poised to slip straight into the Toyota World Endurance Championship seat that was earmarked for him in 2023. The team's reserve and tester in 2022 is in line to replace Jose Maria Lopez for the new season.

De Vries was signed and sealed to race for Toyota in 2023 in place of Lopez alongside Kamui Kobayashi and Mike Conway, before taking up a get-out clause in his contract when F1 came knocking. Now a seat aboard the #7 GR010 HYBRID

Le Mans Hypercar is back on following his replacement in the AlphaTauri line-up by Daniel Ricciardo ahead of the Hungarian Grand Prix in July.

Toyota isn't talking about drivers yet; it never does ahead of the announcement of its motorsport programmes for the following year in November or December. Team director Rob Leupen admitted that he remained in touch with de Vries "because we're both Dutch", but tried to play down speculation about his return. "I think Nyck has a lot of opportunities and our current line-up is superb – from that point of view there is no issue," he said.

Lopez (left), who is understood to have signed a one-year deal to remain at Toyota in 2023, conceded that his future at a team he joined for the 2017 season remains uncertain. Asked if he was sorted for 2024, the 2019-20 and 2021 WEC champion with Kobayashi and Conway replied: "Not yet."

"I would like to stay with the team, but I'm not 20 any more," continued Lopez, who at 40 is the oldest of the current sextet of Toyota drivers. "We'll have to see. It's not decided."

GARY WATKINS



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

EKSTROM, SANZ ADD TO SAINZ FAMILY SUCCESS

EXTREME E

Carlos Sainz's Singapore Grand Prix victory wasn't the only piece of joy last weekend for the royal family of Spanish motorsport. His dad's Acciona Sainz team (below) had already triumphed in Saturday's Extreme E Grand Final in Sardinia courtesy of Mattias Ekstrom and Laia Sanz.

A brave round-the-outside move at the first corner put Ekstrom in front, and Sanz was able to control the race once she took over to finish comfortably ahead. The Abt Cupra machine started by Sebastien Loeb finished second, despite Klara Andersson suffering damage to the rear.

With the windscreen wipers broken, Molly Taylor struggled in the Veloce Racing entry started by Kevin Hansen but still reached the finish in third, while Rosberg RXR pair Johan Kristoffersson and Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky fought broken power steering to fourth.

Lewis Hamilton's X44 team claimed honours on Sunday thanks to Fraser McConnell and Cristina Gutierrez. Loeb ran wide in his early battle for second with Kristoffersson, so it was the RXR pair who finished in second from Abt Cupra, with RJ Anderson and Amanda Sorensen (Ganassi) fourth.



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New control tyres for WRC as Pirelli opts for exit after 2024

WRC

The World Rally Championship is set to change its control tyre supplier for 2025 after Pirelli announced that it will leave the series at the end of next season.

Pirelli has supplied control rubber to all WRC categories since 2021, after winning the 2019 FIA tender for a contract that expires at the end of 2024. The Italian company elected not to submit a bid for the 2025-27 contract, although there were indications in an interview with Autosport last month that it had been contemplating a continuation of its involvement.

Following the decision, Pirelli boss Mario Isola (below) explained: “No, [cost saving was] not really [part of

the decision] because we have a team dedicated to WRC and we believe in this period we got what we wanted in terms of being a part of the sport in the top class. We will continue to put our resources in ERC [the European championship] and national championships and the team that is looking after WRC and rally in general is not the same team we have for Formula 1.

“We will continue to develop products for rally because that is really relevant for our technology transfer on snow, ice and gravel, so we want to be involved in rallying. We are expanding our activity on historic rallies and other championships.

“Obviously we cannot be everywhere and we have to make choices. I believe this period was good to come back to WRC after quite a long period, as the last time we were supplying WRC cars was 2010. After 10 years it was a good exercise to come back for this period to show our brand at the highest level of WRC and now we want to concentrate on other ways.”

Autosport understands that Michelin, MRF and Hankook are in the running to secure the new contract. Michelin supplied rubber to the WRC from 2011 to 2020. The FIA is expected to announce the new tyre supplier on 19 October.

TOM HOWARD



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Menezes out of Peugeot line-up

WEC

Gustavo Menezes will be leaving Peugeot at the conclusion of this season’s World Endurance Championship. The American announced his departure last week without divulging his plans for the future, except to say “it will be fast”.

Menezes (below), on Instagram, described working with Peugeot over the past two years as “an absolute pleasure” and that he has made “memories that will last a lifetime”. He followed it up by saying, “as one door closes, new doors open, but it is too soon to share with you all my plans for 2024”.

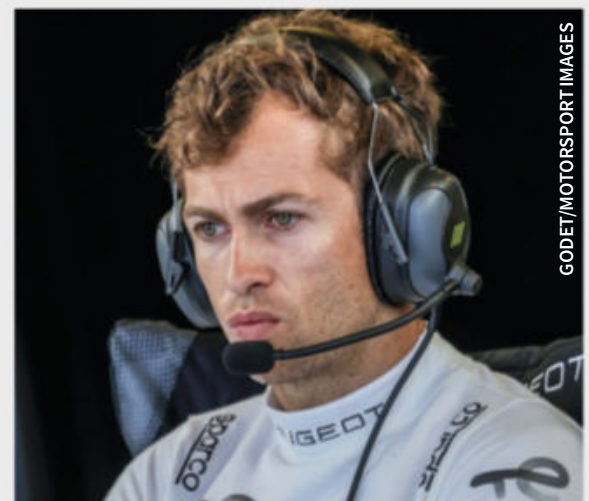
A concurrent Instagram post from Peugeot thanked Menezes for his “hard work, collaboration and good vibes”. There was no mention of a replacement for the 29-year-old in the 9X8 Le Mans Hypercar line-up, but the smart money is on Stoffel Vandoorne stepping up from the reserve slot he has filled this year.

Vandoorne made his race debut in the 9X8 at this month’s Fuji WEC round in place of the injured Nico Muller. He outlined a desire to race in the WEC next year in conjunction with a continued presence on the Formula E grid.

Vandoorne explained that an extension of his FE deal with Penske, which is partnered with Peugeot sister brand DS, remained “a work in progress”. He stated that he wants to “do both” when asked about the WEC: “I’m a racing driver and want to drive as many programmes as possible.”

Menezes was announced as a Peugeot driver in February 2021 when the marque revealed its full line-up for its WEC entry the following year. He drove together with Loic Duval and James Rossiter for its first two races of 2022, before Muller replaced the Briton in Bahrain last year.

GARY WATKINS



GODET/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Basil van Rooyen 1939-2023

OBITUARY

Two-time grand prix starter Basil van Rooyen, who died last week aged 84, was better known as a saloon car racer when he joined the Formula 1 grid at Kyalami in his native South Africa in 1968-69.

After racing motorcycles, van Rooyen became the top dog in South African tin-top racing in the 1960s, winning two national titles at the wheel of Ford Mustang machinery. His first attempt at the South African GP came at the wheel of a Cooper-Climax in 1968; the following year he was in a more competitive Cosworth-powered McLaren (right), and qualified a highly commendable ninth among the 18-car field, only for brake master cylinder failure to ruin his race.

South Africa had its own F1 series at the time, single-seater new boy van Rooyen placing fourth in the 1968 standings in a Brabham-Repco, with one win. With the McLaren, he took two victories early in the 1969 season, before a massive accident while testing at Kyalami caused injuries severe enough to rule him out for several months. It also scuppered a call from Tyrrell to stand in for Johnny Servoz-



Gavin. Van Rooyen then attended the 1970 Dutch GP with a view to buying a March but, sickened by the fatal crash of Piers Courage, decided to quit single-seaters.

He raced on in sportscars and touring cars, including a trip to Australia in 1977, when he raced a Holden Torana in the Bathurst 1000 with Gerry Marshall. He later emigrated to the country, where he became an ingenious inventor, and passed away in New South Wales after illness.

MARCUS SIMMONS



Hamlin win gets him into Round of 12

NASCAR CUP

Denny Hamlin was finally able to translate a strong performance in a NASCAR Cup playoff race into a victory at Bristol last Saturday.

In a race that battled to find a rhythm due to continued inclement weather, Hamlin took control after he grabbed the lead from Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota team-mate Ty Gibbs with 141 of 500 laps remaining.

With the race remaining caution-free, Hamlin was not seriously challenged and cruised to a 2.437-second win over Kyle Larson.

Hamlin's only hiccup was a pitroad speeding penalty in the first stage. His win came after he had a car capable of winning the first two playoff races, but the best he had come away with was a second place at Kansas Speedway.

Christopher Bell, who

started on the pole and led the most laps, was third from Chris Buescher and Gibbs.

Two former champions were eliminated from title contention with the conclusion of the first round of the playoffs. Reigning title holder Joey Logano was involved in a wreck, Kevin Harvick hit the wall, while Ricky Stenhouse Jr and Michael McDowell also failed to get to the Round of 12.

JIM UTTER

O'WARD FOR ABU DHABI FP1

Mexican IndyCar star Pato O'Ward will drive for McLaren in the FP1 session at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, as well as in the following post-season test. The team wants him to join its roster of reserve drivers, and believes his fourth place in the IndyCar standings qualifies him for a superlicence. O'Ward drove in FP1 for McLaren in Abu Dhabi last year.

PIERSON IN HYPERCAR TEST

WEC LMP2 race winner Josh Pierson will get his first taste of a Le Mans Hypercar at the championship's rookie test the day after the final round in Bahrain in November. The 17-year-old American, who has raced with United Autosports since the start of 2022, has been picked by the WEC organisers for the Hypercar class slot. That means he will drive a Toyota GR010 HYBRID because the Japanese make sealed the manufacturers' title earlier this month at Fuji. Corvette Racing driver Nico Varrone (22) and European Le Mans Series LMP3 regular Antoine Doquin (19) have been nominated for try-outs in LMP2 and GTE Am respectively.

SIMPSON'S GANASSI SEAT

Indy NXT racer Kyffin Simpson has been given a full-time seat in the IndyCar Series for next season at Chip Ganassi Racing, meaning the team has a five-car line-up. The Barbados-born Cayman Islander, a CGR development driver since May last year, hasn't won in Indy NXT but does have European and Asian Le Mans Series LMP2 victories to his credit. Simpson, just 18 years old, tested an IndyCar at Sebring in January.

SVG DOES HIS NASCAR DEAL

Three-time Australian Supercars champion Shane van Gisbergen has lined up with Trackhouse Racing for his full-time switch to NASCAR in 2024. The Kiwi, who won on his Cup debut in Chicago in July, will be given a programme across selected races in the three national Cup, Xfinity and Truck divisions, as well as "some late model and other races".

ALMS FIELD GETS 36 CARS

The 2023-24 Asian Le Mans Series has attracted an initial entry of 36 cars. The five-round series, which is expanding from the Middle East to incorporate a double-header round at Sepang in December, will be fought out by 10 LMP2s, three LMP3s and 23 GT3 cars. Newcomers in GTs include the Sainteloc Audi and Earl Bamber Motorsport Porsche squads.

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Finalists selected for Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver Award

YOUNG DRIVER OF THE YEAR

The four finalists who will contest the 2023 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award have been selected.

Formula 3 race winner Taylor Barnard, GB3 championship protagonists Callum Voisin and Joseph Loake, and Italian F4 points leader Arvid Lindblad will battle it out for prizes that include a test in Aston Martin F1 machinery. None of the four have been finalists before.

The Award, which aims to find and assist the best junior British racing drivers, will

include fitness and simulator elements before a two-day test at the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit in MotorSport Vision Formula 2, United Autosports-run Ligier LMP3 and Beechdean Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage GT3 cars.

Aside from the F1 test, prizes for the winner – who will be announced at the Autosport Awards – include £200,000, full membership of the British Racing Drivers' Club, an Arai helmet and personalised helmet bag courtesy of Jordan Bespoke.

BRDC vice-president Derek Warwick is the chairman of the judging panel, which

includes Award winners Dario Franchitti, Darren Turner, Andrew Kirkaldy and Alexander Sims, successful Lola and McLaren designer Mark Williams, Le Mans-winning engineer Leena Gade, leading commentator Ian Titchmarsh and Autosport Chief Editor Kevin Turner.

Previous winners of the Award include 2009 F1 world champion Jenson Button, 13-time grand prix winner David Coulthard, current F1 drivers Lando Norris and George Russell, triple Indianapolis 500 victor Franchitti, and 2014 World Endurance champion Anthony Davidson.

THE 2023 CONTENDERS



TAYLOR BARNARD Aged 19
10th in Formula 3 with Jenzer,
2nd in FRegional ME with PHM

"The jump is big from F4 to F3 and we struggled a bit to start with at the high-downforce tracks. When we went to lower downforce we got better as a team and I got more experienced. It was good to finish the season on a high. I'm pretty good at jumping into different cars and getting up to speed so hopefully that will put me in good stead."



ARVID LINDBLAD Aged 16
Currently leading Italian F4 and
2nd in Euro 4 with Prema Racing

"Going into the season I didn't have too many expectations. I struggled a bit in testing, but when we got to the races I improved and it's been a good year so far. I'm probably the least experienced of the finalists, but obviously I want to try and win the Award, so I'll prepare the best I can. I'm really looking forward to it, it's a great honour."



JOSEPH LOAKE Aged 18
Currently second in GB3
with JHR Developments

"If you'd said at the start of the season I'd be in the championship fight I'd have taken it with both hands. Stepping up from F4 to GB3 and being on the pace was a massive surprise and the GB3 car felt pretty natural. To be nominated in the top 10 was a surprise and I was happy to be in the list then, so to be in the final four is special."



CALLUM VOISIN Aged 17
Currently leading GB3
with Rodin Carlin

"Point-wise it's exactly where I thought we'd be, but I only just got my first win, which wasn't part of the plan, but better late than never! The Award was in the back of my mind as I did get into the top 10 last year, so I wanted to do my best to get in there. It's a brilliant chance to drive some cool cars and I'll be on the phone to drivers about them."



DUBAI 3 HOUR

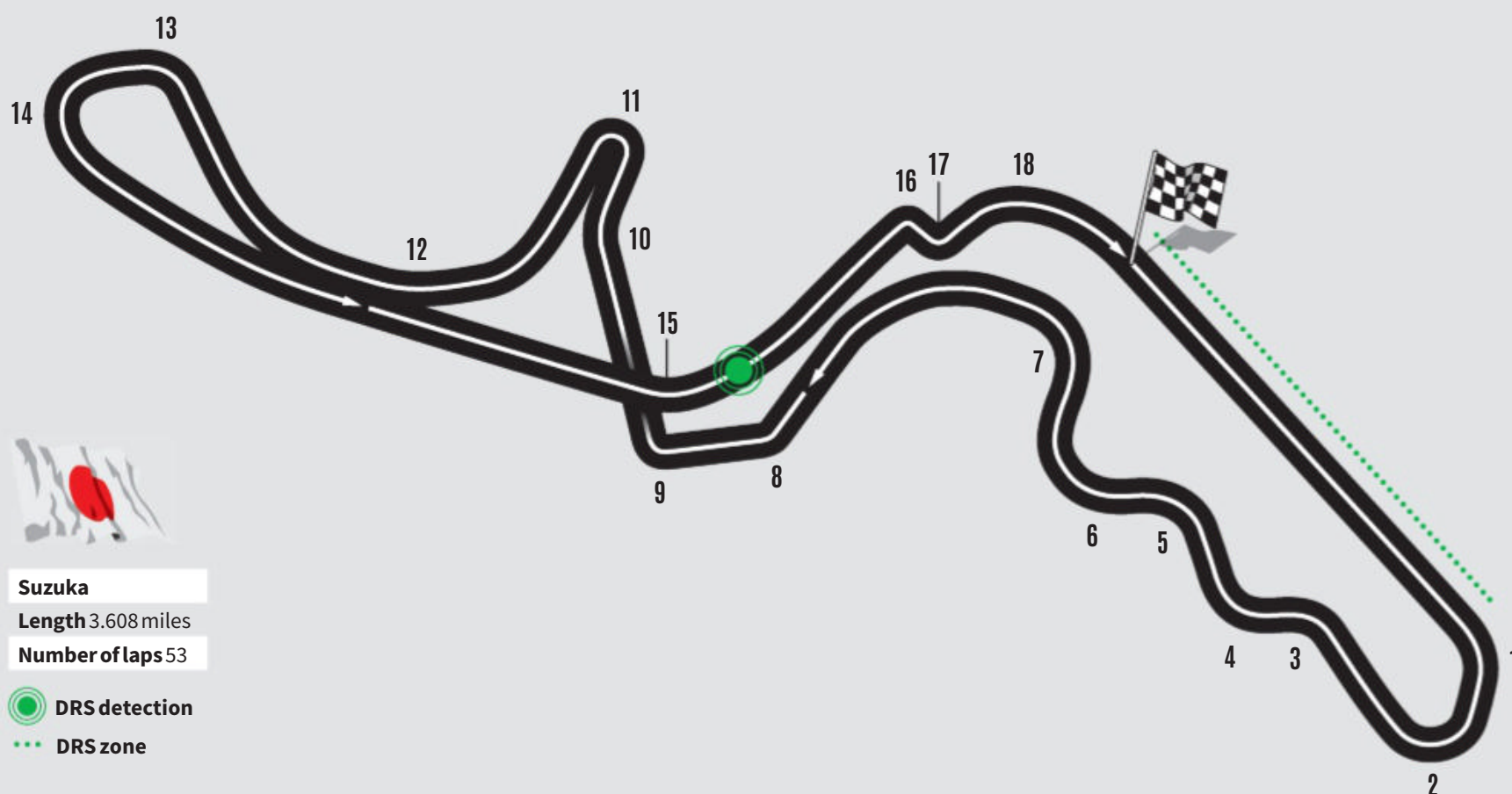
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F1 JAPANESE GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

Friday 22 September

FP1 0330 FP2 0700

Saturday 23 September

FP3 0330

QUALIFYING 0700

Sunday 24 September

RACE 0600

CATCH THE RACE LIVE

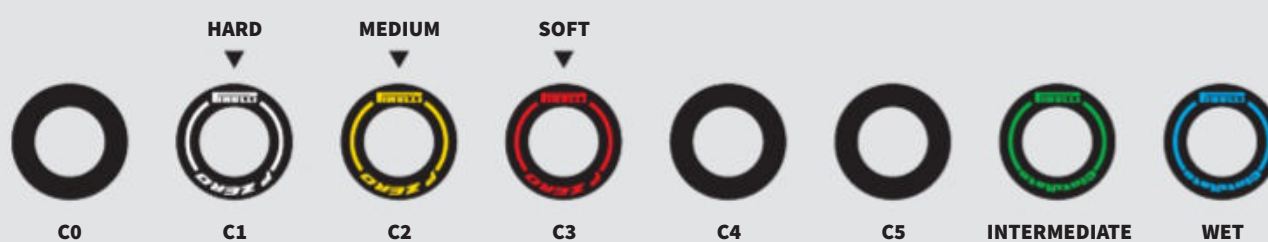
SKY SPORTS F1

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TV Highlights

CHANNEL 4 1230

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	374
2	Perez	223
3	Hamilton	180
4	Alonso	170
5	Sainz	142

Constructors

1	Red Bull	597
2	Mercedes	289
3	Ferrari	265
4	Aston Martin	217
5	McLaren	139



SUZUKA STATS

Previous winners

2022	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2019	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes
2018	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2013	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2012	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2011	Jenson Button	McLaren

2022 POLE POSITION

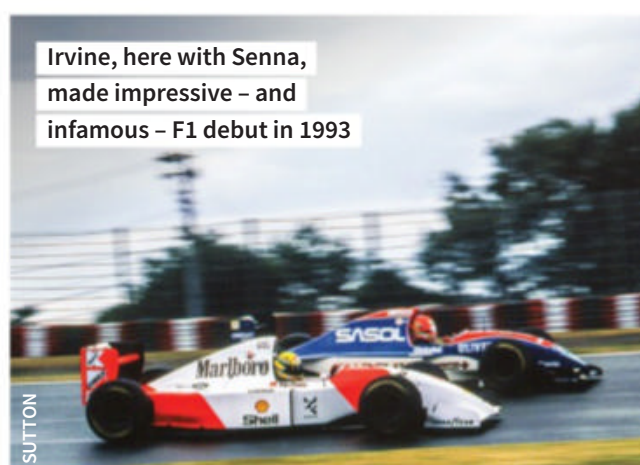
Max Verstappen
1m29.304s

POLE LAP RECORD

Sebastian Vettel
1m27.064s (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD

Lewis Hamilton
1m30.983s (2019)



Laps led

Michael Schumacher	309
Sebastian Vettel	188
Lewis Hamilton	181
Mika Hakkinen	135
Ayrton Senna	112
Damon Hill	83
Alain Prost	76
Nico Rosberg	74
Gerhard Berger	69
Nigel Mansell	60

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Big Red Bull problem or a one-off?

The termination of the squad's winning streak in Singapore may point to a downturn in form, but could also just be a bump in the road before normal service is resumed

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Carlos Sainz's victory in the Singapore Grand Prix last Sunday was utterly brilliant. He and Ferrari nailed every important call and stressful moment, backed up beautifully by Charles Leclerc. But there was another equally important theme in the story of the Singapore event: what happened to Red Bull? Now, as Formula 1 heads to its next race in Japan, the key question is: will that happen again at Suzuka?

As was covered in these pages last week, Red Bull knew it was in danger of losing its 2023 victory streak based on what it had already calculated from its pre-Singapore simulator preparation. The tyre warm-up issue we highlighted indeed came to pass. But the much bigger factor in Red Bull's defeat was revealed through the practice sessions: it simply couldn't set up its car to cope with the track's bumpy nature and maintain its typical balance, which so devastates the rest on smoother courses.

As former Red Bull aerodynamics chief and now Aston Martin technical director Dan Fallows noted, "you tend to have to run the cars maybe higher than at other circuits", and he felt "Red Bull are the most obvious example of that" in 2023. Red Bull had to raise its ride height to ensure underfloor plank wear compliance, and in doing so took things outside of the usually wide operating range of its 2023 challenger.

Set-up changes it knew it would have to make just weren't

"Red Bull was eliminated early in qualifying, but the car was still mighty in race trim"

working as hoped, with Max Verstappen even saying after he was knocked out in Q2, for the first time since his Jeddah driveshaft issue, that "FP3 was not too bad, but then we tried a few more things on the car for qualifying where it tipped it over to the car being undriveable again". The RB19s were bottoming out on Singapore's braking zone bumps and sliding across the kerbs.

That explains why Red Bull was eliminated early in qualifying. But the car was still mighty in race trim. This machine truly is a successor to Ferrari's famed F2004 in this regard.

Ferrari's tactics, having secured track position on a layout where overtaking is very hard anyway without a considerable tyre delta, were spot on. Sainz's controlling of the pace up front actually played into Red Bull's hands with its contra-strategy approach for both Verstappen and Sergio Perez, but the timing

of the safety car following Logan Sargeant's crash undid that. Ferrari also wanted the pack compressed after the restart for the same reason as before. By doing this, it was not tested on tyre degradation, its limitation for so long. Sainz's post-race comments suggest that this might have become critical if the squad had encountered different race circumstances.

The upcoming event at Suzuka will really test Ferrari's progress on tyre degradation as this track hits the highest levels of tyre stress and lateral movement across the F1 season, plus the asphalt is very abrasive. In isolation that will mean a challenge, even if this is mitigated somewhat by the track's figure-of-eight layout meaning all four car corners are tested relatively equally, but recent high temperatures at Suzuka could mean the drivers get a real test if these are repeated this weekend, as is forecast.

Verstappen's pace on his medium tyres in Red Bull's second Singapore stint was startling. He surely must be considered a victory candidate had the safety car not wrecked his day – after all, he lost nearly 30s to Sainz with a green-flag pitstop yet came home only 21.4s behind. That is impressive given how hard a weekend this was for Red Bull.

Of course, the Singapore GP was important for the matters of the flexi-wing and flex-floor clampdown through Technical Directives 18 and 39 – the latter updated from June 2022, when it was introduced as a method to eliminate porpoising. Red Bull team boss Christian Horner was unequivocal that Red Bull had not changed anything in response to the TDs coming into force. Red Bull did introduce a new floor and rear-wing-endplate tweaks last weekend, but these were circuit-specific changes and in any case it went back to its older floor specification after practice.

The TD timing was important for those looking for formbook changes. And this will be closely watched heading to Japan, as the flexi-wing clampdown was thought to be worth just a tenth per lap around Singapore, with its stop/start nature, but could be much more important elsewhere. Rivals reckoned Red Bull's pace loss last weekend was actually too much to be explained by the TD clampdowns alone. It's possible that Suzuka will reveal something has changed with Red Bull's real performance, but far more likely is that the team will return to its previous dominant position.

Red Bull's race performance in Singapore's strategy challenge points to a quick resurgence at Suzuka. There it should be able to run its typically low ride heights, which suggests a lesser set-up challenge. But perhaps the biggest Japan form clue for this season's leading team comes from Verstappen's comments after Singapore qualifying: "On the simulator we went to Suzuka and it just felt amazing again. Like most of the races." 🌟

➔ **P28 RED BULL'S SINGAPORE STORY**



Russell's cruel but crucial lesson

As bitter as the experience tastes in the immediate aftermath of his last-lap crash in Singapore, it can only make the Mercedes driver stronger in the long term

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

In the moment, you just want to curl up in a ball and be with nobody,” George Russell mourned moments after his race-ending trip to the wall on the final lap of the Singapore Grand Prix. A first Formula 1 victory of the season had been tantalisingly close to his grasp in the dying stages of a breathless encounter, and he had been unwavering in his pursuit of eventual winner Carlos Sainz. It was, according to Mercedes CEO Toto Wolff, a “99.9% fantastic weekend” – but that final 0.1% tainted his otherwise stellar performance at the end.

With a front-row start, Russell knew he was on for a potential victory in Singapore. It didn’t matter that Sainz had got pole, and neither did it matter if he wasn’t able to mount an assault for the lead on the first lap; Mercedes had saved a set of medium tyres for the 62-lap contest, and was hoping to play that card at some point. Ferrari covered it off in its own strategy, since it knew that a late-race Mercedes stop could be devastating for its own chances. Sainz tried to congest the field to ensure Mercedes did not have a gap to drop into if it elected to cede track position, but he could do little to stop the W14s pitting when Esteban Ocon’s broken Alpine prompted a virtual safety car. It made sense for Mercedes to withdraw the ace card it had so conspicuously hidden and play it for a cut-price pitstop.

When the two Mercedes roared past Charles Leclerc on their new medium tyres, it seemed inevitable that Russell would at least push for victory. He had reeled in Lando Norris by the 59th lap. Sainz was effectively fighting a proxy war, taking Norris as his vassal, and the Spaniard kept his ex-team-mate handily supplied with DRS assistance to ensure he had equal firepower over the straights. Russell got the better exit out of Turn 13, however, and attempted to outdrag his fellow Briton over the Jubilee Bridge. Norris placed his car perfectly, sitting on the apex of the following corners, which gave him just enough in hand to stay ahead. Sainz backed off once more to keep Norris within a second of his gearbox because the McLaren had strayed outside the gap, and Russell’s best opportunity had gone begging.

Russell then faltered at the final hurdle. Norris actually made the mistake first at Turn 10, touching the outside wall at the site of the former Singapore Sling chicane to knock his steering out of alignment, but Russell hit it harder. It was a microscopic mistake in scale, but it had huge consequences. Russell went straight into the barrier and his race ended nine corners sooner than it should. Ever the exacting self-critic, Russell took the

incident to heart. He knew that it took just a couple of millimetres outside of his normal line to cause it, and that he’d dealt with the intensity of the prior 61 laps only to fall to self-immolation hurt even more: “It is the most horrendous feeling in the world when you are so physically drained, mentally drained. We missed out on an opportunity for victory and then to make such a mistake, it’s truly heartbreaking.”

But there’s no doubt that Russell had woken up on Monday morning raring to go again at Suzuka. Amid his frustration and despair post-Singapore, he retained enough presence of mind to appreciate the run of form that he was in – and felt he was “driving better” than ever before in his F1 career.

Although Russell had kicked off 2023 in good form, he’d overcomplicated things and this rather tied him up in knots. A vow to simplify his approach after the summer appears to have paid off, and he deserves full credit for making a race of

it in Singapore after sensing that opportunity to win. Wolff reckons that Russell’s mistake will be good for his development in the long term. As much as mistakes are vilified at motorsport’s top table, they’re also vital to the progress of drivers; after all, Lewis

Hamilton and Max Verstappen spent a long time in their early years learning what not to do. “What I said to him is I’d rather have this happening now and the learning is there, than when we race for a victory or for a championship,” reckoned Wolff. “That’s going to be engraved in him, this mistake.”

Wolff’s right; should he find himself in future championship battles, Russell will need to know when to fight for wins and when to bank points. Perhaps there’s an opportunity to learn when to keep his powder dry too. Ferrari may well have forecast the extra-medium-set strategy on its own, but Mercedes’ heralding pre-race certainly helped to guide Sainz’s path to victory.

Russell can also learn from his career so far. He had to cope with the pressure when in points-scoring positions during his three years at Williams. Stepping up from the back of the grid to the front requires another adjustment: points-scoring becomes routine, and it’s the wins that start to carry that level of pressure. It takes time to acclimatise. “I’m not going to let a mistake of two centimetres knock me down,” Russell vowed. And nor should he – he’ll have similar races in the future, and he’ll know how to play it next time. 🍀

“I said to him I’d rather have this happening now than when we race for a championship”

➔ P20 SINGAPORE GP REPORT



The Sutton effect

Calls within the BTCC for the Motorbase Ford Focus STs to be reined in fail to appreciate the full picture. Sometimes it's the driver that makes the difference

MARCUS SIMMONS

It's around 10am on Saturday 22 April at Donington Park. The first British Touring Car Championship free practice session of the season is nearing its end. The rhythm of rasping BTCC cars bombing downhill through the Craner Curves to the Old Hairpin is becoming almost hypnotic. Suddenly, a blue-and-yellow projectile comes into view, carrying what must be impossible speed into the right-hander at the bottom of the hill. There's no way it can make it through...

It does. Comfortably. Ash Sutton and his newly massively developed Motorbase Performance-run Ford Focus ST end that session nearly half a second clear of the opposition. The progress of what is, let's not forget, a front-wheel-drive machine carrying a base weight of 1340kg has been extraordinary. So too is the three-time champion behind the wheel. At this point, Autosport concludes that Sutton will, in 2023, claim his fourth BTCC crown before the teams even rock up at the Brands Hatch season finale in October, becoming the first man in series history to have won titles with front *and* rear-wheel-drive weapons.

Well, sometimes we get things wrong! Owing partly to his first-lap incidents at Oulton Park and Croft, Sutton has a 'mere' 42-point advantage over reigning champion Tom Ingram heading to Silverstone for this weekend's penultimate round. He needs to leave there with a 67-point buffer and, with Ingram's penchant for harvesting strong results, that's unlikely, though not impossible.

Of course, Sutton didn't claim pole that weekend at Donington; instead it was team-mate Dan Rowbottom, even if the Midlander's lap to top the second phase of qualifying wasn't quite as rapid as Sutton's Q1 standard. Next time out, in the wet at Brands Hatch, it was another Ford on pole in the hands of Dan Cammish. From the remaining six race weekends, Sutton has topped qualifying in five of them, the exception being Croft, where Cammish was superb.

So that's eight poles out of eight for the Motorbase Fords. It's led to calls for the Focus to be slowed down – this is a performance-balancing formula, after all. Some at West Surrey Racing, whose lead drivers Jake Hill and Colin Turkington lie third and fourth in the points in their BMW 330e M Sports, point out that when they introduced the 3 Series in 2019, such was the early-season pace of Turkington and Andrew Jordan that they had the boost turned down. Surely, therefore, the same should happen with the Fords.

Yet it's not that simple. The winter development of the Fords kept them carefully within the parameters set by the technical team of BTCC organiser TOCA. If you look at the 2023 average 'supertimes', where each driver's fastest lap of the weekend is calculated as a percentage of the overall quickest, it paints an interesting picture. Sutton is supreme, with an average of 100.021% over the eight weekends. Then we get Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai star Ingram

on 100.397 and Hill on 100.398. Josh Cook is on 100.528 with his One Motorsport Honda Civic, with Turkington on 100.569. Four different cars in the top five, and the only duplicate is... the BMW.

Cammish is on 100.786, behind Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla racer Ricky Collard (100.751), with Rowbottom next on 100.819. Such was Cammish's pace in his Team Dynamics days that you would have expected him to have a better average in that team's Honda. Rowbottom, who effectively replaced Cammish

“Sutton can regularly take a machine to extremes that are inaccessible to others”

at Dynamics, would likely have fared similarly with that team. So does that mean that the Motorbase Focus is only as good as, if not worse than, the Dynamics Honda? Of course it doesn't, but such is the very special talent of Sutton that he can regularly take a machine to extremes that are inaccessible to others.

Even if you go into median averages to minimise the effects of outliers (for example, Turkington's Oulton Park qualifying exclusion and Cammish's crash in qualifying at Knockhill), it affects things only slightly. Sutton leads here on a perfect 100.000 to the 100.382 of Ingram. Turkington moves up to head Hill and Cook (the only non-Motorbase driver to have a weekend fastest lap, with his free practice effort at Croft), all in the 100.4s. Cammish moves ahead of Collard, but only onto 100.644 – still behind his expected Dynamics figure from 2018-20.

Looking at it by team and manufacturer, WSR and BMW (Hill has been fastest four times, Turkington on three occasions and Stephen Jelley once) move ahead of Excelr8 and Hyundai (for whom Ingram has done all the heavy lifting, ditto Cook with the One Honda equipe): 100.303 to 100.382. Yet we hear theories that the rear-drive BMW is now only the third fastest car in the series.

Of course, you can twist statistics to tell any story you want, but the black-and-white numbers give a hint as to how TOCA could have been treading in murky waters by 'turning down' the Fords. Slowing Sutton by almost 0.4% to give parity with Ingram and the BMWs might make the title race closer, but it could have dropped Cammish and Rowbottom into Power Maxed Vauxhall/Hard Cupra territory, and Sam Osborne into the bottom six on the grid. None of them would deserve that. Instead, it's better to applaud the remarkable Sutton. Car advantage? Possibly. Driver advantage? Certainly. 🌟

RACE CENTRE



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FORMULA 1

SMART SAINZ ENDS RED BULL'S RUN


Max Verstappen was out of the picture for much of the race in Singapore, but the Ferrari star still had to use his head to defeat Mercedes

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Sainz seals
Ferrari's resurgence
with the victory that
finally breaks
Red Bull's run





Leclerc's
last-minute switch
to softs paid off as he
deposed Russell off
the line

A

t last, we have our answer to the almost-season-old question: will Red Bull win every race this season? If you've somehow missed the headline and the cover, here it is for the avoidance of doubt – it's a definitive 'no'.

Even the ardent Max Verstappenites in the Netherlands were beginning to struggle to muster the requisite enthusiasm for the Dutchman's continued spell of dominance.

Many had spent the Italian Grand Prix two weeks prior hoping for parallels to the last time a seemingly unbeatable Formula 1 team was felled in its efforts to win every race in a season: the 1988 edition of the race at Monza looked to be another occasion where McLaren's all-conquering MP4/4 continued its streak, before Ayrton Senna's victory was derailed by a clash with Williams substitute Jean-Louis Schlesser.

Thirty-five years on, glimmers of a Ferrari resurgence at home – where Carlos Sainz battled valiantly against Verstappen – gave way to the looming sense of inevitability when the reigning champion's pass for the lead was only a matter of time. There was no Schlesser-esque figure that day, and Verstappen claimed the outright record for consecutive wins with 10 in a row. But that's where the streak ends, as Sainz repaid the favour from Monza to vanquish the field in Singapore's tense and tactical encounter.

It was, admittedly, a slow burner at Marina Bay. Concerns over tyre degradation and the desire to make a one-stop strategy work thrust the field into lockstep, with few willing to risk sinking a single iota of tyre life into a doomed effort to pass. That suited Sainz just fine, of course, as Ferrari decided to play the management game very early. It knew it could not necessarily compete on pure race pace since Mercedes and McLaren had shown well in the FP2 race simulations, but getting track position would enable it to slow the tempo of the race.

But Mercedes had a trump card up its sleeve. Throughout the

practice sessions, it had been conspicuously sparing with its allocation of medium tyres, and had saved an extra set to offer more strategic latitude during the race. This gave George Russell cause to be particularly bullish after qualifying, feeling that Mercedes had the race-pace high ground and a tactical advantage in the preamble to Sunday. You got the feeling that he rather underestimated Sainz's own penchant for calling his own shots, even if his premonitions over that extra set ultimately contributed to the race's thrilling conclusion.

As early as Friday practice, it became apparent that Red Bull had not perhaps brought its best to the city state on the tip of the Malay Peninsula. But any difficult starts to a weekend are usually rectified in the simulator, where the at-base personnel provide the last wall of defence against a difficult weekend. But Saturday's efforts were little better. Tweaks between FP3 and qualifying made the car worse, according to Verstappen, and the usually benign-handling RB19 could not be coaxed into the corners without the drivers having to wrestle the steering wheel. The elimination of both Verstappen and Sergio Perez in the second part of qualifying effectively made it open season for the chasing pack.

With pole, Ferrari went all out for victory. This was a different Ferrari to the one seen in recent years, where conservatism and inertia often squandered victories in the face of more dynamic strategies catching the team out. It didn't have the full front-row lock-out to play with since Russell had pruned Charles Leclerc off the front row, but the Monegasque's decision to start on the soft tyre – relative to the other frontrunners' medium rubber – gave him extra impetus off the line to nudge ahead of Russell.

"I changed my mind very last minute [and chose softs] just to make sure that I was in front of George in the first stint," Leclerc recalled of that decision. "It was clear that it was beneficial for Carlos, he was making the gap, but also for me because then that meant I could stop before Carlos and try and keep that second place."



ETHERINGTON

“RUSSELL WAS MADE AWARE OF FERRARI’S PLAN, AND SAID THAT ‘THEY’LL SACRIFICE LECLERC’”

Lewis Hamilton had also broken clear of Russell at the start, but hardly by the most ethical of means; the older Briton made little effort to make the first corner and his Mercedes took to the run-off, where Hamilton overtook Russell and Lando Norris into Turn 3 *[only Russell, really; the Norris pass looked legitimate – ed]* and attempted to pass it off as having been pushed off. It didn’t wash, and Hamilton had to turn in his ill-gotten gains when the FIA put the first-corner events under the microscope.

Subsequent action at the front was not particularly forthcoming after the first lap, as tyre saving waylaid early efforts for the drivers at the front to make progress. Sainz and Leclerc controlled the pace, and Leclerc stayed in DRS range to force Russell into conducting his own tyre saving rather than expending energy to attack. It foreshadowed the end of the race in that regard, but the frontrunners were simply attempting to keep their hands close to their chest. Thus began the gamesmanship, and the race resembled a powder keg awaiting the touch of a single spark.

Ferrari’s plan was to build a gap between Sainz and Leclerc to buy the leader time and, with Leclerc expecting to pit first, Sainz could be protected by his margin with fewer worries that he’d be gazumped by the chasing Russell in the pitstop phase. Leclerc was told on the 10th lap that he’d need to back off to give his team-mate a three-second advantage, a difficult task given Russell was circulating at the same pace as the two out in front. Russell was made aware of Ferrari’s plan,



Sargeant’s shunt brought out safety car – and sparked massed dash for the pits

DUNBAR

and said that “they’ll sacrifice Leclerc”, which arguably summoned a more grandiose and gorier mental image than intended.

With a bit of to-ing and fro-ing with his lap times, Leclerc had built most of the gap and sat 2.3s behind his team-mate, but was hit with the news that he needed more: 5s would be a much safer target to protect the lead. As Ferrari continued to exert its control over the race, Russell got on the radio to his team and asked “what our best shot of winning this race is; what do I need to do?”. He’d get a little help when Logan Sargeant lazily dumped his Williams into the wall at Turn 8 and nibbled off the front wing. The American managed to back his car out of the wall, front wing precariously wedged underneath, and limped back to the pits – but the ensuing shower of carbon-fibre shrapnel warranted a safety car to clean up the track.

That was the spark. Everybody hurried to the pitlane to ditch >>



Alternative strategy of staying out on hard rubber gave Red Bull fleeting track-position boost

their tyres, save for those on the alternative strategy – the Red Bulls among them. The margin that Sainz had been granted crucially decided the pitstop phase in his favour, keeping him ahead of the hard-shod Verstappen once the safety car arrived, but the hurried trips to the pitlane were far less kind to Leclerc.

His own sacrifice to give Sainz a buffer, which went beyond 3s by the time Sargeant littered the Marina Bay circuit with his own mangled bodywork, put him far too close to the Russell-Norris-Hamilton pack behind. Leclerc’s double-stack with Sainz was achievable given their gap, but Hamilton’s need to drive across the Ferrari’s bow to queue up for his own service in the pitbox ahead cost Leclerc positions to both Russell and Norris – his efforts to help Sainz had not been rewarded by Lady Luck in the slightest.

Although Sainz had enough in hand to ensure that the lead never slipped from his grasp, he reckoned the safety car had come a little bit too soon. “Going onto a hard tyre on lap 20 wasn’t my preference, especially because I had managed very well the medium and I felt like we could have gone a lot longer,” he mused after the race. “But it was the right call.”

Sainz’s engineer Riccardo Adami then gave his charge a few directors’ notes for the restart as the field circulated behind the Aston Martin safety car. Firstly, he’d need to ensure that Verstappen didn’t make an outrageous play for the lead, which would be difficult on his aged hard tyres. Next, once the restart was done with, Sainz was told to ensure that the chasing pack stayed together as much as he could manage. There would be no use of Verstappen as a meat shield to absorb the net-second Russell’s advances while Sainz scampered off into the distance; the field had to be compressed.

It had become clear that Mercedes would be the main challenger in the race, given events over the first 20 laps. Solid race pace from Aston Martin’s Fernando Alonso demonstrated on Friday never really materialised, and Norris’s McLaren was much of a muchness with the Ferraris. If Mercedes could be kept on the same strategy, Sainz could micromanage the race pace and hope that the turbulent air gave Russell’s W14 more trouble with tyre degradation.

If Sainz opened the taps and sailed off, he’d only hurt his own hard tyres and risk spacing the field out, which Mercedes could then exploit to employ its not-so-secret weapon. The team’s openness of having retained that extra set of medium tyres meant that this was a strategic option that Ferrari had prepared for; with no field spread, there’d be no real opportunity for Mercedes to pit without sacrificing huge amounts of track position.

Once the Red Bulls had been cleared out of the way by the frontrunners, the strategic stand-off resumed in earnest. Sainz

was told to keep about a second’s margin – enough to keep Russell out of DRS, but not to allow gaps to form in the order. Russell astutely cottoned on to the idea that Sainz was trying to back the field up, and the Spaniard’s resulting tyre management left him feeling surprisingly comfortable and “under control” despite the mounting pressure from Russell behind.

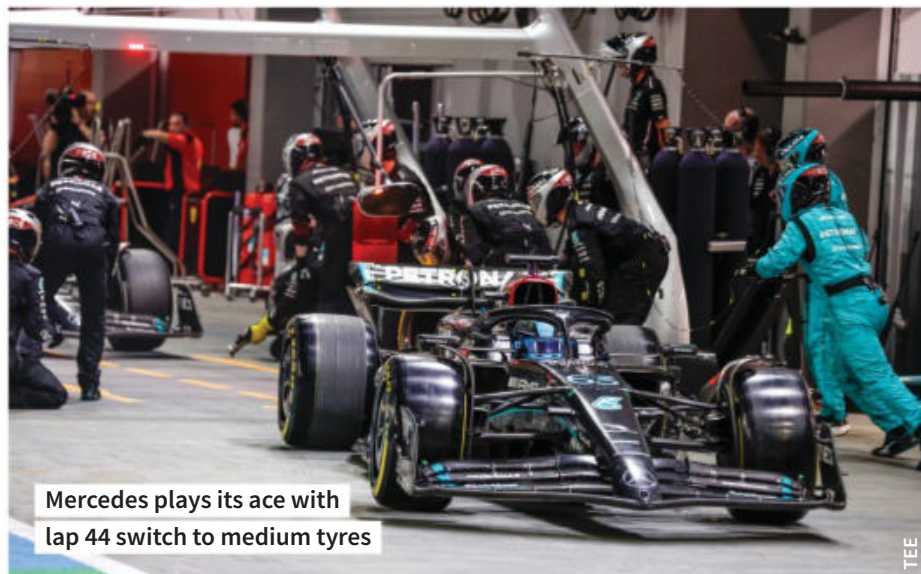
It could very well have continued like that until the end, but fate had one more twist to bestow upon the race’s thread of destiny. Esteban Ocon lost drive in his Alpine and came to rest just before Turn 3, prompting race control to stick the virtual safety car lights on as the marshals tucked the stranded A523 behind the nearest break in the fence. This gave Mercedes the chance to play its ace. Russell and Hamilton were hauled in at the end of lap 44 of 62 and handed those fresh medium tyres to make a race of it. They’d shed a few positions and seconds in the process, albeit at a knock-down rate thanks to the VSC’s presence, which put Russell just over 17s behind Sainz on the lap 45 restart. That worked out to about a second per lap, which looked more than achievable when they’d logged their times for the 46th lap: Sainz’s 1m37.913s was made to look insignificant by Russell’s 1m36.273s. The new-tyre bounce notwithstanding, the race looked to have swung in Russell’s favour.

The Mercedes duo had work to do, though. Leclerc was back in front of them and willing to put up a fight to help Ferrari bag its



Norris keeps “way, way faster” Mercedes duo at bay

QUALIFYING



Mercedes plays its ace with lap 44 switch to medium tyres

TEE

“IT SURPRISED ME HOW QUICKLY THE MERCS MANAGED TO PASS CHARLES AND CLOSE THE GAP ON LANDO AND ME”

first win of the season, with Norris slightly further up the road in Sainz's wheeltracks.

“At the beginning, I was not so nervous because I felt like I had a lot of pace in hand to push in the last 12 to 15 laps,” Sainz reckoned. “But immediately I felt like as soon as I started pushing, my tyre degradation started to kick in. Lando and I were sliding a lot. Then it all surprised me quite a lot how quickly the Mercs managed to pass Charles and close the gap on Lando and me. And at that point, I thought, ‘OK, it’s not going to be easy.’”

Leclerc was made a significantly easier prospect to pass when his Ferrari began to overheat, and concluded that “after the two Mercedes passed me there was not much to gain anymore by pushing”. Russell nipped past on lap 53, with Hamilton following suit on the next tour, to give them the opportunity to close on Norris.

As the black-and-teal cars loomed larger in Norris's mirrors, Sainz took what he considered a risk to ensure that neither he nor his former team-mate would get passed: he decided to back it up and give Norris the DRS.

“This is the sort of strategy that you always keep in the back of your head in tracks like Singapore, that might in come useful at some point,” Sainz revealed. “Obviously it’s easy to think about it, it’s easy to have it in mind. But it’s a lot more difficult to execute, because it does put you under some extra pressure and it comes with its risks. »



ETHERINGTON

Before the Singapore Grand Prix weekend, only Max Verstappen had managed to clinch two successive poles this season. That Carlos Sainz became the second driver to achieve that feat in 2023, while Verstappen faltered in Q2, underlined the growing confidence that the Spanish Ferrari ace has found since the summer break.

Sainz threw down the gauntlet at the start of the top-10 shootout and sat atop the order a quarter of a second clear of team-mate Charles Leclerc after the opening set of laps, as Ferrari hoped to capture a first front-row lock-out of the season. The Madrid-born racer's second effort was even better, and he punched in a 1m30.984s to become the first driver all weekend to dip below the 1m31s barrier.

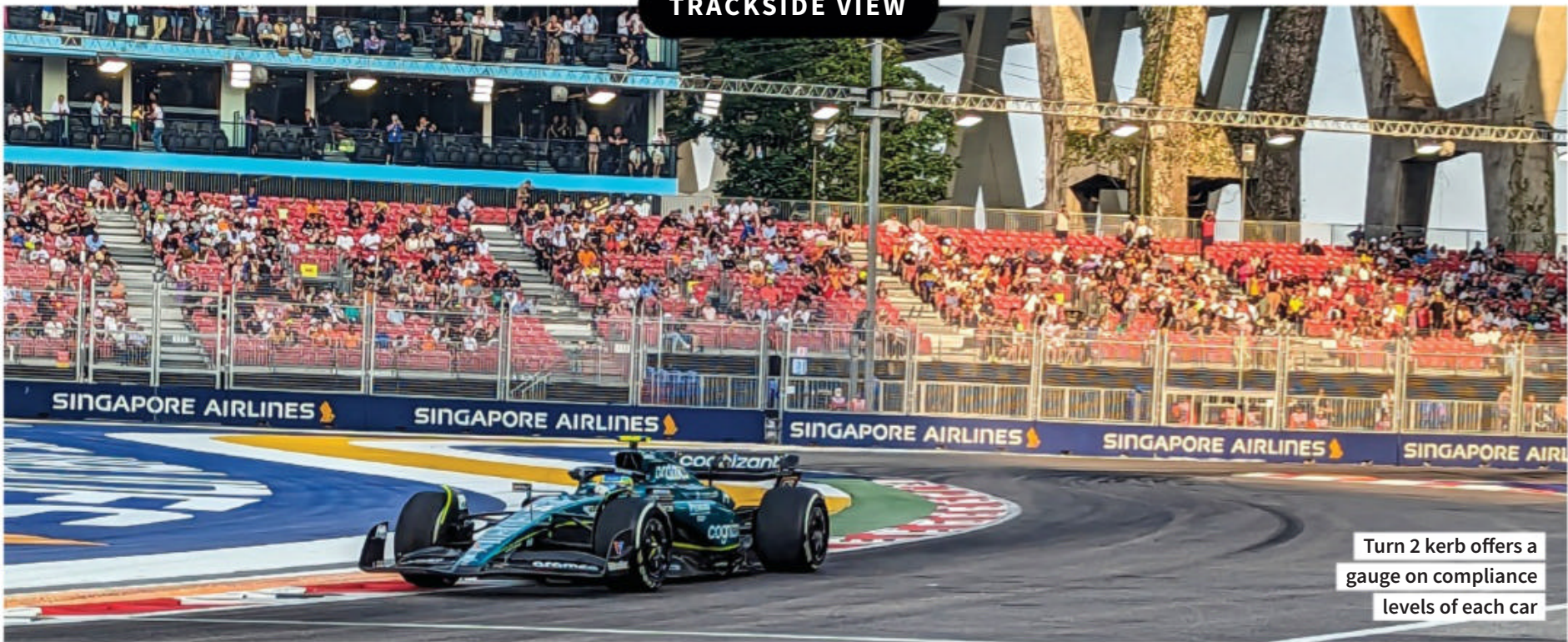
Amid some surprise that Ferrari had found a competitive streak on a street circuit, Sainz noted the work that the team had done in a high-downforce environment, and that keeping tyres alive in the final sector was key to his pole. McLaren's Lando Norris briefly snatched second from Leclerc before the Monegasque retrieved a provisional front-row start, but could not withstand the late siege from George Russell. The Briton found a hatful of time in the middle sector, which contributed towards his Mercedes' second-place start.

But Red Bull's implosion in Q2 was arguably the biggest story. Verstappen and Sergio Perez both comfortably made the cut in the opening part of qualifying, which ended with Lance Stroll's huge last-corner shunt as the Aston Martin driver tried in vain to progress to the next phase. The opening laps of Q2 ended with the Red Bulls straddling the drop zone; Verstappen was 10th and Perez 11th, and both needed to dig more out of their respective RB19s to hit the mark. Instead, they both dropped the ball; Perez suffered a Turn 2 spin that ratified his elimination from qualifying, while Verstappen washed out in Turn 3 and lost time. The championship leader nonetheless improved by a small margin on his compromised final effort but could not cling onto a Q3 berth, and AlphaTauri new boy Liam Lawson made it through ahead of him by 0.007s. Perez claimed 13th, the Red Bulls split by Pierre Gasly.

“Both needed to dig more out of their respective RB19s. Instead, they both dropped the ball”

Leclerc and Norris occupied the second row of the grid after Lewis Hamilton struggled to tap into the same vein of performance as Mercedes team-mate Russell and could only sit on the periphery in fifth. This put him alongside Kevin Magnussen, who had enjoyed a strong run to sixth with Haas unearthing its sometimes-impressive qualifying pace. The Dane outpaced Fernando Alonso, Alpine's Esteban Ocon and team-mate Nico Hulkenberg. Lawson completed the top 10 for only his third grand prix.

TRACKSIDE VIEW

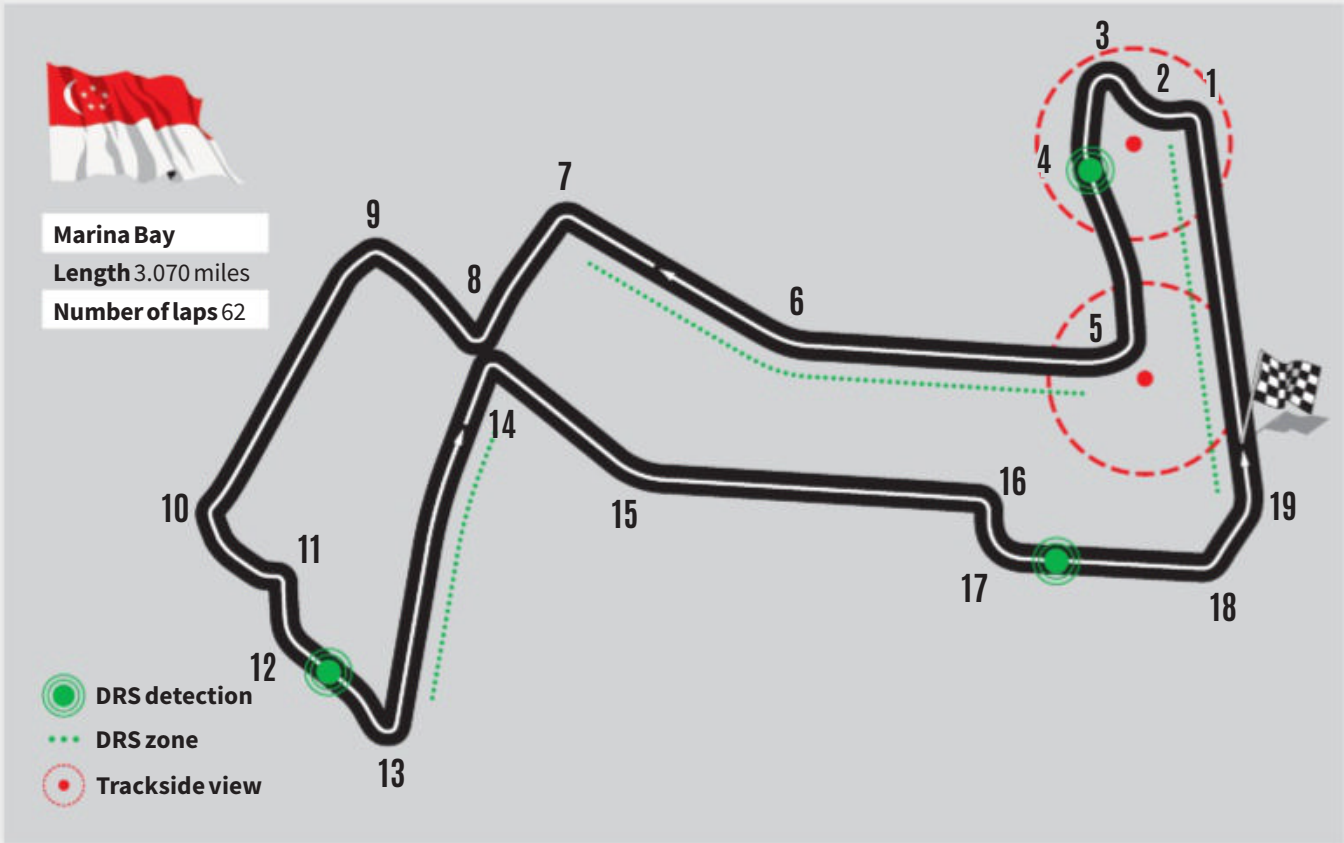


BOXALL-LEGGE

In retrospect, perhaps braving the warm conditions would have been an easier pursuit during the night-time FP2 session. Perambulating along the barriers is sweaty work in Singapore, and the mandated photographer's tabard adds an extra layer of insulation you're hardly crying out for. But we shall endure, and meander down towards a deceptively fast Turn 5 to watch some cars.

It's a curious corner; the cars pull out of Turn 3 and wind down a slight incline, before darting left after the Turn 4 kink. They do so aggressively and try to straighten the car up, while dropping down three gears. The inertia bites as they make a sharp right-hand turn, but every car complies as they navigate the corner. One of the Williams drivers, sporting the special-edition Gulf livery for the Singapore round, leans against the outside kerb before winding on the steering lock to cruise past Liam Lawson's AlphaTauri. It's quite the overtake, even if the Kiwi had long since backed out of his lap.

We walk towards the Turns 1-2-3 complex at the start of the lap, with a brief stop-off at the barely-a-Turn 4. It's a lot more cambered than it



appears on TV, with drivers taking the outside line out of the tight Turn 3 and remaining there on the outside before folding inside for the next corner. George Russell gets very close to the exit wall once we arrive, ruffling the stuck-on Heineken advertising hoarding, as the drivers seemingly attempt to peel it off with their right-front tyre. Esteban Ocon gets close; Lawson

gets even closer – and may have even left a scratch.

The first three corners of the Marina Bay circuit have become magnets for incidents over the years, notably hosting the 2017 pile-up between the Ferraris and Max Verstappen. Standing just to the right of the Turn 3 apex means you're staring down the barrel as the cars fight the Turn 2 kerb, offering a chance to see the compliance of each car filing through. Alex Albon buzzes the kerb with great gusto, while Lance Stroll follows him through with a little more restraint. To shorten the path to Turn 3, the drivers are best off attacking that kerb, and Lewis Hamilton just about keeps his left-hand wheels over the white line to remain in play. Russell is also punchy, and a snap of oversteer in Turn 1 is collected as he straddles

“Russell gets very close, ruffling the advertising hoarding, as the drivers seemingly try to peel it off with their right-front tyre”

the next corner as if he was Tony Hawk performing a 50-50 grind on a rail.

The sun is starting to fold behind the curtain as the floodlights intensify, but it's still too hot to be hanging around. We trudge back to the air-conditioned media centre and watch the rest of the session come under attack from a minor reptilian invasion. These lizards – Malayan water monitors, apparently – are particularly brazen as they enter the confines of the circuit, but one sadly gets a little too brave for its own good...

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



BOXALL-LEGGE



Ferrari boss Fred Vasseur savours podium moment alongside Norris, Sainz, Hamilton

ETHERINGTON

“It’s all about having that commitment to do it and to put yourself under that extra risk. But I felt like that was my only real chance of winning the race...”

With Norris taken under his wing, Sainz ensured that Russell’s attempts to pass the McLaren would be fewer and further between. Norris, for his part, was focused on protecting second, and Sainz kept enough of a gap to ensure that there was no possibility of being backstabbed at the final moment. When Russell applied DRS, Sainz ensured that Norris would have it too.

It got slightly hairy on lap 59 when Russell briefly broke out of the train to attack Norris. The King’s Lynn native got a better run out of Turn 13 and put the Bristol-born racer ahead under heavy pressure along the Jubilee Bridge, but Norris got his lines right to ensure Russell couldn’t find a way past. With no DRS zone on the revised back stretch, Norris could be more leisurely with placing his car into Turns 16 and 17 to ward off a move once more.

Sainz put his neck on the line again; Norris had dropped to 1.5s behind but was still needed in play, and so the leader backed off again to keep his follower topped up with DRS functionality. After that assault, Russell perhaps had to be more circumspect.

“The Merc strategy was way, way faster,” said Norris. “If we weren’t in the way, they would have been 10 seconds ahead of us quite easily, but there’s always the task of overtaking, which in Singapore is one of the hardest tasks. Especially at the end and with a couple of those

“IT WAS SUCH A NOTHING OF A MISTAKE. I CLIPPED THE WALL ON THE LAST LAP. IT’S A PATHETIC MISTAKE”

attacks from George, I think it just put his tyres a little bit over the edge and he didn’t attack me as much.”

It came down to a knife-edge on the final lap. With each passing corner, Sainz’s odds of victory were growing – before Russell’s own error of judgement cast it into near-certainty. At Turn 10, Norris brushed the outside wall before taking the corner, which he admitted caused him to panic when it knocked the steering off-centre. But that was nothing compared to Russell, who seemed to follow Norris’s line and hit the outside wall with more force. This caused the Mercedes to go straight on, putting Russell into the wall to undo his afternoon’s efforts at the final hurdle and handing third to Hamilton, who had closed in the final stint.

“It was such a nothing of a mistake,” Russell lamented. “If I spun off and had a lock-up it would have been very different, but I clipped the wall on the last lap. It’s such a pathetic mistake.”

Sainz could breathe, and simply had to navigate the final corners to secure victory in a race that began with careful manoeuvring of chess pieces, and ended in fireworks, sweat and tears. In one of the most mentally demanding races on the F1 calendar, where the impenetrable humidity and dazzling lights can be overwhelming, Sainz had the clarity of thought to execute his own tactical masterclass after reading the race behind him: “[The plan] worked and sometimes you need to trust your instinct, trust your feeling. I’ve been trusting that these last two weekends – and it’s working well.”

As for the unpredictable thriller that the race became, it just needed Red Bull to colossally drop the ball to create F1’s best spectacle of the year. Aston Martin and Mercedes had got close to breaking the hegemony, but Ferrari’s current swing in form was enough to make the magic happen at Marina Bay. 🏁



Sainz in full control on run to flag after tactical masterclass

GRANT

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F1 REPORT**

Japanese Grand Prix
28 September
issue

ASTON POINT-LESS AMID ALONSO, STROLL DRAMA

Aston Martin racked up its first non-score of the 2023 season when Fernando Alonso dropped down the order following two mistakes, a penalty and a botched pitstop in the Singapore Grand Prix, while team-mate Lance Stroll sat on the sidelines as a non-starter.

Alonso had qualified seventh and mainly chased Lewis Hamilton early in the first stint, which he had started on the medium tyres. But when Alonso pitted after the safety car had been called, he bounced over the kerbs at the pit entry and, when opting to recross, he went contrary to the FIA's event notes instruction. This earned a five-second penalty.

Alonso served this at his second stop, after being passed by Esteban Ocon's Alpine as they both ran with the yet-to-stop Sergio Perez. Alonso reckoned he had "very little rear end on the car" and that subsequent sliding damaged his rear tyres particularly. His service to take soft tyres came under the virtual safety car, but after his penalty was served Aston's "rear jack did not engage properly", said team boss Mike Krack. This led to a 22s delay and Alonso rejoining 15th. He then fell to last with an off at Turn 14.

With Stroll still sore after his Q1 shunt (below) and a long repair required, Aston decided it was better for him to skip the race ahead of the trip to Japan.

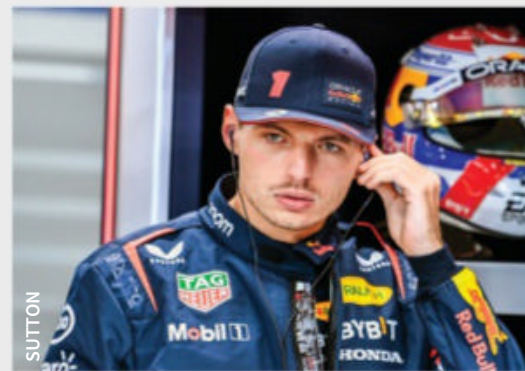


Verstappen shows Red Bull's pace despite struggles

Red Bull's sensational 2023 Formula 1 victory streak was finally ended in Singapore, where Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez rose from qualifying a shock 11th and 13th to finishing fifth and eighth. But their recovery paths were very different: one good and one bad.

Verstappen made the most of Liam Lawson's start struggles to immediately gain ground. He then muscled past the Haas pair before settling down adrift of Esteban Ocon and Fernando Alonso, waiting for his contra-strategy of starting on the hard tyres to pay off. Perez, on the same strategy, made no progress from his starting spot in the first stint, which was notable for the Mexican's part in Yuki Tsunoda's retirement when they clashed at Turn 1 on the opening lap.

After the safety car, under which neither Red Bull driver pitted, they ran second and fourth. But the race neutralisation had actually wrecked Red Bull's strategy, since it required them to make green-flag stops later when all their rivals ahead had been able to stop under the safety car.



A second safety car didn't arrive, and both Verstappen and Perez fell behind the leaders again, with Alonso and Ocon also getting Perez before the Red Bull pair pitted ahead of the VSC being activated.

From there, Verstappen was rapid in climbing the order from 15th to finish 0.3 seconds behind the ailing Charles Leclerc in fifth, and 21s from victory. Perez, meanwhile, did make progress from rejoining last after his stop, but blotted his copybook again with a clash with Alex Albon late on. He was penalised 5s, but it made no difference to his result.

"Everything went against us in the race, with the safety car," Verstappen reflected.

“IT WAS A LUNGE. THERE ARE SENSIBLE WAYS OF OVERTAKING AND THAT WASN'T THE WAY TO DO IT.”

James Vowles took a dim view of Sergio Perez's botched late clash with Alex Albon, which the Williams principal reckons cost his team valuable points



Q&A

LIAM LAWSON
ALPHATAURI DRIVER**How tough was your first Singapore race physically?**

It was tough. Obviously, this place is extremely tough on the body, especially when you're fighting the car a lot. It makes it that extra bit difficult. But yeah, happy to survive the race.

Did anything go wrong on your drive to ninth?

The start. I need to get on top of that because it's now two weekends in a row that I've botched the start basically and

lost a couple of positions. It's just making our life more difficult. That's really the biggest loss of the race and that's on my part. For the rest, I think we extracted everything out of the car. We didn't quite have the race pace.

When did you realise points were on?

Maybe 20 laps to go – before Max [Verstappen] and the Red Bulls were coming back. At that point, I thought we had a chance. Then I felt like it

was slipping away again. And I guess when Checo [Sergio Perez] and [Alex] Albon had their fight, and Albon went back, that was

when I felt a bit more comfortable that we could at least score P10. It was a bonus... I mean not a bonus to see somebody [George Russell] crash out, but for us obviously it means we get an extra point.

How much was scoring points in these cameos a goal?

It was a goal. But I'm just trying to maximise every race, every session and finish as high as we can. [Here] that was points, which is great. We'll try and do even more hopefully in the future, if I get the chance to drive again.

Is racing at Suzuka confirmed?

Not confirmed. So, we'll carry on preparing like normal. But it's not confirmed.

Do you want to drive there?

I'd love to drive there! Obviously, I have a bit of experience. I know it better than Singapore. So, it would be great to drive.

**MAGNUSSEN SCORES POINT AFTER HAAS NAILS QUALIFYING**

Kevin Magnussen finished the Singapore Grand Prix with his first point since Miami in May, as he led Haas's charge ahead of team-mate Nico Hulkenberg.

For only the fourth time in 2023, Magnussen was the lead Haas driver in qualifying and, although he lost places on lap one, he still ran in the points up to the safety car. There, the following Hulkenberg lost out in Haas's double-stack to go from medium tyres to hards, which Hulkenberg took to the finish, struggling against drivers who stopped later or a second time.

This included Magnussen, who stopped under the VSC after an apparent brake problem finally ended his occasionally borderline defence against Pierre Gasly when he fell off at Turn 1 and then got passed by five more drivers. Magnussen took soft tyres for the third stint and charged to the edge of the top 10, which he reached when George Russell crashed.

Alpine back on form but loses Ocon to gearbox problem

Pierre Gasly took sixth for Alpine in Singapore, finishing in the best-of-the-rest spot behind the leading teams that likely would have gone to his team-mate Esteban Ocon before a gearbox problem ended the other Frenchman's promising race.

Gasly gained a spot from starting 12th in the early stages, as did Ocon further ahead from eighth on the grid. As Ocon chased Fernando Alonso, and Max Verstappen progressed to sit behind them before they stopped under the safety car, Gasly chased the Haas pair in the long DRS train.

After the restart, Alonso's inability to pass the yet-to-stop Sergio Perez – unlike the leaders with Verstappen further up the order – meant that Ocon could pounce brilliantly on

his former team-mate before they demoted the second Red Bull, which then pitted. But just as he ran solidly in sixth after Verstappen's stop, Ocon's issue developed and he retired at the pit exit, triggering the virtual safety car.

Gasly had scrapped his way to eighth by this point, at one stage enraged by Kevin Magnussen's strong defence. He gained when Alonso's VSC stop backfired, and got sixth back thanks to Russell's crash after Verstappen had charged through on his second-stint mediums.

"A return to the points is important for the team and the car felt good with solid pace," said Gasly, referencing Alpine's Monza woe. "It's a pity for Esteban as it could have been sixth and seventh."





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GIORGIO PIOLA

McLAREN'S UPGRADE PUSH CONTINUES...

A considerable upward trajectory in McLaren's fortunes thanks to its aggressive upgrade strategy was continued as the team introduced another series of new parts for the Singapore Grand Prix. This was part of a split strategy; Lando Norris collected the full suite of new parts that McLaren had shipped over to Marina Bay, while Oscar Piastri persisted largely with the previous specification. This presented an opportunity to compare the old and new parts,

and team principal Andrea Stella added that this afforded Piastri the chance to simply focus on driving and learning the circuit.

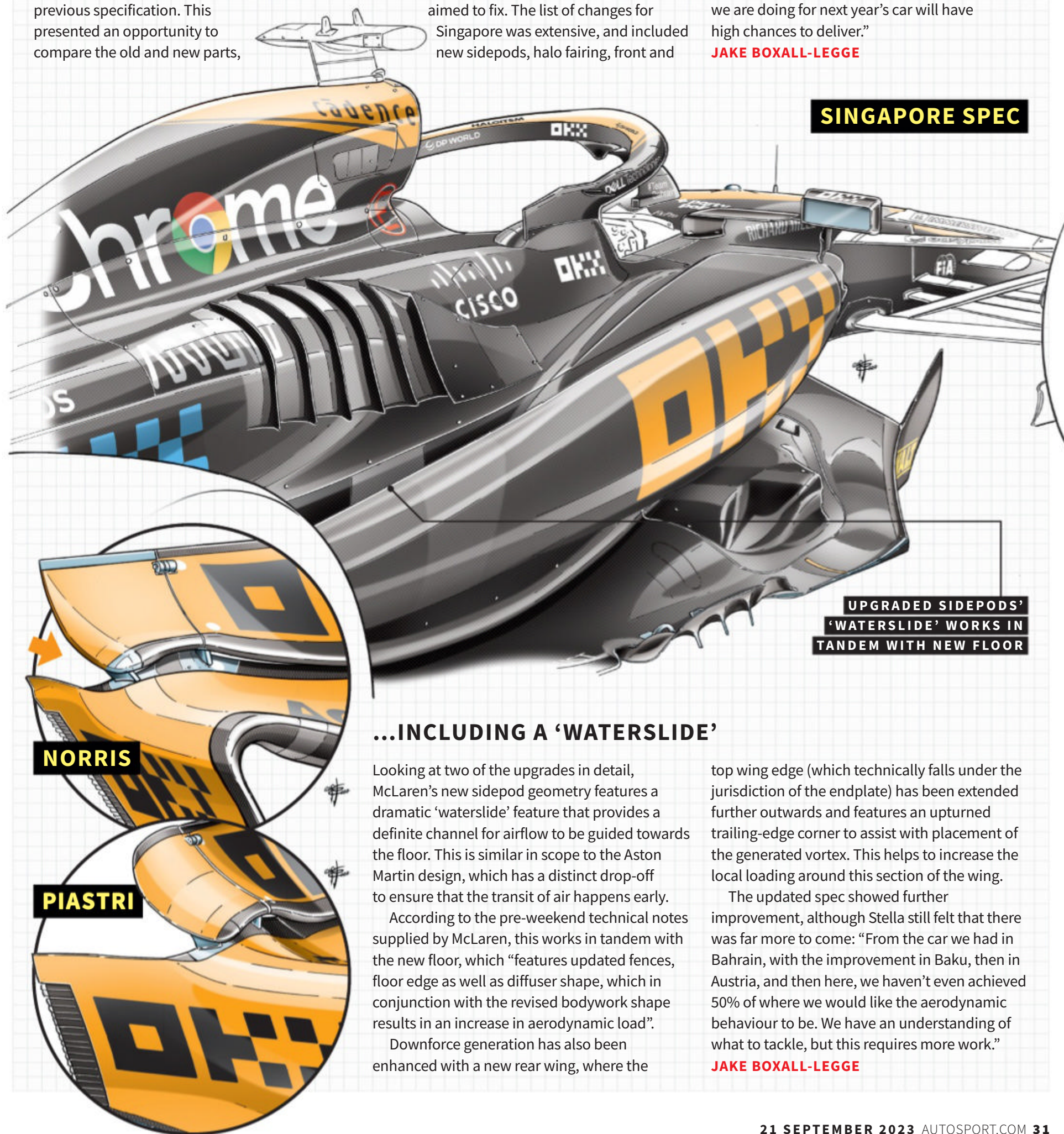
The changes aimed to deliver performance in low-speed conditions, since the much-upgraded MCL60 still has weaknesses in more extreme circumstances – the car also struggles with top speed, which its previous Monza upgrade had aimed to fix. The list of changes for Singapore was extensive, and included new sidepods, halo fairing, front and

rear wing endplates, floor, rear brake ducts, and rear suspension. A new circuit-specific beam wing was also brought to Singapore.

"[The data shows] they have delivered according to the expectation," explained Stella. "This is very encouraging, because it means that our development process is trustworthy. We can have confidence that the development we are doing for next year's car will have high chances to deliver."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

SINGAPORE SPEC



...INCLUDING A 'WATERSLIDE'

Looking at two of the upgrades in detail, McLaren's new sidepod geometry features a dramatic 'waterslide' feature that provides a definite channel for airflow to be guided towards the floor. This is similar in scope to the Aston Martin design, which has a distinct drop-off to ensure that the transit of air happens early.

According to the pre-weekend technical notes supplied by McLaren, this works in tandem with the new floor, which "features updated fences, floor edge as well as diffuser shape, which in conjunction with the revised bodywork shape results in an increase in aerodynamic load".

Downforce generation has also been enhanced with a new rear wing, where the

top wing edge (which technically falls under the jurisdiction of the endplate) has been extended further outwards and features an upturned trailing-edge corner to assist with placement of the generated vortex. This helps to increase the local loading around this section of the wing.

The updated spec showed further improvement, although Stella still felt that there was far more to come: "From the car we had in Bahrain, with the improvement in Baku, then in Austria, and then here, we haven't even achieved 50% of where we would like the aerodynamic behaviour to be. We have an understanding of what to tackle, but this requires more work."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



19 Zhou #24
1m33.258s



17 Piastri #81
1m32.902s



15 Tsunoda #22
no Q2 time



13 Perez #11
1m32.310s



11 Verstappen #1
1m32.173s



NS Stroll #18
1m33.397s



18 Sargeant #2
1m33.252s



16 Bottas #77
1m32.809s



14 Albon #23
1m33.719s



12 Gasly #10
1m32.274s

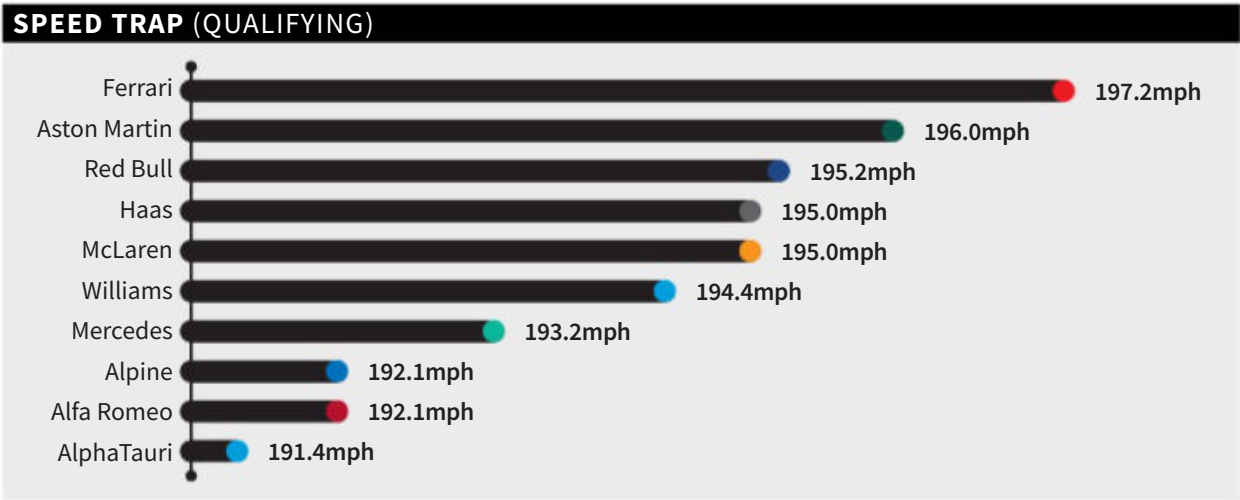


FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m33.350s	1	Sainz	1m32.120s	1	Sainz	1m32.065s
2	Sainz	1m33.428s	2	Leclerc	1m32.138s	2	Russell	1m32.134s
3	Verstappen	1m33.476s	3	Russell	1m32.355s	3	Norris	1m32.303s
4	Norris	1m33.522s	4	Alonso	1m32.478s	4	Verstappen	1m32.378s
5	Hamilton	1m33.540s	5	Hamilton	1m32.585s	5	Leclerc	1m32.381s
6	Russell	1m33.695s	6	Norris	1m32.711s	6	Hamilton	1m32.535s
7	Perez	1m33.725s	7	Perez	1m32.812s	7	Piastri	1m32.730s
8	Alonso	1m33.974s	8	Verstappen	1m32.852s	8	Perez	1m32.784s
9	Tsunoda	1m34.042s	9	Magnussen	1m33.017s	9	Hulkenberg	1m32.896s
10	Ocon	1m34.066s	10	Bottas	1m33.105s	10	Tsunoda	1m32.945s
11	Stroll	1m34.568s	11	Hulkenberg	1m33.139s	11	Magnussen	1m32.970s
12	Gasly	1m34.639s	12	Lawson	1m33.285s	12	Ocon	1m32.979s
13	Albon	1m34.657s	13	Ocon	1m33.361s	13	Alonso	1m33.051s
14	Bottas	1m34.802s	14	Stroll	1m33.390s	14	Stroll	1m33.126s
15	Magnussen	1m34.887s	15	Piastri	1m33.461s	15	Gasly	1m33.351s
16	Lawson	1m34.894s	16	Tsunoda	1m33.477s	16	Lawson	1m33.357s
17	Hulkenberg	1m34.985s	17	Zhou	1m33.575s	17	Albon	1m33.370s
18	Zhou	1m35.456s	18	Gasly	1m33.824s	18	Bottas	1m33.540s
19	Piastri	1m35.474s	19	Sargeant	1m34.327s	19	Zhou	1m33.637s
20	Sargeant	1m35.778s	20	Albon	1m35.558s	20	Sargeant	1m33.708s

WEATHER Clear, air 31-33C track 37-39C

WEATHER Clear, air 30C track 33-34C

WEATHER Clear, air 30-31C track 33-34C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Tsunoda	1m31.991s	1	Sainz	1m31.439s	1	Sainz	1m30.984s
2	Perez	1m32.099s	2	Russell	1m31.743s	2	Russell	1m31.056s
3	Hulkenberg	1m32.100s	3	Alonso	1m31.835s	3	Leclerc	1m31.063s
4	Lawson	1m32.215s	4	Magnussen	1m31.892s	4	Norris	1m31.270s
5	Magnussen	1m32.242s	5	Norris	1m31.951s	5	Hamilton	1m31.485s
6	Russell	1m32.331s	6	Hulkenberg	1m31.994s	6	Magnussen	1m31.575s
7	Sainz	1m32.339s	7	Leclerc	1m32.012s	7	Alonso	1m31.615s
8	Ocon	1m32.369s	8	Hamilton	1m32.019s	8	Ocon	1m31.673s
9	Verstappen	1m32.398s	9	Ocon	1m32.089s	9	Hulkenberg	1m31.808s
10	Leclerc	1m32.406s	10	Lawson	1m32.166s	10	Lawson	1m32.268s
11	Gasly	1m32.452s	11	Verstappen	1m32.173s	WEATHER Clear, air 29-30C track 31-32C		
12	Norris	1m32.483s	12	Gasly	1m32.274s			
13	Alonso	1m32.584s	13	Perez	1m32.310s			
14	Hamilton	1m32.651s	14	Albon	1m33.719s			
15	Albon	1m32.668s	15	Tsunoda	no time			
16	Bottas	1m32.809s						
17	Piastri	1m32.902s						
18	Sargeant	1m33.252s						
19	Zhou	1m33.258s						
20	Stroll	1m33.397s						

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	374	1	1
2 Perez	223	1	1
3 Hamilton	180	2	1
4 Alonso	170	2	2
5 Sainz	142	1	1
6 Leclerc	123	2	1
7 Russell	109	3	2
8 Norris	97	2	2
9 Stroll	47	4	6
10 Gasly	45	3	4
11 Piastri	42	4	3
12 Ocon	36	3	4
13 Albon	21	7	4
14 Hulkenberg	9	7	2
15 Bottas	6	8	7
16 Zhou	4	9	5
17 Tsunoda	3	10	8
18 Magnussen	3	10	4
19 Lawson	2	9	10
20 Sargeant	0	11	10
21 de Vries	0	12	12
22 Ricciardo	0	13	13

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS
1 Red Bull	597
2 Mercedes	289
3 Ferrari	265
4 Aston Martin	217
5 McLaren	139
6 Alpine	81
7 Williams	21
8 Haas	12
9 Alfa Romeo	10
10 AlphaTauri	5

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	13	1	Perez
Leclerc	8	7	Sainz
Hamilton	7	8	Russell
Gasly	8	7	Ocon
Norris	12	3	Piastri
Zhou	6	9	Bottas
Alonso	13	2	Stroll
Magnussen	4	11	Hulkenberg
Tsunoda	2	1	Lawson
Ricciardo	1	1	Tsunoda
de Vries	2	8	Tsunoda
Sargeant	0	15	Albon

WINS

Verstappen	12
Perez	2
Sainz	1

FASTEST LAPS

Verstappen	6
Hamilton	3
Perez	2
Alonso	1
Piastri	1
Russell	1
Zhou	1

POLE POSITIONS	
Verstappen	8
Perez	2
Leclerc	2
Sainz	2
Hamilton	1

NEXT RACE

24 September

Japanese GP

Suzuka

STARTING GRID

 10 Lawson #40 1m32.268s	 9 Hulkenberg #27 1m31.808s	 8 Ocon #31 1m31.673s	 7 Alonso #14 1m31.615s	 6 Magnussen #20 1m31.575s	 5 Hamilton #44 1m31.485s	4 Norris #4 1m31.270s	3 Leclerc #16 1m31.063s	2 Russell #63 1m31.056s	1 Sainz #55 1m30.984s
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RESULTS ROUND 15/22 (62 LAPS – 190.23 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	1h46m37.418s	62	Mn, Hn
2	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+0.812s		Mn, Hn
3	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+1.269s		Mn, Hn, Mn
4	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+21.177s		Su, Hn
5	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+21.441s		Hn, Mn
6	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+38.441s		Mn, Hn
7	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+41.479s		Mn, Hn
8	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+59.534s		Hn, Mn
9	Liam Lawson (NZL)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	+1m05.918s		Mn, Hn
10	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m12.116s		Mn, Hn, Su
11	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m13.417s		Mn, Hn, Mn
12	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m23.649s		Sn, Hn, Mn
13	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m26.201s		Mn, Hn
14	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m26.889s		Mn, Hn, Mn
15	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m27.603s		Mn, Hn, Su
16	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	61 laps-accident		Mn, Hn, Mn
R	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	51 laps-overheating		Hn, Mn
R	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	42 laps-gearbox		Mn, Hn
R	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	0 laps-accident damage		Sn
NS	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	accident		

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Hamilton	1m35.867s	-	47
2	Russell	1m36.273s	+0.406s	46
3	Alonso	1m36.456s	+0.589s	47
4	Verstappen	1m36.575s	+0.708s	61
5	Perez	1m37.108s	+1.241s	61
6	Albon	1m37.342s	+1.475s	46
7	Sainz	1m37.666s	+1.799s	47
8	Norris	1m38.046s	+2.179s	46
9	Bottas	1m38.075s	+2.208s	51
10	Magnussen	1m38.107s	+2.240s	48
11	Leclerc	1m38.275s	+2.408s	46
12	Gasly	1m38.277s	+2.410s	46
13	Piastri	1m38.492s	+2.625s	46
14	Sargeant	1m38.531s	+2.664s	45
15	Lawson	1m39.028s	+3.161s	47
16	Zhou	1m39.316s	+3.449s	46
17	Hulkenberg	1m39.923s	+4.056s	50
18	Ocon	1m39.930s	+4.063s	33
R	Tsunoda	no time	-	-
NS	Stroll	no time	-	-

WEATHER Clear, air 30C track 33-35C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 107.046mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 115.269mph

TYRES

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

HARD MEDIUM SOFT

C0 C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 INTERMEDIATE WET

RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

ZHOU Required to start from pitlane for additional power unit elements used

RACE PENALTIES

ALONSO Five-second

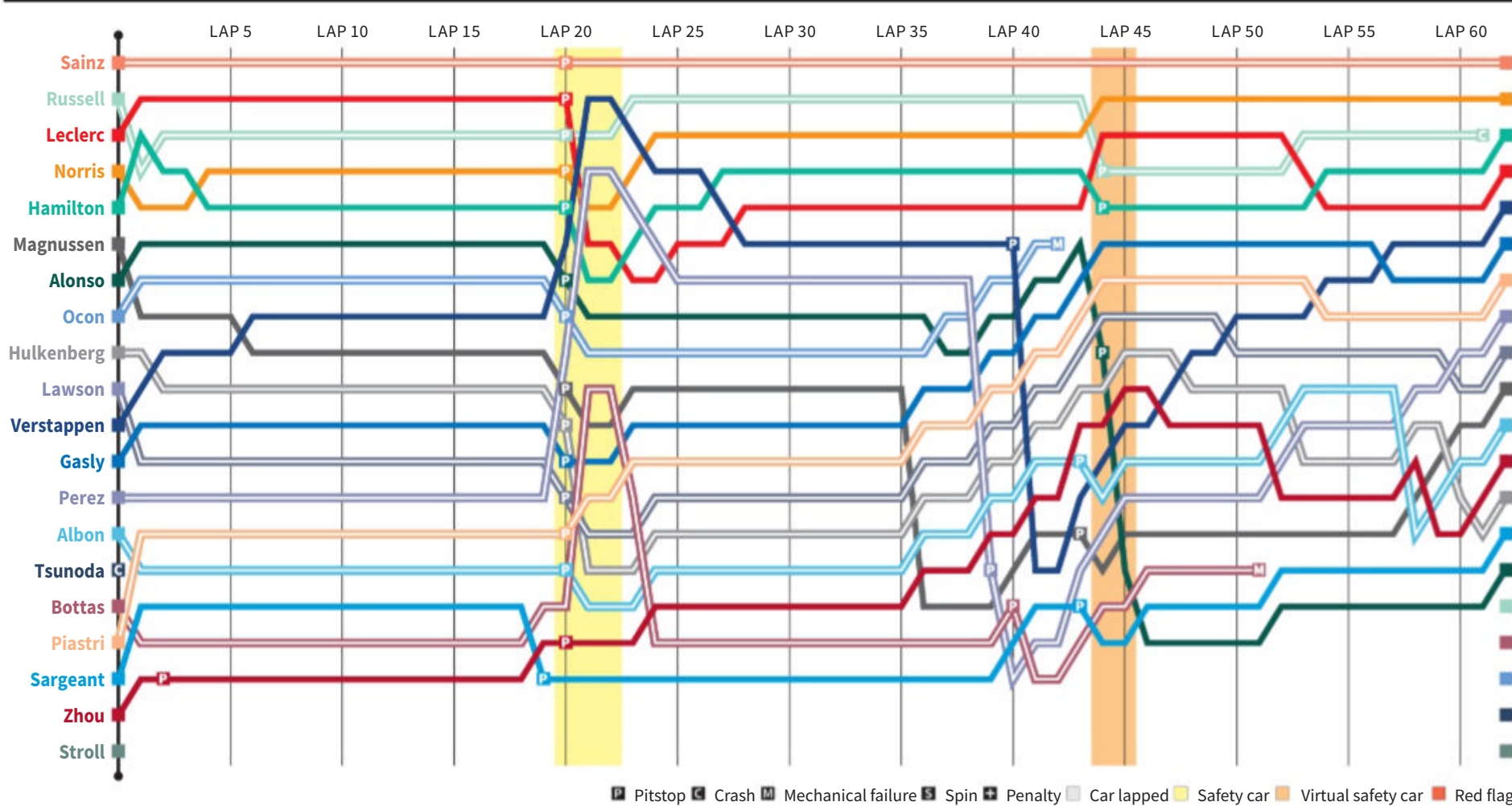
penalty for failing to enter the pitlane to the left of the white line

PEREZ 5s penalty and one licence point for causing a collision with Albon

9

F1 podiums for Norris, the fifth-highest without scoring a win, the same as Martin Brundle

LAP CHART

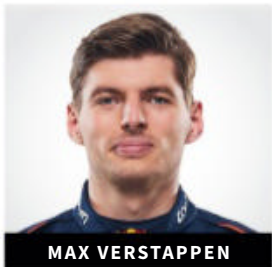


SINGAPORE GP DRIVER RATINGS

A star drive from Sainz on the streets of the city-state deserves full marks, while Norris also shines and Lawson defies his F1 inexperience

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

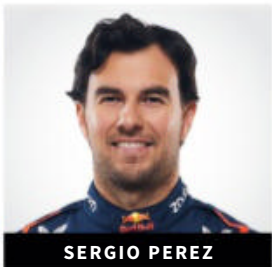
RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **11th** — Result **5th**

8 Record victory run ended, but pace and gains late on to so nearly beat Leclerc mean this still has to go down as a good race performance. Preserved his hard tyres in the DRS train, which meant pain of being overtaken after the restart, but was able to charge on the mediums.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **13th** — Result **8th**

4 Has to be given a slightly better grading than a *really* low one because he was able to show enough pace to climb from latest poor starting spot – even with Red Bull oddly slow. But again he was slower than Verstappen and he had two shunts – was rightly penalised for the second.

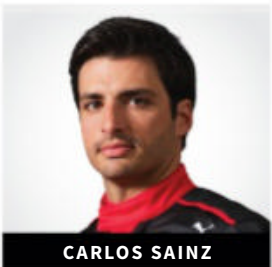
FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **3rd** — Result **4th**

7 Final gap to Sainz built late on, when he'd chewed through his ancient hard tyres and had to manage engine temperatures. Nailed start to pass Russell, played team game behind Sainz and, while he was slow into the pits, Hamilton doing likewise into the Mercedes pitbox was what cost him second.



CARLOS SAINZ

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

10 Controlled slow early stages well to preserve medium tyres and boost Ferrari strategy, then nailed safety car restart. But it was his calmness and nous to repeatedly drop back and give Norris DRS as the Mercedes pair bore down late on that sealed the win. A drive of the season.

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **5th** — Result **3rd**

8 Race got much harder when he had no choice but to cut Turn 2, which he almost did too well in scampering off at speed. Wisely handed places back to Russell and Norris, who he'd outbraked brilliantly at Turn 1. Chased from there, nipping past when Leclerc erred after safety car.

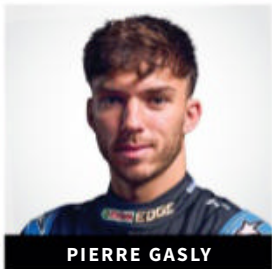


GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **2nd** — Result **16th**

5 His position on Turn 1 apex once Leclerc had shot ahead meant Hamilton bailing wide. Was waved back ahead to resume place as Mercedes' leader, chasing Leclerc then Sainz. Pace was excellent, but not as good as Hamilton's when back on medium tyres. Crash wrecked his score.

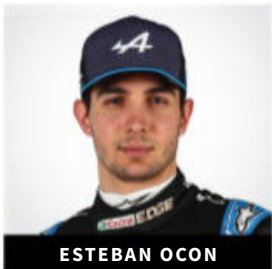
ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **12th** — Result **6th**

7 Only doesn't score higher because team-mate likely would have finished ahead. Battle with Magnussen defined his race, since he was forced off around half-distance and had to carry on the chase. Pounced when Magnussen went off, and gained again with Alonso's long stop.

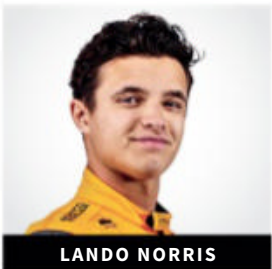


ESTEBAN OCON

Started **8th** — Result **R**

8 Passed Magnussen, then closely chased Alonso while Verstappen lurked behind during first stint. Brilliantly passed Alonso as Perez fell into their clutches. Too far behind to have gained when Mercedes pitted again, then gearbox stoppage triggered VSC.

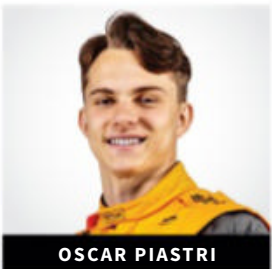
McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **4th** — Result **2nd**

9 Oddly timid into Turn 1, where Hamilton got ahead well before his off. Kept Russell under close watch in first stint, then was really close before VSC. Had to stay out because McLaren only had soft tyres remaining. Defended superbly when the Mercedes pair caught up late on.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **17th** — Result **7th**

8 Still a good result considering he didn't full set of upgrades enjoyed by Norris, plus lowly grid spot. Got stuck in immediately to start his rise, then in second stint gained as others hit trouble ahead with an error-free drive on his first time racing around the tricky streets of Singapore.

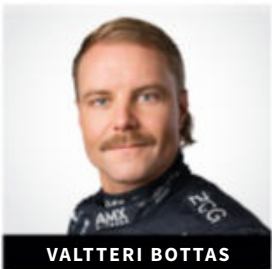
ALFA ROMEO



ZHOU GUANYU

Started **Pit** — Result **12th**

7 A decent drive. Got aggressive early stop in anticipation of a safety car, but when it did come it hurt those running long on hard tyres, as Zhou had been before he took mediums. He therefore rather yo-yoed over third stint, climbing to 10th before those on fresher rubber got past him.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **16th** — Result **R**

5 Lost a spot on lap one and then, like the Red Bulls, had contra-strategy spoiled by safety car timing. Tumbled back on ageing hard tyres after safety car restart. Then, not long into his second stint and finally on the better mediums, a mechanical problem caused overheating and his retirement.



ASTON MARTIN



Started 7th — Result 15th

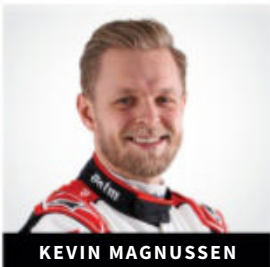
4 A rare poor race performance, particularly his error bonking over the pit entry kerbs twice and earning a penalty, plus late off following slow second stop during VSC. Otherwise, called his car “undriveable” and was sliding around so much that he was killing his rear tyres.



Started NS — Result NS

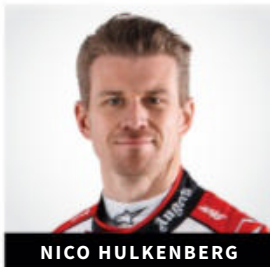
N/A Obviously can’t be scored in race-only ratings given massive shunt late in Q1, but had we been using our pre-2023 approach to our scoring (which we’ll bring back next year) this would have been a zero. Late last-lap bravery was misjudged and thankfully he escaped without injuries.

HAAS



Started 6th — Result 10th

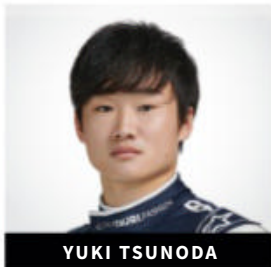
8 Gets benefit of doubt in that he claimed a brake problem caused his Turn 1 off. That, plus black-and-white warning for Gasly defence, might have lowered his score. Lost positions on lap one, chased and defended in DRS trains, then rose back with strong pace on soft tyres after VSC stop.



Started 9th — Result 13th

6 Held position at start before Verstappen powered past, then closely chased team-mate through first stint, running well in points. Having to doublestack at safety car stops undid his race, and being on the one-stop against cars on fresher rubber meant he was “just a falling fruit” late on.

ALPHATAURI



Started 15th — Result R

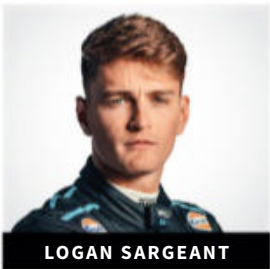
4 Only doesn’t get marked further down because he doesn’t bear full responsibility for clash with Perez that put him out. Race ended at Turn 4 on lap one, where Perez sent a move that was never fully on to the inside, but Tsunoda should have anticipated close pack racing and swung across too much.



Started 10th — Result 9th

9 Gets extra credit because of lack of preparation time compared to Tsunoda. Struggled with his start and lost positions on lap one, but from there it’s hard to see what he could have done better. Showed decent defence against Verstappen late on and gained as others hit issues.

WILLIAMS



Started 18th — Result 14th

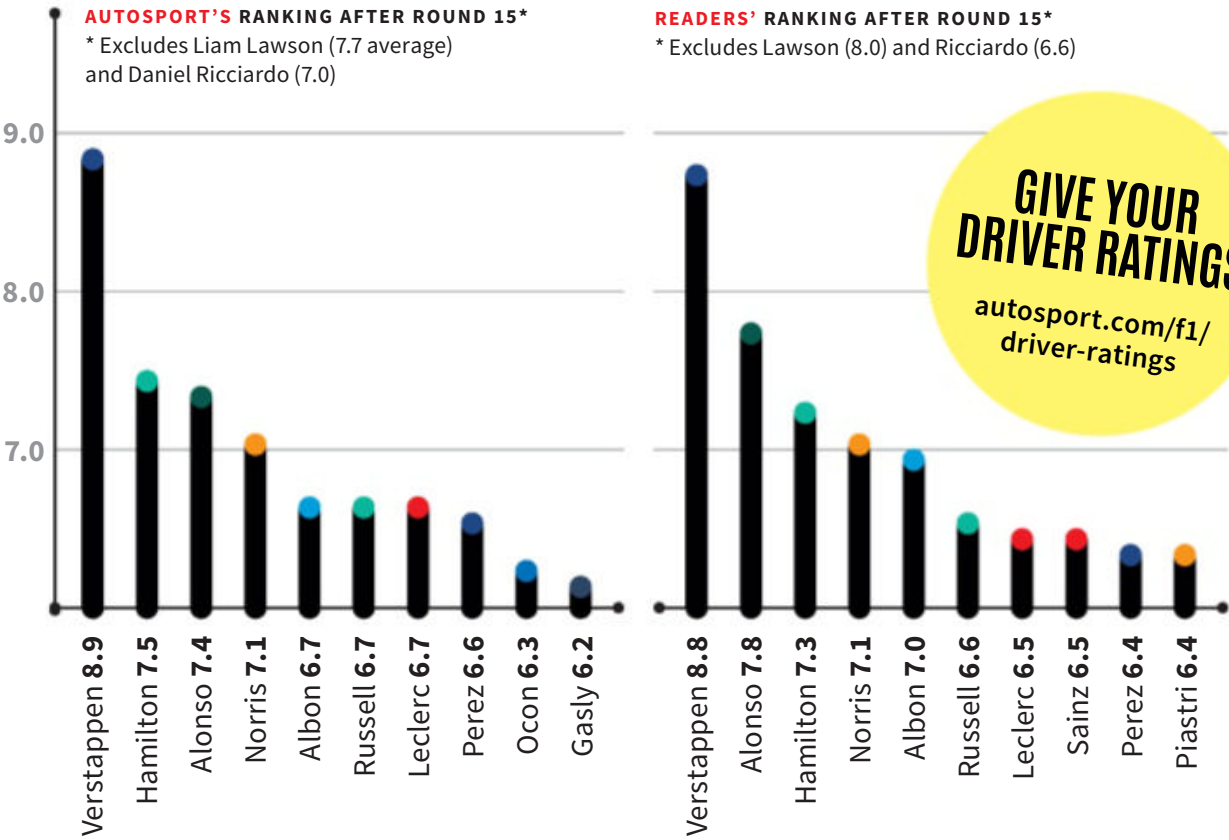
3 Williams suggests that pace gap to Albon can be somewhat explained by having to run older front wing. But his mistake while running solo in no man’s land between Albon and the Alfas near the back was just so poor, even with mid-stint tyre degradation the factor he highlighted.



Started 14th — Result 11th

8 Another strong drive, undone by Perez biffing him out with five laps left. After losing a place on lap one, was trapped in the pack to the safety car stop, but it was his VSC stop to fit new medium tyres he’d saved that made the difference: he then rose rapidly before having to reverse out of the barriers.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS





Winning Porsche led home the sister car

It's Tandy and Jaminet in Penske's Brickyard back yard

**IMSA SPORTSCAR
INDIANAPOLIS (USA)
17 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 10/11**

An emphatic victory for Porsche Penske Motorsport pair Mathieu Jaminet and Nick Tandy in last Sunday's inaugural Battle on The Bricks at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Grand Prix road course sets up what promises to be an enthralling Petit Le Mans IMSA SportsCar Championship finale next month at Road Atlanta. Incredibly, after eight races for the new-for-2023 GTP category, just five points separate the top three title protagonists and manufacturers, with a fourth only 38 points adrift. A maximum of 385 remain on the table.

Cadillac held a slender advantage over Acura prior to this past weekend, with Porsche and BMW not far behind. In truth, there has been little to choose between any of them for the majority of the season.

But the factory Porsche team seemed determined to set that aside at the venue

acquired less than four years ago by team principal Roger Penske. Matt Campbell topped the timing charts in both practice sessions and was on top again after qualifying on Saturday afternoon. A minor error at the first corner by the Australian gifted the lead to the sister car of Jaminet, while behind, a predictable shemozzle at the tight Turn 1 necessitated the first of only two full-course cautions during the two-hour-and-40-minute race. The two Porsche 963s remained in close formation until the first round of pitstops, which were triggered by the only other significant incident when an LMP2 car spun and partially blocked the start/finish straight.

The only time the Penske Porsches were not in control came when the field was being reset and the leading cars briefly hesitated when instructed to pass some GT traffic and take up position behind the safety car. Pipo Derani, running third in the Action Express Cadillac, needed no second request and immediately moved to the front. A few minutes of confusion ensued

before Race Control decreed that Derani should be the leader at the restart ahead of Felipe Nasr, who had replaced Campbell in the #7 car, and Tandy.

In reality it didn't really matter. Derani stayed in front for the next 25 laps or so but, when he outbraked himself at Turn 1 amid traffic, both Porsches immediately pounced and Derani was unable to fight back.

Derani also lost out to the BMW M Hybrid V8 of Nick Yelloly and Connor De Phillippi, who profited by running a longer middle stint and emerging comfortably ahead once the final round of pitstops were completed.

Still, fourth place was enough for Derani and Alexander Sims to regain the series lead by just three points from Ricky Taylor and Filipe Albuquerque (Wayne Taylor Racing Acura), who finished fifth. The second win of the season for Tandy/Jaminet puts them only two points further adrift, with Yelloly/De Phillippi also firmly in the title mix.

Steven Thomas and Mikkel Jensen claimed a clear LMP2 victory for TDS Racing, while Northern Irishman Wayne Boyd and Canadian Anthony Mantella took LMP3 honours in their AWA Duqueine.

In GTD Pro, Jules Gounon and Daniel Juncadella took advantage of a BoP break for their Proton Mercedes to win by just over four seconds, although fourth place for Britons Jack Hawksworth and Ben Barnicoat means they need only to start the final race in their Vasser Sullivan Lexus to be crowned champions.

Similarly, third place after a typically fraught GTD battle won by the Winward Racing Mercedes of Russell Ward/Phil Ellis was enough for Madison Snow and Bryan Sellers (BMW M4 GT3) to secure their second title for Paul Miller Racing.

JEREMY SHAW



BMW pair Sellers and Snow put GTD title to bed with a race to go

GALSTAD

Feeney and Whincup take enduro opener

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
SANDOWN (AUS)
17 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 9/12

Broc Feeney scored his first Sandown 500 win and Jamie Whincup his sixth as the Supercars endurance season burst into life last Sunday.

The Triple Eight Chevrolet duo were near the front all weekend, although it was the Erebus-run Camaros of Will Brown and Brodie Kostecki that led the way in the qualifying Top 10 Shootout.

Come race day, though, the pairing proved too potent, Whincup overhauling Erebus co-drivers Jack Perkins (in Brown's car) and David Russell (Kostecki's) in the first two stints to put the Red Bull entry on course for victory. Feeney was then mistake-free and looked set to cruise to the finish with a healthy margin over the Erebus cars, only for a late safety car to change the complexion of the race.

By that stage Kostecki had got ahead of Brown, with the caution then helping the series leader onto the bumper of Feeney. But even one of the most aggressive racers in the field couldn't shake Feeney's concentration, the second-year Supercars driver holding



Feeney and Whincup were on fire for Sandown glory

HORSBURGH

his nerve to claim a well-earned victory.

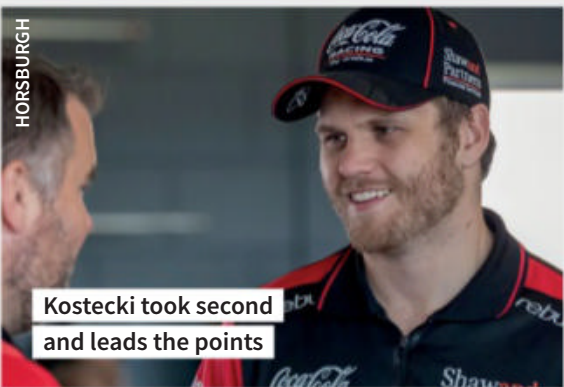
Kostecki extended his series lead with second place, while Brown made a late error when he double-downshifted into Dandenong Road and went off the road. That dropped him and Perkins to fourth, and allowed a recovering Shane van Gisbergen to complete the podium.

Van Gisbergen and Stanaway had started the race way down in 19th after the NASCAR-bound star made an error in qualifying. But the two Kiwis were sublime on race day as they cut through the field, the comeback complete once Brown threw his car off with a few laps to go.

There was drama for the leading Ford teams, with the David Reynolds/Garth Tander Mustang shedding a wheel while running fourth early in the race. The rogue wheel then collected the fifth-placed Cam Waters/James Moffat Mustang, leaving them both out of the running.

At the end of the race the best-placed Mustang was Matt Payne and Kevin Estre in sixth, the Frenchman particularly impressive on his Supercars debut for Grove Racing. Estre's early stint included overhauling the experienced Michael Caruso for third place at one point.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



Kostecki took second and leads the points

HORSBURGH

WEEKEND WINNERS

- IMSA SPORTSCAR INDIANAPOLIS (USA)**
- GTP** Nick Tandy/Mathieu Jaminet
Porsche Penske Motorsport (963)
 - LMP2** Mikkel Jensen/Steven Thomas
TDS Racing (ORECA 07)
 - LMP3** Wayne Boyd/Anthony Mantella
AWA (Duqueine M30-D08)
 - GTD Pro** Daniel Juncadella/Jules Gounon
Proton (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)
 - GTD** Philip Ellis/Russell Ward
Winward (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS SANDOWN (AUS)
Broc Feeney/Jamie Whincup
Triple Eight (Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR CUP BRISTOL (USA)
Denny Hamlin
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

24H SERIES BARCELONA 24 HOURS (ESP)
Julien Andlauer/Gregory Guilvert/
Simon Tirmann/Laurent Hurgon
Imsa Performance (Porsche 911 GT3-R)



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Weerts keeps pursuing Audi at arm's length to secure Sunday victory

Belgian GT kings break their BMW duck

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
SPRINT CUP
VALENCIA (ESP)
16-17 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 4/5**

Twelve months ago, Charles Weerts and Dries Vanthoor snatched a dramatic last-lap victory in the GT World Challenge Europe finale. A year later, the Team WRT duo finally claimed their first victory aboard BMW machinery at Valencia last weekend.

It had been long overdue. The series dominators of recent years have not had things their own way in 2023 to say the least, but they came up trumps on Sunday amid stifling heat and a spirited assault from Attempto Racing Audi pair Ricardo Feller and Mattia Drudi. "The strategy was on point, and I think it's also one of the best starts I've had in GT racing," said Vanthoor. "It was all-in, and it worked out."

Drudi and Feller entered the second one-hour race of the weekend knowing they had to finish ahead of points-leading Saturday winners Timur Boguslavskiy and Raffaele Marciello. With the ASP Mercedes seventh, Feller and Drudi did just that, just a hair's breadth back from victory to keep the overall and Sprint Cup title race alive heading into the final two weekends.

Bronze Cup racer Dennis Marschall took pole for the opening bout in his Attempto Audi and led into the first corner, while



Marciello battled the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari of Thierry Vermeulen to remain in second. The order stayed the same until the pitstops, after which the Audi dropped down the field, allowing Boguslavskiy into the lead. The 2020 overall GTWCE champion was chased hard by Vermeulen's co-driver Albert Costa, racing on home soil. The former Lamborghini factory driver took chunks out of the Merc's lead, but ended up a mere 0.4 seconds shy of a popular victory.

Feller and Drudi limited the damage of a poor qualifying session – 10th – to claim third, while Christopher Haase and Lucas Legeret (Comtoyou Audi) were fourth ahead of Vanthoor and Weerts.

A rare Valencian downpour meant a wet qualifying on Sunday morning, and Boguslavskiy languished in 18th. Drudi started 10th again but made the most of a chaotic opening lap and two early safety cars to move up to fourth before the pitstops, as polesitter Simon Gachet headed the field in his Sainteloc Racing Audi.

Two quickfire safety car periods

interrupted proceedings, and upon resumption Costa, showing yet more promising form from the Ferrari 296 GT3, was the main pursuer to Gachet.

Both these cars fell behind Weerts and Feller after the stops. The Audi tore into the lead of the Belgian-crewed BMW entering the closing stages but was unable to unlock enough speed to make a move for the lead. Second place leaves Feller and Drudi just 7.5 points off the top of the Sprint Cup standings before the final round at Zandvoort next month.

Lorenzo Patrese (son of Riccardo) and Alex Aka were fourth in their Attempto Audi from another EFR Ferrari, that of Giacomo Altoe and Konsta Lappalainen.

Valentino Rossi is more accustomed to competing at Valencia on two wheels than four. He and Maxime Martin took their WRT BMW to eighth on Saturday, but radiator damage from Rossi's first-lap collision with Gachet forced them out on Sunday before the race had got going.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

The only way is NSX despite big crash, exclusion

SUPER GT
SUGO (JPN)
17 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 6/8

Honda scored another Super GT victory at Sugo, but only after one of its cars was stripped of victory and another involved in a serious crash.

At the end of a tumultuous 300km race, it was the Real Racing Honda NSX-GT of Koudai Tsukakoshi and Nobuharu Matsushita that won on the road after a thrilling battle with the ARTA machine driven by Tomoki Nojiri and Toshiki Oyu. But post-race technical inspection revealed that the Real car's skid block was too worn, leading to exclusion for Tsukakoshi and Matsushita.

Polesitters Nojiri and Oyu therefore picked up their first win as a pairing, giving ARTA back-to-back victories after the sister Honda of Nirei Fukuzumi and Hiroki Otsu triumphed at Suzuka.



ISHIHARA/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

The NISMO Nissan Z of Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda was involved in the lead battle throughout and finished third on the road, but was promoted to second in the final results ahead of the SARD Toyota GR Supra of Yuhi Sekiguchi and Yuichi Nakayama.

For the fourth time this year, the race was interrupted by a red flag, this time for a scary-looking crash involving the Team Kunimitsu Honda of Naoki Yamamoto at the final corner at the end of lap 39 of 84. No footage of the crash was shown on TV, but it appears that Yamamoto made contact with the Kondo Racing Nissan GT300 car of Teppei Natori as Natori came across the track to try to

enter the pits, sending the Honda spearing into the left-side barriers at speed. Yamamoto was airlifted to hospital but was discharged the same evening with no serious injuries.

Points-leading NDDP Nissan pair Katsumasa Chiyo and Mitsunori Takaboshi came away with ninth place on a tough weekend, giving them a reduced two-point advantage over TOM'S Toyota duo Sho Tsuboi and Ritomo Miyata, who finished seventh. Quintarelli and Matsuda now sit third overall.

JAMIE KLEIN



Relive this race at Motorsport.tv

Antonelli wins but doesn't – twice

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
MONZA (ITA)
16-17 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/10

The repetitive Monza junior single-seater script of shunts, safety cars, red flags, penalties and very few actual racing laps was tediously adhered to in last weekend's Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine round. Mercedes F1 protege Andrea Kimi Antonelli didn't win the race in which he finished first, and did claim the one where he *wasn't* in front at the end...

From fourth on the grid, Prema star Antonelli beat away second-row partner Alessandro Giusti, beautifully passed polesitting team-mate Rafael Camara at



VAN DER LAAN/DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY

the Roggia chicane, and then dispatched surprise leader Marcus Amand second time into the Rettifilo. He'd done that last move with help from his push-to-pass, which can't be activated until the second lap, but the trigger-happy Antonelli had pressed it 400 metres before the start/finish line.

The inevitable 10-second penalty, coupled with the obligatory safety car leading to just four laps of sprinting to the finish, dropped Antonelli out of the points. ART-run French Sauber junior Amand, second on the road, didn't win either. He was also pinged with 10s, not for his clash with Michael Belov at Roggia that forced the Russian out, but for edging Belov onto the grass at the Curva Grande. So it was Belov's G4 Racing team-mate Giusti who inherited the spoils from Victor Bernier and Martinius Stenshorne, the Norwegian title contender up from 19th on the grid.

Camara had just taken the lead from Antonelli in race two when Pierre-Alexandre Provost lost it out of Lesmo 2, spun across the track and forced Tom Lebbon into the wall, barrier damage causing a red flag. Antonelli claimed the win on countback, with Tim Tramnitz third from the charging Lorenzo Fluxa.

Stenshorne went out thanks to a collision with Joshua Durksen.

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE VALENCIA (ESP)

- Race 1** Raffaele Marciello/Timur Boguslavskiy
ASP (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)
Race 2 Charles Weerts/Dries Vanthoor
Team WRT (BMW M4 GT3)

SUPER GT SUGO (JPN)

Tomoki Nojiri/Toshiki Oyu
ARTA (Honda NSX-GT)

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN MONZA (ITA)

- Race 1** Alessandro Giusti
G4 Racing
Race 2 Andrea Kimi Antonelli
Prema Racing

EXTREME E CAPO TEULADA (ITA)

Race 1 Mattias Ekstrom/Laia Sanz
Acciona Sainz XE Team
Race 2 Fraser McConnell/Cristina Gutierrez
X44 Racing

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS VELOPARK (BRA)

Race 1 Gabriel Casagrande
A Mattheis Vogel (Chevrolet Cruze)
Race 2 Atila Abreu
Pole Motorsport (Chevrolet Cruze)



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TOYOTA

Hydrogen rally car has been demoed, while hypercar concept points to 2026 challenger



TOYOTA'S ALTERNATIVE PATH TO THE FUTURE OF MOTORSPORT

A combination of passion and pragmatism is behind the Japanese car-making behemoth's motivation to push ahead with hydrogen combustion technology

JIM HOLDER



NORIAKI MITSUHASHI/N-RAK PHOTO AGENCY

Noise. A blessing or a curse. A delight or an irritation. For many race and rally fans, it's one part of the essence of what makes motorsport so appealing. You can count Toyota's chairman and former CEO for the past 13 years among their number. "She said noise, but to my ears it is more like a lullaby!" laughs Akio Toyoda, great-grandson of the company's founder and inspiration behind the multi-championship-winning Gazoo Racing, as he picks up the misplaced nuance of his translator's words when asked about the prospects of battery electric motorsport in the vein of Formula E and Extreme E doing away with one of the sport's more visceral appeals.

"In my view sound is a critical part of motorsport," he continues. "In the case of Le Mans, where there are many cars circulating in the same space for a lot of laps, maybe there is less need to focus on this. But when I think about the World Rally Championship, with spectators stood in a forest or out in the dust and sand, what is the appeal of a silent vehicle approaching you? The excitement of hearing a car before you see it is a very important part of enjoying the sport."

You can be cynical or accepting of Toyoda's prosaic motivation

"The excitement of hearing a car before you see it is a very important part of enjoying the sport"

for expounding combusting hydrogen in an engine as being the best solution to motorsport's quest to reduce its carbon emissions and maintain one of its key facets – although I would challenge anyone who spent more than an hour with him discussing the subject, as I did, to hold onto the former view for long.

Yes, Toyota has been famously slow to develop battery-electric vehicles (BEVs), doubting they can provide the panacea for the climate emergency that many legislators are hoping for; while supportive of BEV development, Toyoda sees combusted hydrogen as a potential alternative solution to motoring's emissions problems. As such, he's not purely expounding the adoption of the technology for the benefit of motorsport fans, but rather a mutually beneficial development programme for the long-term health of his company – and the planet.

"People think I talk about hydrogen so I can use it as an excuse to enjoy motorsport," he acknowledges. "But the reality is that we should use racing as an opportunity to accelerate the development >>



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of the product. In a racing environment you have two unique possibilities; firstly, a lot of people are watching what you do, so you can promote a technology to a new audience; and secondly, there are a lot of different cars competing, to a schedule, and everyone wants to win. That sets deadlines for the teams to keep pushing to do a better job, overcome challenges and find solutions that can make it a reality from which we can bring costs down."

Indeed, the very first engine to ignite a fuel was powered by hydrogen. Back in 1807, Swiss-French inventor Isaac de Rivaz fired up the first internal combustion engine using it as a fuel. While the idea didn't have longevity, partly thanks to the superior energy density of petrol, the science behind it remains: burn hydrogen, and it will combine with oxygen to produce energy, crucially with no carbon emissions (and an exhaust byproduct of water).

The case for combusted hydrogen is not, however, as straightforward as that makes it sound. Unlike in a hydrogen fuel cell, combusting hydrogen results in the creation of an array of nasty nitrogen oxides (NOx), the root cause of a variety of respiratory diseases and more. Diesel's demise was largely a result of the same issues, albeit amplified by the Volkswagen 'Dieselgate' scandal.

Toyota's challenge is therefore highly technical, since it must work out how to run its engines as leanly as possible to reduce the NOx issues, as well as developing filters that can prevent any escaping into the atmosphere. Furthermore, beyond that lie the challenges of storing the hydrogen in cars, both under enormous pressure, and, if greater performance is to be extracted, at incredibly low temperatures. There is also the complex issue of creating a refuelling infrastructure, not least because each charging station costs around £1million to install (the UK, for instance, had 15 in 2021, but demand has been so low that just five remain open). To give an idea of the scale of the issue, some question how enough infrastructure can be created at Le Mans to help maybe a dozen teams race there when its rules change from 2026, let alone creating a pan-continental infrastructure.

The upside, of course, is that refuelling can be done in minutes, not hours as with batteries, and that much of the technology is derived from today's engines (estimates suggest an 80% carryover of parts is possible). Nevertheless, while combusting hydrogen has many potential positives, be in no doubt that they still need unlocking – a task that even its proponents suggest is likely at least five years away on any serious scale.

There is, then, an enormous amount of development still to be done. But under Toyoda's watch, Toyota's annual R&D budget has risen to a point where it is now nudging £7billion, and the world's largest car maker by sales volumes isn't prone to chasing rainbows. It is investigating every technology – batteries, sustainable fuels,



Any cynicism is hard
to maintain in face of
Toyoda's enthusiasm

TOYOTA/JEROEN PEETERS



Hydrogen-powered class will compete at Le Mans in 2026

“Insiders point to Toyota’s enthusiasm as a huge endorsement that a breakthrough is realistic”

hydrogen fuel cells, hydrogen-powered engines and more – and feels that all have potential. As far as burning hydrogen is concerned, insiders suggest that road car applications – the money-making side of any automotive company that ultimately underpins any investment in motorsport – are about 50% of the way through from development from concept to reality. While stressing that there is no guarantee of success, they point to Toyota’s enthusiasm as a huge endorsement that a breakthrough is realistic.

As such, over the past year Toyota has already – suited, booted, helmeted and strapped in under the shroud of his racing and rallying alter-ego nickname ‘Morizo’ (see panel, p44) – demonstrated a hydrogen-powered Yaris at the Ypres Rally, raced as part of a team that completed the Fuji 24 Hours in a hydrogen-powered Corolla, and completed a demonstration lap in the same car ahead of this year’s Le Mans. A concept car was also unveiled at this year’s Le Mans race, hinting at the look of a hypercar that will compete using combusted hydrogen from 2026. The expectation is that it will be fast enough not just to fight for the hydrogen class victory, but for the overall race win. >>

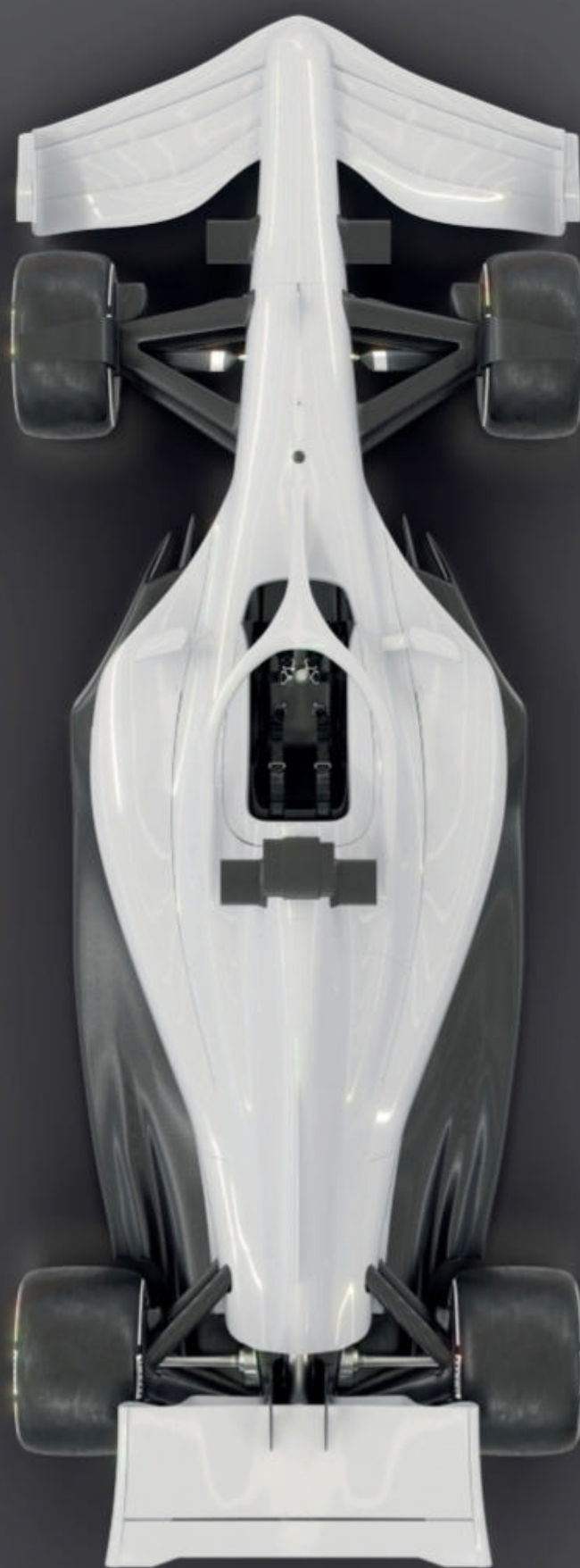


Toyota a big advocate for racing’s unique position to accelerate tech development

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TOYOTA/MCKLEIN

WHY THE BOSS GOT IN THE DRIVING SEAT

Akio Toyoda's decision to get behind the wheel on race tracks and rally stages came relatively late in life when, aged 40 and as a senior official at Toyota, already destined for the top job as much through talent as birth, he encountered the firm's fiery chief test driver.

"It's annoying that someone at the top like you doesn't know the basics of driving, but just gets into the car and comments on this and that!" said Hiromu Naruse, when confronted by some feedback on his latest settings. "Test drivers put everything on the line in the name of creating better cars. To talk about this and that without knowing anything just causes trouble."

Ouch. Thankfully Toyoda responded with an open mind, and took up Naruse's invitation to set aside some time once a month to go driving with him and his colleagues, and to learn how drive properly. From their exploits, a race team was born to compete at the 2007 Nurburgring 24 Hours, with the moniker of Gazoo Racing – the name today under which the firm's title-winning world rallying and sportscar operations compete, and from which the fast car division, makers of genre-defining road cars including the GR Yaris and GR 86, was born.

It's no exaggeration to say that these exploits have come about only with the personal sponsorship of Toyoda – and that they have played a key role in transforming Toyota's reputation from a maker of reliable but uninspiring white goods into one that has a full alignment of products that car enthusiasts happily choose to be associated with.

Now, as he retires from his post as CEO, moving on to become chairman of the company, he expects to have more time to drive again, as always using the 'Morizo' pseudonym that he adopted to deflect any criticism of his activities.

"My starting point as a racing driver was the Nurburgring," he smiles when asked if he might come to Europe again. "Back then I didn't really have any driving skills – in fact I was afraid! But now it is different, as I have more experience from racing in Japan and Asia, and I hope my skills have gone up. Next year, I will race again at the Nurburgring, either in the 24 Hours or in the VLN championship – and I'm telling you this so that you write it so that it is in public; that way the people who have to give approval can't try to change my mind!"

"MY STARTING POINT WAS THE NURBURGRING. I DIDN'T REALLY HAVE ANY SKILLS. I WAS AFRAID!"



NORIAKIMITSUHASHI/N-RAK PHOTO AGENCY

"I see my role from behind the wheel as important," he says. "The general public still think that hydrogen equals an explosion. When we first proposed to drive the Yaris on the World Rally Championship we had a lot of questions from the organisers, asking if hydrogen was dangerous. At first they were very worried. One of the questions they asked was, 'Who is going to drive this car?' The answer was 'Morizo', and suddenly the response was very different. They said, 'Go ahead!' If I put myself in that position then they know that I am confident in its safety. I know that, in turn, I must be fast enough, but my fellow drivers and I have a deal that I will stop if I fall too far behind them; at the moment I am delighted to say that I am closer than ever."

But by talking about combusting hydrogen, Toyoda is also aware that he is putting a target on his – and Toyota's – back. It's a stark reality that the company sold just 26,000 BEVs last year, to Tesla's 1.2m, and has been roundly criticised for lagging behind rivals. It's a criticism that overlooks its leadership in hybrids (it has sold more than 20million), a clear, scientific-led belief that the world's infrastructure isn't braced for a total switchover to a single technology, that the scarce battery resources unlocked so far would be better used in hybrids, where the battery is depleted each day rather than locked in big-mile EVs that typically use just fractions of their capability on each journey, and the fact that, until recently, it hasn't had any confidence that the range and cost of batteries being used is anything like good enough to provide the mix of affordability and capability that most car buyers expect.



Toyoda has spurred a rise in the company's R&D budget to £7bn

TOYOTA



“The truth is that our natural resources are finite. That is why I believe we should look at everything”

Nevertheless, the critics are primed, and talking about hydrogen in a world where most legislators are focused on BEVs has risks.

“When I talk about hydrogen, people sometimes come to the conclusion that Toyota is three laps behind in the race to electrification, but it is my belief that battery electric vehicles will be a big part of the solution to reducing carbon emissions, but maybe not the only one,” says Toyoda. “We are committed to them – in fact, I can tell you that we are already developing a Gazoo Racing BEV road car, with a gearbox and which makes sounds in the cabin, for enthusiasts – but we should all be doing what we can, now and in the future, to reduce carbon. My belief is that there is not one right approach, but many that we should take.

“The truth is that on earth our natural resources are finite. That is why I believe we should look at everything. Today there are about a billion people on earth who do not have adequate connection to electricity. How can we say to them that BEVs are the only solution if we cannot be clear on how we supply the power to them?”

In that statement, Toyoda is nodding towards the so-called

‘energy trilemma’, used by governments, rulemakers and opinion formers the world over to guide policy for the energy transition. In brief, it highlights the need to find balance between energy reliability, affordability and sustainability for everyday people. Europe’s reliance on Russian oil and gas is one example of that triangulation falling down in recent times, for instance, while the cost and legislative red tape of linking green energy generation projects such as off-shore wind turbines and large solar panel installations to national grids is another.

Battery-electric propulsion may be the most energy efficient solution available today, but the majority of raw materials required for battery manufacture are concentrated in potentially difficult areas (Russia again, and China). Meanwhile, the infrastructure required to support a transition to mass charging, including, ultimately, a complete switch to renewable energy sources to ensure net zero transport, means it is unlikely to be the universal solution that many favour – at least in the sort of timescales that climate crisis experts suggest humanity must react within. Viewed in that context, Toyoda’s free-thinking and refusal to be channelled down a single technical route should perhaps be welcomed by everyone, not just motorsport fans.

Nevertheless, it would be myopic not to acknowledge that by thinking like this, Toyoda is displaying what feels like an increasingly uniquely free-thinking position, driven perhaps by the fact that Japan is famously short on the natural resources necessary for the BEV transition, and that his company’s scale and success allows it to invest across a far broader range of technologies than many – perhaps any – of its rivals.

As such, while there are numerous pioneering companies in and around motorsport looking at hydrogen combustion initiatives, there are few mainstream car manufacturers openly pursuing it with anything like the same vigour as Toyota. It will do motorsport few favours if its rulemakers embrace a technology that only a single or even a handful of manufacturers want to pursue longer term. It’s presumably one reason Formula 1 is looking at a future powered by synthetic fuels, why the organisers at Le Mans have twice postponed the introduction of a hydrogen-powered class prior to committing to 2026, and precisely the dilemma that WRC organisers are wrestling with, as they seek to roadmap its future.

Toyoda, though, is making no apologies, or promises. “I don’t have a model for the future, so can’t be certain that I will be correct, but I can say that the enemy is carbon,” he concludes. “Given that, we should all be doing what we can, now and in the future, to reduce carbon. My belief is that there is not one right approach, but many that we should take to achieve that, and exploring hydrogen through motorsport is one that should therefore be interesting to anyone who shares my passion.”



Hydrogen-powered Corolla
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Lotus Emira GT4
debuts in GT Cup



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New Mini scholarship offers prize drive

MINI CHALLENGE

A new scholarship has been launched by Mini Challenge organisers, with one person getting the chance to win a prize drive next year worth over £50,000.

The selection process will feature several stages, beginning with a karting event at Capital Karts in Canary Wharf on 30 October. Not only driving ability will be examined during the day; there will also be a mock interview to assess the driver's media skills, a pitstop challenge to test their teamworking and a simulator session using Puresims equipment – the company operated by British Touring Car champion Ash Sutton.

The next stage is due to be held at

Croft early next year, when on-track performance will be assessed in more detail, along with a fitness test, before the top 20 progress to the grand final.

All finalists will be able to claim a 25% reduction in entry fees if they join the Mini Challenge in 2024, while the winner will secure an entry into a new secondary class on the JCW grid next year, with more details about the new division being announced in the coming weeks. Entry fees, car hire, fuel and tyres will all be included in the prize.

The scholarship is open to anyone aged 16 or over on 1 March 2024 who has not previously competed in the JCW category, including those with no previous race experience. It costs £225 to enter the

initial karting stage.

“We are beyond excited to be in a position where we can now launch the Mini Challenge Scholarship for 2024, which will open the door for new talent to join our grid and experience everything we have to offer as a championship,” said promoter Antony Williams.

“This initiative is something we have considered for a while but, with the launch of a new class coming for next season, this seemed like the perfect time to make the plans become reality. We look forward to unearthing some new talent, and giving them the chance to show what they can do on track.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Ginetta ace Slater stars again in single-seaters

EURO 4

Ginetta Junior champion Freddie Slater continued to impress on his second weekend of single-seater racing, taking a pole at Monza in the Euro 4 category following a promising British Formula 4 debut last month.

Slater linked up with leading squad Prema Racing for the second of three events

for the new series and laid down a marker by qualifying two tenths quicker than the rest of the 30-car field, which included the Italian F4 stars.

He made a poor start to the opener but fought back to regain the lead before suffering damage in a clash with 2022 British F4 race winner Ugo Ugochukwu.

Slater won a chaotic second race on the road but no



Slater took Euro 4 pole with Prema at Monza

official result has yet been declared after a marshal incorrectly displayed a safety car board when the track was still green, leading to a mix of reactions from the drivers.

Slater's weekend then ended in the barriers after clashing in the finale with Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award finalist Arvid Lindblad – who went on to win.



OLLIE READ

Lotus Emira makes UK racing debut with Formula Woman

GT CUP

Formula Woman is aiming for more GT Cup appearances after giving the Lotus Emira GT4 its UK racing debut at Donington Park last weekend.

Revived in 2021, Formula Woman has held competitions across the world with the aim of finding the next female racing champion. Canadian Alana Carter and Jamaican Sara Misir were chosen to drive the Emira at Donington for 24-7 Motorsport and are also planning to compete in the final round at Snetterton.

It was the first outing

together for the winners, after previous difficulties in securing appropriate cars and sponsorship by Formula Woman organisers.

"We started to deal with Lotus two weeks ago," said Formula Woman CEO Graeme Glew. "They had the Emira, which had never raced before. They have this philosophy of women in motorsport, they need to concentrate on that. We've been using their academy as well."

"Sara was the 2021 winner and Alana was last year's winner, so I've paired the two together. We did a test at

Hethel, shook the car down, and then we came here.

"The team is fantastic, 24-7. I'm so impressed with them and they're working with RML as well, and Lotus, so it's like a works team."

Carter made her debut in Saturday's sprint race, finishing sixth in the GTH class before taking seventh alongside Misir in the pitstop race.

"It was my first time racing a GT4 car, first time racing in this field and on this track," said Carter. "I wasn't initially planning on doing the first sprint but then they threw me in at the last

second, so it was definitely intimidating but the car drove beautifully."

Misir competed in two rounds of GT Cup last year in a McLaren, and she used that experience to finish fifth in GTH in Sunday's sprint race.

"I prefer this over the McLaren just because, for my driving style, there's more symphony with me and this car," she said of the Emira. "It's a very easy car to learn. It's been a long wait. I raced back in the Caribbean as well, but it's exciting to be back on the grid this year."

STEVE WHITFIELD

Leung and Harper win on 'prep' outing for Brit GT decider

GT CUP

Century Motorsport added to its recent British GT win with a double success during a one-off GT Cup outing at Donington Park last weekend.

Darren Leung and Dan Harper entered the event in their BMW M4 to prepare for next month's British GT decider at the East Midlands venue, where they will need to overcome a maximum success penalty and a 13-point deficit to 2 Seas Motorsport Mercedes duo James Cottingham and Jonny Adam to take the crown.

"It's prep for us for the British GT

finale," said Leung. "We've got to really pull out a big result against a maximum pitstop penalty, so we've got to really squeeze absolutely everything both out of the car and out of me. We go into it being the underdogs, so that's why we're here."

"It's just about exploring the different set-ups and how they gel with both me and Dan, and what's working for the track in different conditions, so when it's race weekend we know exactly where we need to be. We're here to prepare and hopefully get a clean bit of racing in."

After winning the second sprint race



Century duo took a brace of wins

OLLIE READ

solo on Sunday, Leung was triumphant again alongside Harper in a dry-wet pitstop contest later in the day.

"The result is obviously good but I like to focus on my performance and how the car feels and my delivery of the lap time," added Leung.

STEVE WHITFIELD

Winner will follow
in the footsteps of
Adam Smalley



Drivers selected for next stage of Porsche GB Junior shootout

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

An intriguing mix of single-seater champions and budding sportscar stars are on the shortlist of drivers making it to the next stage of the 2024-25 Porsche Carrera Cup GB Junior selection process.

Twelve drivers have been chosen from the initial batch of applicants, who will be interviewed by Carrera Cup organisers next week. They will then be whittled down to four who will take part in the final shootout at Silverstone in November.

Among the single-seater drivers progressing to the interviews are GB3 race winner Matthew Rees and newly crowned GB4 champion Tom Mills, while fellow GB4 racer – and 2021 Ginetta Junior runner-up – Liam McNeilly is another.

Formula Regional European competitor and 2020 Ginetta Junior champion Tom Lebbon has also been selected.

The rest of the contenders all currently race sportscars. Seb Hopkins, Josh Rowledge and James Wallis all compete in British GT, while Joe Warhurst and Will Jenkins are frontrunners in the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB. European GT4 competitors Tom Edgar and Tom Emson also progress, along with Ginetta Junior victor Hugo Schwarze.

The chosen Junior will follow in the footsteps of current Carrera Cup points leader Adam Smalley and receive £85,000 towards their budget over the next two seasons alongside a wealth of support and opportunities from Porsche.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Ex-Superbike rider joins Team Brit

BEC

Japanese Superbike champion Takuma Aoki will join Team Brit for the final round of the British Endurance Championship at Donington Park next month.

Aoki competed in the World Superbike Championship in the 1990s before winning the All Japan Superbike Championship in 1996.

Two years later, he was left

paralysed below the waist following a crash, but has since worked with Honda, helping them develop cars for disabled drivers and a racing school for people with disabilities.

He will join Aaron Morgan for the two-hour BEC finale on 14 October, and will use hand controls at the wheel of the McLaren 570S GT4 in order to race.

“I’m really looking forward

to racing with the team next month,” said Aoki, who also contested the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2021.

“The technology used by Team Brit is different to anything I’ve used before, so I’m excited about trying it for the first time. Having competed in Le Mans myself, it’s great to be part of a team that has its sights set on doing the same. I hope to return there to race again soon.”

WHITE/MORRIS TEAM UP

Long-time Ginetta racer Colin White returned to the Britcar paddock at Snetterton last weekend as he contested the British Endurance Championship race with fellow former Ginetta GT4 Supercup driver Dan Morris. The duo were due to compete in Creventic’s Barcelona 24 Hours but changed plans after their co-drivers had to withdraw. Morris qualified their G55 Supercup car seventh overall and the pair finished eighth – first in class – in the two-hour race before dashing to Hull for Ginetta head of motorsport Mike Simpson’s 40th birthday party.

MONOPOSTO CHAMPIONS

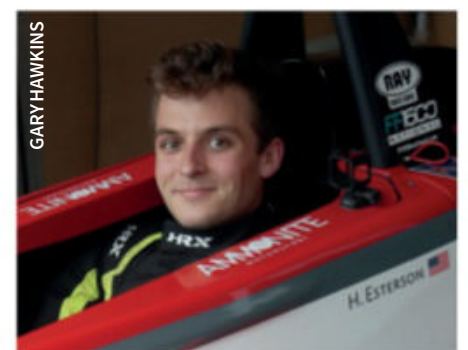
All seven Monoposto titles were finally settled following the 750 Motor Club’s Anglesey race weekend. Karl O’Brien claimed the F3 class in his Dallara-Mugen F307, Tom Wheatley (Van Diemen RF99) topped the 2000s, Will Cox (Ralt RT3) won the Classics, Matthew Haughton (Jedi) headed the M1000 division, Jason Timms (Dallara-Suzuki F301) in the 1400s, Geoff Fern (Van Diemen RF89) in the 1600s, and Phil Davis (Van Diemen RF98) is 1800 champion.

ANOTHER EMIRA IN TESTING

Former Lotus Cup Europe, Mini Challenge and Radical racer Steven Lake is another to have got behind the wheel of a Lotus Emira GT4 after giving one a shakedown test at Donington Park recently. “I am looking at either European GT4 or maybe racing in the UK in 2024,” he said. “We are concentrating on testing for the rest of this year.”

ESTERSON’S UK DEBUT

American Hugh Esterson, brother of current GB3 racer and reigning Formula Ford Festival winner Max, made his UK racing debut at Brands Hatch last weekend, as did Irishman Jason Smyth, son of former Formula Ford Festival Kent winner Neville. Esterson (below), driving an Ammonite Motorsport Ray GR18, finished 13th in both United FF1600 races, while Smyth claimed a pair of ninth-place finishes despite a couple of minor excursions in race one.



Vintage thrills at Circuit des Remparts event

HISTORICS

The streets of Angouleme, the 'balcony of south-west France', hosted the 51st edition of its Circuit des Remparts historic racing event last Sunday with six entertaining races on an afternoon featuring both sun and heavy rain.

Kicking off with the Plateau Maurice Trintignant (each race is named after a famous French driver), the pre-war grid was headed by three British competitors: Christian Pedersen in his 1936 Austin 7, Simon Gallon in a 1936 Austin Pigsty Special and Mark Elder in his 1930 Austin 7 Ulster. Pedersen romped away and won by a near 29-second margin from Gallon.

The Plateau Jean-Pierre Beltoise for pre-1965 GT cars provided an incredibly close contest. Last year's winner Damien Kohler triumphed again in his Diva F10 from a Lotus Elan, this time driven by self-styled 'Maverick', but was just 1.1s clear at the flag.

The meeting's blue-riband race was the pre-war Marc Nicolosi Bugatti encounter. It was Bo Williams in his Type 35B that



converted pole position to an emphatic win over Arnaud Gaignic in his Type 35.

Up to this point, the day had been dry and hot but, moments before the Plateau Raymond Sommer grid took their positions, the heavens opened. Starting behind the safety car, the pre-1939 racers slithered around with armfuls of opposite lock. The drivers were released after a couple of laps but the race was soon red-flagged as conditions worsened. Once the rain and wind eased, proceedings got back under way, with Theo Hunt in a Frazer Nash TT Replica defeating Tommy Waterfield's GN Harlequin.

Fifteen pre-1939 MGs formed the grid in honour of Prince Bira and this proved to be one of the day's closest, with Australian John Gillett triumphing from Charles Goddard. The winning margin was a narrow 1.3s and the top three were covered by a scant 3.6s, with Roger Tushingham third.

The event's finale presented a contrast to the previous races as plateau Henri Greder was reserved for 1966-76 GTs and tin-tops. Francois Delecour's Ford Escort Mk2 pulled clear as Jean-Francois Besson's slightly battered Alpine A110 had to settle for second.

CHRIS TARLING

Junior Saloons enjoys record grid at Silverstone



Record field of 31 Saxos tackled Silverstone

JSCC

The Junior Saloon Car Championship enjoyed a record grid at Silverstone last weekend, with 31 drivers taking to the track.

The Citroen Saxo-based series has attracted larger fields in recent seasons after growing from a small

base and, despite the big entry around the short National layout, only a couple of incidents needed post-race investigation.

"It's a massive achievement for us as organisers to have a grid of 31 cars," said the JSCC's Vickie MacClinton. "We've had three clean races and

that goes to show the education we're doing within the championship and how mature and how much respect there is between the drivers."

Organisers believe there is the potential for further additions to the grid at the remaining two 2023 events.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

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Menzies targets record-breaking fifth straight title

HILLCLIMB

British Hillclimb champion Wallace Menzies will bid for a record-breaking fifth straight title in 2024.

Menzies has now won four BHC titles in a row, which matches the number taken by Ken Wharton between 1951 and 1954. However, both Scott Moran and Tony Marsh have a total of six championships to their credit while David Grace and Martyn Griffiths each took five.

Menzies said: “You just think about one season at a time. You first off dream about a class win and then to get in a run-off, then a run-off win. To win one title was amazing and fantastic. And it’ll take a while to sink in that it’s now four.”

With the title secure, Menzies will miss this weekend’s season finale at Loton Park as his



Gould GR59 is already being stripped for a full rebuild after his high-speed accident at Shelsley Walsh in August.

“That’s the car put away for the year,” said Menzies after sealing the title last time out at Prescott. “We’re not doing Loton as it gives Tommy New more time to get the tub stripped before Goulds are blocked out for the winter with other projects. Our focus now is on getting that number one on again this time next year and that work starts now.”

PAUL LAWRENCE

WATERGATE BAY SPRINT

Almost 100 competitors took part in the Watergate Bay Sprint last weekend to tackle the 850-metre course, which is one of only a handful of closed-road speed events in the UK. Mike Rudge claimed the fastest time of the day on Saturday, setting a 26.15s in his Force SR8 on his second run, despite spinning on his final attempt. Wet weather allowed John Chambers in his Tesla Model 3 Performance all-electric vehicle to win on Sunday with a 28.40s run.

KELLY’S 3 SHIRES SUCCESS

Mark Kelly and Dai Roberts were convincing winners of the 3 Shires Stages last Sunday with their Skoda Fabia R5. The closed-road rally in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire proved to be a tough day for competitors and later rain made conditions treacherous. It was Steve Wood and Paul Morris (Citroen C3 Rally2) who led the chase of Kelly to finish half a minute adrift.

GOLHAR’S SURPRISE WIN

Maninder Golhar was a surprise winner of the first MG Owners’ Club race at Silverstone last weekend after fellow ZR runners Steve McDermid, Martin Wills and Scott Bugner were all excluded for their cars being underweight. There were no such problems second time around, with Bugner triumphant from McDermid while Wills swapped to his MGF and came from the back of the grid to finish seventh.

NEW SUPERKART VICTORS

Honours were shared in the Division 1 Superkart class at Silverstone last weekend. Liam Morley looked odds on to take victory in the opener until an ignition problem caused a major piston failure, which handed a maiden class win to Jack Tritton. Morley (below) bounced back in race two with victory but was tagged by Lee Harpham at Becketts on lap one of the very wet finale, although both continued having lost places. That left Brian Jones to take his first win in the BSRC Super Series.



Billy Morris 1936-2023

OBITUARY

One of speed events’ best loved and omnipresent characters for more than half a century, Pembrokeshire potato farmer Billy Morris died earlier this month. He had suffered from dementia in recent times.

From Wales’ far south-western corner, Billy and brother David campaigned a potent self-developed Mallock-FVA U2 in the early 1970s, supporting Swansea Motor Club hillclimbs at Penrice on the Gower peninsula – a happy hunting ground – and travelling the length and breadth of Britain’s mainland on the championship trail.

David was the quicker driver, Billy the clever and resourceful engineer who honed their equipment and squirrelled away ex-military quality fixings, which

he shared with fellow competitors.

They graduated to an ex-Formula 3 Ensign – in which David scored British championship points from 1974-76 – ultimately running it as the ‘Mosign’ with a full-width Mallock nose.

After David stopped competing, Billy continued with Marches (notably an ex-Chris Cramer 782), scoring points in British Sprint Championship rounds. His swansong came co-driving the Pilbeam-Millington MP88-06 of Tenby’s Tim Davies until 2019, after which COVID-19 presaged retirement at 83!

Billy’s wife Beth predeceased him, but he is survived by daughter Vanessa and son Mike, to whom Autosport offers condolences.

MARCUS PYE





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GTSCC race will be
one of the highlights
at Castle Combe



OLLIEREAD

Large grids and Lotus celebration set for Combe's Autumn Classic

CASTLE COMBE

A mix of old favourites, grids on rotation and a new Ferrari spectacle comprise this weekend's Castle Combe Autumn Classic.

The event will also celebrate 75 years of Lotus, with a large turnout of the British machines expected, including a demo run of a Type 49 Formula 1 car.

The 12th running of the popular Wiltshire fixture will feature large fields across the eight-race meeting. The 90-minute GT & Sports Car Cup pitstop race boasts a strong entry of 33 cars, with a trio of AC Cobras taking on Jaguar E-types, Austin-Healey 3000s and Lotus Elans at the sharp end.

Back for the first time since 2020, Historic Formula Junior is this year's single-seater race. Fresh from his

Chichester Cup victory at Goodwood, Horatio Fitz-Simon starts odds-on favourite on his Combe debut.

The FiSCaR mini-enduro could well see the Elite of Brian Arculus to the fore, but a pair of quick AC Ace-Bristols will take some beating. Watch for Scott Quattlebaum's LECO-MG and Richard Tyzack's gruff Kellison among the sports-racers.

Sideways Jaguar saloons chase the Norman Dewis Trophy within the Ecurie Classic grid. Richard Wilson's Maserati 250S – another Goodwood victor – tops the Historic Sports Car Club's Griffiths Haig Trophy double-header. The Superperformance Ferrari Classic Challenge cars also race twice as they make their event bow.

MARCUS PYE

BALDWIN TRIBUTE ON HOLD

The Mini 7 Racing Club postponed its planned tribute to legendary former Miglia champion Peter Baldwin at Croft last weekend. Instead, the club will now hold a full grid tribute at its season finale at Silverstone next month. Competitors at Croft still did their best to remember their former colleague by putting on a display of close racing. Speaking in parc ferme afterwards, an emotional Rupert Deeth said: "That was for you Peter. I hope you enjoyed it as much as we did."

SWIFT'S HISTORIC TASTER

Former Ferrari Challenge UK champion and ex-European Le Mans Series and Radical European racer James Swift had his first taste of historic machinery at Donington Park recently. Swift is set to join John Dunham in his Ford Mustang, along with Mark Owen, as they take on the Spa Six Hours at the end of this month. "The car felt lovely, but apart from the Goodwood Festival of Speed I haven't raced anything this year," said Swift. "It was my first time in any sort of historic car."

GREENHALGHs TO SPA

Brothers Alan and Robin Greenhalgh will contest next weekend's Spa Six Hours in an AC Cobra. The pair have previously shared former British Touring Car Championship driver Alan's Ford Falcon Sprint in the race, but will switch to Robin's newly acquired Cobra for this year's 30th anniversary edition of the event.

TRUST APPLICATIONS OPEN

The British Motorsport Trust (BMT) has announced that it will accept funding applications for 2024 volunteer officials' training events. A total of 143 training events were offered around the UK and supported by the trust last year, which covered a number of topics including introductory sessions for new marshals, incident handling and mandatory upgrade modules. Applications close on 11 October, with grant aid offers being confirmed no later than the end of November.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Regular supports join TCR UK package

BRSCC

TCR UK will feature a largely permanent support package in 2024, with four other championships administered by the British Racing & Sports Car Club set to feature at all of its race meetings.

Since returning to the BRSCC fold this year, TCR UK has been joined by its Civic Cup sister series and the Fiesta Junior Championship at most

rounds. Both will feature at all seven events in 2024, beginning at Brands Hatch on 13-14 April. Fiesta Junior will have one additional round, kicking off at Silverstone on 16-17 March.

Joining the bill on a permanent basis for the first time are the Fiesta ST240 and Audi TT Cup categories. A revolving cast of other BRSCC championships will fill the one or two remaining timetable

slots at most meetings.

TCR UK championship manager Ashley Gallagher said: "The 2023 season marked the return of TCR UK being the headline of its own events, where we've been able to showcase many of the BRSCC championships to TCR UK's growing fanbase. It's now a great opportunity for the package as a whole to continue to grow."

MARK PAULSON



Four drivers fought at the front, but it was Hiley (53) and Hudson who triumphed

Hudson and Hiley are the Welsh Sport Specials stars

ANGLESEY
750MC
16-17 SEPTEMBER

Clive Hudson and Andy Hiley shared the Sport Specials victory spoils during an eventful 750 Motor Club fixture at Anglesey last weekend.

The Eclipse of Paul Collingwood had led from the start of the opener, but the top four soon paired off with Hiley's Chronos joining Collingwood, while Paul Boyd and Hudson duelled for third. It wasn't long before Hudson 'eclipsed' the similar car of Boyd at Rocket on lap two and soon closed

on the lead pair. Two laps later, it was all change and Hiley led from Hudson, while Collingwood lost ground in third. Hudson then closed in to challenge Hiley for the lead, making the decisive move into Rocket on lap 11 of 13, leaving Collingwood in a solitary third after Boyd retired with the throttle stuck open.

Hiley managed to make an early break in race two while Collingwood, Hudson and Boyd disputed second. Hudson and Collingwood swapped on lap two, but Collingwood was then left playing catch-up after a spin at the Banking Hairpin. Hiley ultimately led home

Boyd and Anton Landon's Cyana, after Hudson slipped to fourth having opted for wet-weather tyres on a drying track.

Matthew Hyde and his AHS Dominator proved unbeatable in both Formula Vee races to provisionally net him the title. The polesitter was second into Rocket, but led through the Corkscrew to head Ross Price (GAC) and Vaughn Jones (Storm Vee) at the end of the opening lap. Price soon headed pitwards after his exhaust fell off, leaving Jones in a distant second, with Phil Waterhouse (Filari Tasso) third following the retirement of Tim Probert's Storm.

The safety car was out from the start of race two with Craig Bell, who was disqualified from the opener after failing to heed a black-and-orange flag, stuck on the grid. Hyde was clear straight from the green flag, with Price a race-long second, resisting the occasional threat from Jones.

Will Self's early lead in the first Hot Hatch race came to nought when his Peugeot 205 faltered at Church on the seventh lap. "It had a misfire then just cut out on me," he said. Dan Silvester had been closing and became the new leader, but had to fend off the similar Honda Civic of Dan Brown to secure his win. "I lost ground at the end when I went from fourth to first gear and locked up the front wheels," explained Brown.

Jack Ashton had been a distant third in race one, and his Metro GTI was initially in



Brown (45) and Silvester enjoyed Hot Hatch scraps

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE JONES



Line made all the right moves for Monoposto wins



Southcott's spin cost him Sports/Saloons hat-trick



Higginson and Miles shared the Sports 1000 honours

the same spot again in race two as Brown and Silvester had an opening-lap duel for the lead. But Ashton pounced on their squabble and pulled clear, only for Silvester to close the gap in vain in the final laps.

Brown was the third different leader in the first two corners of the finale before imposing himself at the front. Silvester chased hard to close down Self in second, but all three held station to the finish.

The MG Midget Lenham of Andrew Southcott had the legs of Paul Rose's Saker in all three CNC Heads Sports/Saloon races, although only won twice. Southcott got a break in the first contest while Rose had an initial duel with Simon Allaway (Lotus Esprit V8), before all three spread out.

Southcott was in charge from the start of the second race, but Rose was closer this time around. The leader spun into Rocket on lap 12 of 16, and rotated again later at the Banking Hairpin. Southcott still held onto second, but Rose took the win, with Roddie Paterson's Caterham third after another duel with Vauxhall Tigra driver Arron Armiger.

Southcott was back on form in the finale, heading Rose throughout. Paterson was clear in third from the start, and Allaway completed the top four after Armiger retired.

Matthew Higginson and his Mittell also came close to a winning treble in Sports 1000. He was in charge from the start of

the first race and saw off any threat from the Spires of Richard Miles and Ryan Yarrow, until Miles's late charge reduced the winning margin to 0.49 seconds.

Miles had the early race-two lead from Dan Clowes's Mittell and Higginson, after Yarrow pulled off at School on the opening tour. Higginson was second into Church on lap two and within a lap was challenging Miles for the lead. He made his move around the outside at Church on lap four and soon began to consolidate. But on lap six Miles had closed again and, as they rounded the final turn, Higginson was forced off line to avoid a stranded car and Miles surged back ahead. After two safety car laps, Higginson couldn't get close enough to rechallenge, so it was Miles's victory with Clowes a solitary third.

It was Higginson from Miles again at the start of race three, until Miles dropped out after six laps, leaving Higginson to seal his second win of the event from John Cutmore's Spire and Clowes.

Former F3 Cup champion George Line proved unbeatable in the Monoposto F3/1800/Moto 1400/Classic contests. The F3 Dallaras of Line and Karl O'Brien were in the clear from the start and maintained those places throughout both races.

Behind, a three-way battle for third came to a head at Rocket with a lap to go of the opener when Dean Warren challenged Neil Harrison. Their clash left Jason Timms

clear to take third and, although Warren recovered in fourth, he was disqualified for a flag infringement. Warren managed to stay clear in third in race two, after taking Timms at the Banking Hairpin on the fourth lap.

In the Moto 1000/2000/1600 bouts, Tom Wheatley's Van Diemen RF99 just held off the Jedi of Nigel Davers in race one. But Davers was penalised for being out of position at the start, dropping him to third behind Matthew Haughton (Jedi). Codey Keogh (Leastone 1000) held onto a race-long lead in the second encounter, but had Wheatley closing, while David Heavey's Leastone completed the podium.

Reigning 750 Formula champion Peter Bove won the first two Welsh races, but had to settle for second in the finale, losing out by just 0.28s to Andrew Kemp's Racekits Falcon. Shaun Traynor was a double winner too, taking both MR2 victories.

PETER SCHERER

WEEKEND WINNERS

SPORT SPECIALS

Race 1 Clive Hudson (Eclipse SM1)

Race 2 Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

FORMULA VEE

Races 1 & 2 Matthew Hyde (AHS Dominator)

HOT HATCH

Race 1 Dan Silvester (Honda Civic)

Race 2 Jack Ashton (Rover Metro GTI)

Race 3 Dan Brown (Honda Civic)

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS

Races 1 & 3 Andrew Southcott (MG Midget Lenham)

Race 2 Paul Rose (Saker S1-500)

SPORTS 1000

Races 1 & 3 Matthew Higginson (Mittell MC-53)

Race 2 Richard Miles (Spire GT3)

MONOPOSTO F3/1800/MOTO 1400/CLASSIC

Races 1 & 2 George Line (Dallara-VW F308)

MONOPOSTO MOTO 1000/2000/1600

Race 1 Tom Wheatley (Van Diemen RF99)

Race 2 Codey Keogh (Leastone 1000)

750 FORMULA

Races 1 & 2 Peter Bove (Darvi 88P, below)

Race 3 Andrew Kemp (Racekits Falcon)

TOYOTA MR2s

Races 1 & 2 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)



For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

Aside from Se7ens start-light confusion, Jordans were all-conquering at Croft



Jordans' Mini revival as duo top entertaining contests

CROFT
BRSCC
16-17 SEPTEMBER

After a challenging time at Goodwood earlier this month, Mike and Andrew Jordan travelled to Croft last weekend and delivered a clear reminder that, when it comes to Mini racing, each is simply in a class of their own.

Both qualified on pole for their respective opening races but, for Jordan Sr, what should have been a dominant run into the first corner descended into chaos. With the Mini Se7en grid seemingly formed, the gantry displayed two orange lights and not the six reds expected. One car had come to a halt at the pit entry, and Jordan assumed that officials were signalling an aborted

start while the stranded vehicle was recovered. Instead, the lights went out and everyone else took that as the signal to go. With credit to the former GT champion, he recovered well, losing only four places, but that was enough for Joe Thompson and Ross Billison to head through the melee and lead onto the back straight, with Spencer Wanstall following them closely.

Jordan was soon pressing for third, sending Wanstall's defence from determined to desperate, but Jordan was both quick and clever and found the right time to make the move stick. The gap ahead, however, was too big and Thompson held off Billison's attacks to win.

Jordan was back on top in race two, but the reversed grid and a series of fastest laps from Thompson made him work hard for

the spoils. Both drivers had to dig deep, but Jordan eventually found exit and slipstream out of the chicane that opened the opportunity to pass the leader into Tower on the final lap.

It was the usual gang of four in the first Miglia race. Andrew Jordan and Kane Astin were both quick off the line, followed closely by Aaron Smith and Rupert Deeth. Astin gave everything in pursuit of the 2013 British Touring Car champion but Jordan's positioning was perfect, leaving just the fight for the final podium place to be settled. On the early laps, Smith looked to have the edge, but Deeth has become ever more confident with his new car and, braving a stunning overtake around the outside at Clervaux, took the position and held it to the flag.

The only way to describe race two is 'pure classic'. Smith made short work of gaining the initial lead. Behind, Jordan and Astin were at it again and soon dragged Smith into their squabble. These three launched in and out of every turn, Smith fervently repelling the onslaught until Jordan found his father's line through and out of Tower.

Then it was Astin's turn, levelling Smith through the Esses, then Barcroft too, finally forcing him to cede the place through Sunny. It was Mini racing at its best and Deeth wanted in. Soon, these four were as one as they entered the complex but, with Astin sliding on his own oil, he hit Jordan and holed his radiator, forcing an early retirement and requiring the rest to negotiate his coolant. Though sideways at



Swift prevailed
in Audi TT opener

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES ROBERTS



There was no stopping
Davis in the Compact Cup

WEEKEND WINNERS

MINI SE7EN

Race 1 Joe Thompson

Race 2 Mike Jordan

MINI MIGLIA

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Jordan

FIESTA ST240s

Race 1 John Cooper

Race 2 Alastair Kellett

Race 3 William Kellett

FIESTA ST150s

Race 1 Michael Blackburn

Race 2 Sam Beckett

Race 3 Paul Dobson

AUDI TT CUP RACING

Race 1 Carl Swift

Races 2 & 3 Andrew Dyer

BMW COMPACT CUP

Races 1, 2 & 3 Guy Davis

SUPER CLASSIC PRE-'99 FORMULA FORD

Races 1 & 2 Callum Grant (Van Diemen RF91)

EVOLUTION TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Adam Marshall (VW Golf)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

times, Jordan held his lead, but Smith and Deeth were far from finished, each braving moves to pass and repass. Sadly for the crowd the flag seemed to come too soon, Smith heading Deeth across the line.

There was upset in the Fiesta ST240s. Championship rivals Albert Webster and Alastair Kellett made a hasty visit to the gravel as the opener got under way, leaving Zachary Lucas an unlikely leader until he too fell off soon after at Tower. This left John Cooper to take the spoils, followed by Simon Horrobin and Matt Luff.

Despite an early red flag, the sequel went more to form. Horrobin got away well but Kellett then Webster were soon on his tail. At first, it seemed that Horrobin might hold on but Kellett was relentless, finally forcing an error at the complex, then again at the hairpin, allowing him and Webster through for a 1-2.

The finale featured the top seven grid positions reversed, swapping one Kellett for another as Alastair's son William bagged and converted pole for his first win of the season. Horrobin was again on the podium but also in the officials' room for contact with Kellett Sr. The most important mention of the weekend goes to Morgan Kidd, who not only raced to a hat-trick of Club class wins but was also in the mix with the Pro cars in every round.

There were also three races for the Fiesta ST150s and, despite winning only once, championship leader Sam Beckett bagged a healthy points advantage to improve his margin. The pick of the trio was race one, in which title hopeful Thomas Ikin stalled



Alastair Kellett (left) and
Horrobin battled hard

at the start and then, lights ablaze, fought his way back through the order. Ikin's woes gave polesitter Michael Blackburn an easy run to protect his lead but, behind, Dan Robinson, race-three victor Paul Dobson and Beckett traded fast laps and lunges in an effort to get to the front.

New for this year is Audi TT Cup Racing. TCR race winner Carl Swift set the early pace and won the first contest handsomely. But then, in race two, turbo failure allowed Andrew Dyer to ease past. Dyer looked comfortable in the lead but, behind, a furious battle raged between Luke Handley and Scott Parkin. Parkin seemed ever more frustrated with his lack of progress and, by the last lap, chanced a huge effort into Tower; it was 'do or die' but he locked up

and smoked Handley into the field. Ryan Edgecumbe happily inherited second while Parkin was later penalised for the contact and demoted below Handley into fourth. Dyer then also topped the finale.

Carlin Formula 2 mechanic Guy Davis proved unbeatable in the BMW Compact Cup, but the demands of the F1 support grid have kept him well out of title contention, much to the delight of Gareth Claydon, whose trio of podiums has extended the gap to Rudi Macmillan and the hard-charging Matt Flowers.

Callum Grant took two easy wins in a poorly supported Pre-'99 Formula Ford grid, and Adam Marshall enjoyed a brace of Evolution Trophy victories in his VW Golf.

STEVE HINDLE



Century's Leung took a brace of wins with BMW M4 GT3

Thrills and spills spice up GT Cup's Donington action

DONINGTON PARK

MSVR

16-17 SEPTEMBER

The GT Cup delivered two contrasting days of action during its penultimate round at Donington Park last weekend, with Cook Racing and G-Cat Racing taking hard-fought triumphs on Saturday before Century Motorsport dominated on Sunday.

Saturday's sprint race featured a close tussle between Hugo Cook's Audi R8 and Tom Roche's McLaren 720S Evo. The gap ebbed and flowed, with Roche running wide while lapping another car before Cook also lost time in traffic. Roche tried to snatch victory on the final lap but missed out by 0.6 seconds. Darren Leung finished third in his Century BMW M4, after sweeping around the outside of Iain Campbell's McLaren early on.

The following pitstop race was equally enthralling. Simon Orange led away from pole in the McLaren he shared with Roche, while Campbell moved past Sacha Kakad

for second into Redgate. Leung also tried to squeeze past, but there was slight contact approaching Holly Wood. "It knocked my left-front out by three and a half degrees, so we were struggling to turn right," Leung revealed afterwards. "The left-handers were fine, all two of them!"

Despite the damage, Leung soon passed Kakad and closed in on Campbell, who in turn eradicated Orange's 2.5s lead in traffic. The safety car was then deployed when Kakad collided with Keith Bush at the Fogarty Esses, and the pit window opened just before the race resumed, with all of the leading runners coming in.

After taking over G-Cat's Porsche 911 from Shamus Jennings, Greg Caton emerged with a 14s advantage due to others serving success penalties and remained ahead for a first win of the season while a thrilling battle raged for second. Roche prevailed against Dan Harper in that squabble, the pair having taken over from Orange and Leung respectively for the final stint.

Sunday's sprint race was more incident-filled, but Leung ran untroubled at the front throughout to take a controlled victory from pole by 7s. Campbell was spun out of second following an optimistic lunge from Orange, who was subsequently excluded. Kakad was promoted to the podium along with Richard Chamberlain, whose Porsche 935 narrowly avoided being collected after a three-car collision between Gilbert Yates and GTH runners Phillip Carter and Ed Bridle at the hairpin.

Rain arrived during the final race, with Leung mastering the conditions on slicks during the opening stint. He handed over the BMW to Harper with a commanding 25s lead, enough for the Northern Irishman to rejoin on wet-weather tyres still in front, where he remained until the finish on a quickly drying circuit.

The McLaren of Orange and Roche was the closest pursuer throughout, while Jennings moved up to third in the opening stint, a position Caton maintained after jumping aboard the 911. Paul Bailey cemented his overall points lead with three GTO wins across the weekend in his Lamborghini, shared with Ross Wylie.

James Lay secured a second consecutive Radical Cup UK title during an incident-filled finale. After qualifying ninth for the opener, Lay dropped to 15th when he was rear-ended during an early safety-car period, but he recovered to seventh before the race was ended early. Haydn Chance dominated to win ahead of Ben Caisley, who took advantage of an error from Chris Preen to shove his way into second.

Lay sealed the crown with a commanding race-two triumph, while Chance recovered from a poor



Lay took his second Radical Cup UK title

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT CUP

Race 1 Hugo Cook (Audi R8 GT3 Evo)**Race 2** Shamus Jennings/Greg Caton (Porsche 911 GT3-R)**Race 3** Darren Leung (BMW M4 GT3)**Race 4** Darren Leung/Dan Harper (BMW M4 GT3)

RADICAL CUP UK

Race 1 Haydn Chance**Race 2** James Lay**Race 3** Tommi Gore

7 RACE SERIES - 420R

Race 1 Jay McCormack**Race 2** Anthony Barnes (below, left)

7 RACE SERIES - 310R

Race 1 Stephen Clark**Race 2** Caroline Everett

SPORTS 2000 - HISTORIC

Races 1 & 2 Nik Johnson (Lola T592S)

SPORTS 2000 - DURATEC

Races 1 & 2 Michael Gibbins (MCR S2n)

BELL SPORT CHALLENGE

Race 1 Andy Christopher (Ferrari 488)**Race 2** Peter Smith (Ferrari 488)

BERNIE'S V8s & HISTORIC OUTLAWS

Races 1 & 2 Stewart Robb (TVR Tuscan)For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

start to snatch second from Caisley, despite both running wide at the hairpin.

The safety car led the field for several laps in a rain-soaked finale, after which Tommi Gore benefited from a stop/go penalty for David 'Sven' Thompson, who made his mandatory pitstop too early, to move ahead. A charging Chance eradicated a 10s deficit by the final lap, but Gore survived a wide moment at the last bend to hold on.

Jay McCormack prevailed in a final-lap battle with Mark Stansfield to win the opening 7 Series 420R contest, with newly crowned champion Anthony Barnes third. Chaos at Redgate caused the sequel to be red-flagged, with Barnes winning the restarted race after beating Gary Smith on a drag to the line.

Stephen Clark edged Mark Roberts to win the opening 310R encounter. Don Henshall topped race two but was penalised for causing a collision with Clark and David Yates, handing the victory to Caroline Everett.

STEVE WHITFIELD

A WINNING START FOR DAVIES

Three GT Cup victories
came with McLaren

Callum Davies has already enjoyed plenty of success in his first season of car racing, and he continued to impress last weekend by narrowly missing out on a clean sweep of GTH class wins on his GT Cup debut.

The 16-year-old, who has been a regular podium finisher in the Ginetta GT Championship this year, teamed up with his driving coach Jon Lancaster in a Race Lab-run McLaren Artura GT4 and was immediately on the pace.

After taking class pole for Saturday's opening sprint race by over 0.6 seconds, Davies led until two laps from the end before losing out to Chris Hart's Mercedes-AMG, which edged him by 0.241s in a drag race to the chequered flag.

"It's the first rolling start I've ever done," said Davies. "But I had a great start, I led for the majority of the race and I made one little mistake, and that's all it takes for someone to overtake you."

"Karting definitely built the foundation to be a racing driver and started me off on the right path. I jumped to the Ginetta and this is another big jump, big difference,

not really anything the same. The driving style is completely different. The McLaren definitely has a bit more grunt. You've got to be a lot smoother on the wheel. It's great fun."

Davies was not to be denied in the subsequent pitstop race, building a commanding advantage in the opening stint before handing over to Lancaster, who brought the car home a minute clear of Paddock Motorsport McLaren pair Tim Docker and Alex Walker.

"I think I've got 17 or 18 podiums this season [in Ginettas] but not the top step, so to finally get that definitely feels great," said Davies of his maiden car racing triumph. "Jon's been my driver coach this whole year and we get on really well. I wouldn't be here without him because, when I first went out in a Ginetta, mid-summer last year, he was sat next to me. I've learned everything from Jon."

Davies then dominated Sunday's sprint race for his second win ahead of Morpheus Racing Mercedes racer Jon Currie, and he coped with the added challenge of rain in the final pitstop race, running as high as fifth overall on slick tyres before Lancaster completed another class win ahead of Currie, who shared with Phil Keen.

"My engineer told me I had about five minutes until the pit window, so I had to try and keep it on the track," Davies said. "I wasn't pushing too hard, it got very slippery. It's definitely boosted my confidence, especially with a grid like this with very professional drivers. To come away with three wins is amazing."

Lancaster added: "He did the work. There's bits we have to learn, but I tell him once and he does it. Exciting times, to see what next year holds for him."

STEVE WHITFIELD

Davies has raced in
Ginettas this season

Datsun ace puts in a Corker of a performance

SNETTERTON

BARC

16-17 SEPTEMBER

After knocking on the door all season, Jonathan Corker finally claimed his first Pre-'83 Touring Car wins of 2023 at Snetterton, topping a three-way tussle in each race.

Corker's Datsun 510 passed the Ford Escort Mk1 of polesitter Stephen Primett at Agostini on lap three of seven in Saturday's opener. As Corker escaped, Mark Cholerton pressured Primett into a Turn 3 mistake that allowed his Escort Mk2 to snatch second.

Cholerton kept Corker on his toes in Sunday's rematch, despite a poor start dropping the Norfolk local to fifth. He quickly picked off Don Hughes (Volkswagen Golf) and got underneath Jason Christie's Escort at the Wilson hairpin. Cholerton then forced Primett to defend into Agostini before dispatching the multi-champion at Oggies. After reeling in next target Corker, Cholerton pounced when the Datsun slewed into Wilson, but Corker, more comfortable chasing, regathered his composure and powered back ahead to complete his double. "I'm not really used to leading, and it's a different mindset to keep it all under control," admitted Corker. Further back, Alan Greenhalgh stretched his Ford Falcon's legs to bag a brace in the concurrent Pre-'66 section.

Mid-race rain injected drama into Sunday's first Britcar Trophy race as the hitherto dominant Ginetta G56 GTAs struggled on slick tyres. After being relayed by opening stint leader Ian Astley, Neil Wallace twice erred, handing the advantage to Axel van Norderveen.



But Simon Clark's rear-engined Porsche 997 was revelling in the conditions. From a pre-pitstop seventh, the Class 2 car rounded Jim Edwards Jr (in for Julian Wantling) for second at Wilson on the penultimate tour, then overhauled van Norderveen via a better run onto the Bentley Straight on the last lap.

Clark's chances in the largely dry sequel were extinguished by a drive-through penalty for an over-eager start. Instead, Lee Goldsmith secured his maiden win, the first for Geoff Steel Racing's BMW M3 E90. After trading the lead with Edwards just before pitting, Goldsmith's lack of a success time penalty (he was sixth in the opener) was key to him emerging in front. Maurizio Sciglio then closed in but was penalised for a short pitstop, promoting Datum Motorsport team-mate Marco Anastasi to second.

As the sole top-class British Endurance Championship car, Enduro Motorsport's Audi R8 was never threatened, taking a fourth consecutive win. Keen to maximise his driving time, Peter Erceg pushed his stint length to the limit – and beyond it, leading to a stop/go penalty. But Pro driver Marcus Clutton still had enough in hand for a whole-lap victory over the GT4 cars of Mike McCollum/Sean Cooper (KTM) and Chris Jones/Matt George (Mercedes-AMG).

Ryan Smith's march towards an eighth successive British Truck Racing title continued with three utterly dominant wins from five races. Almost more impressive was one he lost – the weekend's fourth race, where Smith rose from eighth to pass long-time leader Michael Oliver at the Esses on the penultimate lap. But Smith was deemed to have exceeded track limits in the process, and was demoted to third behind Oliver, handing victory to Dave Jenkins, who'd followed Smith through. Authoritative lunges at Agostini fuelled Jenkins's earlier run from fifth to his first win of the season in race three.

Nick Vaughan's turbocharged Audi A3 took a Classic Thunder double. Vaughan overhauled polesitter Colin Voyce – whose Escort Mk1 was sporting a new British Touring Car-derived Mountune engine – to win the dry opener. Still slick-shod, he then tiptoed to victory in Sunday's wet sequel, holding off Gary Hufford's BMW M3 (third on Saturday). Sharing the grid, Jaguar Challenge honours were split between the XJSs of Colin Philpott and Guy Connew.

Returning champion Martin Reynolds (Escort Mk2) twice topped the Blue Oval





Two wins went the way of Corker in Pre-'83 Touring Cars

WEEKEND WINNERS

PRE-'83 & PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

Races 1 & 2 Jonathan Corker (Datsun 510)

BRITCAR TROPHY

Race 1 Simon Clark (Porsche 997 Carrera S)

Race 2 Lee Goldsmith (BMW M3 E90)

BRITISH ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Peter Erceg/Marcus Clutton (Audi R8 GT3)

BRITISH TRUCK RACING

Races 1, 2 & 5 Ryan Smith (Daimler Freightliner)

Race 3 & 4 Dave Jenkins (MAN TGX)

CLASSIC THUNDER & JAGUAR CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Nick Vaughan (Audi A3)

PRE-'93 & PRE-'03 TOURING CARS/BOSS

Races 1 & 2 Martin Reynolds (Ford Escort Mk2)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Saloons ahead of AJ Owen, who was having a run in dad Craig's Ford Sierra Cosworth. The lead quartet also comprised Stuart Waite (Pre-'93 BMW M3 E36) and Gary Prebble (Pre-'03 Honda Civic EG) in the combined races. Polesitter Waite slipped from third over the line to fourth behind Prebble in the opener upon the application of a 10s penalty for a bizarre mix-up that necessitated an extra green-flag lap. His M3 expired while running second in race two, allowing Prebble to secure third again and assisting Kevin Willis's similar M3 to Pre-'93 laurels.

MARK PAULSON




BACK ONCE AGAIN Jake Margalies chalked up a second outing in his Pre-'83 Ford Escort XR3i following its Brands Hatch Super Touring Power debut weekend. Originally raced in the Ford XR Challenge, it was upgraded from Mk3 to Mk4 spec for use as a rally car before being converted back. Resplendent in a livery taken from an original Scalextric rally car model, the XR3i was rear-ended after getting caught behind a bogged-down car off the grid but still twice managed second in class.



FIFTEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING Malcolm Harding gave his unique self-built Mercedes SLK its first race outing for five years in Classic Thunder. Originally aimed at Britcar when conceived around 15 years ago, the spaceframe chassis raced only a handful of times with its original Ford Zetec engine. Harding has resurrected the SLK "for some fun". Fourth fastest in qualifying, he dropped to seventh in the opening race with a suspected wastegate leak, while a holed oil cooler thwarted Sunday's action.



WALLER'S SUNBEAM DEBUT One-time Pre-'05 Touring Car champion Phil Waller debuted his 1974 Avenger in Pre-'83 Touring Cars. The import from Finland had just 8000 miles on the clock as a road car prior to being prepared for competition in a livery paying tribute to Bernard Unett's triple British Saloon Car Championship class crowns. Electrical gremlins kept the Avenger out of the Saturday race, but it ran well on Sunday before a final-lap gearbox failure.



Medina driver
Smith repeated his
success from last
year's Ford Power
Live event

Smith's perfect FFord Festival preparation with United double

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR
16-17 SEPTEMBER

Rory Smith made the ideal preparation for next month's Formula Ford Festival by claiming a pair of race wins in the combined United Formula Ford and Champion of Brands double-header at Brands Hatch last weekend. The 2020 Festival winner, who also won both races at last year's equivalent Ford Power Live event in his Medina Sport JL18, was never headed in either race and not even a late

caution in the second – after Tom Hawkins spun – could thwart him.

Jeremy Fairbairn was second both times in his Ray GR20 after he came out on top in two close battles with the Van Diemen JL13 of Lucas Romanek. In the opener, Romanek was briefly second until running wide on a damp track at Graham Hill Bend and allowing Fairbairn to pounce. The duo finished in the same order in race two, Fairbairn admitting he “gave his all” in chasing down Smith.

Former British Touring Car racer Lea Wood won the opening Modified Fords

Group A race in his 2.3-litre Duratec-powered RSR Escort after early leader Tommy Field (RSR) ground to a smoky halt. Josh Payton took second in his self-built, 319bhp Cortina Mk2 after battling with Steve Goldsmith's 2.6-litre Anglia. Field stormed through to take the spoils in the second contest, ahead of Wood and Payton, in a race that required a restart after James Allen's Focus was stranded at Druids.

Wet conditions helped Fiesta drivers lock out the podium in the first Group B encounter. Rich Sanders looked set to claim the spoils in his ST150 until a late caution

Elated Edwards victorious again

SILVERSTONE
BARC
16-17 SEPTEMBER

Nathan Edwards had been waiting 18 Mini Challenge Trophy events for a maiden victory. Now he has made it three wins from two weekends after a successful Silverstone appearance followed up on his breakthrough result at Donington Park last time out.

“I’m wishing the season had started at Donington as I would be right up there in the championship!” joked Edwards, who, prior to the Leicestershire fixture, had not stood on the podium this year.

Yet he proved his Donington success was no fluke by taking pole for the Silverstone opener and was in the thick of a frantic battle at the front, eventually getting the better of first-time podium finisher Sam Gornall and Harry Hickton with a move at Copse on the penultimate tour.

Edwards then doubled up after breaking slightly clear of the squabbling pack in race two, before his assertion that the Cooper category “has got to be one of the most competitive championships in the country” was proven in the partially reversed-grid finale when as many as 12 cars were in the lead battle. Ultimately it was Rhys Hurd who prevailed for his own first win, with Edwards finishing third behind Excelr8 team-mate Gabe Fairbrother. “To have a worst [weekend] result of third shows how far we’ve come,” Edwards concluded.

Edwards's elation was in contrast to Tom Ovenden's woes as the points leader had a weekend to forget. He was eliminated after contact with Hickton and Nicky Taylor at Brooklands in the opener, and later could only recover to ninth and seventh places.

Another driver to replicate Edwards's feat of winning twice was Ginetta G40 competitor Charlotte Birch after two fantastic Track Attack scraps with Adam Croft's Peugeot 205. The cars are not two



Edwards twice kept the
squabbling pack at bay

that are often seen together in UK motorsport but they proved evenly matched around Silverstone. Birch snatched the win in the opening race, a contest rearranged from Oulton Park in July, with a move on Croft on the final lap after the pair had passed the wilting VW Scirocco of Paul Roddison. “I was chuffed to bits for it to be as close as it was for as long as it was,” enthused Croft. The pair had another battle in race three but, after Birch reclaimed the lead, she stretched clear as Croft struggled in traffic. Roddison won a safety-car-disrupted middle race.



Wood took Modified Fords win after Field ground to a smoky halt

period helped Oliver Bullion snatch victory on the penultimate lap in his similar car. Mike Thurley came from 12th to win a drier second race in his Zakspeed Mk1 Escort, although he was chased by Chris Baker's Escort Mk3 RS1600i to the flag. Mark Charteris steered his Mallock Mk20/21 to victory in the first Clubmans Sports Prototype bout after fending off James Clarke's Phantom PR22 throughout. Behind them, Steve Dickens brought his Mallock Mk29 home third after an equally close battle with Clive Wood's Mk23. Clarke looked poised to return to his supreme 2023 form and win race two comfortably until he was sidelined by a broken stub axle, enabling Charteris to take another triumph ahead of Dickens. A dominant performance in race three secured a hat-trick for Charteris, while Tom Muirhead (Mallock Mk18) benefited from Clarke's misfortune to provisionally seal the overall drivers'

crown despite colliding with Brendan Herd in race one and spinning in the third race. Four podium finishes, including a win in race three after closest rival Ian Mitchell suffered a big spin at Surtees, enabled Lewis Clark to clinch the Focus Cup title as four different drivers claimed race wins across the weekend. Simon Warr won a restarted opener after he had tangled with Morgan Jones at Paddock, while Jon Baker and Greg Saunders battled through to claim victories in races two and four respectively. Alex Sidwell was a double winner in his Holden VF Commodore in the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club Super Saloons/Tin Tops despite sliding off at Surtees in race one. Rod Birley brought his BMW E36 home second after fending off Peter Seldon's E46 M3 in race one, but a daring move at Graham Hill Bend paid off for Seldon and reversed the sequel's result.

MARK LIBBETER



Croft's Peugeot, Roddison's VW and Birch's Ginetta entertained

Junior Saloons frontrunner Cameron Pratt-Thompson was another driver to claim two victories. He had spent much of the opener stuck behind Harry Smith as Daire Flock scampered away to a 12th 2023 win. But Pratt-Thompson retaliated in the restarted second bout, before defying Flock again in a wet race three. Continuing the theme, Stephen Berry's #666 Cooper S Coupe bagged two Mini Challenge Clubsport triumphs. A demonic drive from 14th netted him the lead at Copse on the penultimate lap of the opener, before overcoming Charlie Newton-Darby

on the second lap of race two to double up. Berry then seemingly completed the treble, but was later demoted to second after a devilish move on Newton-Darby under yellow flags. The event's longest race, a 40-minute Hyundai Coupe Cup mini-enduro, was another close affair. Jonny Rockett defeated Mark Ridout by half a second, while Paul Bailey (in the car that led early on with Sam Maher-Loughnan) pipped Luca Staccini Anzanello to third by an even narrower 0.283s.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

WEEKEND WINNERS

BRANDS HATCH
UNITED FORMULA FORD/
CHAMPION OF BRANDS
Races 1 & 2 Rory Smith (Medina Sport JL18)

MODIFIED FORDS – GROUP A
Race 1 Lea Wood (RSR Escort)
Race 2 Tommy Field (RSR Escort)

MODIFIED FORDS – GROUP B
Race 1 Oliver Bullion (Fiesta ST150)
Race 2 Mike Thurley (Escort Mk1 Zakspeed)

CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPES
Races 1, 2 & 3 Mark Charteris (Mallock Mk20/21)

FOCUS CUP
Race 1 Simon Warr
Race 2 Jon Baker
Race 3 Lewis Clark
Race 4 Greg Saunders

CMMC SUPER SALOONS & TIN TOPS
Races 1 & 2 Alex Sidwell (Holden VF Commodore)

PRODUCTION GTI & Z CARS
Races 1 & 2 Edd Giddings (BMW Z4)

INTERMARQUE SILHOUETTES
Races 1 & 2 Daniel Smith (Mercedes SLK)

SILVERSTONE
MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY
Races 1 & 2 Nathan Edwards
Race 3 Rhys Hurd

TRACK ATTACK
Races 1 & 3 Charlotte Birch (Ginetta G40)
Race 2 Paul Roddison (VW Scirocco)

JUNIOR SALOONS
Race 1 Daire Flock
Races 2 & 3 Cameron Pratt-Thompson

MINI CHALLENGE CLUBSPORT
Races 1 & 2 Stephen Berry (Cooper S Coupe)
Race 3 Charlie Newton-Darby (Cooper S)

COUPE CUP
Jonny Rockett (below)

MG OWNERS' CLUB
Race 1 Maninder Golhar (ZR)
Race 2 Scott Bugner (ZR)

KUMHO BMWs
Race 1 Bryan Bransom (M3 Compact)
Race 2 James Card (E46 M3)

BRITISH SUPERKART RACING CLUB
Race 1 Jack Tritton (MS Kart/Harvey VM)
Race 2 Liam Morley (Anderson/VM)
Race 3 Brian Jones (Anderson/VM)

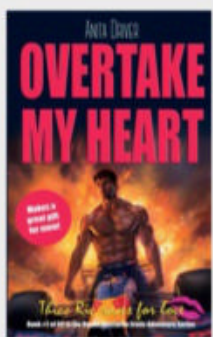


For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

FINISHING STRAIGHT



A love letter to Daniel Ricciardo's neck



BOOK
OVERTAKE MY HEART
Anita Driver
RRP £10.99

We can put it off no longer. It's time to swoon over 'Thicc Ric' with Anita Driver's *Overtake my Heart*

ode to all things Daniel Ricciardo.

The Australian is one of the most well-loved drivers in the Formula 1 paddock, but in this instance things are taken to the extreme with a swathe of double entendres and innuendoes that are enough to make anyone blush. If there is an F1 pun that can be interpreted in a less-than-innocent fashion, Driver is sure to have found a way to include it in the short 40-page offering.

The entirely fictional story follows F1 and Daniel Ricciardo fan Emily Jensen, who stalks and – ahem – ‘meets’ Ricciardo in a satirical alternative future, where

Nicholas Latifi is a two-time world champion and Liberty Media has moved every race to the United States, yet ‘professional Twitch streamer’ Lando Norris is still only 17 years old.

Part of the appeal that keeps you hooked are the informed nudges and winks directed at the reader, with some oddly specific references to real-world incidents or occurrences used to further the story.

Before you get to any of this, however, the dedication on page one really sets the tone of what to expect: “This book is dedicated to Daniel Ricciardo for not suing me over this book.” The lengthy disclaimer categorically making clear that this is a work of fiction and is not to be taken seriously was likely a necessary, if not equally amusing, addition.

Despite this being advertised as an ‘erotic adventure series’, don’t expect *Fifty Shades of Grey* levels of intimate detail, as this element is – wisely – extremely limited, with the focus instead on the

humour of the aforementioned innuendoes.

There are two notable exceptions to this, though. Firstly, the hardest Pirelli C1 tyre compound is used as a metaphor for a certain part of a man, and bizarrely, Ricciardo’s neck is the other prime focus. Honestly, you will never look at the Perth-born driver in the same way again. Much of the first chapter is dedicated to the details of his neck, with a haiku and sonnet following later on, leaning further into this infatuation.

Perhaps summing up *Overtake my Heart* best is Ricciardo himself, who was informed of the book for the first time on the *Eff Won with DRS* podcast.

He said: “I have never heard of this. I think I’m flattered but I don’t know. I’m also assuming that you’re not joking. I’m very gullible.

“It’s the first I’ve heard. What the hell? Makes a great gift for Mum. ‘Thicc Ric races for love’, ‘book one of 69 in the Daniel Ricciardo erotic series’. What the **** is this? I look jacked though!”

Overtake my Heart is an engaging story that will have you laughing until you cry. Far from the crude entity that was anticipated, this is a hilarious romp that cannot and should not be taken seriously.

If you’re looking for an entertaining way to kill some time, this cannot be recommended highly enough.

SAM HALL

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Japanese Grand Prix
F1 World Championship
Round 16/22
Suzuka, Japan
24 September
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 0555
TV Highlights
Sky Sports F1, Sun 0930,
Channel 4, 1230

Euroformula Open
Round 6/8
Monza, Italy
23-24 September
TV Live on Motorsport.tv,
Sat 1140, Sun 0905

International GT Open
Round 6/7
Monza, Italy
23-24 September
TV Live on Motorsport.tv,
Sat 1355, Sun 1215

ADAC GT Masters
Round 5/6
Red Bull Ring, Austria
23-24 September
TV Live Viaplay2,
Sat 1410, Sun 1410

DTM
Round 7/8
Red Bull Ring, Austria
23-24 September
TV Live Viaplay2,
Sat 1215, Sun 1215

NASCAR Cup
Round 30/36
Texas, USA
24 September
TV Live ViaplayXtra,
Sun 2000

European Le Mans Series
Round 4/6
Spa, Belgium
24 September
Livestream on
europeanlemansseries.com,
Sun 1030

MotoGP
Indian Grand Prix
Round 13/20
Budh, India
24 September
TV Live TNT Sport 2,
Sun 1030
TV Highlights ITV4, 2000

UK MOTORSPORT

Silverstone BARC
23-24 September
BTCC, British F4, Caterham
Seven UK, Mini Challenge,
Porsche Carrera Cup,
Porsche Sprint Challenge
TV Live ITV4, Sun 1100

Castle Combe CCRC
23 September
CMMC Classic Challenge/
Ecurie Racing Classic
Challenge, Ferrari Classic,
FISCAR, Formula Junior,
GT & Sports Car Cup,
HSCC Griffiths Haig Trophy

Oulton Park CSCC
23 September
Classic K, Future Classics,
Morgan Challenge,
New Millennium, Open
Series, Slicks Series,
Swinging Sixties

Donington Park 750MC
23-24 September
5Club MX-5 Cup, Alfa Romeo,
Armed Forces Challenge,
BMW Car Club, Classic
Stock Hatch, Clio Sport,
Club Enduro, Historic 750
Formula, Mighty Minis,
Roadsports, Type R Trophy

Snetterton MSVR
23-24 September
BCV8, Equipe (70s/
Pre-'63/50s, GTS, Libre),
MGCC (Cockshoot Cup,
Midgets & Sprites, Trophy),
Snetterton Saloons

Brands Hatch CTA
24 September
Racing Hondas

Trackrod Rally Yorkshire
British Rally Championship
Round 6/7
Filey, England
22-23 September

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



Singapore Grand Prix review

The Singapore Grand Prix delivered a race of both strategy and outright pace at various points thanks to the expected safety car periods on the streets of the Marina Bay circuit.

Martyn Lee is joined by Matt Kew in Singapore, alongside Kevin Turner and Alex Kalinauckas, to discuss why the formbook was thrown out of the window here and how Carlos Sainz scored a great win for Ferrari.



Japanese Grand Prix

HONE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



BTCC

JEP



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Jody Scheckter (Tyrrell 007) stops for the slick rubber required by the Zandvoort track's drying conditions during the early stages of the 1975 Dutch Grand Prix. The South African

had made a great start, vaulting from his fourth-place grid slot to initially run second behind polesitter Niki Lauda (Ferrari 312T). Then once the field's switch to slicks had shaken out he was looking good for the final

podium position behind the epic lead battle between James Hunt (Hesketh 308) and Lauda – settled, of course, in the Englishman's favour – when his engine failed eight laps from home and he was classified 16th and last.



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Martin Brundle

It speaks volumes for the premium Christian Danner places on honesty that the drivers he immediately considers for his favourite team-mate were willing to go beyond the racing norm of looking after number one. His choice of Martin Brundle, his Zakspeed partner during the 1987 Formula 1 season, is despite the former Tyrrell driver having number one status negotiated in his contract.

“He was quick, he was straight, he was uncomplicated and he was honest, which is a very uncommon attitude as far as team-mates are concerned,” relates Danner. The only point-scorer for Arrows in 1986 had a contract guaranteeing equal status but, at a small team operating on a fraction of the leading squads’ budgets, this was always going to be difficult to realise. It led to a frank chat with Brundle over a beer about which of the pair would end up with a new rear suspension.

“Usually people take whatever they can get and screw the team-mate, but he wasn’t like that at all,” the 65-year-old remembers. “We decided to give Erich Zakowski [team boss] a hard time, insisting on our rights.”

Before doing so, the pair “agreed who is going to have which part”. Danner adds: “There was never a problem between him and me. We basically united against the team principal, which was very funny.”



Reliability was a limiting factor at Zakspeed, the only team other than Ferrari that year to produce its own chassis and engine. The 1.5-litre turbo was an Achilles’ heel and both cars saw the finish only once – at Imola, where Brundle scored two points for fifth and Danner’s year-old car took seventh. The result would never be bettered in Zakspeed’s F1 history.

Brundle had the better of Danner in qualifying 13-3, although on six occasions the Brit was only one place higher. It’s to the lofty German’s credit that he makes no mention of his height and therefore extra weight being a contributing factor.

“Martin was quick, there was no doubt about it,” says Danner. “You had to give what you had to come to the same level, and that always helps because any team-mate who is slow is no help. You need someone to push you. I always got on with the fastest people the best.”

JAMES NEWBOLD



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