

# F1 Questions raised by Austin disqualifications

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# AUTOSPORT

UNITED STATES GP

## Hamilton denied as Max hits 50

Verstappen holds on before  
Mercedes and Ferrari exclusions



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How Sutton stormed to **BTCC** history



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# Another landmark for Max after a proper F1 contest

Alain Prost (in 1993), Michael Schumacher (2001), Lewis Hamilton (2016), Sebastian Vettel (2018), and now Max Verstappen. Red Bull's current star underlined his status as one of the Formula 1 greats by joining the short list of drivers to score his 50th world championship grand prix victory at Austin last weekend.

Many of Verstappen's recent successes have not exactly pushed the Dutchman to dig deep, such as been the advantage of the RB19, but the United States Grand Prix was different. As Alex Kalinauckas explains on page 18, a combination of a track limits penalty, Red Bull brake problems, improved performance from McLaren and Mercedes, and an inspired Hamilton made Verstappen's job more challenging than anyone expected on Sunday.

In the end, Hamilton's disqualification (see p4) made the battle academic, but it was good while it lasted before F1 heads to Mexico – where the Red Bulls are likely to disappear down the road at a rate of knots. Verstappen has won four of the past five GPs there...

The British Touring Car Championship and its support package provided plenty of action in 2023. Marcus Simmons and Stephen Lickorish take a look at how the titles were won in our reviews (p40 and p48), as well as picking out the top performers.

Two of the UK highlights last weekend were the British GT finale at Donington Park and the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch. Turn to p66 to see how the GT crown was decided, and p70 for our coverage of a Formula Ford contest that culminated in an epic final.



*Kevin Turner*

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## PIT & PADDOCK

- 4 Why Hamilton/Leclerc 'walked the plank'
- 8 Anger over new €1m F1 driver fines
- 6 WEC and BTCC change qualifying formats
- 10 International entries return to Macau
- 13 Mexican Grand Prix preview
- 15 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
- 17 Opinion: Gary Watkins

## RACE CENTRE

- 18 United States GP report and analysis
- 34 World of Sport: ELMS; DTM; NASCAR Cup;  
F1 Academy; FRegional European; MotoGP

## FEATURES

- 40 BTCC review: Sutton makes history
- 48 The conquerors of the TOCA supports

## CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 61 Century wants BGT champs to stay
- 62 Jaguars and Midgets to CSCC
- 64 Equipe to move into single-seaters
- 65 Opinion: Stephen Lickorish
- 66 National reports: Donington Park;  
Brands Hatch FF Festival; Silverstone;  
Kirkistown

## FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 78 What's on this week
- 80 From the archive: 1956 Le Mans
- 82 My favourite track: Oliver Gavin

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# PIT + PADDOCK

## Worn planks cause exclusions for Hamilton, Leclerc

### FORMULA 1

Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc were disqualified from last Sunday's United States Grand Prix after their cars were found to have finished the race with excessively worn floor planks. The FIA technical regulations decree that the 10mm skids must measure no less than 9mm in thickness come scrutineering. But the Mercedes of runner-up Hamilton and sixth-placed Leclerc's Ferrari were picked for checks – alongside Max Verstappen's Red Bull and the McLaren of Lando Norris – and were found to be non-compliant.

FIA technical delegate Jo Bauer can carry out “at his discretion, any checks to verify the compliance of the cars entered in the competition”. As such, scrutineering isn't uniform. No one had their floors inspected after last month's Japanese GP, but three were assessed next time out in Qatar. This is because the governing body can zero in on which cars are worth calling in for further review based on several indicators. Onboard footage is monitored to see whether drivers' heads are wobbling from bottoming out over bumps. And following the high-profile return of porpoising in 2022, vertical oscillations are logged. It is likely that the Mercedes and Ferrari piqued the FIA's interest in these areas. That the cars of team-mates George Russell and Carlos Sainz were not flagged suggests that the FIA felt they were legal, perhaps from running different set-ups.

A bulletin from the stewards read: “During the hearing the team(s) acknowledged that the measurement performed by the FIA Technical Team was correct and stated that the high wear on the skid pads was probably a result of the unique combination of the bumpy track and the Sprint race schedule that minimised the time to set up and check the car before the race.”

That the rear skid plates were overly worn points to both cars either running too low or too soft, allowing the floors to repeatedly graze the asphalt as they rebounded after hitting the bumps at the Circuit of The Americas. The track was noticeably rougher this year, despite Turns 12 and 14-16 being resurfaced. Race winner Verstappen declared the venue as being better suited to a “rally car” and not “F1 level”. As noted by the FIA, Mercedes and Ferrari were also likely caught out by the sprint format used at Austin. The timetable only allows for one hour of practice before parc ferme. That meant some squads had not completed heavy fuel runs to adjust the suspension accordingly. What's more, teams cannot remove the plank to take accurate measurements once



parc ferme is in place. From then on, they are effectively making highly educated guesses.

With Hamilton and Leclerc excluded, as is the standard punishment for a technical breach, the rest of the field were promoted. Of the 17 finishers, 13 did not have their floors checked. While the FIA can point to the oscillation and onboard as warning flags, there remains a possibility that other illegal cars went undetected but have now scored more points. But the governing body has long favoured pragmatism with scrutineering. Assessing all 20 cars is not realistic with the current resources. In the case of Austin, there was the usual small technical team, a sprint race weekend meaning four lots of inspections to reflect the number of competitive sessions, plus a need to immediately freight the cars to Mexico City for the second leg of a triple-header.

Teams have only 30 minutes following the chequered flag to protest a race result. But it was approximately 100 minutes after the event when Hamilton's and Leclerc's cars were reported to the stewards. By that time, rivals had already retrieved their machinery from parc ferme and could have adjusted componentry. As such, no other cars could have been recalled to be tested for suspect planks. Therefore, the amended results are almost certainly final.

MATT KEW







Dennis tested Red Bull in 2018 at the Hungaroring (inset)

## Formula E king Dennis given Red Bull FP1 bow

### FORMULA 1

Reigning Formula E champion Jake Dennis will end his stellar 2023 by driving for Red Bull in FP1 at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. The Briton has been a simulator driver for the recently crowned Formula 1 constructors' champion since 2018, and his reward for that service is a first public top-flight run.

Dennis, who was third in the 2015 Formula 3 European Championship and fourth in GP3 in 2016, privately tested the Red Bull RB14 in 2018, but prior to his 2021 electric switch with Andretti he had moved away from the single-seater ladder to GT racing.

The 28-year-old, winner of the 2012 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award, will help Red Bull satisfy the FIA criteria to run a

rookie in each of its cars. Both Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez will be benched for FP1 at the season finale, where FIA F2 driver Isack Hadjar will also participate. Red Bull is no longer able to field junior Liam Lawson following his five-round stint at AlphaTauri deputising for the injured Daniel Ricciardo.

Meanwhile, Alpine has announced that its reserve

driver, F2 racer Jack Doohan, will take Pierre Gasly's car for the Mexico and Abu Dhabi FP1 sessions. In the closing rounds of the campaign, Mercedes will roll out Frederik Vesti, Ollie Bearman will run for Haas, Pato O'Ward for McLaren, Robert Shwartzman returns for Ferrari, Felipe Drugovich joins Aston Martin and Alfa Romeo deploys Theo Pourchaire.

**ADAM COOPER**

## Schumacher gets Alpine Hypercar run

### WEC

Mick Schumacher got his first taste of a sports car last week when he drove the new Alpine A424 LMDh prototype at Jerez. The tryout came after a way for him continue in his role as Mercedes Formula 1 test and reserve alongside another programme was outlined by team boss Toto Wolff last month.

Wolff was responding to speculation that Schumacher was in talks with the Renault brand about joining its World Endurance Championship assault with the Signatech team in 2024. The German was known to have had talks with Alpine boss Bruno Famin.

Alpine has confirmed that Schumacher did drive the A424, but has revealed few other details. Signatech boss Philippe Sinault simply described



Alpine has been testing at Jerez

it as a "first contact" and a "short programme" as he sampled a prototype.

The French manufacturer has so far not been drawn on whether Schumacher could join its six-strong line-up for 2024. But a delay in the announcement of its drivers, originally scheduled for the middle of this month,

suggests that he is in the reckoning.

Alpine has so far revealed only that Nicolas Lapierre, Matthieu Vaxivière and Charles Milesi have driven the A424. It is understood that other drivers who are already contracted for next year have also sampled it.

**GARY WATKINS**



# Fury as FIA hikes driver fines to €1m

## FORMULA 1

The FIA has hiked the maximum fine that it can dish out to Formula 1 teams and drivers up to €1,000,000. The governing body reasons that the previous €250,000 limit outlined in the International Sporting Code had “not been reviewed nor amended for at least the last 12 years and does not reflect the current needs of motorsport”. Other FIA world championship competitors (Rally, Endurance, Rallycross, Rally-Raid, Formula E) may one day have to cough up to €750,000. These sums will be reinvested in grassroots motorsport.

While the increase reflects the growth of F1 since 2011, with teams now valued at \$1billion, the paddock is incensed. They have called out the lack of warning and consultation, there not being any codified list detailing which sins will cop the eye-watering payouts, and a general feeling that talk of such high sums is insensitive amid fans enduring a cost-of-living crisis.



New drivers won't be able to afford fines, reckons Russell

Although these are the same people calling for Michael Andretti to pay an anti-dilution fee of \$600m to form an 11th F1 team...

Mercedes driver George Russell reckoned fresh-faced F1 drivers wouldn't even be able to cough up. “In my first year of Formula 1, I was on a five-figure salary and actually lost over six figures in that year from paying for my trainer, for flights, for an assistant,” he said. “That’s probably the case for 25% of the grid. We’re doing

what we love, so we’re not complaining about that. But if you take a year one driver and you fine them a million, what’s going to happen?”

“We just want transparency and understanding. It feels like these numbers are being plucked out the air. When there’s a lot of global issues going on and so much poverty, how can a federation just make up these six, seven-figure fines?”

MATT KEW

# Chinese GP circuit joins Formula E calendar

## FORMULA E

Formula E has added another permanent track to its schedule with a pair of races at Shanghai International Circuit, host of the Chinese Grand Prix, as part of a 16-race calendar for the 2024 season.

The event will take place on 25-26 May, just over five years after FE last visited China with a race in the island city of Sanya. The series has not raced in the country since 2019 due to the pandemic.

FE has long raced on a derivative of the permanent circuit that plays host to the Mexican GP, while a round at the Portland IndyCar venue was introduced this year. With the Rome street track regarded as too quick for the new Gen3 cars, nearby Vallelunga as well as Misano are in contention to stage



FE looks nice beneath the Portland trees

the Italian double-header on 13-14 April.

“The combination of street circuits, which is in Formula E’s DNA, and established race tracks will allow drivers to push the capabilities of the Gen3 car harder and further after a first season that beat all expectations,” said series

chief Alberto Longo.

The calendar, approved at last week’s World Motor Sport Council, begins in Mexico City on 13 January. This will be followed by the Diriyah double-header in Saudi Arabia (26-27 January) before a return to Hyderabad in India (10 February). Sao

Paulo hosts its second FE event on 16 March before the championship visits Japan for the first time in Tokyo on 30 March. After Italy, it’s off to Monaco (27 April) and a Berlin double-header (11-12 May), followed by the two races in China.

Portland is next up on 29 June before the season again ends in London (20-21 July), with Cape Town and Jakarta the 2023 venues missing from the schedule.

● China’s FE team has concluded its collaboration with NIO and been renamed Electric Racing Technologies. The Silverstone-based squad has existed in various guises since the series’ formation. In its former guise as NEXTEV, NIO bought into the team that started out as Team China Racing, and ran Nelson Piquet Jr to the 2014-15 title.

STEFAN MACKLEY





**FORMULA 1** FIA Formula 3 podium finisher Luke Browning had his first taste of F1 machinery on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit on Tuesday as his prize for winning the 2022 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award. The 21-year-old Williams junior drove the Aston Martin AMR21 on the drying circuit, heading out first on wet-weather tyres before swapping to a hard-compound Pirelli slick. "It's a lot quicker through the low speed than I expected," he said after his installation lap. "I'm really looking forward to unleashing it through Copse once it dries up a little bit – that's going to be the really exciting part, so that's what I'm looking forward to. Everything is incredible – the ride, the power steering – and I'm really looking forward to smashing the brakes later on."

Photograph by Sutton/Motorsport Images

## Mercedes protege Antonelli leaps straight into F2 with Prema

### FORMULA 2

Exciting Mercedes Formula 1 protege Andrea Kimi Antonelli will leap directly from winning the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine into Formula 2 with Prema Racing next year.

The 17-year-old Italian this month won the FRECA title as a rookie with two races to spare, adding to his FR Middle East crown from the winter, and last year claimed 26 race victories in his first full season of car racing to win the Italian and German Formula 4 titles plus the Motorsport Games Gold Medal. This season he was even a race winner on a one-off Italian GT outing.

"It will be a huge jump," acknowledged Antonelli. "I'm aware that it will be very

challenging because the level is really high there. It will be a new car, for me and the others as well, but it's still going to be tough.

"I don't want to set expectations – I will try to have fun as always, and do a good job. I'm delighted to continue with Prema as I started my single-seater career with them and they are my second family. I love working with them."

The jump to F2 from FRegional level is not unprecedented: 2020 champion Gianluca Petecof did the same in 2021 and is now plying his trade in Brazilian Stock Cars, something we assume won't happen to Antonelli... His team-mate is tipped to be Ferrari protege Ollie Bearman – the highly rated Briton has won four races with Prema in his rookie F2 season.



ROZENDAL/DUTCHPHOTOAGENCY

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## WEC adopts Le Mans hyperpole qualifying system for 2024...

### WEC

The hyperpole qualifying format pioneered at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2020 will be introduced into the rest of the World Endurance Championship from next year. That means a two-round, knockout style format to set the grid in each of the championship's two classes.

At Le Mans, the fastest six cars during a one-hour qualifying period on Wednesday go through to the half-hour Hyperpole session on Thursday evening. The new system signed off by the FIA World Motor Sport Council for the other seven rounds last week allocates 12 minutes per class for the first round, from which the fastest 10 cars will go through to the Hyperpole sessions.

The first 10 places on the grid in Hypercar and the new LMGT3 class, the only two categories in the WEC from next year on the disappearance of LMP2, will be allocated on the basis of times set in the final session. The rest of the grid will be set during the opening periods.

The system replaces the three 15-minute mini-sessions, one for each class, in place this year, and was described by the FIA as an

"enhanced qualifying format".

What hasn't been revealed so far is whether qualifying at Le Mans will be tweaked, so that 10 rather than six cars in each class go through to Hyperpole. The 24 Hours has its own sporting regulations, which aren't scheduled to be published for next year until November.

The WMSC also ratified the new LMGT3 rules. WEC-specific adaptations of the FIA GT3 regulations will include the introduction of illuminated number panels and leader lights, which indicate whether the car is running in the top three in class. The cars will also be fitted with torque sensors on each driveshaft.

FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem made mention at the WMSC of Aston Martin's confirmation earlier this month of plans to race a Valkyrie developed to the Le Mans Hypercar rules in the WEC.

"I also welcome the recent announcement of Aston Martin and their commitment to enter the Hypercar class of the WEC from 2025," he said. "This class is going from strength to strength with an impressive line-up of some of the world's biggest manufacturers."

GARY WATKINS

## ...while BTCC apes IndyCar

### BTCC

British Touring Car Championship ringmaster Alan Gow is known to be partial to a spot of IndyCar action, and his teams have gone along with a plan to implement a new qualifying system for 2024 entirely based on the US series' format used for road and street courses.

From now on, the field will be split into two groups, based on alternate positions from the second free practice session, for the first phase. The top six from each will graduate to the next round, with the top half-dozen from this 12 fighting it out for pole among the 'Quick Six'. Each session will last for 10 minutes.

"I've long admired the way IndyCar use this system – it's ideal for the BTCC and in keeping with our policy of providing short, sharp and intense action," proclaimed Gow. "The pressure will certainly be on the teams and drivers, more than ever before, to quickly 'nail' their qualifying laps in each segment."

ITV pundit Tim Harvey gave it the thumbs up. "I'm really excited," said the 1992 BTCC champion. "I love qualifying anyway. When you see an Ash Sutton pole lap, or a Colin Turkington quick lap, or a Tom Ingram on-the-limit lap, they're a joy to watch. This format I think is great because it gives us four sessions of people going for it. Obviously there'll be some tyre management and strategy involved, but I really like it."

Harvey also pinpointed that the system will provide focus on more competitors. "In a normal session you don't have a chance to give everybody exposure," he added. "We're just looking for who's on a quick lap, see the purple sectors and give feedback to the directors. Trying to pick up on cars at Brands Indy or Knockhill is bloody difficult! But with this there'll be attention on lots of different cars and it will be fantastic on the live coverage."

MARCUS SIMMONS







**INDY NXT** Britons Louis Foster and Jamie Chadwick will both remain with the renamed Andretti Global team for a second season of Indy NXT in 2024. Foster took two wins on his way to fourth in this year's points, while Chadwick claimed 12th position. Both took part in last week's official test at Indianapolis (Chadwick pictured). Among the other IndyCar support series in action at the test, Adam Fitzgerald sampled a USF Pro 2000 car with TJ Speed Motorsports. The Irishman has recovered from the injuries he sustained in the tragic Formula Regional European crash at Spa in July that claimed the life of Dilano van 't Hoff. **Photograph by Jones/PEC**

## Blomqvist in enduro Cadillac

**IMSA**

Two-time Daytona 24 Hours winner Tom Blomqvist will retain a foot in sportscar racing when he moves full-time into IndyCar next year with Meyer Shank Racing. The Brit will race for the 2023 title-winning Action Express Racing Cadillac squad in four of the IMSA SportsCar Championship enduros.

Blomqvist will line up alongside Pipo Derani and Jack Aitken at Daytona, Sebring, Indianapolis and Petit Le Mans aboard the AXR Caddy V-Series.R. His announcement follows that of the Shank team he joined ahead of the 2022 season losing its deal with Acura to race in IMSA next year. He will not be able to race at June's six-hour Watkins Glen round, where line-ups often comprise three drivers, after a date change means it now conflicts with the Laguna Seca IndyCar event.



"It is an honour to be joining Action Express Racing and Cadillac for the endurance rounds of the 2024 campaign," said Blomqvist, who took his first steps in IndyCar with Shank this year as a stand-in for Simon Pagenaud. "It is a series I love being a part of, and I'm delighted to be returning once again. To be able to come back to the series and to try to defend my title at Daytona is a huge motivation."

AXR boss Gary Nelson explained that Blomqvist's successes in IMSA made him a "natural fit" for the team.

**GARY WATKINS**

## GT3 giant ASP for WEC Lexus duo

**WEC**

Lexus is set to race in the new LMGTC3 class of the World Endurance Championship next year with the French Auto Sport Promotion team. It has announced that it will be filing entries for what is likely to be an oversubscribed category, and began its test programme with the Toyota marque's RC F GT3 at the Algarve Circuit this week.

ASP, run by 13-time Le Mans 24 Hours participant Jerome Polanc and a multiple title winner in the GT World Challenge Europe with Mercedes, is taking up the entries earmarked for Lexus. It is expanding an existing partnership with Toyota that already encompasses the GR Supra GT4, one expected to continue when the Japanese manufacturer's new contender based on the GR GT3 Concept enters competition in 2025.

Present at the test was Jose Maria Lopez, who looks set to race for the team in WEC next year after losing his Hypercar seat to Nyck de Vries. The Argentinian is understood to have been given a continuing role with Toyota covering the WEC and development of the GR GT3. Jack Hawksworth, who races for Lexus in the IMSA SportsCar Championship, was also part of the squad at the test.

**GARY WATKINS**



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## F2 ace Verschoor bids for second Macau victory...

### MACAU GRAND PRIX

Richard Verschoor is stepping back from Formula 2 in an attempt to become the fifth driver to become a two-time winner of the Macau Grand Prix in its Formula 3 era.

The 22-year-old Dutchman tops the 27-car entry list for next month's race, four years on from F3's last appearance before travel restrictions from the COVID crisis scuppered any possibility of assembling an international field. Verschoor won that event in 2019 with MP Motorsport on his and the team's Macau debut (above).

Verschoor has been a race winner in F2 this year with Van Amersfoort Racing, but has returned to Trident – with which he took an F2 victory in 2022 – for Macau.

"Many people advised me not to do it, but I like a challenge," he said. "Even before I won the race in 2019, I loved the atmosphere and the track and everything about it. I said I'd never get the same experience or feeling of driving that I got in Macau anywhere else."

Verschoor is one of four F2 racers stepping down for Macau: Roman Stanek joins him at Trident; Zane Maloney is the only nominated driver so far at Rodin Carlin; and Isack Hadjar is with Hitech.

There is no entry for Trident's 2023 FIA F3 champion and newly appointed McLaren F1 protege Gabriel Bortoletto, but the team is fielding 16-year-old American Ugo Ugohukwu, who clinched the Euro 4 Formula 4 title at Barcelona last weekend.

F3 runner-up Zak O'Sullivan does not

appear either, but his 2023 team Prema Racing has a full line-up of category aces, with Paul Aron (third in the championship) joined by Dino Beganovic and Gabriele Mini, the last-named transferring from Hitech. Franco Colapinto, fourth in the points, leads the attack of MP.

Other F3 frontrunners from this season include Campos Racing pair Pepe Marti and Oliver Goethe, Hitech's Williams F1 junior Luke Browning, and Christian Mansell and Gregoire Saucy with ART Grand Prix.

In the Formula 4 race, which takes place the preceding weekend on 11-12 November, Prema has entered Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award finalist Arvid Lindblad and fellow Brit Freddie Slater among its quartet.

**MARCUS SIMMONS**

## Female series to flyaway street tracks

### F1 ACADEMY

The all-female F1 Academy series will race on some of Formula 1's most daunting tracks next season, its first with a 100% grand prix support schedule. After kicking off in March in Jeddah, the series will appear at the Miami, Spanish, Dutch, Singapore and Qatar GPs before finishing in Abu Dhabi.

But if that sounds like a recipe for safety cars for any single-seater series, Rodin Carlin chief

Stephanie Carlin pointed out that the svelte field of 15 cars should mitigate this, and "the championship is working hard to make sure the girls have tested on as many of these tracks as possible. They'll end up testing on five of the seven, which is really impressive."

Carlin saw Jessica Edgar claim her team's maiden F1A win in the 2023 finale last weekend at the US GP (right), its first as an F1 support. "This weekend goes to prove what a boost it is

for drivers and sponsors to be on the F1 package," added Carlin. "The level of opportunity and exposure it presents is a really positive thing and there are some incredible tracks on the calendar."

McLaren last week promoted F1A race winner Bianca Bustamante to its driver development programme. The Philippines racer's Prema teammate Marta Garcia clinched the inaugural F1A title at Austin.

**MARCUS SIMMONS**







## ...as GT World Cup is crammed with all of its former winners

### FIA GT WORLD CUP

Every former winner of the FIA GT World Cup will be on the grid for the resumption of the event on the streets of Macau next month. Maro Engel, Laurens Vanthoor, Edoardo Mortara, Augusto Farfus and Raffaele Marciello are among the 21-car entry in factory-backed GT3 machinery for its first edition since 2019.

Both Marciello and Engel will race in Macau on 18-19 November as defending champions: the Italian won the last time the World Cup took place in 2019 before it was a casualty of the COVID pandemic and travel restrictions into the Chinese territory; the German, the inaugural winner of the title in 2015, took victory in the non-FIA GT race at Macau last year. Marciello drives for the Landgraf Mercedes team with which he took the ADAC GT Masters crown in 2022, while Engel returns to Craft-Bamboo one year on from what was his third victory on the Guia circuit.

BMW driver Farfus, who took World Cup honours in 2018 with Schnitzer, will race an M4 GT3 for Rowe Racing. The winner with Audi in 2016, Vanthoor will drive a Porsche 911 GT3-R for Toro Racing.

Marciello and Engel are joined by Jules Gounon and Daniel Juncadella, winner of the Formula 3 Grand Prix at Macau in 2011, in the Mercedes roster. They will race for the Chinese Climax Racing team and Craft-Bamboo respectively.

Sheldon van der Linde completes the BMW line-up with the WRT squad, while the solo Ferrari 296 GT3 in the field is entered by Harmony Racing for factory driver Daniel Serra.

Kevin Estre and newly crowned DTM champion Thomas Preining are part of Porsche's line-up with HubAuto, while Matteo Cairoli races a 911 GT3-R for Absolute Racing. The Chinese team has also entered a pair of Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo 2s for Macau star Mortara, winner of the F3 race twice and the GT event three times, and Christopher Haase.

Stefan Wendt, head of customer racing at Mercedes-AMG, outlined the importance of the race. "We have something to lose and we are going there to win it again," he said. "That is clearly the target, knowing that the competition will be very tough. They will also try to beat us and that is why we will send our best drivers."

**GARY WATKINS**

### HYPERCAR TESTERS NAMED

Ferrari Formula 1 tester Robert Shwartzman will drive the Italian manufacturer's 499P Le Mans Hypercar at the World Endurance Championship rookie test in Bahrain the day after next month's 2023 season finale. The 24-year-old, who has been racing a factory AF Corse Ferrari 296 GT3 in the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup this year, will be joined in one of the cars by Lilou Wadoux, who is also on the marque's books. Brits Ben Barnicoat and Jack Hawksworth will get outings in the Toyota GR010 HYBRID LMH courtesy of their contracts with sister marque Lexus in the IMSA SportsCar Championship, in which they won the GTD Pro class title this season.

### BRISCOE TO RACE VANWALL

Ryan Briscoe will race the Vanwall-Gibson Vandervell 680 Le Mans Hypercar at the 2023 World Endurance Championship finale in Bahrain next month. The Australian has been brought in alongside Esteban Guerrieri and Tristan Vautier in place of Joao Paulo de Oliveira, who will be racing the same weekend in the Super GT finale at Motegi.

### HANLEY'S UNITED SWITCH

IMSA SportsCar Championship LMP2 regular Ben Hanley will switch to United Autosports for next year's IMSA SportsCar Championship. The Briton, a two-time class winner this year with Algarve Pro, will contest the full season with Ben Keating at the wheel of one of two United ORECA-Gibson 07s, with Alex Quinn joining them for the five enduro rounds. Hanley was a stand-in at United at three WEC rounds this year.

### MORTARA'S LAMBO LINK

Edoardo Mortara and Matteo Cairoli could fill the remaining seats at the Iron Lynx Lamborghini squad in the WEC next year. It is known that they tested the Lambo SC63 this month, though there has been no official comment so far. One of the vacancies has been created by Raffaele Marciello, who had signed for the Lambo, being poached by BMW.

### FITTIPALDI'S INDYCAR SEAT

Haas F1 reserve Pietro Fittipaldi has secured a full-time IndyCar seat for 2024 with Rahal Letterman Nisan Racing. The Brazilian made nine starts in the series across 2018 and 2021, and takes the #30 seat occupied this year by Jack Harvey, Conor Daly and rookie Juri Vips.



Century Motorsport would like to congratulate all their drivers and crew on an exceptional 2023 season.

*Thank you for your support!*



*Our achievements from the weekend are as follows:*



GT3 Overall champions  
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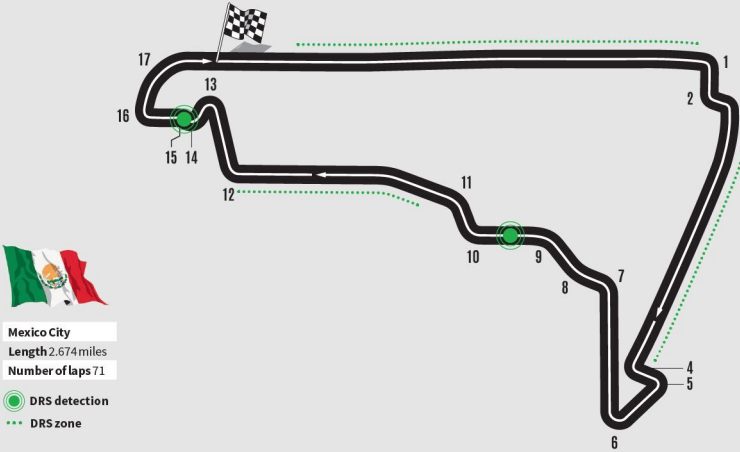
GT4 Team Champions  
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Ginetta GTA P2



Porsche Carrera Cup Team Champions 2023  
Porsche Carrera Cup Drivers P2 and P3



## F1 MEXICAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Mexico City  
Length 2.674 miles  
Number of laps 71

● DRS detection  
... DRS zone

## UK START TIMES

Friday 27 October

FP1 1930 FP2 2300

Saturday 28 October

FP3 1830

QUALIFYING 2200

Sunday 29 October

RACE 2000

**CATCH THE RACE LIVE**

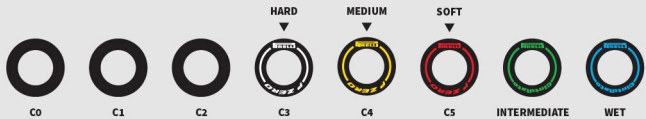
SKY SPORTS F1

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

**TV Highlights**

CHANNEL 4 0100 (Monday)

## TYRE ALLOCATION



## CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

## Drivers

1	Verstappen	466
2	Perez	240
3	Hamilton	201
4	Alonso	183
5	Sainz	171

## Constructors

1	Red Bull	706
2	Mercedes	344
3	Ferrari	322
4	McLaren	242
5	Aston Martin	236

Can Perez do something decent at home?



## MEXICO CITY STATS

## Previous winners

2022	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2021	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2017	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
1992	Nigel Mansell	Williams
1991	Riccardo Patrese	Williams
1990	Alain Prost	Ferrari

## 2022 POLE POSITION

Max Verstappen  
1m17.775s

## POLE LAP RECORD

Daniel Ricciardo  
1m14.759s (2018)

## RACE LAP RECORD

Valtteri Bottas  
1m17.774s (2021)



Graham Hill's 1968 win gave him his second title

## Laps led

Max Verstappen	264
Jim Clark	191
Ayrton Senna	133
Nigel Mansell	126
Lewis Hamilton	95
Alain Prost	76
Jacky Ickx	68
Nico Rosberg	68
Richie Ginther	66
J Surtees & G Hill	60

# RORY SMITH

## 2023 Champion



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3rd Formula Ford Festival title in 4 years using the Medina Sport Formula Ford chassis.

We would like to send huge congratulations to Rory Smith on his second Festival win, his first one secured in 2020. Rory missed testing so his first taste of action was in qualifying which makes it all the more special, eventually winning his semi-final and starting P1 for the grand final.

Also massive congratulations to 2021 Festival winner Jamie Sharp for his dominance all weekend to claim 2nd place, resulting in a 1-2 for the team.

The Medina Sport chassis again proving its race winning capabilities in both wet and dry conditions, leading the most laps overall and of course winning the grand final.



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Photo credit to Jakob Ebrey







# Norris needs to get tougher

*The McLaren star seems to have everything he requires to fight for a title, except perhaps one...*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

**I**t was absorbing to watch Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton sit together before the post-race press conference following the Red Bull star's victory in the United States Grand Prix last Sunday. Lando Norris followed them in much later due to his TV interviews dragging on. There was initially an icy silence. Hamilton broke it eventually, asking about Verstappen's post-Austin travel plans. The reply was polite enough, pleasant even, from a delighted winner. But there was a distinct lack of eye contact on either side.

Finally, Norris arrived. And as press conference host Tom Clarkson conducted last-minute discussions with F1 TV directors, Verstappen and Norris talked about the McLaren man's travel-sticker livery for last weekend's event. This extended to his race boots. Hamilton returned to his iPhone.

The different narrative of the two relationships has long been established. It's going to take lots of time for the bruises of the 2021 title fight to heal, if they ever do. Meanwhile, Verstappen has previously discussed being good friends with Norris off-track, even calling him his "best friend" of the racing community. It's hard to imagine many other drivers being able to help personally deliver a broken Hungarian GP trophy to Verstappen's Monaco apartment.

Verstappen and Norris have discussed the idea of one day being F1 team-mates. And what a line-up that would be – at a stroke forming a super-team with possibly the best combined

Therefore, it must make an even bigger step next year if it's to challenge Red Bull for race wins.

That will be quite a task. Hamilton, after pushing hard to follow Verstappen early in last weekend's dull sprint race and watched how his rival's car performed, insisted afterwards that "everyone behind these guys has a lot of work to do". Indeed, the RB19's pace was still mighty on a weekend where its ride height had to be raised to traverse many bumps at Austin, with bigger rear wings to make up for the loss of underfloor downforce usually generated from its typical ride settings.

But Norris is clearly encouraged by his team's work on car development this year. The rather cutting examples of him talking down McLaren's chances – such as "we're slow, we have been all year" at the Spanish GP – are gone. But Norris is still Norris, refreshingly honest. He's adamant that McLaren has missed its "best chance" to win a GP in 2023, in Qatar. F1's history is on the side of Norris's "positive pessimism". Realistically, McLaren needs another off-season to make further changes to finally recover into regular win-challenging mode. But, if that does come in 2024, Norris is going to have to operate differently.

At Austin, just as at Silverstone eight rounds ago, his defences from an early lead once Verstappen raced up behind and made a move were on the tame side. They were firmly pragmatic – Norris aware in both instances that a podium was still so valuable to rebuilding McLaren. But wins are even more so, and the chances of finally taking one after his Monza and Sochi 2021 near-misses just go up if Verstappen has to work harder to get past.

Norris can race very hard. His defence against Hamilton was inch-perfect – the pair lunged to the inside of Turn 1 in unison, before the Mercedes backed out, headed wide and surged ahead on the exit anyway. But that was a far cry from Norris not making any move to cover against Verstappen at Turn 12, the Circuit of The Americas' other main passing spot, where Charles Leclerc had gamely tried to thwart Verstappen's advances much earlier.

Hamilton likely wasn't going to be denied at a track he performs at so well, and his tyre offset advantage was a big factor in how easy it ended up to blast past Norris. But at Silverstone, which suited the MCL60 so well with its high-speed turns, a fierce battle with Verstappen might have secured an even better result for the young home hero. The world champion has a track record of clashes – mainly with Hamilton – when he's given as good as he gets. That's what made 2021 so compelling, because of what each driver was willing to do to win. So, if these racing situations repeat in 2024, Norris must put glory above friendship if he's to have the best chance of ever prevailing. *✉*

## "At Silverstone, a fierce battle with Verstappen might have secured an even better result"

driving talent level of any squad. If that ever does happen, it won't be for a while. And, until that hypothetical point is reached, if it ever is, Norris's best hope of finally breaking his F1 win duck will be with McLaren.

In taking a third second place in four races, in the aftermath of Hamilton's disqualification at Austin, Norris is now one short of equalling Nick Heidfeld's record of most F1 podium visits without winning. Thanks to McLaren's impressive efforts to rework the MCL60 (into a race winner with Oscar Piastri, albeit in a sprint event), the team can lean on the pedigree of making the best gains of any squad behind Red Bull so far in 2023. No more "magic" updates that "add lap time or add the improvement from a tyre degradation point of view that will change things around significantly", per team boss Andrea Stella, are coming in 2023.



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# This garagiste will be missed

*Glickenhaus Racing's three-season contribution to the World Endurance Championship is something to celebrate. It's part of a proud motorsport tradition*

GARY WATKINS

**G**lickenhaus driver Olivier Pla took me to task for describing his employer as a garagiste a while back. It seems it's a pejorative term for the French. Not so for we Brits. Quite the contrary: it's celebratory. And that's why we should rejoice in the successes of the Glickenhaus Racing squad now that it has told us that it is bowing out of the World Endurance Championship.

I hope that in future times we'll talk about the American entrant in the same breath as other plucky privateers that built and ran their own machinery to take on the challenge of the Le Mans 24 Hours. I'm referring to the likes of Alain De Cadenet's tiny operation based in a London mews garage and Pescarolo Sport; like Glickenhaus, teams good enough to get on the podium with chassis – to a greater or lesser extent – of their own construction. That last point is why I think team founder Jim Glickenhaus isn't quite correct to describe his operation as a privateer. He's only half right.

The words privateer and garagiste are interchangeable for some. But to me the distinction between a privateer and a garagiste lies in who builds the car. Kremer was the first privateer home at Le Mans in 1983 with an off-the-shelf Porsche 956. Glickenhaus matched that feat in 2022 as a garagiste because he built his own Le Mans Hypercar, the 007.

Glickenhaus is part of a proud sportscar racing tradition that includes the DeCads of the 1970s and early 1980s and then the cars built and run by Le Mans legend Henri Pescarolo's team in the 2000s and into the 2010s. The race has never just been about big manufacturers. I hope it never will.

For every garagiste success story at Le Mans there are probably three or four of indifference: cars that didn't fulfil their potential or simply weren't fit for purpose. But the three-season story of Glickenhaus in the WEC truly was a success.

Even if the top class was in rebuild with new regulations when Glickenhaus collected its biggest accolades, its achievements shouldn't be played down. Jim and his team, everyone at Podium Advanced Technologies and Joest Racing, can walk away with their heads held high. No one should scoff at a Le Mans podium however many cars were on the grid in class. We don't look down at those garnered by De Cadenet and Pescarolo against limited factory opposition.

Glickenhaus arguably had it easier than De Cadenet and Pescarolo thanks to rules designed to slash the costs of entry into the highest echelons of sportscar racing. But that is to overlook what it achieved this year at Le Mans. Big Jim G probably sums it up best when he says, "we beat the likes of Porsche and Peugeot – it really doesn't get any better than that". The team might have got on the podium when the manufacturers weren't out in force, but

it still finished in the top six when they were. And its sixth and seventh-place finishes this year came ahead of two marques with 22 Le Mans wins between them.

You could contend that with the level of manufacturer participation in Hypercar in the WEC the series doesn't need the likes of Glickenhaus and the ByKolles-run Vanwall team. But I reckon it does, and for two reasons. The first I have already mentioned: the garagistes have pretty much always been an

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**"Le Mans has never just been about big manufacturers. I hope it never will"**

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integral part of sportscar racing in general and Le Mans in particular. The other is that while the WEC doesn't necessarily need them right now, it one day undoubtedly will. Just like it did when the Hypercar division replaced LMP1 for 2021.

Without Glickenhaus would the class even have got off the ground? A pair of Toyotas against an old ORECA P1 with an Alpine badge nailed to the front wouldn't have been much of a launchpad for the glorious era we're now entering. So when the history books are written, we need to remember that Glickenhaus was there from the start. The rules that encouraged him to sign up, the performance windows and strict limits on development, perhaps should have kept Glickenhaus in the game longer. But it was always going to be a big ask for the little guy to stay competitive.

Besides, Jim and his company have other fish to fry. He's becoming a bona fide manufacturer building his 004 sportscar that we've seen in its 'C' racing spec at the Nurburgring 24 Hours and his off-road Boot under the Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus banner. Perhaps in the future, if Glickenhaus comes back, we won't regard him as a garagiste. But he was just that during his three-season WEC adventure with the 007.

The term entered the motorsport vernacular 60-plus years ago when Enzo Ferrari used the word garagistas to describe the British teams increasingly becoming a thorn in the his side in Formula 1, the likes of Cooper and Lotus. It was intended as a disparaging remark, make no mistake.

Yet it was adopted as a kind of badge of honour by the British motorsport industry, more usually in its French rather than Italian form. That explains my use of the word garagiste to describe Glickenhaus Racing and why I couldn't make any apology to that man Oli. ✎

# RACE CENTRE



FORMULA 1

## MAX MAKES IT 50 AS MERCEDES MISSES ITS MARK

*Verstappen racked up a half-century of grand prix wins, but this was one of the Red Bull star's more challenging days of 2023*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**  
IMAGES





Verstappen's  
brake issues, and  
their impact on  
tyre management,  
meant win was  
no cakewalk



**A**fter a lifeless first sprint race at Austin, the 2023 United States Grand Prix gave the weekend a cracking ending even though the result of both was the same: a Max Verstappen victory. His GP triumph at the Circuit of The Americas was his 50th in Formula 1. But had things worked out only slightly differently, Verstappen's completion of the half-century could well have extended to the upcoming Mexican GP. Indeed, it could well have

been Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton standing atop an F1 podium for the first time since the Saudi Arabian GP in December 2021.

Things went wrong for Hamilton right at the beginning, when front-row starters Charles Leclerc and Lando Norris had very different getaways. Norris was quickly alongside the Ferrari and at Turn 1 the McLaren was already ahead through the apex, before shooting clear in the lead. Behind, Hamilton went from unsuccessfully fending off Carlos Sainz's run behind Norris to the inside of the uphill hairpin, to going wide and edging Verstappen to the track limit on the exit.

At the end of lap one of 56, Norris led Leclerc by 1.8 seconds, with Sainz 0.8s further back and Hamilton and Verstappen trailing, the world champion having powered past George Russell off the line. Norris felt "my start was very good" and that "to get into the lead, that was a podium maker". He added: "I think without that it would have made my race a lot tougher."

That was because now the McLaren driver's task was clear: to push on as quickly as possible, come what may, with Verstappen recovering up the order after his Friday qualifying track limits slip and subsequent sixth-place starting spot. "We thought firstly that we wanted to go for the victory," McLaren team principal Andrea Stella would later explain. "The only way to do that was to try to go as fast as possible and let's see what the tyres do and if the tyres are consistent or not. There was no point in just taking care of tyres and then just being slow from a lap time point of view to achieve a certain strategy."

What this added up to was Norris pulling 3.2s on Leclerc in the five laps when it was the Ferrari driver chasing him in second. In that time, Hamilton had taken until lap four to repass Sainz with an uncontested DRS charge to Turn 12, with Verstappen doing likewise to the Spaniard from much further back at the same spot one tour later. On lap six, Hamilton took the DRS-powered outside line around Leclerc at Turn 12 and then faced the same 3.2s gap to Norris.

This initially held north of 3s before coming steadily down to 1.8s by the 17th tour, during which time Verstappen had taken rather longer to pass Leclerc, which he did eventually with an inside dive at Turn 12 that the Ferrari driver fought late. That defence had Leclerc off in the Turn 12 run-off, and he continued the fight until Turn 15 before backing out. Race control looked at the incident but decided it to be unworthy of a proper investigation.

"I tried to be patient [in] the first stint," Verstappen explained. "But,



at the same time, following for so long did hurt my tyres a little bit."

This explains why in the four laps after he'd reached the podium places, the Dutchman had first lost 0.4s to Norris's overall lead before shrinking it back to 6.6s, and the immediate gap he faced to Hamilton had grown by 0.5s to 4.6s.

Then, on lap 16, Red Bull made the first call of its aggressive tyre strategy, bringing Verstappen in to take a second set of new mediums. This cemented his plan to complete a two-stopper. "All our simulations were telling us that the two-stop was a faster race," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner.

McLaren's minimal management approach clearly also set it on a two-stopper, and so it was no surprise to see the early leader head to the pits the lap after Verstappen's first stop – the undercut's power here was clear, and potentially worth 2s. It was also no surprise to see McLaren replace Norris's starting medium tyres with the hards at the first opportunity, given it had committed to banking these in practice after being unsure back then "whether the medium compound grained or doesn't grain [in the hot conditions last weekend]", said Stella. "It is not an easy science to master so we wanted to opt for what was a safer choice knowing that our car normally works well on the harder compound," he added.

But what was something of a surprise was that Mercedes didn't immediately bring Hamilton in too to cover Verstappen. The



Easy DRS move for Hamilton to repass Sainz; Verstappen followed a lap later





Norris stole the lead from Leclerc, after which McLaren's game plan was to go hell for leather

## "I TRIED TO BE PATIENT. BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, FOLLOWING FOR SO LONG DID HURT MY TYRES A LITTLE BIT"

Black Arrows squad instead had something else in mind: a one-stopper. "When Max pitted, we knew that we only needed to make three more laps to make a one-stop stick," explained Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff.

Hamilton was finally brought in on lap 20, but Horner and Red Bull saw this as Mercedes' "indecision", while Mercedes told its charge that he'd banked a tyre offset. When Hamilton rejoined, he faced a 6.5s gap to Verstappen, a swing he couldn't believe at the time in the race or afterwards. "When Max came into the pits, he wasn't even close to me," he said in the post-race press conference. "It must have been 10 seconds on me."

In the next phase of the race, during which Hamilton faced a 10s deficit to leader Norris, the focus switched to Verstappen's quest to recover to the front. In the nine laps after Norris's opening stop, Verstappen erased his lead with a 0.35s per lap average advantage, his gains in part coming from the pair now running different compounds. Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola reckoned that the medium tyres favoured by Verstappen for both stints so far ended up being "more manageable" and had more grip. This he put down to "the track evolution factor", which was boosted by last weekend being completely dry and the Austin track having the type of rough asphalt where cars "put down more rubber".

And so, after roaring up behind his friend (the pair spent the final minutes before the post-race press conference going over Norris's sticker-logo-covered race boots, Hamilton and Verstappen having had a somewhat icy chat about their pre-Mexico travel plans beforehand), Verstappen made his move on lap 28. It was at the same spot as his dive on Leclerc, but even later – and this time Norris didn't put up anywhere near the same level of fight. He came back alongside on the exit but abandoned the scrap just one corner later.

Stella felt that the decision to have Norris press on in the first stint had "worked very well" and even at one stage thought "it looked like >>

### QUALIFYING



Now that was a qualifying session worth watching. With Red Bull's usual advantage wiped out by having to raise the RB19's ride height to cope with the Austin bumps, and its rivals gaining from added mechanical grip afforded by the C4 soft tyres for one flier only, four teams suddenly had a pole shot.

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton led Q1, while Ferrari's Charles Leclerc topped Q2, with both opening segments featuring drivers missing out on progression due to track limits violations in the final corners, where the tyres cried enough on even rougher asphalt. Daniel Ricciardo and Nico Hulkenberg were the victims of their own falls.

In Q3, Leclerc's 1m34.829s had him in the prime spot by 0.056 seconds over Hamilton, with Verstappen third – 0.252s down and close to losing his opening effort to a track limits slide at Turn 20. McLaren's Lando Norris rather languished down in seventh, but only thanks to his MCL60 being fitted with used softs for his opening effort.

On the second runs, Leclerc led the way, with Norris, Verstappen and Hamilton further back. Leclerc would later reflect that his first flier felt "quite a bit better", but only because on his final effort his attitude was "a bit more, 'Let's go for it and see what happens'". What this translated to was a tighter line at the hideously bumpy Turn 1, and then sending his Ferrari floor-smackingly aggressively across the many kerbs of Austin's rapid, flowing, esses. It was where he made his main gains over his previous personal best. Not that this translated into any purple sectors, but a 1m34.723s was still an overall improvement.

Behind, Norris came to rue that "the car just turned a bit better than I was expecting" at the Turn 11 hairpin as he "ended up just clipping the kerb". That further boosted Leclerc's top-speed edge down the back straight. But Norris was also behind Leclerc through the esses and the multi-apex Turns 16-18 complex, where the Ferrari driver was mighty. Norris wound up 0.130s down, with Hamilton ultimately edged back behind his compatriot.

All of them should have been behind Verstappen, who produced a 1m34.718s to edge Leclerc by 0.005s. But the Dutchman lost this lap for going too wide through Turn 19 – a result of "a little mistake in Turn 1". That meant he had to stay on the brakes a touch longer with the nose under-rotating, which cost him speed and momentum back down the hill, and he was on a mission to recover ever after. A much better Turn 11 onto the back straight than Leclerc's got Verstappen back on terms and just about in front, but it was all undone a short while later, as he "just tried to really maximise the corner and misjudged it by a little bit". And that left him starting sixth.

**"Verstappen lost the lap for going too wide through Turn 19 – a result of 'a little mistake in Turn 1'"**

## SPRINT RACE

Tyre management meant Verstappen remained unchallenged up front



The most interesting aspect of the Austin sprint race was eventual winner Max Verstappen's ultra-aggressive chop on Charles Leclerc heading up the hill to the first turn. The pair were sharing the front row and launched in unison, but Leclerc gained ground in the second phase of the start and pulled his front axle level with Verstappen's left-rear, at which point the Dutchman veered left to cut off the Ferrari's line. Leclerc, who felt the move was "on the limit" but "would have done exactly the same", was sent across the pitlane exit to the edge of the grass.

At the Turn 1 hairpin, Leclerc was pinched, which allowed Lewis Hamilton – who started third and saw off Lando Norris under braking for the left-hander – to get a run. Hamilton did so coming from completely off the track, a move FIA officials quickly put under the

'lap one leniency' banner. Hamilton swept down the hill to the fast Turn 2 right, edging ahead, with Leclerc braving it on the outside there and at Turn 3, where he admitted defeat. By the end of the first lap of 19 he was 1.7 seconds adrift of Hamilton and never really saw him again.

At this stage, Verstappen's lead was 0.8s. Hamilton fell back to 1.2s

**"Leclerc felt the move was 'on the limit' but 'would have done exactly the same'"**

away on lap two, but then clawed it back to 0.8s, pushing "to stay in the DRS", said Verstappen. But that was as close as it got. Once the pair were into the considerable tyre management exercise of getting the medium Pirellis – the choice of most of the leaders – to the end, there was never going to be a

battle. The Austin bumps might have shorn Red Bull of some downforce, but it was still mighty in race trim. At 0.6s each lap from the fifth tour, when Hamilton lost DRS for good, Verstappen romped clear to win by 9.5s.

Carlos Sainz had been the only runner to try the softs in the sprint, which aided his rise from sixth to pass both McLarens on the first lap. He held station 3s adrift of Leclerc in the opening phase, then began to fall away and come under pressure from Norris and Sergio Perez, recovering from yet another poor qualifying. Sainz had lined up seventh following a sprint shootout in which 0.1s had covered the top four and there had been a different focus on track limits, with the white line at Turns 9, 12 and 19 being extended over Friday night.

Norris finally passed Sainz at the end of the long back straight on lap 10 – Perez got through a lap later –



Hamilton demoted Leclerc to third on the opening lap

and then the McLaren faced a 6.7s deficit to Leclerc. He smashed this at 0.7s per lap quicker, even going 0.12s faster than Hamilton's 1m40.181s second-half average, but some way off Verstappen's 1m39.506s. By the flag, Norris was just 0.9s behind Leclerc's third place.

The race's other notable points were Oscar Piastri dropping from starting fifth to 10th, the Australian struggling with overheating, rapidly degrading tyres and earning a black-and-white warning for track limits abuse. In his fall, he was passed off-track by George Russell – recovering from a grid penalty for impeding Leclerc in sprint Q1 – exiting Turn 15. Russell said his five-second penalty was "fair". It dropped him from seventh at the flag to behind Pierre Gasly, with a late flurry of Alex Albon personal bests not enough to cost Russell the final point.

Leclerc was pushed wide across the pitlane exit by Verstappen at the start





we could have enough pace to finally grasp the victory". But once Verstappen and the medium-tyre advantage erased that tantalising picture, Stella explained that Norris had "lost a little bit the tyre [operating window] so we pitted onto the second set of hards". This explains why Norris's second stint was comparatively short for the hards at 17 tours and, thanks to being the first of the leaders to pit for a second time, on lap 34, he would enjoy the biggest undercut.

"I was always in the vulnerable position, the one defending, and just clearly didn't have the pace at the end of any of the stints,"

## "I HAD TO DODGE TO THE RIGHT SIDE AND THEN CUT BACK. IT WAS PRETTY COOL. I ENJOYED IT"

Norris reflected later. "Tyre degradation was just not on par with [Verstappen and Hamilton]."

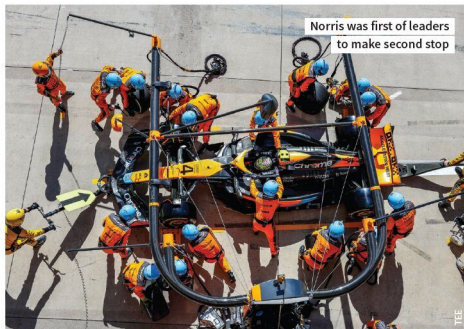
The second time around, it was Red Bull that quickly moved to cover Norris's second stop, with Verstappen enjoying a 3.1s lead that had risen after the Briton had initially been able to stick close to the rear of him. When Verstappen rejoined, now finally on the hard tyres, his advantage stood at 1.9s.

And so attention turned to Hamilton, who again stayed out longer than his rivals, although in pitting on the 38th tour, and thereby capping his stint at 18 laps (two under his opening run), no additional tyre offset was built. Mercedes had learned from Hamilton's drop in pace at the end of his opening stint. Critically, Hamilton was now back on the new mediums, and with Verstappen ahead discovering that "the hard tyre was not very good", as Norris and McLaren already knew. They lacked any new mediums with which to return for the final stint.

All of the leaders had to re-pass the one-stopping Leclerc in the closing phase. Verstappen and Norris both did this on the 39th tour – the leader at Turn 1 and the chaser at Turn 12. Hamilton then cruised up to the Ferrari and passed well before Turn 12 with DRS on lap 43. Now he faced a 3.7s gap to Norris and 6.2s to Verstappen. When he'd emerged on the mediums, those gaps had sat at 6.4s and 7.6s.

Hamilton reached Norris's DRS range on lap 48 and was all over the McLaren through sector three. At the start of the following tour, Hamilton mounted an attack at Turn 1. Norris firmly defended with a very late move to cover the inside run to the apex. "He came across at quite an angle," Hamilton said of his compatriot's driving here. "And so, then I had to dodge to the right side and then cut back. It was pretty cool. I enjoyed it." On the downhill exit from the hairpin, Hamilton outraged Norris and then set off after Verstappen, who now enjoyed a 5.2s advantage.

Hamilton cut into that at an average rate of 0.6s each time over the



following six tours to the start of the final lap, a period characterised by Verstappen getting audibly more agitated with a brake problem that had been hampering him since "just lap one". Its deterioration, and perhaps with Verstappen's extra stress at engineer Gianpiero Lambiase repeatedly talking to him during braking phases, meant the lead gap fell rather dramatically late on, just when it looked like Hamilton's initial work wasn't chipping back enough ground.

Starting the last tour, Hamilton was 1.8s back, but when Verstappen gained DRS from Zhou Guanyu as he came up to lap the Alfa Romeo, that helped ease his progress to the firework-packed finish line. His winning margin ended up 2.2s after Hamilton somewhat backed off to the flag. Norris came home 10.7s adrift.

When asked whether he might have won had he not been left out longer in the first stint, or even stopped earlier than Verstappen, Hamilton was sure. "Yes," he replied, before adding: "I mean, I do think we would have been in a position to fight with Max. We made our life a lot harder than it probably needed to be."

So, the question becomes: does that claim stack up? Was this a win lost by Mercedes on a day when Verstappen and Red Bull unexpectedly ended up under a lot of pressure? On a pure time loss assessment, the answer has to be yes, based on Hamilton getting Verstappen's lead to a minimum of 1.8s before the final lap and feeling that "maybe one more lap I would have been closer into Turn 11 and maybe been in a fighting position [at the end of the back straight armed with DRS], maybe two".

That affirmative comes from several areas. The first was Hamilton rueing "our starts this weekend". The time lost to repassing Sainz cost Hamilton 0.8s in GP race time to Verstappen.

Mercedes may also reflect how Russell "making a bad start" was costly in terms of the second W14 being able to act as a rolling road block on a day when "Mercedes was as quick as Red Bull", according to Stella, and Sergio Perez's latest poor qualifying again left him absent from the lead fight.

Hamilton also regretted "in one of the pitstops [his first], I might have been a bit long [on the pitbox marks], which then made it harder for the guys and then the stop wasn't that great overall".

Wolff reflected that his team "in terms of [pit] equipment and science around it, the way we are set up" can't compete with the quickest F1 services these days. Hamilton's stops were clocked at 3.6s and 3.4s – a combined loss to Verstappen of 1.2s, with the Dutchman having a (relatively) long 3.3s stop of his own at his second service, due to a >>



## TRACKSIDE VIEW

A roasting under Texas sun  
well worth it for vantage  
point at tricky Turn 1

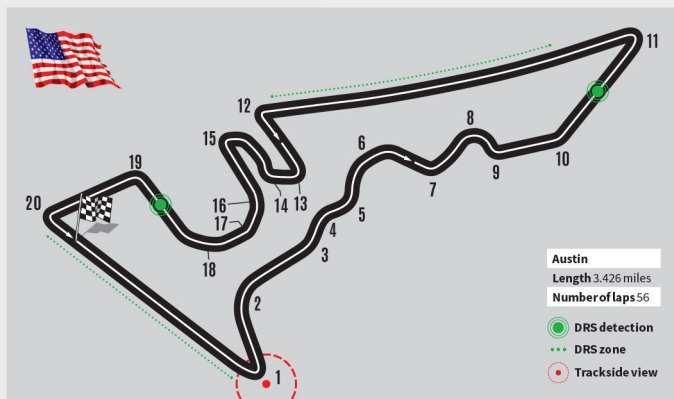


KALINAUCKAS

If you want to see quite how stiffly sprung the current generation of Formula 1 cars truly are, you could do little better than pay a visit up the towering hill at Austin's opening corner. Autosport, having marched up that climb in the fierce 35C heat sans water bottle in what can only be described as an utterly foolish move, has only just made it. But we're in for a treat for our efforts. Having climbed a photographers' tower looking across the gigantic run-off area behind Turn 1, and with the start/finish straight stretching down before us, downtown Austin basking in the background to our right, we can see how much the track's famed bumps unsettle these machines.

The Ferraris, in particular, are very stiffly sprung early on – the teams having to make set-up and ride height adjustments on the fly to traverse the bumps best while sacrificing as little underfloor downforce as possible. This work has an extra urgency this weekend thanks to it being F1's penultimate 2023 sprint event, and the first such compressed schedule at the Circuit of The Americas. Carlos Sainz and Charles Leclerc are locking up here regularly early on, their worst examples sending audible tyre torture across the run-off to our sunburnt ears.

The hairpin's challenge is tricky.



### “Ferrari lock-ups send audible tyre torture across the run-off to our sunburnt ears”

Thanks to bumps at the apex, the ideal racing line here means sweeping in from slightly wider than with other examples of this corner type, but the cars are just bouncing to a massive degree. The drivers want to stay wide and rotate the car late and rapidly on the way in, having hit the brakes staring at the sky, but as they cross the

bumps the steering goes light and unsettles things further.

Then it's about squeezing the power on to shoot back down the hill to Turn 2 to our right, where another, bigger sole bump is to be avoided over long stints and just fully tackled for a single-lap edge. Inevitably, the softer-riding Red Bulls are unruffled here, but the Alfa Romeos are whacking their floors at this point, orange sparks standing out even in this blazing sun.

Some drivers, such as Leclerc, try to take the Turn 1 challenge

differently to the rest, the Monegasque staying on a wider line than most as he sends his car around through the corner. It's risky – there are more bumps adrift of the racing line to bite the unwary. In the Red Bull camp, there's a split between the cars. Max Verstappen, using his preferred style of throwing a pointy car savagely through the rotation then holding the rear swing, is on the power earlier than Sergio Perez.

It's hot, it's brutally bumpy, it's Austin. It's excellent.

**ALEX KALINAUCKAS**



Hamilton got to celebrate with Verstappen and Norris before being disqualified...



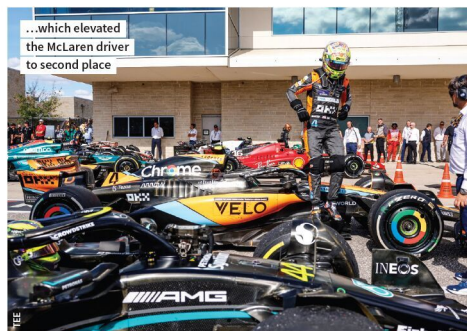
slow left-rear switch. Again, that time loss was critical to Mercedes' outside shot at victory.

Then there were the Turn 11 lock-ups during the race's middle third for both of the 2021 title rivals. Hamilton's cost him 2.7s to Verstappen, while the Red Bull driver actually gained 0.4s on the lap of his slip. Norris did this too shortly after Hamilton, with Stella later reflecting that "braking into Turn 11 and then traction out was the most problematic phase from a car performance point of view".

But what cost Mercedes most was its initial decision to try to see whether the one-stopper was ever really viable. When asked why he was certain that a different strategy would have led to a different result, Hamilton replied: "It's not necessarily that I'm certain. At the end of the day, I was 1.8s behind Lando at the beginning [before the McLaren's first stop], and there's a huge undercut."

"So in that moment, most likely we should have probably pitted and I would come out ahead. We would have been close, but potentially overtaken Lando in that scenario. It would have still been close between us all, because I think we were all similar in pace. I think we [also] just lost too much time in extending. I really dropped off a cliff in performance. And then when I came out [from the first stops], these guys were miles up the road."

That bears out: Hamilton's pace once in the lead for the first time dropped from the mid-1m42s bracket to the high-1m42s and then into the mid-to-high-1m43s. He also felt, having in any case ended up with a tyre life offset, "when their tyres are starting to drop [that was useful], but that didn't seem like it really made a big enough difference".



## "SO IN THAT MOMENT, MOST LIKELY WE SHOULD HAVE PROBABLY PITTED AND I WOULD COME OUT AHEAD"

Wolff explained that the one-stop experiment had come about because Mercedes "believed if we were on the same strategy – cover Max, be a few seconds ahead of him – that would not be enough to win the race".

Had Mercedes been able to get Hamilton closer to Verstappen, its victory chances would have been enhanced because the brake issue – which stemmed from Red Bull changing Verstappen's brake material in parc ferme, allowed by the rules and not uncommon, although it wasn't listed in the official FIA bulletin concerning such matters – left the world champion "not getting the same feeling from the brake pedal that he had previously", according to Horner.

That had a knock-on impact upon how Verstappen went about his tyre management – Horner said it "interfered". Plus, inconsistent braking on a bumpy surface only raised tyre temperatures even further. So, another Verstappen/Hamilton battle most likely went begging...

But everything would have been rendered academic anyway because, almost two hours after the chequered flag, the FIA announced that the rear plank areas on Hamilton's and Leclerc's cars were "not in compliance with Article 3.5.9" – that stipulates only 1mm can be worn away from "the peripheries of the designated holes" in the plank. It had been measured that they had worn more than this and so the pair were thrown out of the results. This promoted Norris to second and Sainz to third.

Mercedes trackside engineering director Andrew Shovlin said the issue on Hamilton's car came down to "[not] running at a race fuel load in FP1 [due to the compressed sprint weekend format], combined with a circuit as bumpy as this and the parts of the track where the drivers have to put the car during the GP, have contributed to the higher than expected wear levels".

A deflating end to a gripping contest. One that comes with yet another new piece of history for Verstappen. *✍*

**NEXT  
F1 REPORT**

Mexican Grand Prix  
2 November issue

## STROLL TURNS PITLANE START INTO POINTS

Lance Stroll rescued points for Aston Martin after the team opted for a pitlane start for the United States Grand Prix due to being dissatisfied with its car set-up.

The Silverstone squad broke parc ferme to tune new updates on Lance Stroll's AMR23 and roll Fernando Alonso back to the previous spec in efforts to get something out of the race.

Although both cars were at the back on the opening lap after leaving the pitlane last, the two drivers worked their way into the points with strong tyre management and a strategy to stop later in each stint to offer a tyre offset.

Alonso had got up to ninth and was closing on Pierre Gasly for eighth, but was forced to retire with floor damage. Stroll equally showed tenacity in his rise through the order that eventually yielded seventh after penalties for others, and was close to attacking Gasly at the end.

This came despite a *faux pas* on his reconnaissance laps, where Stroll missed the pitlane entry and made the usual stop before the grid with the other drivers, waiting to be wheeled into position. Instead, Aston Martin had to hoist his car onto skates and wheel him through the gap in the pitwall, getting Stroll back into the garage. The FIA noted that "although the established process was not followed, no breach of any regulation was evident".



## Ferrari's strategy blunder with Leclerc one-stop

Charles Leclerc's disqualification from the United States GP added to his unhappiness following an ill-advised one-stop strategy.

After starting from pole, he was asked to move aside for team-mate Carlos Sainz late on as Ferrari elected to diverge its run plans with the two drivers, and Leclerc's one-stop efforts could not prevent Sainz and Sergio Perez from moving past in the latter stages of the race. It proved to be the wrong strategy, and other teams who had committed to it made U-turns during the race.

The disqualification that Leclerc was slapped with after a barely conciliatory sixth-place finish will have smarted even more, but he had already revealed his displeasure at being lumped with a one-stop approach. "There was something wrong in our numbers today, because we were far off the ideal race strategy," was the assessment of the

Monegasque, who explained that Ferrari had felt that the one and two-stop plans were initially similar in their data.

With Leclerc on pole, it does raise the question of why Ferrari felt it needed to apply the riskier strategy to the driver higher up the grid. Team principal Fred Vasseur suggested that there was "hesitation" on both sides, and a failure from either to fully commit to the one-stop made the situation worse. "Probably the issue is that we didn't have a clear picture about this before the race, we were a bit hesitating, and he was a bit hesitating into the first stint, pushing or not pushing – and we made a mistake," said Vasseur.

"It was not very clear before the race. We had the two options. In terms of numbers, it was very, very close. I think where we made the mistake is that we anticipated that the field will be 50-50. And it was not at all."

# 3

Number of corners before the moment the US GP really ended for Oscar Piastri and Esteban Ocon. Their lap-one contact at Turn 2 would cause both to soon retire.





## Q &amp; A

**GEORGE RUSSELL  
MERCEDES DRIVER****How do you sum up your race?**

Story of the season really! Missed opportunities, on the back foot from the beginning, making a bad start. On the hard tyre we had to manage the fuel, we had to manage the engine a little bit, and I was about a second off the pace. Then we put the medium back on, and we were the quickest car on track. I closed on Max by about 10 seconds, and on Lewis by a couple of seconds. It was frustrating that we weren't on the podium.

**Any reason why Lewis had the upper hand this weekend?**

We had that last weekend, and it was one of my strongest weekends in Qatar. Austin's

always been a bit of a bogey track for me, I've always struggled a bit here. It's probably always been one of his strengths, this circuit, but I'm not too concerned because it feels like this is definitely a bit of an outlier with how bumpy it is.

**Are you encouraged by the upgrades?**

It probably exceeded my expectations this weekend, and it's definitely exciting heading into next year, with what I think we'll be capable of achieving.

**What do you think of your five-second penalty in the sprint after the Piastri pass?**

If there's gravel there, if someone pushes you wide, you're going to end up in

the gravel. Here, I was always intending to go around the outside, hoping that he would leave me a bit of space. If he didn't, he would just push me wide onto a bit of Tarmac.



You sort of worry about the consequences after. I don't enjoy racing like that and something does need to change.

**You've got to do that if FIA won't fix it?**

Yeah, at the end of the day, we're all racing to the same rules. If you're racing in Monaco, you can't go beyond the limit because you'll end up in the wall. When you race in Japan, you'll end up in the gravel. Here, your only consequence is running off onto a bit of Tarmac.

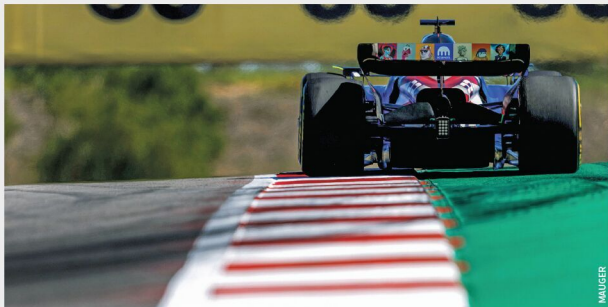
**TSUNODA SNATCHES FASTEST LAP IN BEST 2023 FINISH**

Yuki Tsunoda's last-gasp bid to take the fastest lap proved successful, and the Japanese was classified eighth for his best result of the season.

After losing a position to Zhou Guanyu at the start, Tsunoda returned the favour a lap later and then found his way into the points when Esteban Ocon and Oscar Piastri dropped out of the top 10. A thrilling battle with Kevin Magnussen after his pitstop showcased Tsunoda's inch-perfect car control in the final sector of switchback corners, and the AlphaTauri driver continued to prove his worth in his battle with the recovering Lance Stroll in the final part of the race. Stroll eventually proved too strong to contend with as Aston Martin's overnight set-up tweaks delivered extra performance, but the chasm-like gap to Alex Albon behind offered Tsunoda a chance to pit late for soft tyres.

"To be honest I got a heart attack when I had to box," said Tsunoda. "I thought it was something like an issue from the engine. After I heard we go for fastest lap, then I was relieved!"

Daniel Ricciardo made his return to the second AlphaTauri after recovering from his broken hand, but endured a difficult race with a forlorn one-stop attempt being hampered by debris stuck within his front suspension, prompting a late pitstop to make the finish.

**Alb'off' lucky to score as Sargeant gets promotion**

Alex Albon was lucky to chalk up points despite finishing 11th on the road, after a five-second track-limits penalty did not change his finishing position at the flag.

The Williams driver crossed the line 6.3 seconds clear of team-mate Logan Sargeant, which was enough margin to mitigate any effect of his penalty. Despite an FIA investigation for further track limits offences at Turn 6, it noted that "the evidence at hand is not sufficient to

accurately and consistently conclude that any breaches occurred".

After being on the fringes of the points throughout the race, but missing the final ingredients to make a breakthrough, Albon was promoted to ninth following disqualifications for Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc. Sargeant was elevated to 10th to secure his first world championship point – the first for an American since Michael Andretti in 1993.



# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 CHAMPIONS!

Huge congratulations to the British GT3 Champions Darren Leung & Dan Harper, British GT4 Champions Erik Evans & Matt Cowley, GB3 Champion Callum Voisin and GB4 Champion Tom Mills for an amazing year and well deserved championship titles!

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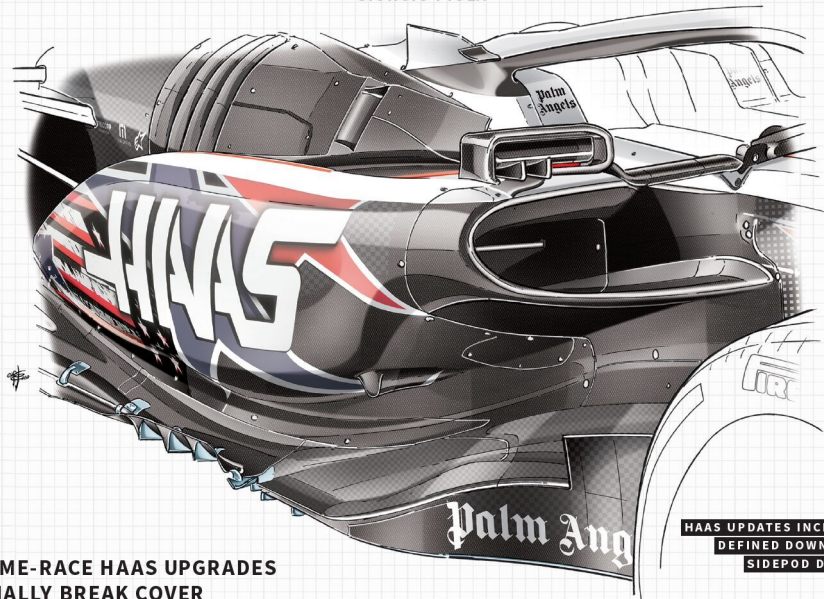


GIORGIO  
PIOLA

UNITED STATES GP TECH

# DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



HAAS UPDATES INCLUDED  
DEFINED DOWNWASH  
SIDEPOD DESIGN

## HOME-RACE HAAS UPGRADES FINALLY BREAK COVER

Haas took the covers off its much-anticipated upgrades for the United States Grand Prix, which featured extensive bodywork changes as the team sought to cure the VF-23's insatiable appetite for Pirelli tyres.

Early tyre wear during races has instigated sliding, which the drivers find makes managing tyre wear nigh-on impossible because the lateral movement only

exacerbates the problem.

The changes included a defined downwash sidepod, falling in line with the rest of the grid, and revising cooling louvres around the engine cover to match. The risk was always that, within the single hour of practice allotted during a sprint weekend, Haas would struggle to get to grips with the change in car behaviour. Despite flashes of pace in

qualifying, it never quite came together; Nico Hulkenberg's initial assessment was that the updates were "not a transformation", and an anonymous sprint race prompted Haas to recall its cars from parc ferme and change the set-up.

According to the drivers, those tweaks had a small positive impact. Although the results were middling at best, Hulkenberg was

pleased that he was able to fight with the cars around him, rather than have to back out simply to keep the tyres alive. "We helped the problem," added Kevin Magnussen. "I think we had a better race than we would have if we hadn't changed. I'm still curious to see how it evolves when we get to play with the set-up a little more and optimise things better."

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**

## MERCEDES FOCUSES ON FUTURE WITH FLOOR

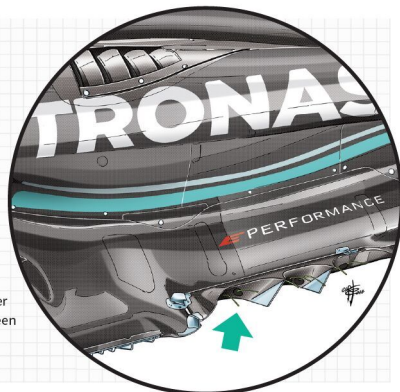
A revised floor for Mercedes was aimed at adding performance to the current W14 but, as CEO Toto Wolff explained, the effect would also help set the tone for its developments on the W15 for 2024.

The changes included a raised leading edge with repositioned floor fences, and the edge of the floor featured a more open 'scroll' section, which helps develop flow structures in a straight line and assists with outright downforce production while the car is in yaw.

"It will hopefully bring a small gain but more importantly, is another milestone in setting our development path for W15," Wolff stated. The diagram of the revised scroll demonstrates

the wool tufts used to monitor the direction of flow in a delightfully old-school fashion; teams often use flow-vis paint to check flow patterns in modern F1. "It was directionally an interesting experiment, whether it would work, to give us more indications if we were on the right path for next year's car," Wolff added. "No upgrade is the real deal. I think in the years I've been in F1, apart from the double diffuser, nothing was a silver bullet. Since then, they have always been the accumulation of smaller gains."

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**





FREE PRACTICE

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m35.912s
2	Leclerc	1m36.068s
3	Hamilton	1m36.193s
4	Perez	1m36.212s
5	Magnussen	1m36.472s
6	Russell	1m36.474s
7	Albon	1m36.492s
8	Sainz	1m36.533s
9	Hulkenberg	1m36.702s
10	Gasly	1m36.705s
11	Sargeant	1m36.987s
12	Ocon	1m37.066s
13	Tsunoda	1m37.104s
14	Ricciardo	1m37.152s
15	Norris	1m37.256s
16	Zhou	1m37.418s
17	Bottas	1m37.517s
18	Alonso	1m37.840s
19	Piastri	1m38.420s
20	Stroll	1m39.940s

WEATHER Sunny, air 33-35C track 38-43C

RACE QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME
Q3 1	Leclerc	1m34.723s
2	Norris	1m34.853s
3	Hamilton	1m34.862s
4	Sainz	1m34.945s
5	Russell	1m35.079s
6	Verstappen	1m35.081s
7	Gasly	1m35.089s
8	Ocon	1m35.154s
9	Perez	1m35.173s
10	Piastri	1m35.467s
Q2 11	Tsunoda	1m35.697s
12	Zhou	1m35.698s
13	Bottas	1m35.858s
14	Magnussen	1m35.880s
15	Ricciardo	1m35.974s
Q1 16	Hulkenberg	1m36.235s
17	Alonso	1m36.268s
18	Albon	1m36.315s
19	Stroll	1m36.589s
20	Sargeant	1m36.827s

WEATHER Sunny, air 37-38C track 40-45C

SPRINT QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME
Q3 1	Verstappen	1m34.538s
2	Leclerc	1m34.593s
3	Hamilton	1m34.607s
4	Norris	1m34.639s
5	Piastri	1m34.894s
6	Sainz	1m34.939s
7	Perez	1m35.041s
8	Russell	1m35.199s
9	Albon	1m35.366s
10	Gasly	1m35.897s
Q2 11	Ricciardo	1m35.978s
12	Alonso	1m36.087s
13	Ocon	1m36.137s
14	Stroll	1m36.131s
15	Zhou	1m36.182s
Q1 16	Hulkenberg	1m36.749s
17	Magnussen	1m36.922s
18	Bottas	1m36.922s
19	Tsunoda	1m36.945s
20	Sargeant	1m37.186s

WEATHER Sunny, air 33-34C track 39-41C

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	466	1	1
2 Perez	240	1	1
3 Hamilton	201	2	1
4 Alonso	183	2	2
5 Sainz	171	1	1
6 Norris	159	2	2
7 Leclerc	151	2	1
8 Russell	143	3	2
9 Piastri	83	2	2
10 Gasly	56	3	4
11 Stroll	53	4	6
12 Ocon	44	3	4
13 Albon	25	7	4
14 Bottas	10	8	7
15 Hulkenberg	9	7	2
16 Tsunoda	8	8	8
17 Zhou	6	9	5
18 Magnussen	3	10	4
19 Lawson	2	9	10
20 Sargeant	1	10	10
21 deVries	0	12	12
22 Ricciardo	0	13	13

SPRINT RACE 19 LAPS - 64.89 MILES

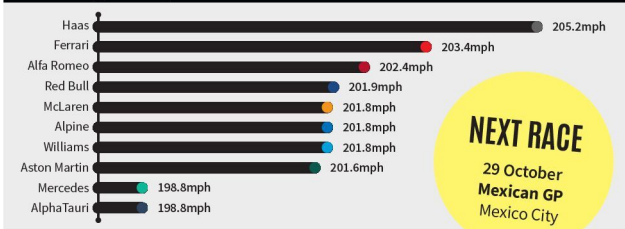
POS	DRIVER	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRE	FASTEST LAPS
1	Verstappen	31m30.849s	19	Mu	1m39.060s
2	Hamilton	+9.465s		Mu	1m39.138s
3	Leclerc	+17.987s		Mu	1m39.634s
4	Norris	+18.863s		Mu	1m39.795s
5	Perez	+22.928s		Mu	1m39.824s
6	Sainz	+28.307s		Su	1m40.223s
7	Gasly	+32.403s		Mu	1m40.155s
8	Russell	+34.250s		Mu	1m40.253s
9	Albon	+34.567s		Mn	1m40.094s
10	Piastri	+42.403s		Mu	1m41.037s
11	Ocon	+44.986s		Mu	1m41.013s
12	Ricciardo	+45.509s		Mu	1m40.434s
13	Alonso	+49.086s		Mu	1m40.805s
14	Tsunoda	+49.733s		Mu	1m40.632s
15	Hulkenberg	+56.650s		Mn	1m41.232s
16	Bottas	+1m04.401s		Mu	1m41.503s
17	Zhou	+1m07.972s		Mu	1m41.595s
18	Magnussen	+1m11.122s		Mu	1m41.699s
19	Sargeant	+1m11.449s		Mu	1m41.947s
R	Stroll	16laps-brakes		Mu	1m41.460s



WEATHER Overcast, air 33-34C track 36-37C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 123.537mph  
FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 124.492mph

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



**NEXT RACE**  
29 October  
Mexican GP  
Mexico City

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

	PTS
1 Red Bull	706
2 Mercedes	344
3 Ferrari	322
4 McLaren	242
5 Aston Martin	236
6 Alpine	100
7 Williams	26
8 Alfa Romeo	16
9 Haas	12
10 AlphaTauri	10

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Verstappen	16	1	Perez
Leclerc	11	7	Sainz
Hamilton	9	9	Russell
Gasly	11	7	Ocon
Norris	13	5	Piastri
Zhou	7	11	Bottas
Alonso	16	2	Stroll
Magnussen	6	12	Hulkenberg
Ricciardo	1	2	Tsunoda
Tsunoda	4	1	Lawson
de Vries	2	8	Tsunoda
Sargeant	0	18	Albon

WINS

Verstappen	15	Verstappen	8
Perez	2	Hamilton	3
Sainz	1	Perez	2
		Alonso	1
		Piastri	1
		Russell	1
		Tsunoda	1
		Zhou	1
		Hamilton	1



## STARTING GRID



## RESULTS ROUND 18/22 (56 LAPS - 191.63 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	1h35m21.362s	26	Mn, Mn, Hn
2	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+10.730s	21	Mn, Hn, Hn
3	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+15.134s		Mn, Mn, Hn
4	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+18.460s		Mn, Mn, Hn
5	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+24.999s		Mn, Hn, Mn
6	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+47.996s		Mn, Mn, Hn
7	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+48.696s		Hn, Mu, Mn
8	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	+1m14.385s		Mn, Hn, Mn, Sn
9	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m26.714s		Mu, Hn, Mu
10	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m27.998s		Mn, Hn, Mn
11	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m29.904s		Hn, Mn, Mu
12	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m38.601s		Mn, Hn, Mn
13	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+3.576s		Mn, Hn, Hn
14	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+8.072s		Mn, Hn, Mn
15	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+8.852s		Mn, Hn, Sn
EX	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+2.225s/worn plank	6	Mn, Hn, Mn
EX	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+24.662s/worn plank	3	Mn, Hn
R	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	49 laps-floor		Mu, Mn, Hn
R	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	10 laps-accident damage		Mn
R	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	6 laps-accident damage		Mn

## FASTEST LAPS

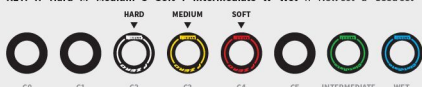
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Tsunoda	1m38.139s	-	56
2	Ricciardo	1m39.366s	+1.227s	49
3	Russell	1m39.393s	+1.254s	48
4	Hamilton	1m39.582s	+1.443s	42
5	Perez	1m39.737s	+1.598s	40
6	Stroll	1m39.908s	+1.769s	48
7	Alonso	1m39.954s	+1.815s	47
8	Norris	1m39.985s	+1.846s	39
9	Verstappen	1m40.028s	+1.889s	40
10	Sainz	1m40.034s	+1.895s	51
11	Gasly	1m40.412s	+2.273s	47
12	Hulkenberg	1m40.925s	+2.786s	45
13	Leclerc	1m41.025s	+2.886s	38
14	Sargeant	1m41.238s	+3.099s	34
15	Albon	1m41.371s	+3.232s	40
16	Magnussen	1m41.506s	+3.367s	41
17	Zhou	1m41.879s	+3.740s	51
18	Bottas	1m41.972s	+3.833s	54
19	Piastri	1m42.705s	+4.566s	5
20	Ocon	1m44.789s	+6.650s	2

WEATHER Sunny, air 32-33C track 43-44C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 120.580mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 125.661mph

## TYRES

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



## RACE BRIEFING

### SPRINT GRID PENALTIES

**RUSSELL** Three-place penalty for impeding Leclerc in sprint qualifying

### SPRINT PENALTIES

**RUSSELL and ZHOU** Five-second penalty each for leaving the track and

gaining a lasting advantage

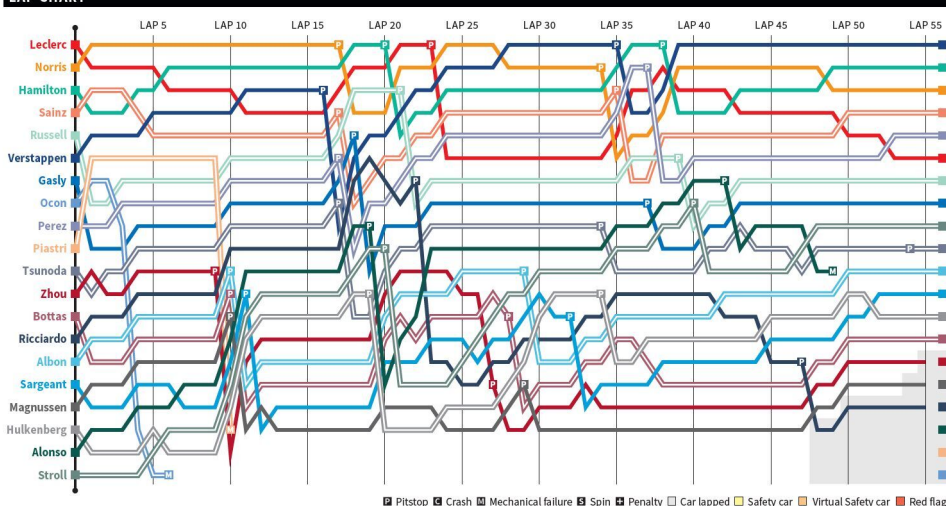
### GP GRID PENALTIES

**STROLL, ALONSO, MAGNUSSEN** and **HULKENBERG** required to start from the pitlane for set-up changes while under parc ferme conditions

### RACE PENALTIES

**ALBON** 5s penalty for leaving the track without a justifiable reason multiple times  
**HAMILTON and LECLERC** Disqualified for excessive wear on rear skid/plank

## LAP CHART

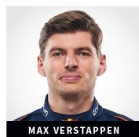


# UNITED STATES GP DRIVER RATINGS

*No performances worthy of a double-digit score, although in the Lone Star State three drivers – Verstappen, Hamilton and Norris – stand out*

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

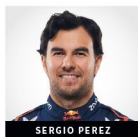
## RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started 6th — Result 1st

**9** Rise to the front was expected after easy sprint win, but progress slower than predicted thanks to braking struggles and tyre management. Did not disappear down the road after passing Norris, but did enough to break out of DRS range. Had enough in hand to suppress late Hamilton threat.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started 9th — Result 4th

**5** On one hand, he made up ground from a disappointing qualifying and split the Ferraris. On the other, made no real progress beyond the opening part of the race, and demonstrated his gap to Verstappen in best car on the grid. Outclassed by stronger drivers in lesser machinery.

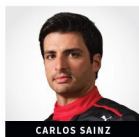
## FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started 1st — Result DQ

**7** Hard done by with his strategy and subsequent disqualification. Beaten off the line by Norris and did well to defend second from Sainz, but the faster cars of Hamilton and Verstappen put the Ferraris in their place. Baffling one-stop decision derailed a strong effort.

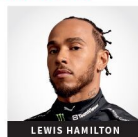


CARLOS SAINZ

Started 4th — Result 3rd

**7** Brave inside-line choice at start offered a way past Hamilton but could not stay ahead. Benefited from Ferrari's split strategy, with two-stopper the far stronger option, and later team orders rather sacrificed Leclerc in favour of keeping Sainz ahead of Perez. A steady and dependable drive.

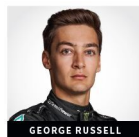
## MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started 3rd — Result DQ

**9** Lost a place at start to Sainz, but managed to return the favour as race settled into a rhythm. Ambitious stint targets left him in pursuit of Verstappen and Norris, as team hoped for a tyre offset at the end. Move on Norris freed him up for optimistic charge, but victory chances had subsided.

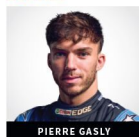


GEORGE RUSSELL

Started 5th — Result 5th

**5** Never really figured among frontrunning pack. Indecision over strategy cost him slightly as middle hard-tyre stint was shortened, and pace in opening two stints fell short of Hamilton's. Could not mount late pass on one-stopping Leclerc, although final-stint pace was solid.

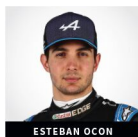
## ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started 7th — Result 6th

**6** Lost three places at start, but Ocon's and Piastri's respective ailments lessened the blow. Otherwise, a steady if unspectacular presence behind the frontrunning pack, maintaining a solid race pace to ensure that Alpine got a result. Tailed off towards the end.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started 8th — Result 3rd

**5** Was entitled to defend his position against Piastri, hence it was a racing incident. Managed to leapfrog team-mate in opening corners, but sidepod damage from brush with the McLaren was too great to limp on with and was called in to retire. Has now finished just four of the past nine races.

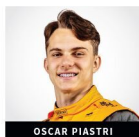
## McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started 2nd — Result 2nd

**9** Made excellent start to lead opening half of race and built convincing lead prior to opening stops. Hard tyre vs Verstappen's mediums held up well, but Turn 11 error helped Red Bull catch up. Gamedly held on after being passed, but tyre deg proved too much, which brought Hamilton into play.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started 10th — Result R

**6** Made up four places at start and was hanging onto the five cars ahead in opening laps. Ocon clash a racing incident, but ultimately contributed to damage and loss of water pressure that proved terminal. Difficult to rate given truncated race, but earns bonus score for a great start.

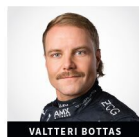
## ALFA ROMEO



ZHOU GUANYU

Started 12th — Result 13th

**4** See Bottas, but even less felicitous. Made up a position at start over Tsunoda, but couldn't keep hold of the AlphaTauri and dropped to the back after stopping earliest. Cited a lack of grip and heavy degradation for his fall behind Bottas, despite starting ahead, and ended up finishing a lap down.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started 13th — Result 12th

**5** An anonymous race as Alfa pace was lacking. Reckoned strategy was right, but felt bumpiness of circuit hampered progress and forced team to jack up ride height, giving up performance. Hard-tyre stint at the end was consistent, but missed mark of other lower midfield teams.





## ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started 19th — Result R

**7** Reverted to proven Qatar-spec overnight after miserable weekend, but progress was good. Reckoned eighth-place finish on the road was there for the taking and had taken chunks out of Gasly's advantage, but floor damage proved too much to continue with. A tenacious drive under the radar.



LANCE STROLL

Started 20th — Result 7th

**7** Did well to break into points given encumbrance of pitlane start — despite brief *faux pas* in driving to grid. Tyre management was laudable and managed to reel off a few overtakes after overnight changes to his car. Offset strategy helped demonstrate much-needed improvement in form.

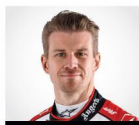
## HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started 17th — Result 14th

**4** Fought hard following pitlane start in early stages to gain positions, but was put to the back after first pitstop and never really managed to get going. Found set-up changes beneficial, but additional downforce was not enough to rescue anything from the race.



NICO HULKENBERG

Started 18th — Result 11th

**5** Solid recovery after pitlane start. Upgrades didn't prove to be an immediate cure-all for tyre-wear woes, but parc ferme-breaking tweaks gave him enough to fight with the cars around him. Pace drop-off still present, but improvements offered some glimmers of hope.

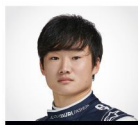
## ALPHATAURI



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started 14th — Result 15th

**5** Found his return physically demanding after five races away. Stayed near Tsunoda in first two thirds of the race, and late decline coincided with aborting an ambitious one-stopper as damage and tyre wear sapped performance over lengthy stint on the hard tyres.

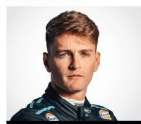


YUKI TSUNODA

Started 11th — Result 8th

**7** Made late switch to soft tyres to snatch fastest lap, after stealing into the points following Alonso's retirement. Pace was consistent, and made good moves on other traditional midfielders; his early battle with Magnussen was a highlight and a great demonstration of his unheralded racecraft.

## WILLIAMS



LOGAN SARGEANT

Started 16th — Result 10th

**6** At last, some progress; much-needed clean weekend will offer something to build from. Home-race fervour added pressure, but he coped with it handily. Also coped well with long second and third stints despite degrading tyres. Disqualifications ahead gifted him a first F1 point.

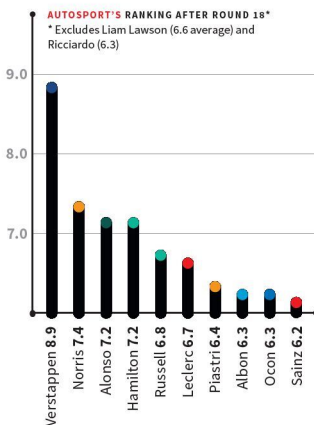


ALEX ALBON

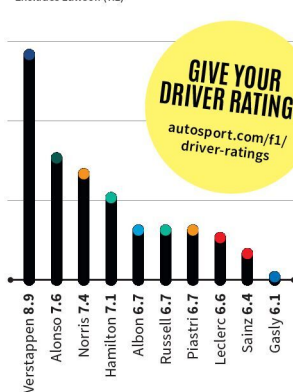
Started 15th — Result 9th

**5** Probably achieved a maximum expected result and lucked into points after exclusions ahead, as his frequent track-limits violations ultimately changed nothing in final results. Managed tyres well in long final stint, but that penalty costs him a mark in an otherwise solid performance.

## TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



**READERS' RANKING AFTER ROUND 18\***  
\* Excludes Lawson (7.1)



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United's  
double-winning  
ORECA leads Inter  
Europol car in Friday  
Portuguese sunset



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## Algarve Pro trio proves they're pros in the Algarve

**EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES**  
**ALGARVE CIRCUIT (PRT)**  
**20/22 OCTOBER**  
**ROUNDS 5/6 & 6/6**

Algarve Pro Racing trio Alex Lynn, Kyffin Simpson and James Allen secured the European Le Mans Series title with a pair of second-place finishes across a Portimao double-header finale in which United Autosports won both races amid adverse weather conditions.

The unorthodox season conclusion, featuring two four-hour races, stemmed from the cancellation of May's 4 Hours of Imola. Instead, the ELMS organisers added a second round – the 4 Hours of Algarve – to its final fixture and named the weekend the 'Portimao Grand Season Finale'. The opening race kicked off on Friday afternoon before running into the early evening. United had appeared to be on the back foot following the final round of fuel

stops, before British veteran Oliver Jarvis charged back up to overtake Cadillac WEC star Lynn to secure a race victory for himself, Marino Sato and Phil Hanson.

But it was Algarve Pro that arguably ended Friday with the biggest smiles, with a near-insurmountable points advantage heading into the season finale on Sunday afternoon. Ironically for the team based not far from the track, it was the Portuguese weather that would prove the biggest threat to its impending title success. Or, more accurately, the complete lack of favourable conditions. Showers had been a factor in the weekend prior to Sunday and, ahead of the four-hour finale, a downpour struck the area with a vengeance. Treacherous conditions led to a start delay that eventually amounted to 90 minutes and, once the race did start, it was only for a single sighter lap that was immediately followed by a red flag lasting 45 minutes. When conditions finally improved, the

field was released for three hours of racing.

A dominant early stint from Hanson laid the groundwork for a second victory for United's ORECA, although Lynn brought the black-and-blue APR ORECA-Gibson 07 home in second place to secure the title. He did so by overcoming an incident-filled final hour in which Paul-Loup Chatin spun into the gravel at Turn 8, and Neel Jani turned Job van Uitert around. Lynn then survived his own scare when a recovering van Uitert went on the offensive at the Torre Vip hairpin. The Panis Racing driver moved up the inside of Lynn, but made contact and spun, while the Brit escaped unharmed.

The LMP2 Pro-Am title was decided in favour of AF Corse duo Matthieu Vaxivière and Francois Perrodo. Joined by Ben Barnicoat, they combined third on Friday with a Sunday victory to beat Racing Team Turkey and Cool Racing to the crown.

Cool Racing clinched the LMP3 title with a race to spare when its Ligier finished fourth on Friday, aided when its nearest rival, the Inter Europol Competition Ligier, retired from the final hour when it caught fire. Marcos Siebert, Alex Garcia and Adrien Chila enjoyed a dominant run in 2023, scoring three wins from six races.

Proton Competition Porsche trio Alessio Picariello, Zach Robichon and Ryan Hardwick took the GTE title in style by winning on Sunday, after finishing a close second to the sister car of Julien Andlauer, Giammarco Levorato and Christian Ried on Friday. It was the final GTE title in the ELMS, with the class set to be replaced by the incoming LMGT3 division for next year.

**DAVEY EUWEMA**

**motorsport.tv**  
Relive this race at Motorsport.tv



L-r: Allen, Lynn and Simpson  
were quite happy with  
this kind of wet conditions



# Perfect Preining does it for Porsche

**DTM**  
**HOCKENHEIM (DEU)**  
**21-22 OCTOBER**  
**ROUND 8/8**

Porsche factory driver Thomas Preining scored a perfect tally of 56 points at the Hockenheim finale to claim the DTM title. The Austrian didn't even have to wait until the final race to seal the crown – his bagging of the three bonus points for pole position in Sunday's qualifying session put him out of reach.

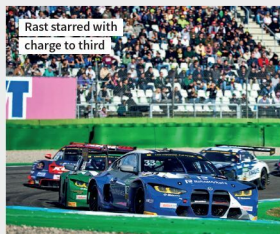
The decisive moment of the weekend had taken place exactly 24 hours earlier, when chief title rival Mirko Bortolotti set a time that would have been good enough for pole, only to lose the lap to track limits. That meant that, while Preining could dictate the race from the front in his Manthey EMA Porsche, Bortolotti's SSR Performance Lamborghini was stuck in the midfield in eighth, behind the Abt Audis of Kelvin van der Linde and Ricardo Feller, who remained an outside title contender at this stage of the weekend.

Bortolotti could gain only one place in the first stint, and it wasn't until the final 12 minutes of the race that he cleared van der Linde and the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari of Jack Aitken, moving up to finish fifth behind Feller.

Preining, meanwhile, was untouchable at the front of the field, with team-mate Dennis Olsen acting as a rear-gunner and keeping the Grasser Lamborghini of Christian Engelhart at bay. He eventually crossed the line with a victory margin of 0.6s, giving him a near-unassailable 27-point lead.



Preining leads from Bortolotti on Sunday



Rast started with charge to third

ADAC MOTORSPORT

Bortolotti tried to remain in the hunt in Sunday's qualifying, and immediately set the fastest lap of the weekend before breaking the 1m37s barrier on his next flier. But Preining had even more time up his sleeve and went 0.006s quicker at his next attempt to clinch the title.

In the race, Preining successfully resisted a late attack from Bortolotti, even forcing him to make a mistake on the penultimate lap, to cap off his season in style. His eventual margin was 33 points, and he also led Manthey EMA and Porsche to the teams' and the manufacturers' titles. It was Porsche's first success in the DTM, in its second year of full participation.

While the spotlight was firmly on Preining and Bortolotti in the final race, three-time DTM champion Rene Rast pulled off one of his finest drives in recent memory to take third. After being blocked in qualifying, Rast started his Schubert Motorsport BMW from a dismal 23rd position, but he made up 10 places on the opening lap alone and was inside the top 10 shortly after an early safety car period, caused by a collision between Engelhart and the Project 1 BMW of Marco Wittmann.

Rast continued to make further inroads and assumed fourth position

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES ALGARVE CIRCUIT (PRT)

#### Race 1

- LMP2** Oliver Jarvis/Phil Hanson/  
Marino Sato  
United Autosports (ORECA 07)
- LMP3** Oscar Tunjo/Torsten Kratz/  
Leo Weiss  
Rinaldi Racing  
(Duqueine M30-D08)
- GTE** Julien Andlauer/Giammarco  
Lavorato/Christian Ried  
Proton Competition  
(Porsche 911 RSR)

#### Race 2

- LMP2** Jarvis/Hanson/Sato
- LMP3** Matt Bell/Adam Ali  
EuroInternational (Ligier JSP320)
- GTE** Alessio Piccirillo/Zach  
Robichon/Ryan Hardwick  
Proton Competition  
(Porsche 911 RSR)

### DTM

#### HOCKENHEIM (DEU)

- Races 1 & 2** Thomas Preining  
Manthey EMA  
(Porsche 911 GT3-R)

### LE MANS CUP

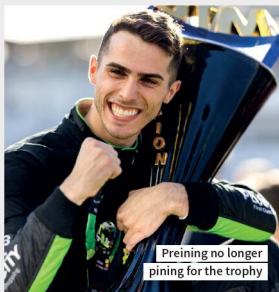
#### ALGARVE CIRCUIT (PRT)

- Josh Skelton/Tony Wells  
Nielsen Racing (Ligier JSP320)



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Preining no longer pining for the trophy

ADAC MOTORSPORT

after overcutting a number of his rivals with a late pitstop on lap 18 of 36. Then, with Maro Engel struggling in his hobbled Team Landgraf Mercedes ahead, Rast was able to make a pass at the hairpin on the final lap to complete his stellar recovery drive. Rast's team-mate, outgoing champion Sheldon van der Linde, finished fourth after also clearing Engel at the end.

**RACHIT THUKRAL**

Bell has made the Championship 4 for the second consecutive season



## Bell rings true as rivals drop clangers

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**NASCAR CUP  
HOMESTEAD (USA)  
22 OCTOBER  
ROUND 34/36**

Christopher Bell is getting good at pulling off dramatic wins to earn NASCAR Cup championship opportunities.

Bell claimed two 'must-win' races in the playoffs last year to advance to the Cup series title race and, in almost the same situation last Sunday, he rallied in the final 60 laps to hold off Ryan Blaney for an improbable victory at Homestead.

Bell struggled for much of the race in his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota and at one

point nearly fell a lap down. But a string of caution-causing incidents as the 267 laps wore down knocked several playoff contenders out of the race and put Bell back in the hunt for the win.

Bell grabbed the lead for the first time on a restart on lap 230, lost it on pitroad, and then reclaimed it from William Byron with 15 to go. He then held off a late charge from Blaney's Team Penske Ford to earn just his second win of the 2023 season. The victory means Bell is the second driver, along with Kyle Larson, confirmed for next week's Championship 4 at Phoenix.

"That race was a whirlwind," an exasperated Bell said after the race.

"I was ready to throw the towel in there in the second stage. I got frustrated on the radio. Adam [Stevens, crew chief] kept after it. The guys back at the shop were working over the adjustments and gave me what I needed. Whenever we got some clean air, this thing was really good."

Tyler Reddick ended up third in the race ahead of Byron and AJ Allmendinger.

Byron and Blaney are the remaining drivers in the Championship 4 positions with just this Sunday's race at Martinsville remaining to qualify, while those currently in the elimination spots are Reddick, Martin Truex Jr, Denny Hamlin and Chris Buescher.

**JIM UTTER**

## Victory in opener does it for Garcia

**F1 ACADEMY  
AUSTIN (USA)  
21-22 OCTOBER  
ROUND 7/7**

Marta Garcia became yet another driver to win a championship in a Prema Racing-run Formula 4 car when she triumphed in the opening race of F1 Academy's season finale to its inaugural season, supporting the US Grand Prix.

The Spaniard claimed pole position and took the lead at the start, but had to endure some side-by-side battling with Abbi Pulling on the opening lap. Rodin Carlin driver Pulling kept the pressure



Garcia soaks up Pulling's pressure

on Garcia all the way to the finish. There was a fight behind too, with ART Grand Prix's Lena Buhler getting past Nerea Marti to claim third position.

Contact with Jessica Edgar on the opening lap damaged Garcia's front wing in the reversed-grid second race, and a black-and-orange flag forced her out. Hamda Al Qubaisi took a win in her MP Motorsport car, leading all the way to beat Buhler and Edgar.

Edgar, the cousin of Formula 3 racer Jonny, showed much improved form to claim pole for the finale. And the Briton then fended off a Turn 1 attack from Garcia to lead throughout and claim her and Rodin Carlin's first F1 Academy win.

Garcia's move cost her momentum and second place to compatriot Marti, and the Campos Racing driver fended off a race-long attack to claim second, with Buhler and Al Qubaisi next up.



# R-race pair are racey in the final races

**FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN  
HOCKENHEIM (DEU)  
21-22 OCTOBER  
ROUND 10/10**

R-race GP pair Martinus Stenshorne and Tim Tramnitz shared the wins at the Formula Regional European by Alpine finale to secure second and third respectively in the points.

Tramnitz, newly anointed as a Red Bull Junior, made a corker of a move to get into the lead of the opening race. Poleman Kas Haverkort was attempting to repass Rafael Camara on the opening lap into the Spitzkehre hairpin, only for the German to chuck it around the outside of both of them and emerge in front.

But some safety car interludes nearly did for Tramnitz. After the final restart with four laps remaining, he braked too late into Spitzkehre and had to be forceful to defend from Prema Racing-run Ferrari protege Camara. The Brazilian's lost momentum allowed Stenshorne to dive inside for second at the Mercedes Arena and, when Camara got into a slide, Nikita Bedrin nipped through for third on a one-off outing with Van Amersfoort Racing.

Haverkort faded to fifth in his VAR car, holding off Prema's champion, Mercedes



Tramnitz scored win on home ground

F1 junior Andrea Kimi Antonelli, who had forged through from 10th on the grid.

Tramnitz had pole for the finale, but Stenshorne got the jump at the start and Camara moved into second at Turn 2. Following an early safety car, Camara made his bid for the front. He went down the inside of Stenshorne at Spitzkehre, but the Norwegian clung on. After another safety car he tried again at Mercedes Arena, only for Tramnitz and Haverkort to nip past Camara on the exit.

With the positions at the front settled, attention turned to the progress of Antonelli, who had run wide while trying to pass Tramnitz on the first lap and dropped to 11th. The Italian was seventh behind Trident pair Owen Tangavelou and Nikhil Bohra going into the final tour, which meant R-race would claim the teams' title on wins countback over Prema. But then he made a crucial pass on Bohra to swing things Prema's way.

## WEEKEND WINNERS

**NASCAR CUP  
HOMESTEAD (USA)**  
Christopher Bell  
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

**F1 ACADEMY  
AUSTIN (USA)**  
**Race 1** Marta Garcia  
Prema Racing  
**Race 2** Hamda Al Qubaisi  
MP Motorsport  
**Race 3** Jessica Edgar  
Rodin Carlin

**FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN  
HOCKENHEIM (DEU)**  
**Race 1** Tim Tramnitz  
R-race GP  
**Race 2** Martinus Stenshorne  
R-race GP

**EUROFORMULA OPEN  
BARCELONA (ESP)**  
**Race 1** Enzo Trulli  
CryptoTower (Dallara-Spiess)  
**Race 2** Levente Revesz  
Team Motopark (Dallara-Spiess)  
**Race 3** Francesco Simonazzi  
BVM Racing (Dallara-Spiess)

**INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN  
BARCELONA (ESP)**  
**Race 1** Christopher Haase/Simon Reicher  
Eastalent (Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II)  
**Race 2** Dominik Baumann/Mikael Pitamber  
SPS (Mercedes-AMG GT3)

**TCR EUROPE  
BARCELONA (ESP)**  
**Race 1** Kobs Pauwels  
Comtoyau (Audi RS3 LMS II TCR)  
**Race 2** Ruben Volt  
ALM (Honda Civic Type R FL5 TCR)



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## ADVERTORIAL

# INVEST IN TALENT NOT SHORT-TERM RESULTS

Young racing drivers and their families are consistently worried about their success and the results obtained at the early stage of their career, which actually should never be the main focus. The real focus should go towards consistent development.

They are and will be high-performance athletes even from their youth, which means they have to be on a constant evolution. Look for example at Leo Messi or Max Verstappen: even though they have an indisputable talent, they have kept evolving and improving day by day, working and investing in themselves. This is why they keep getting better and better and are able to perform at such a level

for a long period of time.

So often efforts are directed to find the best material and spend all the resources on trying to find the best engine or the best team in order to get a result that will not



Ramon Pineiro with Brandon Lee Oxley after a GB3 victory at Brands Hatch

last for a long time. In all honesty no one will really care which mini or junior championship has been won, whereas if this investment has gone towards the development of the driver, it will actually make a big difference in the future.

Moreover, if in a final a mistake is made and there's contact where a title is lost, it shouldn't be a big disappointment, mistakes are part of a driver's development and they should be allowed to make them – even the greatest of the sport have made plenty of mistakes. What's important is how this mistake is used towards the future. Believing in development, investing in it and having the patience for it – and great racing drivers will

come. First development, second results, not the other way round.

The driver will last forever and the investment in their performance will be kept forever, this is why investing in development is much more important than achieving a result at the beginning of any driver's career. Without development it's impossible to have consistently good results.

**Ramon Pineiro**  
Founder  
**RP Driver Management**



# Zarco like the wind to claim overdue win

## MOTOGP

PHILLIP ISLAND (AUS)

21 OCTOBER

ROUND 16/20

It was getting to a point where you had to wonder whether Johann Zarco would ever actually win a grand prix. And there are a fair few people within the MotoGP paddock who believed his time had come and gone.

After coming close on a Tech3 Yamaha on several occasions in 2017 and 2018, and his hellishly brief stint with KTM in 2019, Zarco landed on his feet in 2020 when Ducati offered him a career reprieve. But being on the grid's best bike for the past three and a bit seasons still wasn't proving enough to break his duck. And his looming move to LCR will give him a Honda that, for now at least, does not a race winner make.

For much of Saturday's rescheduled 27-lap Australian Grand Prix, brought forward from Sunday due to the threat of extreme wind at Phillip Island – which ultimately did force the cancellation of the sprint contest – it was Zarco's Pramac team-mate who was set to come out on top. Jorge Martin smashed the lap record to take pole and looked like once again having a raw-speed advantage over Ducati title rival Francesco Bagnaia, who had to come through Q1 again, this time successfully escaping and qualifying his bike third.

Bizarrely, Martin opted to run the soft rear tyre, which only two others – Marc Marquez and Pol Espargaro – elected to do. Bagnaia noted after the race that only Martin was strong enough to make that gamble pay off.



Zarco salutes the crowd after his belated first win...

Martin's plan was simple: break away immediately by using the grip advantage of the soft; build up a comfortable margin to be able to maintain the lead when the tyre eventually dropped. For the first 15 laps, his plan was going well. At the end of that tour, he was 3.479 seconds clear.

But the gap would grow no more, and steadily started to reduce. Initially, it wasn't enough to cause concern. But the gap kept closing and Martin's speed plummeted. Come lap 23, his pace dropped to a 1m31.296s, while on the same tour Zarco was at 1m30.8s.

As Martin started his final lap, he was just 0.440s ahead of Zarco, who had carved past Brad Binder on the previous tour at the Turn 4 now named after the South African's KTM team-mate Jack Miller. Given Martin's championship situation, there was a brief thought that Zarco could well play tailgunner for his stablemate.

That idea evaporated when Zarco came

through on Martin at Miller Corner on the final lap, his overtaking move opening the door for Bagnaia to grab second. While Martin lost positions to Gresini Ducati rider Fabio Di Giannantonio and Binder to drop to fifth, Zarco delivered the win everyone has been waiting over six years to see.

With tyre management key at Phillip Island, the 2023 Australian GP seemed tailor-made for Zarco's maiden victory. And it also proved to be an attribute used by Bagnaia to extend his championship lead.

The Italian blamed his slump into a second consecutive Q1 on his focus on working with the medium rubber in practice. From third on the grid, he didn't have anything like the pace of Martin at the start of the race, and looked seriously under threat to miss the podium.

But the Ducati rider deserves a great deal of credit for his race management. He knew Martin would come back to him, and just needed to ensure that he didn't do

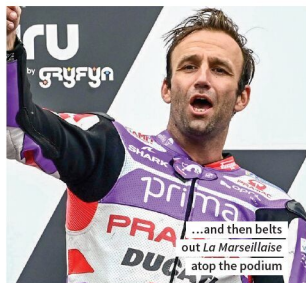


Martin, here leading Binder, had his day at the seaside spoilt





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anything silly leading up to that point. His reward was the runner-up spot and a 27-point championship lead, something that will likely have been protected by the sprint being cancelled, what with Martin winning the past four of them.

Martin owned up to his tyre-gamble error and now knows to just fight with the tools he has, given his machinery is identical to Bagnaia's. But the cracks in his title charge are showing.

That isn't true of Di Giannantonio, but that didn't stop him getting a maiden podium as he fights to save his career after Gresini signed Marc Marquez to replace him for 2024. Binder was a solid fourth, while Marco Bezzecchi (VR46 Ducati) kept his slim title hopes alive in sixth. Miller took seventh on his homecoming.

Marquez's own soft-tyre gamble came with nothing to lose. He was quick to begin with, then faded to 15th as the tyre dropped off. But, as he pointed out afterwards, what more can he do with the bike he has?

Marquez finished behind Fabio Quartararo, whose miserable weekend led him to quip that Yamaha "needs 15 winters" to be able to become competitive again.

LEWIS DUNCAN

**RESULTS ROUND 16/20, PHILLIP ISLAND (AUS), 21 OCTOBER (27 LAPS - 74.624 MILES)**

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	40m39.446s
2	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	+0.201s
3	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+0.477s
4	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+0.816s
5	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+1.008s
6	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+8.827s
7	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	+9.283s
8	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+9.387s
9	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+9.696s
10	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	+12.523s
11	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+13.992s
12	Luca Marini (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+17.078s
13	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	RNF Aprilia	+19.443s
14	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+20.949s
15	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	+21.118s
16	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	RNF Aprilia	+32.538s
17	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Yamaha	+37.663s
18	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+37.668s
19	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+37.758s
R	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	12 laps-accident
R	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	10 laps-accident
NS	Alex Rins (ESP)	LCR Honda	injury

Winner's average speed 110.126mph. Fastest lap Martin 1m28.823s, 112.019mph.

**QUALIFYING 21** Martin 1m27.246s; 2 Binder 1m27.662s; 3 Bagnaia 1m27.714s; 4 A Espargaro 1m27.844s; 5 Zarco 1m27.903s; 6 Di Giannantonio 1m27.919s; 7 M Marquez 1m28.012s; 8 Miller 1m28.074s; 9 Vinales 1m28.093s; 10 Bezzecchi 1m28.121s; 11 P Espargaro 1m28.234s; 12 Bastianini 1m28.287s.

**QUALIFYING 1** Bagnaia 1m28.160s; M Marquez 1m28.237s; 13 A Marquez 1m28.324s; 14 A Fernandez 1m28.435s; 15 R Fernandez 1m28.607s; 16 Mir 1m28.841s; 17 Quartararo 1m28.925s; 18 Marini 1m29.047s; 19 Oliveira 1m29.182s; 20 Morbidelli 1m29.419s; 21 Nakagami 1m29.832s.

**RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1** Bagnaia 366; 2 Martin 339; 3 Bezzecchi 293; 4 Binder 224; 5 Zarco 187; 6 A Espargaro 185; 7 Vinales 170; 8 Marini 148; 9 Miller 144; 10 Quartararo 134.

**CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1** Ducati 552; 2 KTM 296; 3 Aprilia 274; 4 Yamaha 154; 5 Honda 150.



Bagnaia charged through to take second position

**NEXT REPORT**  
Thai GP  
2 November issue

## SEASON REVIEW

BTCC

# SUTTON AND HIS TEAM PROVE THEY'RE NO NAPPERS

*The midnight oil was burned over the winter on developing the NAPA-liveried Ford Focus ST, and Ash Sutton did an astonishing job for his fourth title*

MARCUS SIMMONS

 PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

“C

oming off the back of Donington was when I felt we were in a really good place. The car, me mentally, the team were fully behind me, NAPA were fully behind me. That was kind of the point where I thought, ‘Right, this is mine to lose. I just need

to really focus on keeping out of trouble, keeping my nut down and doing the best job I can.”

The words are Ash Sutton’s, while pondering when he thought he might be looking in a strong position to win his fourth British Touring Car Championship title. And the cynics among you may think he’s referring to Donington round one, way back in April, when he exhibited scarily quick pace in the much-reworked Ford Focus ST. The NAPA-clad Motorbase Performance crew had presented Sutton and his team-mates with absolute weapons, and it was only the first of three what we might call ‘early-race missteps’ of the 2023 season that prevented him leaving the Leicestershire parkland circuit with the championship lead.

But Sutton is actually alluding to Donington round eight, in late August. And here is where the irony creeps in: yes, he scored a pole position, a win and a second as the Grand Prix loop appeared on the BTCC calendar for the first time since 2002, but

to the task in hand of accumulating what he amusingly refers to as ‘pointy’ weekends, and it was this application – plus Sutton’s other two ‘early-race missteps’ at the mid-season Oulton Park and Croft rounds – that kept him in the hunt. At Donington GP, he felt that the regular 2023 pattern of missing a couple of tenths to Sutton had been reversed; the Hyundai was as quick as the Ford overall. And when he beat Sutton to the chequered flag in race two, Ingram had cut the gap to 40 points with seven races still remaining. If another Sutton misstep happened...

Yet here was where that intangible yet significant phenomenon occurred: what is commonly referred to as champion’s luck. Sutton had again been overtaken by Ingram in the early going of the reversed-grid race, and they were running around in 10th and 11th positions when suddenly mayhem broke out thanks to the sister Ford of Dan Rowbottom hitting a chicane tyre stack. The chain-reaction knock-on effects of this resulted in Sutton suddenly gaining five places in half a lap on Rowbottom, Jake Hill, Colin Turkington, Tom Ingram and Tom Chilton – all race winners in 2023 – without genuinely overtaking of them.

That was the kind of episode from which we might normally expect the canny Ingram to benefit, but now he faced a 42-point deficit, with six races remaining...

And at Silverstone, there was indeed another misstep from Sutton, but this was only because his team – operating for its last weekend as Motorbase >>

**“HERE’S WHERE THAT PHENOMENON OCCURRED: WHAT IS COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS CHAMPION’S LUCK”**

it was one of the places where that scarily quick pace looked less in evidence than at most venues. And, whisper it, he was even overtaken on genuine pace for the lead – and victory – by a rival in the form of reigning champion Tom Ingram and his Excekr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback.

Excekr8, of course, hadn’t been standing still over the winter either, and a package of refinements to the Hyundai had left Ingram in confident mood of repeating his 2022 title. But the Suffolk team, not to mention everyone else on the grid, was left shattered by the huge performance leap of those Focuses. Ingram knuckled down





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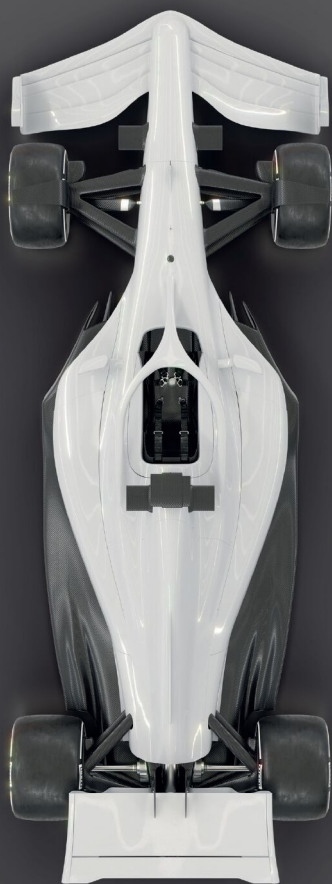
**CATACLEAN**

Sutton is the first  
to win the BTCC title  
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wheel-drive cars





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Sutton leading Ingram  
and the rest was the  
theme of 2023...

before its renaming as Alliance Racing in time for the Brands Hatch finale – was shadowing the strategy of Ingram, the perceived only rival for the title. Like so many other race weekends, this one was heavily affected by rain, and a shower before the start of race one threw the grid into disarray. Ingram took the start on slicks; Sutton said he knew this was the wrong choice, but that the security of emulating his opponent was paramount. They slid down the field and, when Ingram was clobbered into a spin at Becketts, he called it quits and went for wet-weather Goodyears; Sutton and his crew saw Excelr8 getting ready, and called their own man in. Wrong choice again, because from shortly after this point the slicks had become the quicker tyre...

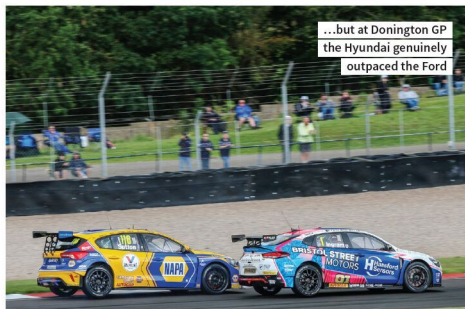
They both finished a lap down; the gap was still 42 points with only five races remaining, but now Hill had leapfrogged Ingram to become Sutton's closest rival. And his 330e M Sport, fresh from its win on the correct tyres in race one, was starting the sequel from pole, with Ingram 22nd and Sutton 23rd. "Whoa, we maybe overlooked that one," acknowledged a worried Sutton.

And then along came more champion's luck. Sutton's drive from 23rd on the grid to victory in that second race is rightly hailed as that of a maestro, one of the greatest performances in BTCC history from one of the greatest drivers in BTCC history, yet there were three other drivers who should have won.

Hill was on course for another victory, and to trim the gap to Sutton to 30-odd points, when a misfire caused by a boost sensor failure seriously hobbled his BMW just after a mid-race safety car. He'd had the race completely under control, keeping that hope of a maiden BTCC title just within his grasp, and now it had been ripped away. Ingram had been running ahead of Sutton on the opening lap when he was collateral damage to an outbreak of intra-Team Hard Cupra Leon chaos, got shoved wide and lost several places. His own recovery drive to third was outstanding – his pace matched that of Sutton, who arguably would never have passed the Hyundai, especially given his need to preserve points. And Aron Taylor-Smith, seeking a first win since the 2019 finale for the plucky Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra squad, had enough of an advantage over Sutton before the safety car to suggest that he wouldn't have been caught by the Ford. While Hill was devastated and Ingram was rueful, the cheery Dubliner was just delighted to have been running up at the front before succumbing to the inevitable Sutton move into Copse Corner on the final lap.

Even so, Sutton rightly hails it as the showpiece of his extraordinary 12 race wins of 2023, "especially when you think all the odds are against you in terms of Jake winning race one, should have really won race two if he didn't have his issue. So to storm through when it looks like it's not looking too good and take the win was something special. That's one I will





**“TO STORM THROUGH WHEN IT’S NOT LOOKING TOO GOOD AND TAKE THE WIN WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL”**

remember for a long, long time.”

And from here, the title was a formality. Sutton went to the Brands GP finale 45 points clear of Ingram, the two raced off way ahead of the field in the opener, and at the chequered flag it was all done and dusted. Twelve months earlier, he’d emerged from the Focus at the Brands finale, delighted that he’d likely never have to drive the finicky beast again as Motorbase evaluated a rear-wheel-drive Audi project. When that decision was reversed, Sutton’s engineer sidekick Antonio Carrozza was tasked with turning the Focus into something good. Apart from the mechanical work – even bolts were changed – there was aerodynamic re-homologation of most of the panels on the car. Under the bonnet, long-time Focus engine supplier Mountune produced new camshafts. So too did Swindon for the Hyundais and M-Sport for the Power Maxed and Hard customer teams, but theirs meant a slight boost reduction at the hands of the TOCA technical team. Mountune, meanwhile, had focused upon drivability rather than power, and kept everything within TOCA’s performance parameters to be unaffected on boost. Just another illustration of how this team had every box ticked.

Carrozza has now been with Sutton for all four of his titles, albeit as a data engineer when he won the 2017 crown with the BMR Subaru under the technical leadership of Carl Faux, who subsequently went to work in Supercars in Australia. “It is something special,” acknowledges Sutton of the working relationship with Carrozza. “Together, I’d like to think we’ve got our peace and harmony in terms of what we can do with *any* car on the grid. This is now the third car I’ve won a British Touring Car Championship in [it was the Infiniti Q50 in 2020 and 2021]; there’s not many drivers can say they’ve done that, and that’s a massive thanks to that man. He was very new to it [in the Subaru days]. He’d come in from Xtrac [the BTCC’s control gearbox supplier] and just soaked up every bit of information he could. The last thing Carl said to me when he left to go to Oz was, ‘He’s the boy you need’. So I took his advice and look what we’ve gone and done together.”

Further, the revamped cars of Sutton, Dan Cammish, Rowbottom and Sam Osborne were out testing early, each driver getting several days each. Which meant that, amid the desperately poor British spring, they actually managed to find some dry-weather running. Other teams, wherever they went, found that rain or even snow put paid to any meaningful testing. Incredibly, such was the climate this year that, by the end of the rain-affected opening round at Donington, the BTCC’s long-time tyre supplier Goodyear had >>

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Exclusive! WSR develops left-wheel-drive BMW. Hill was sensational at Oulton...

provided more sets of wet-weather rubber than during the whole of 2022. Such was the preparation of the NAPA-liveried Ford boys that this will have only widened their advantage. Early in the season, rival teams simply hadn't honed their packages.

"What the guys have done with the car has kind of worked... not to my favour, but into what I like from a car," explains Sutton. "I want a car I can rely on, and make it nice and nervous and loose, but I've also developed my driving style to suit that car. The car

hasn't just been an easy thing to drive; I've had to tailor myself to suit that, so the combined elements of the car and myself and what the guys have given me has been the key to all of that. We didn't open the toolbox and go, 'Oh there it is, we've got that'. We opened every single drawer and lifted out every single tool in it and found all the little bits, and every one of them adds up, and if you know what they are you know how to utilise them on track. And that's what I have with the engineers here, especially Antonio – he's been phenomenal, just dialling it in, making sure I know exactly what that car's capable of doing, and I go and extract it from it."

As with Sutton and Carrozza, it's the same with Ingram and his long-time cohort Spencer Aldridge. While Sutton's style is spectacular, Ingram's also belies that he's lugging around a heavy front-wheel-drive beast, so late on the brakes, pretty much drifting into tight corners with pinpoint accuracy on the apex, letting the rear dance around. They were both brilliant to watch this year, yet Ingram took just two wins, one of those when he went on a different tyre strategy to the rest over the 'use all three compounds in a day' round at Snetterton. There was certainly nothing wrong with the Hyundai, but the work done on those Fords means that the development race has ratcheted up for this coming winter.

The WSR squad with its long-serving BMW 3 Series, now the only rear-wheel-drive car in the BTCC, knows this too. Bearing in mind the performance of the Focus, it is understood that some of the brains trust at Sunbury were looking into a front-wheel-drive



Watson, here fighting Rowbottom and Butcher, won Jack Sears Trophy

## ROUND BY ROUND

### Donington National

**R1** Dan Cammish

**R2** Tom Chilton

**R3** Dan Cammish

Rowbottom takes pole, but is involved in a start incident with Hill and Sutton that rips off Sutton's water radiator and leads. Turkington is bumped through gravel, and Hill leads before Cammish passes late on. Cammish leads race two before rain increases; Chilton is on right tyres for victory. Cammish recovers to 12th and wins finale, while Ingram fend off Sutton for second.

### Brands Hatch Indy

**R1** Colin Turkington

**R2** Ash Sutton

**R3** Ash Sutton

Cammish is supreme in wet qualifying, but on dry Sunday can't hold back BMW of Turkington, who gets the lead and beats Sutton and Cammish. Sutton then leads home Ingram in second race, with Turkington third. Sutton charges from 11th in reversed-grid finale to fight Collard. The Toyota wins on road, but track limits deny him. Sutton takes victory from Thompson and Ingram.

### Snetterton

**R1** Ash Sutton

**R2** Ash Sutton

**R3** Tom Ingram

Sutton is on pole on medium tyres, but switches them on before the soft-equipped BMWs can. Hill passes Turkington late on for second and slashes gap, but Sutton just holds on. Now on softs, Sutton dominates race two from Hill and Turkington. Ingram, fighting illness, passes Rowbottom to win race three. Cammish beats Butcher to second but fails ride-height test.

### Thruxton

**R1** Ash Sutton

**R2** Jake Hill

**R3** Dan Rowbottom

For the third round running, Sutton wins a double. Ingram chases him home in each of the first two races, with Cook – who tops free practice but can't repeat the pace – just behind him. Hill, despite misfire, leads Cammish and Turkington to 4-5-6 in each race. Reversed grid shakes things up, and Rowbottom charges from fifth to pass Morgan for win, with Moffat taking third.

### Oulton Park

**R1** Jake Hill

**R2** Jake Hill

**R3** Colin Turkington

Yet again it's Sutton on pole, but Hill uses rear-drive traction to take lead at start of race one and defends mightily early on for victory. Ingram recovers from qualifying tyre problem to pass Collard for third. Hill doubles up later, from Sutton and Ingram. Sutton hits pitwall at start of finale. Turkington passes Morgan for win, with Hill following him past in BMW 1-2-3.





**“OUR PROBLEM IS WE’VE GOT THE WRONG BOOST AFTER THEY TOOK IT AWAY FROM US IN 2019”**

2 Series, before opting to refine what they have while the current NGTC ruleset plays out its remaining years. Like Sutton and Ingram, its two top drivers, Hill and Turkington, have long alliances with their respective engineers Craig Porley and John Waterman. But there is a feeling of hands being tied behind backs.

It dates back to the debut season of the 3 Series in 2019, when the car dominated out of the blocks and had its boost cut, something that has not been reversed. Hill and Turkington, together with team-mates Adam Morgan and Stephen Jelley, complained of lack of straightline performance in 2023, and theories flew around that somehow the BMW engine was running at increased charge temperatures, with consequent loss of power. Waterman – the Stirling Moss of BTCC engineers; somehow he’s never run a driver to the title! – disputes this, arguing that “where we modified the intake it’s better in traffic. Our problem is we’ve got the wrong boost after they took it away from us in 2019. We looked good at Silverstone, but that’s a short circuit and we were getting touts off everyone. We’ve got to do some engine development; they’re looking at different things on the power curve. And then we’ve got to hope we’re not too quick and they turn us down again!” >>

## Croft

**R1** Dan Cammish

**R2** Ash Sutton

**R3** Colin Turkington

It’s Cammish’s turn to rule qualifying, and he uses soft tyres to win race one. Rowbottom lets Sutton (on mediums) through for second on last lap in Ford 1-2-3. Sutton dominates race two on softs from Cammish, and Rowbottom wins fight with Ingram for another Focus clean sweep. Final race features another Sutton incident. Turkington leads home Ingram and Cook.

## Knockhill

**R1** Jake Hill

**R2** Jake Hill

**R3** Ash Sutton

Sutton claims top spot in qualifying, then fights Cook in opener as rain starts to fall. Cook shunts, and safety car scuppers Sutton, who pits belatedly for wets. Ingram wins, but fails ride-height test, handing victory to Hill, who then holds on from Sutton in race two. Sutton hunts down early leader Pearson to win finale. Cook is second and Pearson lets Ingram by for third.

## Donington GP

**R1** Ash Sutton

**R2** Tom Ingram

**R3** Rory Butcher

Bad start for Sutton from pole in wet opener, but he recovers to pass Ingram for victory. Hill catches Ingram at the end, and Ingram’s defence results in a penalty that costs him second. In dry race two, Ingram passes Sutton on fourth lap to move in front, and the series leader only just holds off Hill. Butcher climbs order in finale, before last-lap exit for Lloyd gives the Scot the win.

## Silverstone

**R1** Jake Hill

**R2** Ash Sutton

**R3** Colin Turkington

Hill is the only one of the leading qualifiers on the right tyre (wets) and wins easily from Rowbottom and Watson. The day dries out, and Hill is cruising in race two when a misfire hits. Taylor-Smith moves in front, but can’t hold off storming Sutton. Ingram is third. Turkington emerges from early battle with Lloyd and Rowbottom to win the third race from Ingram and Sutton.

## Brands Hatch GP

**R1** Ash Sutton

**R2** Ash Sutton

**R3** Jake Hill

Sutton clinches the title with win number 11 from pole in opener. Ingram is second, while puncture for Butcher decides fight for third in Thompson’s favour. New champ Sutton makes it 12 in race two, while Ingram fends off late challenge from Cammish, who’s on soft tyres. Brilliant double pass from Hill on Cook and Jelley gives him the last win of the season, with Cook second.

## HIGHS AND LOWS FOR CAMMISH

If there was a BTCC trophy for bad luck, it likely would have gone in 2023 to Dan Cammish. Lest we forget, this is the guy who in 2019, his second season in the series, came within a few miles of winning the title. This year he was a distant sixth, with less than 57% of team-mate Ash Sutton’s points total.

You can partly pin the blame on Cammish himself for what happened at Knockhill; he was quickest at the time when he fell off the road during qualifying on a wet-but-drying track, a bump tore off the radiator and he plummeted to 23rd. Not so for next time out at Donington; he was flying in free practice, easily top of the times, when brake failure at McLeans caused a massive shunt and ruled him out for the weekend (below). In the next round at Silverstone, he got used as a pinball in the slicks/wets opening race, then suffered late tyre delaminations in the second and third encounters.

The Yorkshireman was arguably the class act in his home county at Croft (where he won one race), scored a brace of victories in the opening round at Donington, and was blistering in wet qualifying at Brands Indy, but it can be tough when you’re up alongside a force of nature in the form of Sutton and his own particular driving style.

“He has the ability to handle oversteer and drives through it,” admitted Cammish at Silverstone. “I like the car stuck, but I do need it to rotate, so it’s can you have rear-grip stability and get it to turn? We’ve now found a way to have a bit of both. We’ve been more aligned in the second half of the year – we’ve gone a little bit to him [on set-up] and he’s come a little bit back to us.”



Somehow, Josh Cook ended up fifth in the points – albeit far adrift of fourth-placed Turkington – amid a frustrating season at One Motorsport. The Brackley squad, formerly known as BTC Racing, took over the Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type Rs when that team pulled out not long before the start of the season, to replace its older Dynamics-built Civics. It also inherited the Dynamics engine deal for bespoke Neil Brown Engineering-built Honda powerplants. But its form puzzlingly fluctuated.

At Thruxton, Cook's free practice time on Saturday morning was never bettered by anyone all weekend – and he was 0.3s off that



**“COLLARD STEPPED FORWARD WITH SOME OFTEN HIGHLY ENTERTAINING PERFORMANCES – ON AND OFF-TRACK!”**

when it counted in qualifying. At the Brands finale, he topped a free practice session, but he and unrelated engineer Mick Cook couldn't get the car to work on new, soft rubber when the grid was being set. Mid-season, he spoke of the old car being so predictable that “it was like a pair of old slippers”. This one was a different beast. It didn't help that the team had done “no testing since the start of the season. We haven't done a shakedown, we haven't done anything.”

The other team to get drivers – two of them – into the championship top 10 was Speedworks Motorsport with its Toyota Corolla GR Sport. Like the BMWs and Hondas, the Cheshire operation now had bespoke engines from NBE, but they were heavier than the customer M-Sport engines they replaced, affecting the weight distribution, and the first tests didn't come until the eve of the season. Early-season form was a disappointment, and it was Ricky Collard who stepped forward with some often highly entertaining performances – on and off-track! – to lead the line. The Toyota engine shares a fair amount of its architecture with the BMW, but there are also significant differences and it has to be mounted transversely in the Corolla, whereas it's longitudinal in the 3 Series.

A mid-season allowance of 20 millibars' extra boost from TOCA can't have done any harm, and generally improved all-round form seemed to particularly help Rory Butcher, who also had a mid-

season change of engineer. “It took me until the summer break to regroup,” the Scot admitted of a second half that included a reversed-grid Donington win and a front row at the Brands finale. In the third

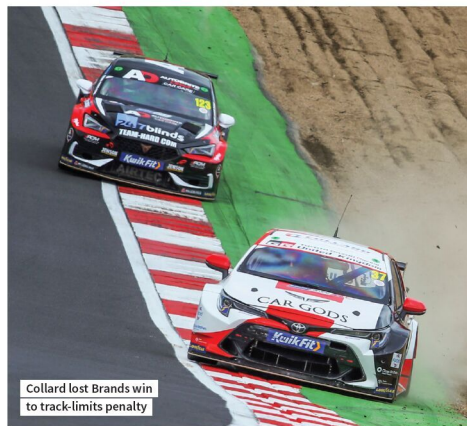
car, George Gamble showed pace in his first season of front-wheel drive, but it was usually too early (in free practice) or too late (in midfield race scrums), and he would overdrive it in qualifying.

Butcher's Donington win should have gone to Dan Lloyd, only for a driveshaft failure to heartbreakingly pitch him off the road on the final lap. He and Bobby Thompson – engineered by ex-Dynamics men Tom Hunt and Barry Plowman respectively, and with Matt Neal helping out – were the standouts in the large Team Hard Cupra camp, Thompson putting in some eye-opening performances when he wasn't sidelined by the team's budgetary situation.

Over at the Power Maxed Vauxhall camp, there was often nothing to choose between veteran Taylor-Smith and rookies Andrew Watson and Mikey Doble. Watson and Doble were involved in a five-way Jack Sears Trophy title scrap with Ronan Pearson (another impressive newcomer with the Excelr8 Hyundai team), Sam Osborne in his Motorbase/Alliance Ford and Hard Cupra man Dexter Patterson. Watson deservedly won it, but it was Doble who provided the shock of the season with his Silverstone pole.

Incredibly, it was the only time all season a Ford didn't top qualifying. When you look at it, was there ever a time when Sutton wasn't “in a really good place”? ❗

## ➔ P48 TOCA SUPPORTS REVIEW



## DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Motorbase/Alliance / Ford Focus ST
2	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N Fastback
3	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport
4	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport
5	Josh Cook (GBR)	One Motorsport / Honda Civic Type R
6	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Motorbase/Alliance / Ford Focus ST
7	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Motorbase/Alliance / Ford Focus ST
8	Ricky Collard (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport
9	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport
10	Rory Butcher (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport

11 **Aron Taylor-Smith** (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) 165; 12 **Stephen Jelley** (West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport) 141; 13 **Dan Lloyd** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 111; 14 **Tom Chilton** (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback) 97; 15 **Andrew Watson** (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) 93; 16 **Aiden Moffat** (One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R) 87; 17 **Bobby Thompson** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 74; 18 **Ronan Pearson** (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback) 69; 19 **Sam Osborne** (Motorbase/Alliance Ford Focus ST) 65;

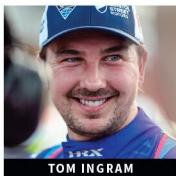


## AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



ASH SUTTON

**1** The first driver in the BTCC's 66-year history to win the title in rear and front-wheel-drive cars. Right from the start, he was absolutely phenomenal in the heavily revamped Focus. Sensational one-lap pace and spintangling overtaking.



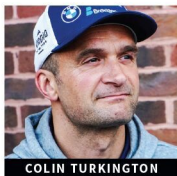
TOM INGRAM

**2** From electrical failure sidelining him from the first FP1 of the season, it was an uphill battle for the outgoing champ. But he never gave up, and took the Hyundai to 17 podiums. That's remarkable in a car that rarely matched the Ford.



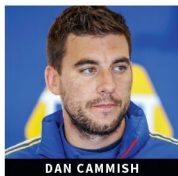
JAKE HILL

**3** Round five at Oulton was a turning point. Hill went his own way on set-up with the BMW and was totally inspired. Ended season with astonishing pass at Brands for win, but recurring boost sensor/misfire dramas cost two points.



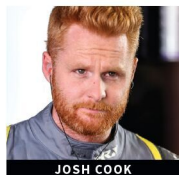
COLIN TURKINGTON

**4** Still excels at wringing the most from the BMW on its good days. Three of his wins were typical low-profile Turkington; the other was the climax of an epic day at Oulton where he charged from last on race-one grid after qualifying exclusion.



DAN CAMMISH

**5** 'Mr Unlucky' gets the nod over Cook (who beat him in points) because at his peak he was capable of beating team-mate Sutton on genuine pace. Also sat out Donington GP after brake failure caused huge shunt.



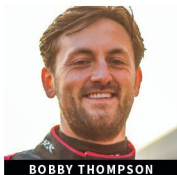
JOSH COOK

**6** Did his best with the resources available, but another Independents title doesn't cut it these days for someone who should be a top-liner – as the man himself knows. Fought hard and came close a couple of times to elusive-in-2023 race victory.



RICKY COLLARD

**7** Ah, Ricky... The BTCC's new king of entertainment had retired from racing at end of 2022, then changed his mind and was quite simply a revelation in the Toyota. Perhaps his head was in a better place. Don't mention track limits too often though.



BOBBY THOMPSON

**8** He's been around for a while now, but this season the Team Hard Cupra was good enough for him to show what he can do – at least, when the squad could afford to run him. Breathtaking car control. Many now believe him capable of BTCC big time.



DAN ROWBOTTOM

**9** Got himself a plum drive alongside Sutton and Cammish. There were growing pains as he sussed out his new working environment but the speed is there, as pole (with everyone on same hybrid usage) for Donington opener proved. Terrific team player too.



RORY BUTCHER

**10** There was the traditional late-season surge but this time it came from further back. Was overshadowed by team-mate Collard over first half of year, then began to re-establish himself as a contender. If only the BTCC went on into December...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	PTS
R	15	3	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	12	2	2	R	2	1	R	6	2	1	1	2	5	23	1	3	1	1	13	446
3	9	2	5	2	3	4	7	1	2	2	9	3	3	4	6	4	2	EX	10	3	3	1	7	22	3	2	2	2	4	400
2	16	4	4	4	22	2	2	10	4	4	10	1	1	2	5	11	7	1	1	14	2	3	8	1	20	8	6	6	1	372
12	8	5	1	3	5	3	3	7	6	6	4	9	4	1	7	6	1	11	R	17	5	4	6	R	8	1	4	R	10	312
9	19	7	8	7	10	8	27	5	3	3	11	6	5	7	4	5	3	R	8	2	7	5	R	9	7	6	12	7	2	268
1	12	1	3	5	4	11	11	EX	5	5	8	5	6	5	1	2	4	14	R	10	NS	NS	NS	R	24	23	5	3	9	253
5	11	10	R	15	9	7	4	3	24	11	1	R	21	8	3	3	5	R	23	R	8	7	22	2	10	4	7	8	5	226
6	R	14	9	9	8	R	13	14	11	9	5	4	9	9	11	8	15	3	6	5	4	6	4	20	14	7	9	4	6	217
7	2	22	R	16	6	5	5	9	13	12	2	8	7	3	19	13	R	16	NC	18	12	9	3	4	5	10	10	13	8	199
11	14	11	7	6	R	9	8	2	7	7	7	16	10	10	25	18	8	R	15	12	11	8	1	6	4	R	23	19	15	173

**20 Mikey Doble** (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) 62; **21 George Gamble** (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla GR Sport) 50; **22 Dexter Patterson** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 41; **23 Michael Cress** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 13; **24 Nicolas Hamilton** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 10; **25 Daryl DeLeon** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 6; **26 Rob Huff** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 5; **27 James Gornall** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 1; **28 Will Powell** (One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R) 0; **29 Jack Butel** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 0; **30 Nick Halstead** (Excel8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback) -5; **31 Jade Edwards** (Team Hard Cupra Leon/One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R) -5.  
**MANUFACTURERS** 1 Ford 802; 2 BMW 798; 3 Hyundai 699; 4 Toyota 583. **INDEPENDENT DRIVERS** 1 Cook 485; 2 Taylor-Smith 370; 3 Lloyd 357; 4 Watson 353; 5 Doble 321; 6 Moffat 317. **JACK SEARS TROPHY** 1 Watson 451; 2 Doble 422; 3 Patterson 422; 4 Osborne 404; 5 Pearson 383; 6 Butel 238.

SEASON REVIEW

TOCA SUPPORTS

# THE CONQUERING QUARTET THAT STARRED ON BTCC UNDERCARD

*With no Ginettas competing for the first time since 2007, there was a different feel to the TOCA support bill this year but still plenty of impressive displays*

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport  
IMAGES



PORSCHE  
CARRERA CUP GB  
ADAM SMALLEY

BRITISH FORMULA 4  
LOUIS SHARP





MINI CHALLENGE  
DAN ZELOS

PORSCHE SPRINT  
CHALLENGE GB  
JOE WARHURST



Sharp (below left) took incredible win from 20th at season opener

## BRITISH FORMULA 4

From the moment Louis Sharp burst onto the British Formula 4 scene last year, he has been turning heads with his performances. After travelling over from New Zealand, he completed far fewer test days than his rivals yet was instantly on the pace of his Carlin stablemates. And, despite being too young to contest the opener, he was in the mix at the second event, taking a podium at Brands Hatch.

Fast forward 12 months and Sharp was back for another crack and, after finishing fourth in 2022, he was in the spotlight again – this time as the highest-placed driver staying in F4. “There’s always pressure whether it’s your first year or second,” he says. “But there was probably more pressure on me than some of the others. As one of the favourites, a lot of that pressure I put on myself as I wanted to win and didn’t want anything else.”

And Sharp began that quest in impressive and memorable fashion. While he led throughout the first Donington Park contest from the front row, it was his stunning climb from 20th to win the reversed-grid race that truly justified his pre-season favourite tag. Yes, he was aided by a safety car bunching the field and *questionable* driving by some of his rivals – a recurring theme of the year with just eight of the 30 races not featuring at least one caution period or red flag – but it was still some achievement.

Yet Sharp struggled to build upon that impressive start. Podiums followed at Snetterton and Thruxton, but no wins, and little incidents began creeping in and costing him points. “It was pretty frustrating – we started off really strong and then, all of a sudden, our pace seemed to have disappeared,” recalls the Rodin Carlin racer. “I still felt like I was driving well and the team was still doing a good job. It was a tough period to go through – when the pace isn’t there, you end up having to make that difference yourself and be a bit more aggressive and go for riskier moves.”

Having qualified just ninth and 12th for the series’ maiden visit to the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit, Sharp used the summer break to spend time with the team and attack the final four events with fresh vigour. A return to winning ways at Croft was key and then, after a runner-up result at



### STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Louis Sharp	384
2	Will Macintyre	371
3	Deagen Fairclough	296
4	Dion Gowda	226
5	Jimmy Piszcyk	220
6	James Higgins	217

Knockhill, came a crucial moment at Donington Park. Hitech’s Will Macintyre had been consistently visiting the rostrum and usurped Sharp as points leader, this pair having a clear advantage over the rest of the inconsistent field. But 2022 Ginetta Junior runner-up Macintyre spun out of qualifying in Leicestershire, leaving him down the order as Sharp took another win. They headed to the Brands Hatch finale split by a single point although Sharp had the advantage all weekend and duly sealed the spoils.

“It just shows all the hard work and sacrifices we’ve made have paid off,” says Sharp, who had to leave friends and family behind in New Zealand, having been joined by his dad in “moving to the other side of the world”. But the globetrotting has been worth it, with Sharp once again turning heads as he prepares to rise further up the single-seater ranks.



Ginetta Junior runner-up Macintyre took the title fight down to the wire

“THERE’S ALWAYS PRESSURE – BUT THERE WAS PROBABLY MORE ON ME THAN SOME OF THE OTHERS”



## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

There was only ever one goal for Adam Smalley in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this year. After finishing runner-up last season, he was determined to follow in his previous four Juniors' footsteps and claim the crown. No pressure then. But, after a strong start, winning the title never truly looked to be in much doubt.

Smalley laid down a marker by qualifying on pole for the Donington Park opener and, although he slipped to second in the first race, he stormed from fourth to the lead on the opening lap of the reversed-grid contest to signal he meant business. Having switched from Redline Racing to Team Parker during the off-season, Smalley credits competing in the winter Porsche Sprint Challenge Southern Europe series as being key to his impressive start.

"That was a really good experience and a great way of finding out how Team Parker work and how to work better together," he explains. "I think that was a really beneficial few weeks, which meant we hit the ground running."

Yet there was a hint at Donington that Smalley might not have things all

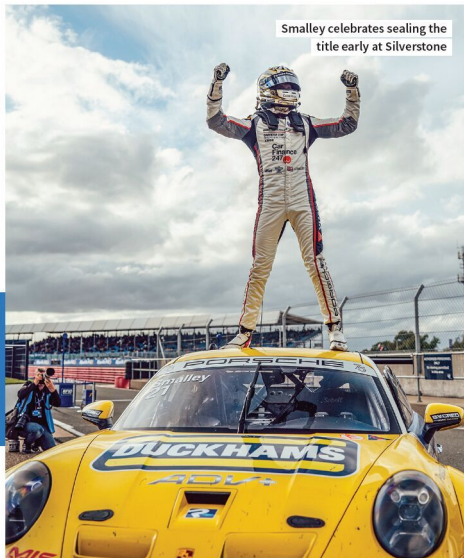
**"I HAD A WORST RESULT OF  
FOURTH - I COULD'VE NEVER  
EVEN DREAMT OF THAT"**

his own way. Richardson Racing's Robert de Haan had pulverised the PSCSE opposition and made history, pouncing on Smalley at Donington to become the youngest-ever winner in the Carrera Cup GB aged just 16. But then, in the rain of race two, he spun off down the Craner Curves, and that combination of flashes of speed but errors ultimately meant he fell away from Smalley in the points, even before he started skipping rounds to compete in Europe.

Smalley, meanwhile, was metronomic. He chalked up podium after podium to build what was quickly looking like an unassailable points lead. Sure enough, he wrapped up the title with a weekend to spare and finished the season with a remarkable 14 podiums from 16 races. "I had a worst result of fourth - I could've never even dreamt of that at the start of the year," says Smalley. "We had that points advantage so it was like it was mine to lose."

Sure enough, his path to the title was not always smooth sailing. He lost a potential win on the second visit to Donington with a wide moment at Goddards in the rain and even at Silverstone, where he clinched the championship, he plummeted down the order after opting for slick rubber on a drying track before calmly rising to the front again as the track improved.

Reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion James Kellest emerged as Smalley's main rival as the Century Motorsport driver grew in confidence with the car throughout the year after limited pre-season experience. But other title contenders - and drivers Smalley defeated to be selected as the Junior - vanished from the fray early on. A terrible start meant Gus Burton opted to focus on the Porsche Supercup before taking a couple of wins after



Smalley celebrates sealing the title early at Silverstone



Track limits were a problem for de Haan

## STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Adam Smalley	141
2	James Kellest	102
3	Josh Malin	75
4	Charles Rainford	68
5	Matty Graham	60
6	Robert de Haan	55

returning with JTR mid-year. Similarly, 2021 Sprint Challenge GB conqueror Theo Edgerton bowed out after things did not go his way at Thruxton.

There was no such trouble for Smalley and his impressive performances even continued after wrapping up the spoils as he signed off by winning the Brands Hatch finale, despite his front splitter breaking free. Not even that could dislodge Smalley from his remarkable run.



Kellest (leading) grew stronger to become Smalley's main rival

## MINI CHALLENGE



STANDINGS		
POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Dan Zelos	862
2	Will Orton (left)	810
3	Nelson King	650
4	Oliver Meadows	643
5	Joe Tanner	598
6	Bradley Gravett	573



Zelos could often be found leading the field

The winter "reset" clearly worked for Dan Zelos. The 2021 Mini Challenge champion had a poor season last year as he only mustered three podiums when attempting to defend his title. Zelos admitted the pressure got to him at times and he therefore adopted a new approach for this campaign.

"I wanted to come back and prove myself," he says. "There were certainly points last year thinking, 'Where has the pace gone, was it [2021 title] a fluke, was the pace actually there?' But we went into the season with a really good head space. Everything seemed to click, and it was spot on from the get-go."

Sure enough, Zelos instantly dispelled last year's disappointment by taking pole at Donington Park and winning two races. But then came a moment that threatened to derail his year. He was involved in a huge crash with Sam Smith in race three when Smith cannoned into him at Redgate. It forced Smith onto the sidelines as he recovered from concussion and Zelos was worried he might join him. "It was a horrific crash and I feel very lucky to have been able

to walk away from it," admits Zelos. "Big crashes like that cause big repair bills and there were questions whether I would make it to the end of the season."

But his Excel8 Motorsport crew was able to prep a spare Mini in time for the next Brands Hatch round and Zelos was back on form, winning the opening race before a puncture struck while leading race two.

Yet that proved to be the end of his bad luck as he proceeded to rack up the wins to head to the Brands finale on the cusp of the title. Key to that success was a string of poles only ended by the returning Smith in Kent. Second to Smith in the opener, despite a late gearbox problem, was enough to seal the deal and, when the replacement started leaking oil in the second race, Zelos says: "It was like the car had realised it had done its job!"

It certainly had, although Zelos was pushed hard in the early events by Hybrid Tune's Ginetta GT5 graduate Will Orton. He defied his lack of Mini mileage to pounce when Zelos's woes struck before engine troubles at Snetterton set him back. Aside from a couple of outings from reigning champion Sam Weller and when Smith finally returned, Orton was the only one really capable of challenging Zelos. But it could perhaps have been a different story had Smith not suffered that Donington accident.

**"WE WENT INTO THE SEASON WITH A REALLY GOOD HEAD SPACE - AND EVERYTHING SEEMED TO CLICK"**

## PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

The 10-week gap between the second and third events of the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB season gave plenty of time to reflect. And Ginetta Junior graduate Joe Warhurst wanted to use the hiatus to turn his season around after battling to podiums on his first wet-weather running in the Cayman at Donington Park before struggling in Snetterton qualifying and then suffering a track-limits penalty when pushing too hard at Hamilton.

"I knew, if we continued this way, I wasn't going to win the championship and I needed to do something about it," recalls Warhurst. "I spent a lot of time with Team Parker trying to look at everything that went

wrong and why it went wrong."

And that hard work yielded results as he qualified on pole at Croft and seemingly won the first race before dropping to fourth with a penalty for being "30cm over the line" at the start.

Sunny In then provided dark clouds when he went off in the rain of race two before being spun by Toby Trice (Redline) at the

following Donington event meant Warhurst was starting to be frustrated by the lack of wins. "All around my bedroom I've got second-place trophies," he remembers thinking. He used his training for the Great North Run to provide extra preparation for Silverstone and this paid off. "I broke the ice with my first win and then took two more with me as well!" says Warhurst.

With Redline's long-time points leader Steve Roberts struggling with track-limits sanctions of his own and having retired at Donington after tangling with Matthew Armstrong, Warhurst was right back in the title picture. While he was gaining momentum, other frontrunners like Trice, Warhurst's team-mate Armstrong and Graves' Max Coates all struggled to achieve the required consistency and dropped from contention. And then two more Warhurst wins from pole at Brands Hatch sealed the deal and his transformation was complete.



Supreme end to the season gave Warhurst the glory

STANDINGS		
POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Joe Warhurst	185
2	Steve Roberts	172
3	Max Coates	156
4	Matthew Armstrong	147
5	Will Jenkins	128
6	Toby Trice	121



## AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



DAN ZELOS

**1** Just 0.129 seconds in a thrice red-flagged final qualifying session of the season was all that separated Zelos from an unbeaten run of Mini Challenge poles. Such a remarkable feat is surely deserving of top spot in Autosport's rankings. Yes, the series may have lacked established frontrunners, but Zelos's consistency was incredible and he secured the highest win percentage of any driver among the TOCA supports (50%). Barely put a wheel wrong all year as he wrestled back the title in convincing style.



ADAM SMALLEY

**2** Porsche Carrera Cup GB dominator Smalley came pretty close to knocking Zelos off the number one spot with some sublime consistency of his own. Of the 16 races, he took 14 podiums – a seriously impressive feat. But, again, he faced limited opposition at times this year and, ultimately, his far lower win percentage (25%) and lack of poles (only two) means he has to settle for second. Yet, winning the title with an event to spare and never losing his cool mean he is still more than deserving of a high ranking.



LOUIS SHARP

**3** Produced arguably the standout drive of the season with his victory from 20th on the grid in the rain of the Donington Park opener. But British Formula 4 was the only one of the overall championships decided in the final race and his five-event mid-year winless spell means Sharp is not higher up the order. The Kiwi still coped admirably with the pre-season 'favourite' tag and was back on form in the final four events to narrowly triumph having not let his slender points lead heading to Brands Hatch faze him.



WILL MACINTYRE

**4** His Old Hairpin Donington qualifying spin happened in front of Autosport and Macintyre's obvious disappointment was understandable – he knew it was a blow to his title bid. Yet it was easy to forget this was his first season in single-seaters considering how he took the F4 battle to sophomore Sharp down to the wire. Given the narrow margin, it seems right they should be next to each other in our rankings, too. He scored the same number of podiums (14) as Sharp but the fact just two were wins proved the difference.



WILL ORTON

**5** Orton certainly did not look like a Mini Challenge rookie with the manner in which he began the season. He instantly emerged as the much more experienced Zelos's main rival and, any time the 2021 champion was in strife, Orton was there to pounce and held the early points lead. But recurring engine issues at Snetterton dented his charge and thereafter he was unable to claw enough points away from Zelos to make a closer fight. Nevertheless, he still marked himself out as one to watch for the future.



JOE WARHURST

**6** Inevitably, one of the champions must be the lowest-ranked and, unfortunately for Porsche Sprint Challenge GB conqueror Warhurst, that happens to be him. He was almost unstoppable at the final two events, winning five of the six races, to snatch the title away from Steve Roberts. But he'd not achieved such domination over the field – in which no one had really stood out and Am driver Marc Warren had been able to head – earlier in the season and therefore finds himself lower in Autosport's top 10.



JAMES KELLETT

**7** Kellett was not quite able to replicate his Ginetta GT4 Supercup pulverisation from last season in the Carrera Cup but still finished the year with the most wins on five, and three of his triumphs came without the benefit of a reversed grid. A tangle with Charles Rainford left him with just two points after the opener and hampered his title bid right from the start. Then nerfing team-mate Gus Burton off after a poor start from pole at Brands was not great either, but regularly impressed from then on.



DEAGEN FAIRCLOUGH

**8** There was never a dull moment watching Fairclough in F4 this year! Earned his place on the grid after topping the ROKiT Racing Star sim shootout and lived up to his car's branding with his rocketship starts to regularly fly up the order from lowly qualifying. Made some enemies with a few questionable moves early in the season but combined a little more maturity with his gung-ho attitude later to snare third in the points as others fell off the pace, finishing with more victories than Macintyre.



MARC WARREN

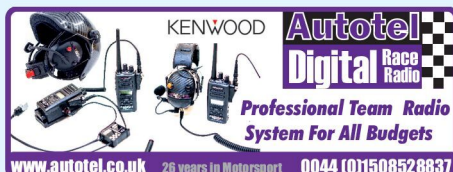
**9** It is very rare for a driver not in the Pro class to make this top 10, but there was something a bit special about Warren's achievements this year. For an Am driver to win any race outright is impressive, but Warren managed it four times in the Sprint Challenge to prove it was no fluke – giving him more overall wins than anyone except Warhurst. Yes, he has impressed in Ginetta series previously but beating drivers less than half his age and with much more experience is no mean feat.



ROBERT DE HAAN

**10** Like Fairclough, de Haan was another spectacular driver to watch this year. On pure pace, the Dutchman should be higher up this list but he made too many mistakes in the Carrera Cup – especially when it came to following the new track-limits rules – to be any better than 10th. But it was easy to forget his lack of experience in such cars as he made history, becoming the series' youngest race winner at just 16, and also landed more success across the Channel, including winning the Benelux title.

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#### Your roles and responsibilities will include:

- Setting and operating Mazak CV5-500 5 axis machining centres to achieve maximum efficiency and the highest quality standards for the manufacture of precision engineered metallic components.
- Use of Siemens NX CAM software to create CNC programmes alongside our dedicated CAM Programmers for high complexity components, with a focus on CNC code optimisation and troubleshooting.
- Providing clear, effective communication across all shifts.
- Maximising throughput and overall machine tool efficiency.
- Ensuring that appropriate process and procedures are adhered to throughout manufacture in order to maintain high quality.

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- Comply with company quality standards AS 9100D (training will be provided)
- Lead and mentor junior designers to ensure company standards are achieved
- Supporting the Test team as required to explore and validate technical solutions

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- Prepare power units for both dyno and trackside operations
- Assist with other activities deemed appropriate by the Engine Build Team Leader or Head of ICE Operations
- Manage all build specification, up revisions and component lifing in accordance with Production Control and Technical Operations instructions.
- Communicate assembly related quality issues to the appropriate key stakeholders ensuring faults/NCR's are recorded via the internal business Faults System.
- Become an integral member of the Assembly Group team, providing support to all team members and promoting open discussion with members throughout the business.

**Key Attributes of the Engine Builder/Assembly Technician**

- Demonstrate a high level of technical understanding and ICE assembly competence.
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- Monitoring and maintenance of relevant automotive systems, data loggers and sensors
- Monitoring and maintenance of relevant programmes and software systems
- Management, set up and maintenance of radio communication equipment
- Administration and support of the IT structure at the race track and in the workshop
- Installation, set up and maintenance of weather station at the race track
- Live data monitoring during test and race events

**Qualifications:**

- Masters or Bachelors Degree in Systems, Electronic or Automotive Engineering or similar background
- Relevant experience in GT endurance racing, ideally GT World Challenge Endurance
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- Good understanding of IT structure
- English spoken and written

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- Scheduling your own work to ensure production and installation deadlines are met
- Maintaining in-house equipment by completing routine maintenance checks
- Maintaining stock levels of material, tools and consumables
- Ensure the reputation of the company and its associated brands is maintained to the highest level

**Essential requirements:**

- Previous experience of full vehicle wraps to a high standard
- Previous experience of graphic printing, cutting and application
- Good knowledge of common software packages to create and modify graphic designs
- Must have experience in a similar wrapping and graphic environment and be able to work unsupervised
- Excellent time management skills with the ability to forecast workload and identify additional labour requirements
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**Key Responsibilities:**

1. Sub-Assembly:
  - Perform sub-assembly tasks on motorsport components, including powertrain systems, suspension systems, and other critical parts.
  - Follow assembly instructions, technical drawings, and specifications with precision to ensure accuracy and quality.
  - Ensure that all components are assembled to the highest standards and in compliance with safety and performance regulations.
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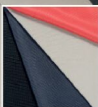
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**GB3 Voisin gets the job Dunne to defeat title rivals**

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Harper (left) and Leung pairing could continue

motorsport  
IMAGES

## Century wants champs to stay in 2024

### BRITISH GT

Century Motorsport owner Nathan Freke would “love to” keep his British GT title-winning pairing of Dan Harper and Darren Leung together into the 2024 season.

The BMW duo came out on top in a rollercoaster ride of a race at the Donington finale last Sunday, overcoming a 20-second success penalty in the pits to finish second.

After describing the season as “a dream year”, Freke added, when asked if he would try to keep the combination together to defend the crown: “Love to, I’d absolutely love to. Darren’s quite new to his career and has obviously got big hopes and big goals going forwards.

“I can’t talk for Darren but, from the conversations I’ve had, I think the ambition is to do British GT. One thing that is true in motorsport is that the more seat time you have, the better you are.

“If we can double-programme something with perhaps GT World Challenge or some endurance races in Europe and a British GT campaign, that’s what we’d like to do.”

While Leung has control over his racing future, BMW works driver Harper must go where the German manufacturer places him. While he highlighted a preference to remain in British GT, Harper said: “I don’t know at the moment. I think after this, Darren will hopefully be keen to keep me but we just need to see what his plans will be also.

“I know that this year was very much about getting him up to speed. It’s his first year in GT3 racing and we know how many different series there are all over the world. But I would personally love to come back.”

A key moment in deciding the outcome of the title battle came when 2 Seas Motorsport’s pre-event points leader James Cottingham was penalised for overtaking under yellow flags.

“It was busy and I just simply didn’t see it,” said the Mercedes driver. “If you’re on your own, or with one other car, when you’re going into that part of the track you can see it. But just with the circumstances, I didn’t see it.”

SAM HALL

## Eaton targets more British GT after cameo

### BRITISH GT

Former W Series driver Abbie Eaton has expressed her desire to make a full-time return to British GT after a cameo appearance at the 2023 finale at Donington Park.

The 31-year-old failed to complete a racing lap on Sunday after team-mate John Seale crashed the Fox Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan GT3 they were due

to share into the barriers at the Old Hairpin during the opening stint.

Eaton finished fourth in the GT4 standings in 2016 in an Ebor Maserati and has been regularly racing Lamborghinis this season.

“I always wanted to come back, I never wanted to leave, but it’s just an opportunity I was lucky to have with John,” she said. “I’ve been lucky to race in Super Trofeo this year,



Seale off prevented Eaton racing Fox Lambo

JEP  
MOTORSPORT  
IMAGES

which is a GT3 car of sorts, so I wanted to maintain that speed.”

Eaton’s target is a full British GT push in 2024: “That’s always the goal – and continue my

exploits with Super Trofeo, with Rebelleo, the team that I have set up. It would be good to come back and do a full season for sure – ideally GT3.”

SAM HALL

# Jaguars and Midgets/Sprites to join CSCC fold

CSCC

Two more championships are joining the Classic Sports Car Club's ranks for next season, with the Jaguar Challenge and Midget & Sprite Challenge both adding to the club's growing portfolio.

The Jaguar category enjoyed a long spell of appearing at CSCC events when it was run by the Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club, but it has spent the past three seasons with the Classic Touring Car Racing Club. Now it will be renamed as the CSCC Jaguar Championship, and former coordinator Chris Robinson is back in post.

"We never really wanted them to go in the first place but, at the time, their grid numbers had been going down and down," said CSCC director David Smitheram. "They ran with us but we had no part in the promotion and they were run by the JEC. We've kept in touch with James Ramm, the drivers' representative, ever since [the CTCRC move] and a whole load of their drivers came across and raced in Future and Modern Classics."

Those discussions led to the idea of rejoining the CSCC, and a drivers' vote was held recently in which there was broad support for the change. "I think they missed the CSCC paddock and organisation



and that was flattering," added Smitheram, who says the focus is on growing numbers. "This year will be about stability and we're working on the regulations now."

Ramm added: "Jaguar club racing has a long history and its current format started in 2001 with the CSCC, so in some respects it's a bit of a homecoming for the Jaguars! The CSCC have given our championship a unique opportunity to grow and we are excited to blast into the 2024 season. We would like to thank the CTCRC for making us feel welcome over the last three years."

The Midget & Sprite Challenge joins the CSCC following the MG Car Club's decision to no longer run race meetings. With a significant number of these cars currently competing in the CSCC's Swinging Sixties division, Smitheram said it felt like a logical fit.

"Between us, we've pretty much got all the Sprints and Midgets so, if they want



their championship to grow, it makes sense to be on the same card as Swinging Sixties," said Smitheram. "We can say to our many Midget and Sprite drivers, 'If you fancy a change and to do two 20-minute championship rounds, you can.'"

These latest additions now mean the CSCC will run four championships next year, having previously concentrated on series. The MG Trophy and Kumho BMW categories have already been confirmed as moving across from the MGCC and British Automobile Racing Club respectively.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

## New build kit to boost FN2 models in Civic Cup

CIVIC CUP

The Civic Cup is introducing an off-the-shelf build kit for the FN2-model Honda Civic Type R to encourage more of the cars into the series.

The EP3 model, built between 2001 and 2005, has been numerically dominant in the championship, with only a handful of the newer FN2s, dating from 2007-11. The FN2's greater weight and simpler torsion beam axle, compared with the EP3's double wishbone set-up, have contributed to it being less favourable. But

championship promoter Maximum Motorsport has conducted development work on the FN2 this year to address its potential flaws.

"There's a lot of EP3s out there but they're getting harder to find," explained Maximum boss Stewart Lines. "There's been some FN2s in the championship, but they haven't been stellar on performance. So we've had a couple of cars out this year where we've found out what we need to do to make the car the same speed."

Dave Marshall recorded a reversed-grid win in his FN2



at Cadwell Park in August, then added a podium finish in a non-reversed-grid race at Silverstone last month. Multiple TCR UK race winner Bradley Kent drove another development car, run by Pro Alloys Racing, at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The new kit, which will include rollcage, suspension,

ECU and lighter tailgate among other parts, will be finalised and made available to customers over the coming weeks.

"There's lots and lots of FN2s out there," added Lines. "You can buy a donor car for £2500. And the kit won't be any more than £15,000."

MARK PAULSON





OLLIE READ

After seven years as a series, Hot Hatch is now a championship

## Castle Combe Hot Hatch series to become a championship for 2024

### CCRC

Castle Combe Racing Club's popular Hot Hatch competition is to be run as a fully fledged championship next year, following seven successful seasons as a series of events.

"We have been thinking about it for a few years, but kept thinking if it's successful, why change it?" said CCRC chair Ken Davies. "But, when we put it to the competitors as a straw poll, 75% were in favour of the switch, so the decision was customer-led.

"The technical regulations have to be

finalised and submitted to Motorsport UK for ratification but, as part of the process, the club had to demonstrate the strength of support for Hot Hatch, which we were able to do for the past seven years."

This season the average Hot Hatch arrival rate over six meetings (alternate single and double-headers) has been 26, the best of Combe's crop. Four drivers have won across the nine races, Shaun Goverd top gun with five in his Citroën AX. Chris Southcott (twice), Tony Cooper and Sam Stride won the others in different generations of Honda Civic.

MARCUS PYE

## Radical champion Micouris tries GB4

### GB4

Radical Cup UK champion Theo Micouris made his slicks-and-wings debut with Elite Motorsport in the final round of GB4 at Donington Park last weekend.

Micouris, who has starred in SR1 machinery with nine wins and 14 pole positions during his first year of car racing, made the switch as he evaluates options for 2024.

He took two sixth places and a seventh across the three contests but, after limited running in pre-event

testing, Micouris felt it could have gone even better.

"It's a tough one," he said. "We've had a lot of potential. We had a lot of great pace but we've had such little testing, we've had quite a few issues throughout the weekend.

"We were put on the back foot straight away and we had a couple of good races making our way through the pack, but we haven't been able to show what we could have done. But it's been a good experience. We've got to weigh up some different things, see what looks

best for next year."

Ginetta Junior podium finisher Finn Harrison also made his GB4 debut with Elite in preparation for a full season in 2024, bouncing back from a race-one incident to finish fourth in race two.

"It's definitely more fun to drive," he said of his first single-seater experience. "It gives you a head start. You get some races under your belt, you know how to do the starts, how to overtake cleanly and race other cars, which is why we are doing these races."

STEVE WHITFIELD

### CHILMAN WINS BHRC TITLE

Roger Chilman and Patrick Walsh have won this year's British Historic Rally Championship following the final round on Saturday's Carlisle Stages. Ford Escort Mk2 crew Chilman and Walsh had the upper hand going into the final round in the Kielder forest and, when rivals Nick Elliott and David Price slid their Fiat 131 off on the opening stage, the matter was settled.

### IMAGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Image Race Cars' co-founder Alan Langridge and Goodwood era manager Robert Sygne celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Formula Ford marque's birth on Saturday in Tangmere, West Sussex, where the first chassis were made. Maiden race winner Mike Wrigley, FF1 owners Mike 'Fulmar' Taylor and David Wigdor, plus later works drivers Frank Bayes and Anthony Reid attended the reunion. Vicky Chandhok (Karun's father), Paul Simpson and Anders Oberg made the longest pilgrimages, from Madras, Cape Town and Sweden respectively.

### FIESTA JUNIOR ADDITIONS

Junior Saloon frontrunner Oskar Dix and Ministox graduate Freddie Hunter-Johnson were additions to the Brands Hatch Fiesta Junior field last weekend. Dix drove the MK7 Zetec S of Jeakins Race Preparation, which is considering joining the series full-time next year, but got caught up in race one's first pile-up. Hunter-Johnson is assessing a dual campaign on the circuits and short ovals in 2024. He qualified 16th of 23 cars but did not finish either race.

### RICHARDS WINS AT JEREZ

Briton Clive Richards (below) won both legs of the Lurani Trophy Historic Formula Junior finale, a highlight of the Jerez Historic Festival last Sunday. Richards and team-mate Andrew Hibberd battled in Saturday's race until Hibberd spun, but he charged down duellists Philipp Buhofer and Croix-en-Ternois circuit owner Patrick d'Aubrey to regain second. Richards then revelled on a damp track on Sunday, beating Hibberd and d'Aubrey.



# Equipe enters single-seaters with F2 Atlantic

## EQUIPE CLASSIC RACING

Equipe Classic Racing will run single-seater races for the first time next year after launching a new Equipe F2 Atlantic series.

The organiser has traditionally hosted contests for pre-1966 sports cars before beginning to diversify with the creation last season of its Equipe 70s category, which features tin-tops alongside GTs. Now, with BGV8s and the more modern machinery of the MG Cup arriving on board for 2024, it is also expanding into historic single-seaters in the belief that there is a gap in the market for a UK-focused series for Formula 2 and Formula Atlantic cars.

"We felt we needed to change the profile of what we're doing and we know some people in that arena," said Equipe partner Rob Cull. "What we've looked at is F2/Formula Atlantic have similar speeds so we've created a series for them. A few of our drivers have these cars and said, 'Is there any chance of doing a UK



series because I don't want to do five rounds in Europe as it's getting more and more expensive? It's taken a bit of work behind the scenes to get it all coming together. These spectacular cars will bring some fantastic racing to the Equipe weekends."

Races are due to be held on the Grand Prix circuits at Silverstone and Brands Hatch next year, alongside trips to Donington Park, Snetterton and Oulton Park. The series will span cars built between 1967 and 1978, and

FIA papers are welcomed but not demanded from drivers with eligible cars.

Leading historic racer Martin Stretton has thrown his support behind the new category. "I'm a great fan of the Equipe organisation and their philosophy," he said. "This new, self-policed series offers a terrific opportunity to enjoy their pragmatic, user-friendly approach to rules, regs and racing."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

# McRae to make gravel Rally2 debut on Cambrian

## RALLYING



Max McRae is due to make his gravel Rally2 debut on this weekend's Cambrian Rally at the wheel of a Skoda Fabia R5.

The grandson of British Rally Championship legend Jimmy has previously only competed in a Rally2 car on the Tarmac-focused McRae

Rally Challenge at Knockhill, but is now looking forward to tackling Welsh woodland stages that are synonymous with McRae rallying success.

"There's so much history on those stages, it's going to be fantastic to get in there and drive them," said McRae. "The priority for me is to take experience of the R5. This is going to be

quite different. It's a chance to get out and end the year with some fun but, at the same time, I know it'll help me next season."

The Cambrian Rally is also the final round of this year's BRC campaign. With the British title already wrapped up, Adrien Fourmaux is instead concentrating on the world championship.

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# A Festival to remember

*This year's Brands Hatch Formula Ford showpiece featured a thrilling final, banishing memories of last season's misery, but the event lacked entries*

STEPHEN LICKORISH

**N**ow that is what a Formula Ford Festival final should be like. Forget the damp squib that was last year's brief affair, this was a proper contest. Twenty laps of uninterrupted action that had the crowd enthralled, featuring unbelievable overtakes between quality drivers and uncertainty over the winner right to the end. There was even some late unreliability drama for the brilliant Niall Murray to add another twist. It's no wonder that Jamie Sharp, the 2021 victor who was part of the lead squabble, says: "You can never guess what's going to happen – it's the most unpredictable weekend!"

It was the perfect tonic after the misery of last season, when risky scheduling and a reluctance from those in charge to react to the expected bad weather meant predicted rain arrived shortly after the final began and insufficient daylight for it to be restarted when conditions improved. Autosport, and many others, gave the organising British Racing & Sports Car Club a hard time for not foreseeing such problems and, to its credit, changes were made this year, with the final brought forward to 1600 and no longer being the event's last race. But this year's cracker was the perfect way to banish memories of the madness of 2022. And BRSCC chairman Peter Daly wants to take advantage of the brilliant battles to promote the event in the future. "We've got it filmed and available and will see how we can market it," he says.

**"It would be nice to have a prize fund for it – it might bring one or two higher-level drivers in"**

Yet, for all the final's thrills, there is a problem. The Formula Ford Festival is an historic event with an incredible collection of previous winners and frontrunners. But this year just 55 drivers took part. It is an enormous reduction on the 78 of last year, which followed the 97 when its 50th edition was celebrated in 2021. Only for the pandemic-affected 2020 instalment have fewer gathered for the Brands Hatch showpiece. For what is supposed to be a blue-riband event, having so few entries that every single one was guaranteed a place in the semi-finals somewhat undermines its knockout nature.

"Our original ambition was 80-85 cars," admits Daly. "As the year's gone on, all clubs have seen numbers dwindle. I was hearing people were running out of budget early in the year because of the increases in prices of tyres and fuel or early accident damage."

There is certainly no doubt the cost-of-living crisis has taken a toll and there were other factors at play. Take the calendar clash with the Donington Park British GT finale. That meant GT race director Daly – who won the historic final in 2020 – and his partner Lorna Vickers could not take part, and also ruled out FF1600 regular Matt Cowley, who was busy winning the GT4 title! It also impacted upon teams with Kevin Mills Racing focusing on its GB4 drivers at Donington. Further afield, the Northern Irish championship finale at Kirkistown may have attracted a meagre grid but it still potentially cost another couple of entries in Kent.

Two-time winner Joey Foster was another on the sidelines as budget difficulties meant he instead switched roles to run Historic Formula 3 champion Samuel Harrison in a Firman. However, he remains optimistic the event's fortunes will improve. "You have to look at Formula Ford over the years and it does this," he says, making an up and down movement. "There's still youngsters coming through and it's a great place for drivers to start. But it's very difficult for people who have no spare cash to spend."

While some feel last year's shambles has put drivers off, Foster – who plans to return to the driving seat for next weekend's Walter Hayes Trophy – does not believe that is the case. "Lessons have been learned," he says. Instead, he feels some sort of incentive is needed to lure drivers, like the boost provided when UK Formula Ford champions secured places on the Mazda Road to Indy shootout approaching a decade ago.

It is something that Daly is certainly considering. "I think it would be nice to have a prize fund for it – it might bring one or two higher-level drivers in," he says. Daly also believes the reduction in Formula Ford racing next year with the BRSCC's National championship ending and MotorSport Vision Racing's United category instead flying the flag for 'modern' cars could assist with the budgetary situation.

Also set to help is the "passion" of Alan Bowles, who was recently appointed Super Classic Pre-'99 championship coordinator and will be working on the Festival, too. Bowles organised an impressive Elden reunion at Brands last weekend with drivers travelling from as far afield as the States to reminisce, while he also assembled an eclectic mix of cars in the paddock to again try to spark some interest. His enthusiasm can only help.

Ultimately, the BRSCC has learned from the mistakes of last season but now it needs to ensure the fantastic final this time around is used to convince more to race in the years to come. The Hayes has traditionally attracted larger fields than the Festival and, if its numbers are substantially greater this season, it would provide a clear demonstration of the challenge still ahead. 🏁

➡ P70 FESTIVAL REPORT

# Blistering comeback drive seals GT3 title for Leung and Harper

**DONINGTON PARK**  
**BRITISH GT**  
**22 OCTOBER**

Dan Harper and Darren Leung secured the British GT3 title after finishing second in a chaotic Donington Park decider.

The Century Motorsport-run BMW M4 crew arrived at the season finale trailing championship leader James Cottingham, and the absent Jonny Adam, by 13 points following their victory last time out at Brands Hatch.

However, there was drama even before the race as seven grid penalties and four disqualifications were handed out on Saturday night after qualifying, including the removal of the pole-winning Beechdean-run Aston Martin of Andrew Howard and Ross Gunn for failing to set two timed laps in the opening wet Q1 session. The sanction was later overturned, however, after Pirelli confirmed an unexpected tyre issue was to blame for an early pitstop.

This meant that Leung lined up second, with Cottingham – racing alongside factory

Mercedes driver Philip Ellis as opposed to regular partner Adam, due to his European Le Mans Series commitments – in fifth.

The permutations were many but, in order to have any hope of taking the crown, Leung and Harper had to at least finish in the top five. The Century pair would also be required to overturn a 20-second success penalty for their win at Brands Hatch, though, while Cottingham would only need to serve 10s after finishing third.

Aware of the need to build a margin at the front, Leung wasted no time in passing Howard with a brave first-lap overtake down the Craner Curves and through the Old Hairpin. In the laps that followed, he was a second per lap faster than those behind but his margin was crushed on the fifth tour when the safety car came out following a sizeable shunt between GT4 Toro Verde team-mates Ian Duggan and James Townsend at Redgate.

Following the 20-minute intervention, Leung again showed blistering pace to build a 19s lead, all while Cottingham was struggling, losing places to Miguel Ramos and Morgan Tillbrook, while 2 Seas



Leung (r) took the lead on the opening lap but safety cars negated his gap

team-mate Ian Loggie appeared in no mood to offer aid.

Howard was acting as a buffer in second but, through GT4 traffic, Loggie moved from fourth into second, demoting Tillbrook and Howard before a second safety car was called into action. This was after John Seale skated across the grass at high-speed on the inside of the Craner Curves before striking the tyre wall at the Old Hairpin in his Fox Lamborghini. Mike Price's Mercedes had also made heavy contact with Iain Campbell's McLaren at the Melbourne Hairpin moments earlier, which left the latter beached and both out.

The end of the safety car period coincided with the opening of the GT3 pit window just past the hour mark, which meant Leung was unable to build any sort of buffer as they rejoined down the pack and outside the points after being held additional seconds while traffic filed out.

Jules Gounon assumed the lead, having replaced Loggie, ahead of Marcus Clutton



Balfe/Mitchell came back from penalty to win



Cottingham lost out on title after sanction

## GT4 CROWN FOR COWLEY AND EVANS AFTER ANOTHER INCREDIBLE TURNAROUND

Erik Evans and Matt Cowley completed an unlikely British GT4 comeback to seal race and championship success at Donington.

The GT4 drivers' title appeared to be a done deal ahead of the penultimate round at Brands Hatch but a nil score for the #90 Optimum Motorsport-run McLaren Artura of Jack Brown and Charles Clark opened the door to Century Motorsport duo Michael Johnston/Chris Salkeld and Academy's Evans and Cowley.

The latter pair had topped the podium at Brands Hatch and built on this spectacularly at Donington with a drive from the lower reaches of the order to take the lead with 15 minutes remaining – a move that pushed

them ahead in the standings despite arriving 16.5 points down on the leaders, and the deficit being over 50 points just one race earlier.

Evans lined his Ford Mustang up in seventh on the grid, with Johnston 12th and title favourites Brown and Clark having the advantage in third.

The points leaders dropped a place to Zac Meakin in the early phases before a huge crash between Toro Verde GT team-mates Ian Duggan and James Townsend caused a 20-minute safety car interruption – the pair colliding on the run to Redgate and making heavy contact with the wall.

While the battle in GT3 raged, GT4 was a far more sedate affair until the pitstops. Taking place under a further safety car period, the

race unravelled for the championship-leading entry as it dropped a lap on the field with a flat battery, exiting the pits when the GT3 pack had completed their stops.

The safety car made its third and final appearance shortly after, when Ben Collins – making his first appearance in the category in 18 years – stopped his Ginetta with an oil pressure sensor failure. The former *Top Gear* 'Stig' had completed fewer than two laps.

Following the stops, the Johnston/Salkeld BMW M4 was in prime position for championship glory, running in third with the #90 now all but out of the running and Cowley in 10th. But a fine individual performance from Cowley enabled



## RACE RESULTS

## GT3

(71 laps) **1 Shaun Balfe/Sandy Mitchell** (Lamborghini Huracan EVO); 2 Darren Leung/Dan Harper (below) (BMW M4) +9.01s; 3 Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (McLaren 720S Evo); 4 John Fergusson/Raffaele Marciello (Mercedes-AMG); 5 Ian Loggie/Jules Gounon (Mercedes); 6 Andrew Howard/Ross Gunn (Aston Martin Vantage). **Fastest lap** Mitchell 1m25.546s (104.67mph). **Pole** Howard/Gunn. **Starters** 17.

**Points** 1 Leung/ Harper 176; 2 James Cottingham (Mercedes) 163.5; 3 Jonny Adam (Mercedes) 162; 4 Balfe/Mitchell 144; 5 Loggie 134.5; 6 Gounon 122.5.

## GT4

(68 laps) **1 Erik Evans/Matt Cowley (Ford Mustang)**; 2 Ian Gough/Tom Wrigley (McLaren Artura) -1 lap; 3 Aston Millar/Josh Rowledge (McLaren); 4 Carl Cavers/Lewis Smith (BMW M4); 5 Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones (Ford); 6 Harry George/Darren Burke (Mercedes-AMG). **FL** Charles Clark (McLaren) 1m33.909s (95.35mph). **P** Josh Miller/Seb Hopkins (Aston Martin Vantage). \$ 17.

**Points** 1 Evans/Cowley 145.5; 2 Jack Brown/Clark (McLaren) 124.5; 3 Gough/Wrigley 117.5; 4 Michael Johnston/Chris Salkeld (BMW) 117; 5 Rowledge/Millar 111; 6 Cavers/Plato 106.5.



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



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motorsport  
IMAGES

(in for Tillbrook in the Enduro Motorsport McLaren), while the biggest gainers in the pits were Shaun Balfe and Sandy Mitchell. The former had been handed a penalty for a collision with Price, but a third safety car – after Ben Collins's Ginetta G56 came to a halt – promoted the Barwell Lamborghini into third after they elected to pit later than other competitors.

At the restart, Harper followed Leung's example and explored the limits of the BMW's pace and scythed his way up the order as Cottingham's title hopes took a devastating blow. The Mercedes, now with Ellis at the wheel, was handed a drive-through penalty for overtaking under yellow flags. Ellis served the penalty following his team-mate's transgression, which dropped him out of the points and led to a recovery to 10th by the flag.

With half an hour remaining, Harper lined up Michael O'Brien for fifth place and dived to the inside at the Melbourne Hairpin. Unable to complete the pass at

the first attempt, he persisted and ran side-by-side through Goddards before sealing the position into Redgate.

It was enough for the title, but Harper was far from done, making up positions on Gounon – who had lost the lead when running off track ahead of the final safety car restart – Raffaele Marciello's Merc and Clutton. Out front, Mitchell had completed an incredible drive to take victory after passing Clutton down the Craner Curves shortly after the last caution period, but all eyes were on Leung and Harper behind.

Harper said: "I actually said after the race that I don't think I breathed for about 30 minutes and, whenever I got to about third and there was a decent gap, I just finally breathed and calmed down."

"But we had incredible pace, the car was on rails. I picked them off one by one and, as soon as I got into a championship-winning place, I just finally could relax and bring it home."

SAM HALL

Academy to score back-to-back wins, with his race-winning pass on Tom Wrigley coming with 15 minutes remaining to seal title honours.

"After a couple of incidents we've had over the year, we were like, 'We're out of the championship, we'll just go out there and see what we can do each round,'" said Cowley. "But, fortunately, Ford pushed hard, got us a break in the BoP, which we needed, and since then, we haven't looked back."

Wrigley and Ian Gough's Race Lab McLaren finished second after the former had held the DTO Motorsport McLaren of Josh Rowledge at bay for the final hour, with Johnston and Salkeld slipping to ninth, two places ahead of Brown and Clark.

SAM HALL



Back-to-back wins  
handed the GT4 title  
to Academy duo



Win in the opening race put Voisin in a strong position for GB3 title

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motorsport  
IMAGES

## Voisin crowned GB3 champion as title goes to the wire

**DONINGTON PARK**  
**GB3**  
**21-22 OCTOBER**

Rodin Carlin driver Callum Voisin produced his best performance of the season to clinch the GB3 title at the Donington Park season finale.

Five drivers remained in contention for the crown entering the final round, with Voisin holding a slender 13-point advantage over fellow 2023 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver finalist Joseph Loake, with Hitech GP's Alex Dunne only four points further adrift. Voisin boosted his hopes further by topping a wet qualifying session to claim his fifth and sixth poles of the season, securing the Jack Cavill Pole Position Cup for the second year in a row in the process.

Voisin made good use of his starting position in race one to score his second victory of 2023 in a disrupted encounter. JHR Developments' Matthew Rees ran second throughout but it was not enough to keep his remote title chances alive, while McKenzy Cresswell's hopes also came to an end after retiring in a first-corner collision with Rees's team-mate Loake that necessitated an early safety-car period.

Only three more green-flag laps followed, with the race finishing behind the safety car after Oliver Stewart collided with Noah Ping at Goddards. Dunne finished third to take the runner-up spot in the standings away from Loake, who could only muster 10th following his opening-lap skirmish.

Conditions were largely dry for Sunday's race two, with Voisin and Dunne sharing

the front row. Dunne made the better start from the damp side of the grid to draw alongside Voisin, who maintained the lead despite locking up into Redgate.

Voisin initially pulled one second clear as Dunne faced early pressure from Fortec Motorsports' Max Esterson but, after breaking clear of his pursuer, Dunne closed to within half a second of Voisin by the end of lap five of 13. Under pressure from his chief rival, Voisin ran deep at the Melbourne hairpin, with Dunne pouncing up the inside into Goddards and snatching the lead, despite running wide and making contact with his title rival.

Dunne pulled away to record his fifth win of the campaign ahead of Voisin to take the title battle to the wire, while Loake was eliminated from contention by finishing down in eighth. Esterson added some cheer to a largely difficult season with a fourth and a first podium of 2023.

Voisin, who started two places behind Dunne from 22nd, needed to finish 12th in the reversed-grid encounter to guarantee the crown – and that's exactly what he did. He gained those 10 places early on to run directly behind Dunne before the safety car was deployed when Tymek Kucharczyk crashed at the Fogarty Esses.

Dunne passed David Morales and James Hedley at the restart to move into ninth, but the race finished behind the safety car after Loake spun to a halt at Hollywood.

Hillspeed's Gerrard Xie scored a maiden win ahead of the Fortec car of Edward Pearson, who capitalised on a battle between Patrick Heuzenroeder and Nico Christodoulou to nip up the inside of the pair at the hairpin for second.

### RACE RESULTS

#### GB3

**Race 1 (10 laps) 1 Callum Voisin (below);**  
2 Matthew Rees +0.356s; 3 Alex Dunne;  
4 James Hedley; 5 Souta Arao; 6 Max Esterson.  
**Fastest lap** Dunne 1m32.857s (96.43mph).  
**Pole** Voisin. **Starters** 22.

**Race 2 (13 laps) 1 Dunne;** 2 Voisin +4.498s;  
3 Esterson; 4 Rees; 5 McKenzy Cresswell;  
6 Hedley. **FL** Dunne 1m22.335s (108.75mph).  
**P** Voisin. **S** 22.

**Race 3 (13 laps) 1 Gerrard Xie;** 2 Edward  
Pearson +0.477s; 3 Patrick Heuzenroeder;  
4 Nico Christodoulou; 5 Oliver Stewart;  
6 Cresswell. **FL** Xie 1m23.729s (106.94mph).  
**P** Heuzenroeder. **S** 22.

**Points 1 Voisin 484;** 2 Dunne 466; 3 Loake 417;  
4 Cresswell 390; 5 Rees 370; 6 Hedley 347.



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

"Really difficult to put into words," said Voisin after becoming champion. "It's been a long old year. We've made the most of it. Every time we've bagged the points, we've done the most we can and we've been rewarded with that. We got better towards the end of the season and it's brilliant to finish on a high. I'm over the moon."

**STEVE WHITFIELD**



# Spin and win for White en route to title

**DONINGTON PARK  
BRSCC  
21-22 OCTOBER**

Nick White prevailed in his season-long fight with Ravi Ramyeed to win the Ginetta GT Academy title in the final race at Donington Park last weekend.

There was little to separate the pair heading into the deciding round after factoring in dropped scores, with White holding the advantage. Ramyeed closed the deficit by dominating Saturday's damp opener from pole ahead of White, who climbed one place to second ahead of the slow-starting Matt Shaw.

Conditions were dry for Sunday's two contests, which both proved far more dramatic. Shaw again bogged down from the outside of the front row in the first of those, allowing White to give chase to Ramyeed once more. Under pressure at the halfway stage, Ramyeed locked up and ran wide at the hairpin, and contact with his rival put him on the grass on the exit.

White's lead only lasted for one corner before dramatically spinning and slipping to fourth, where he remained until the finish. Ramyeed therefore scored his second win of the weekend ahead of Shaw and Ed Acres.

That set up a thrilling climax under fading light in the final contest, with Ramyeed needing to convert his third pole of the weekend into another victory and set the fastest lap in order to steal the title from White's grasp. But his hopes effectively ended with



Ramyeed took title to the final race, but White (57) did enough

a trip through the Redgate gravel after making a poor start and then outbraking himself as he tried to retain the lead.

White climbed from fourth to first into Hollywood and went on to win the race and the title. Shaw remained within one second of White throughout, but suffered a penalty at the chequered flag, promoting Jon Kearney to second while Ramyeed recovered to third.

"After race two, the mistake I made, I had to dig deep to turn it around," said White. "I didn't dare think it had happened until I came in and someone told me. Ravi has been strong all season, so I knew he wasn't going to take it lying down. It's been stressful, a season of just being mentally strong enough to keep going."

Hugo Schwarze edged Reza Seewooruthun to win race one in Ginetta Junior before Seewooruthun took a comfortable triumph in the

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### GINETTA GT ACADEMY

Races 1 & 2 Ravi Ramyeed  
Race 3 Nick White

### GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 Hugo Schwarze  
Race 2 Reza Seewooruthun  
Race 3 Chase Fernandez

### GINETTA GT

Races 1 & 2 Callum Davies (G56)  
Race 2 Ruben Hage (G56)

### GB4

Races 1, 2 & 3 Cooper Webster

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



Webster was unstoppable in GB4 and secured a hat-trick of wins

sequel, but he was pipped to victory by Chase Fernandez in the final bout.

Callum Davies scored a maiden series win ahead of McKenzie Douglass and recently crowned champion Luke Reade in the opening Ginetta GT contest. Ruben Hage won an incident-filled race two ahead of Blake Ankliss and Colin White, with Davies claiming his second victory ahead of Conner Garlick and Ankliss in the finale. Luke Garlick clinched the GT5 class title despite retiring in a collision with chief rival Ella Lloyd in race two.

With the title already wrapped up, KMR Sport's Tom Mills sat out the final GB4 round. Evans GP driver Cooper Webster secured runner-up spot with an emphatic victory treble, which included a recovery from 11th in the full-reversed-grid race.

STEVE WHITFIELD



## Smith roars to thrilling Festival win as Murray denied

**BRANDS HATCH**  
**BRSCC FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL**  
**21-22 OCTOBER**

It was a tantalising prospect. Three previous winners of the Formula Ford Festival lining up in the first three places on the grid for last weekend's final at Brands Hatch promised an exciting contest.

Each of Rory Smith (2020 victor), Jamie Sharp (2021) and Niall Murray (2013 and 2016) were feeling confident of scoring more success after strong semi-final showings. Add in 2021 National champion

Chris Middlehurst and two-time Combe title winner Luke Cooper starting just behind and all the ingredients were in place for a classic.

And the 2023 final proved exactly that. Right from the start, no inch was given with the leading trio circulating as one – and that set the tone for a frantic 20 laps in the Kent sunshine.

First to make a move was Murray on lap two as he dived down the inside of Paddock Hill Bend to grab second from Sharp. But, out of the corner, he banged wheels with leader Smith causing a momentary delay

and enabling Sharp to power his B-M Medina JL17 back ahead at Druids. Not that he stayed in front for long. A wide moment at Clearways allowed Murray through once more and it was clear Sharp was struggling compared to his heat and semi-final dominance (see right). "I was fighting and couldn't get heat into the tyres," he said.

Sharp's performance blunted, he was soon passed by Middlehurst's Team Dolan Van Diemen LA10 at Paddock Hill Bend, while Smith and Murray had paired off in the lead. After a couple of cagey tours, a ferocious fight erupted. First, Murray made a sensational move around the outside of Paddock on lap seven to brilliantly send his Dolan Van Diemen RF99 past Smith's B-M Medina JL18. But Smith was having none of it and instantly tried to retaliate at Druids, only for Murray to hold firm – for now.

Smith's next attack came on lap 10 as he jinked from the outside to the inside heading into Paddock to boldly grab the lead back. "I knew I had to throw something a bit special to get by him," admitted Smith. "It was a bit of a kamikaze lunge but, hey, it's the Festival final – you've got to do it!"

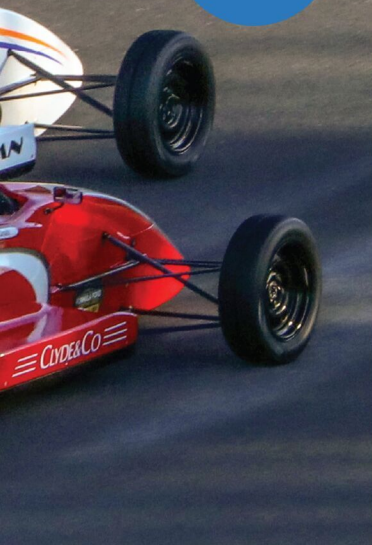
Murray, in contrast, was disappointed at losing his hard-won lead. "I was gutted to let him back in front – that was my fault for not defending," he said. Nevertheless,



There was double delight for B-M Racing with a 1-2



Murray (l) and Smith spent much of the final battling before Irishman's cruel misfire



Murray regrouped and completed a trio of unforgettable moves in five laps by braving it around the outside at Druids and then squeezing ahead of Smith on the inside of Graham Hill Bend. Inevitably, their squabbling allowed the chasing pack to reel them in and Middlehurst very nearly followed his team-mate in passing Smith. A couple of laps later Sharp also latched onto the lead group, giving Middlehurst a dilemma as he sought to keep the leaders honest and defend from Sharp. "I had to have eyes in the back and front of my head," he said.

Sure enough, with Middlehurst "boxed in" at Druids, Sharp went around the outside to reclaim third. Up ahead, Murray had eked out a half-second gap but this was soon erased and it was clear something was not right. "It was a misfire – it began with probably eight laps to go," he said. "It was spluttering out of the corners."

This suddenly got worse two laps from the end and a devastated Murray had to pit. "It's frustrating as in the last six/eight weeks I put a lot of effort in," he said. "I lost a lot of weight, Bernard [Dolan] got a lot of weight out of the car and we had got some fantastic new engines with Scholar."

It was a cruel way for such a memorable drive to end and prevented a grandstand finish to a thrilling final. Smith was then >>

## SEMI-FINALS, EVENTUALLY, GIVE TASTE OF WHAT'S TO COME

Sharp topped first semi-final, after it belatedly began



Last year it was the Festival final that proved an embarrassing and curtailed contest. This time around it was the opening semi-final that struggled to reach a conclusion. An early red flag and then multiple abandoned starts sadly reduced it to a nine-lap, safety car affected affair.

The original race was halted after a lap with Bob Hawkins in the Paddock Hill Bend barriers. Then, on the restart, Vincent Jay struggled to get off the grid so an extra green-flag lap was needed. But things became increasingly ridiculous as a host of other drivers were stranded, including polesitter Nolan Allaer. "You've got to keep calm and your experience comes into it," said Chris Middlehurst, who was starting third, of the situation. "You've got to keep an eye on temperatures but a few were cooking their engines."

By the time Jay's Ray had been pushed to the pitlane and others were rebooted, it was decided that a further two green-flag laps were needed.

When things eventually did get under way – over 30 minutes after the original start – Jamie Sharp again pounced on Allaer to grab the lead. His launch was not quite as good second time around but he still powered ahead of the Ammonite Ray into Druids. And Sharp maintained his lead to the flag, a safety car period failing to halt his momentum. But it all got too

close for comfort behind as Middlehurst challenged Allaer at Druids and there was contact. "I went up the inside of him and he didn't leave me anywhere to go," said Middlehurst. Allaer's error was a costly one as he fell back to 14th, putting him in the Last Chance race, which he duly won.

The second semi-final was less chaotic and provided a taste of the thrilling fight that awaited later in the day. Rory Smith jumped Luke Cooper at the start, while Niall Murray also relegated the polesitter further. "I didn't make a bad start but Rory got a better one," said Cooper. "I was then over-cautious into Druids on the first lap and just took it a bit easy and Niall carried more speed around the outside."

Smith began to edge away after a mid-race caution before he dipped a wheel on the Graham Hill Bend grass, which meant the leaders were back as one. Cooper ran side-by-side with Murray at Druids and Graham Hill but could not quite make a move stick, while Murray decided against a lunge on Smith, opting to save that for the final. "I had a lot more pace but didn't want to do anything stupid," he said.

The heats – held on a drying track – were much more tame affairs, not helped by the lack of jeopardy with every starter guaranteed a place on the semi-final grids. Pick of the bunch was the second one as Allaer claimed his maiden UK Formula Ford victory, although he was helped by traffic giving him a break, just as Smith, Team USA Scholar Ayrton Houk and Jordan Dempsey were closing in.

Cooper resisted Middlehurst in the opener, while Murray rose from sixth to third off the line having struggled in the wet qualifying. Sharp was unchallenged in a shortened third heat, although he was aided by Jeremy Fairbairn and Morgan Quinn coming together on lap two.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Cooper defied Middlehurst in the wet opening heat



able to keep the rest at bay to secure the spoils, with Sharp making it a B-M 1-2 after resisting Middlehurst.

"It was like a boxing match," added a delighted Smith. "It was an awesome race and a real shame poor Niall broke down because I think the last few laps would've been the same again."

But what made Smith's victory even more remarkable was his lack of pre-event testing. While many of his rivals pounded around the Brands Indy track for endless laps in the build-up, for a variety of reasons Smith did not – instead using his two wins at the Champion of Brands round here in September as preparation. Such is his understanding of the Medina machine that the approach paid off handsomely.

While Sharp's Medina was not quite at its full potential, he was still pleased to be runner-up. "I've proven to myself that I can be up there," he said having contested a limited campaign this year. "I'm happy with second – but I could be happier!"

Just three tenths behind Middlehurst, Cooper in his family-run Swift SC20 finished best of the rest and was both encouraged by the pace shown but also disappointed to miss the podium. "In comparison to some of my other Festivals, getting fourth is a brilliant result!" he said. "I got caught out a little bit early on because



Middlehurst dives past Sharp at Paddock Hill Bend early on

I backed out of the throttle waiting for something to happen and Jordan [Dempsey] came up the inside of me."

The reverse happened later with Dempsey battling Sharp but getting delayed and Cooper pounced out of Paddock. Behind Dempsey, National champion Jordan Kelly made it three Dolan entries in the top six, the Irishman recovering after a few mistakes earlier in the event.

Also on the comeback trail were Brandon McCaughan, who crashed out of his heat after suffering damage to the rear of his Van Diemen JL13, but fought through to take eighth in the final behind Jeremy

Fairbairn (Ray GR20). Combe champion Felix Fisher (a heat retiree after contact with Jason Smyth) and Jonny McMullan (broken driveshaft on the heat-three grid) also progressed to finish 17th and 18th, while the two Team Canada scholars had a close tussle and were split by 0.03s for 12th and 13th – Logan Pacza just ahead of Alex Berg, son of the 1980s sportscar racer and nine-time Formula 1 starter Allen.

But the real battle was the one at the front. And, after all the trouble last year, the 52nd Formula Ford Festival final will live in the memory for the right reasons.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

## RACING IN TRIBUTE TO FORMER AUTOSPORT EDITOR HALLBERY

There was an added poignancy surrounding one of the cars in this year's event. The Reynard 89FF driven by 1980s Formula Ford frontrunner Andy Charsley carried stickers in memory of former Autosport editor Andy Hallbery, who died at the end of last year.

Alan Bowles of Kejan Engineering – who also organised a well-attended Elden reunion and arranged an eclectic mix of

single-seaters to be on display in the paddock that included an ex-Eddie Cheever Indycar and a Ralt RT3 – felt it was important to remember Hallbery at the first Festival since his passing.

"I met Andy a couple of years ago at this event," Bowles explained. "Andy helped me with writing my book [his account of 50 years of Formula Ford Festivals] – it fired his enthusiasm – and we became very good

friends very quickly. He did amazing things to connect me with people for the book, like Danny Sullivan. He opened doors for me.

"It's a great shame he's no longer with us but we needed to honour him. Andy Charsley came on board straight away and knew what I wanted to achieve."

Sadly, Charsley's event was a mixed one. He struggled to get off the line on the green-flag lap of the second heat and was given a penalty for passing other cars to retake his original grid slot, having fallen to the rear of the field – a penalty that prevented him from topping the historic element of the race. He then dropped out of the second semi-final early on at Druids, before fighting to 10th in the historic final.

Richard Higgins defied two clashes with Samuel Street's Swift SC92 to head that entertaining



race in his Van Diemen RF91, while Street fell to an eventual fourth after their last-lap incident at Druids. Higgins had built a decent lead from pole early on but fell into the clutches of Street just before a safety car period set up a frantic two-lap dash to the flag, from which Henry Chart (RF81) and Callum Grant (RF80) completed the podium.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**



Bowles (l) honoured Andy with car driven by Charsley (r)



## WEEKEND WINNERS



## FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL

Heat 1 Luke Cooper (Swift SC20)

Heat 2 Nolan Allaer (Ray GR22)

Heat 3 Jamie Sharp (Medina JL17)

Semi-final 1 Jamie Sharp (Medina JL17)

Semi-final 2 Rory Smith (Allaer JL18)

Last Chance race Nolan Allaer (Ray GR22)

Historic final Richard Higgins

(Van Diemen RF91, above)

Final (20 laps) 1 Rory Smith (Medina JL18);

2 Jamie Sharp (Medina JL17) +0.372s; 3 Chris

Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10); 4 Luke Cooper

(Swift SC20); 5 Jordan Dempsey (Van Diemen

RF00); 6 Jordan Kelly (Van Diemen RF06).

Fastest lap Niall Murray (RF99) 50.067s (86.85mph).

Pole Smith. Starters 30.



## TCR UK

Race 1 Alex Ley (Hyundai i30 N)

Race 2 Jac Constable (Audi RS3 LMS)

## FIESTA JUNIOR

Races 1 &amp; 2 Jacob Hodgkiss (Mk7, above)

## MINI 7 WINTER SERIES

Races 1, 2 &amp; 3 Aaron Smith (Miglia)

## CIVIC CUP

Races 1 &amp; 2 Max Edmundson (EP3, below)

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

## BOARDLEY CLAIMS TCR UK TITLE ON INCIDENT-FILLED WEEKEND

Fourth place in the first TCR UK race of the Festival weekend secured the 2023 championship title for Carl Boardley in his Cupra, but the race wins were taken by Alex Ley's Hyundai and Jac Constable in an Audi RS3.

Jenson Brickley's Cupra was missing from race-one pole with a gearbox problem, but joined in from the pits to reach sixth by the end, setting fastest lap. Chris Smiley's troublesome Honda Civic led until half-distance before yielding to Ley and eventually stopped with power-steering failure. This allowed Callum Newsham and Adam Shepherd to complete an all-Hyundai podium.

The first 10 were reversed for race two, and a multiple shunt on the drop down from Druids caused a red flag before a car off at Paddock at the second attempt then brought out the safety car. With racing finally under way, Constable was soon in front under heavy pressure from Brickley. Ley took third and Bruce Winfield fourth on the road, but the latter fell to ninth with track-limits penalties applied.

The Fiesta Junior title was also still to be decided, but the teenagers' first race was a shocker, 23 starters reduced to nine after two red-flag stoppages and several lesser incidents.

A multi-car crash between the grid and the first corner left Flame Airikkala's car on its roof. A second attempt was halted with a car off at Paddock. At the third time of asking, champion-elect Ben Mulryan took the lead but, heading into the last lap, Mulryan and title rival Daniel Lewis plunged off at Paddock in a final moment of madness. Jacob Hodgkiss was the winner.

Hodgkiss won again in a more disciplined affair on Sunday, for which a staggered one-by-one grid was adopted. With Lewis demoted places on the grid and docked points for causing Saturday's last-lap incident, Hodgkiss became the only potential rival to Mulryan for the title. Ben still needed to finish, which he did in ninth place.

Mini Miglia champion Aaron Smith was a double winner on Saturday in the Mini 7



Fourth in the first race was enough for Boardley

Racing Club's Winter Series. Rupert Deeth set fastest laps, but a pitstop in race one when a tyre "fell apart" blunted his challenge. Colin Peacock and Phil Bullen-Brown finished side by side in race two behind the leading pair, and class battles down the order were even closer.

Smith was seemingly denied a hat-trick by a bold passing manoeuvre by Deeth heading into the final lap in Sunday's bout. Until then, they traded the lead in spectacular fashion but clashed briefly at Druids. Peacock inherited the lead, but was soon passed by the recovering Deeth and Smith although the latter was subsequently promoted to the win by officials.

Two race victories and a championship crown at the end of his first season were Max Edmundson's reward in the Civic Cup. Edmundson's triumph was at the expense of Dan Thackeray's misery, the former points leader losing out when his car came to a smoky halt after leading most of race one. Dave Marshall inherited a distant second place, and there was a blanket finish for third.

The top 10 reversed meant a frantic scramble in the early stages of race two, and it took Edmundson until lap 11 of 17 to reach the front. He finished clear but, from Alex Kite in second down to eighth, the cars were nose-to-tail, with Thackeray's refuelled Civic at the back of that group.

BRIAN PHILLIPS



Deeth (l) and Smith battle for Mini Winter Series glory

# Shepherd leads Marshall flock despite fumes

SILVERSTONE  
MSVR/MRL  
21-22 OCTOBER

There was drama written all over Fred Shepherd's far from straightforward victory in the Gerry Marshall Trophy at a Silverstone meeting last weekend that included a mixture of races from Motor Racing Legends and the Historic Racing Drivers Club.

Richard Oldershaw started the race from pole in his ex-Brian Muir Rover SD1, but Shepherd used his Ford Boss Mustang 302's extra power to blast into an immediate lead before drawing clear to win the 45-minute race by over 35 seconds from John and Jack Young's Chevrolet Camaro.

But things hadn't been comfortable for Shepherd, as the 25-year-old explained: "In qualifying, the clutch wasn't returning so the team [Bill Shepherd Automotive] had the gearbox apart, the clutch off and did a full driveline strip – we only got the car out 30 seconds before the rolling start lap but full credit to them.

"Then, about 15 minutes from the end, fumes started to come into the cockpit and I was already struggling with my neck. I was glad when it was over so I could get out and get some fresh air."

Tommy Waterfield and Ben Mitchell took third after their Ford Capri was hunted down and passed late on by the Youngs' Camaro, which had been badly delayed when it refused to fire back up during the pitstops. Oldershaw took fourth while another son/father act, Ben and Richard Colburn, starred with a giant-killing sixth in their Ford Fiesta.

The Nigel Reuben Racing team celebrated three victories with its cars



Mustang driver almost didn't make the start – or finish – of HRDC race

during the weekend, the first in the three-hour RAC Pall Mall Cup, held in drizzly and then drying conditions on the Saturday.

After a precautionary engine change, Harry Barton – driving the first and third stints – and Oliver Reuben came through for a convincing win in their TVR Griffith.

In a close finish, the identical car of team-mates John Davison and Nigel Reuben was just 9s adrift in second after Davison caught and passed modern tin-top ace Rob Huff (sharing a Jaguar E-type with Richard Meins) on the penultimate lap, his TVR better suited to the now-dry track surface. After qualifying on pole, Huff's opening stint drive, during which he built a sizeable lead when conditions were at their greasiest, was sublime.

Former British Olympic skeet shooter Davison achieved the Reuben squad's two other wins, in the HRDC's Allstars and Jack Sears Trophy races, which both featured stunning 49-car grids.

In the first, again using the TVR, Davison ended up 16s clear of Bill Shepherd

(Shelby Cobra). The biggest entertainment came from Lotus Ford Cortina Mk1 trio Michael and Victor Cullen and Pete Chambers. They ultimately finished in this order, nose to tail, after spending much of the 30-minute race swapping positions.

In the Jack Sears Trophy, Davison – now in a Ford Mustang – was chased all the way by Tom Sharp (Ford Falcon), just two seconds in arrears at the flag. Davison admitted: "I was getting fuel starvation towards the end. Another five minutes and I wouldn't have been here on the podium – I'd have been shouting." In a fierce duel, David Dickenson (Lotus Ford Cortina Mk1) fought back to regain third position outright from the similar car of British Touring Car ace Josh Cook, who had held the spot mid-race after taking over from Mike Gardiner.

Andrew Smith and Shane Brereton (each in a Cooper Monaco) put on a similar display at the head of the MRL Woodcote/Stirling Moss Trophy during the first half of its 60-minute duration. Soon after the pitstops, though, Brereton's car developed a misfire and Smith eased to a 23s victory.

Darren Fielding (BMW E30 M3) had an eventful drive en route to winning the MRL Historic Touring Car race on Saturday. In damp conditions, triple BTCC champion Colin Turkington (in a near-identical ex-Bigazzi car) pulled out a 20s lead before handing over to Mark Smith, who was unable to prevent Fielding closing in for the win as the laps unfolded.

"I went through the gravel at Stowe going after Mark, which cost me five seconds," related Fielding. "When I eventually caught up, I threw it down the inside into Brooklands and prayed. Thankfully there was some grip." Ric Wood (Nissan Skyline GTR) had been expected to threaten for the win, but a gamble to fit



Davison leads Jack Sears Trophy on successful Reuben Racing event





## WEEKEND WINNERS

**HRDC GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY**

Fred Shepherd (Ford Boss Mustang 302)

**MRL PALL MALL CUP**

Oliver Reuben/Harry Barton (TVR 200 Griffith)

**HRDC ALLSTARS WITH CLASSIC ALFAS**

John Davison (TVR Griffith)

**HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY**

John Davison (Ford Mustang)

**MRL WOODCOTE TROPHY & STIRLING MOSS TROPHY**

Andrew Smith (Cooper Monaco, below)

**MRL HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE**

Darren Fielding (BMW E30 M3)

**MRL JAGUAR CLASSIC CHALLENGE**

Graeme Dodd/James Dodd (E-type)

**GT4 CHALLENGE**

Alex Osborne (Ginetta G55)

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

slick tyres failed to pay off as track conditions deteriorated.

After jumping in to replace father Graeme, James Dodd's only real issue in winning the Jaguar Classic Challenge came after the race when his E-type's driver's door refused to open and he had to climb out of the passenger side.

**CARL MCKELLAR**



**3 DRIVERS, 2 CARS, 1 RACE** Alex Montgomery, Nick Sleep and Martin Stretton pulled off the rare feat of racing two cars together in one race in the Pall Mall Cup at Silverstone. The trio's distinctive 'Hairy Canary' Shelby Cobra (driving order Sleep-Montgomery-Stretton) finished sixth overall. Close behind, there was an eighth-place result for their Lotus Elan 26R (Montgomery-Stretton-Sleep). "We didn't think it was too elaborate a plan – the five-minute pitstops gave us some flexibility," said Montgomery.



**HILLCLIMBING FIAT RACES** Richard Colburn gave his Westbourne Motorsport squad's latest creation, a 1973 Fiat 128C originally built for hillclimbing in eastern Europe, its race debut in the Allstars contest. "It's a work in progress – it's got the wrong gear ratios but they are on order from Italy," said Colburn. "It's taken nearly two years to get it to this stage. Slightly odd for me, because I'm a bit older, is that – as it's a left-hand-drive car – I sometimes go for the gear lever with my left hand!"



**BULLET TRAIN CHEETAH?** Duncan Pittaway is to explore uprating his Chevrolet Cheetah's brakes with "the material they use on Japan's bullet trains" for 2024. "Its drum brakes work fine while they last but we're told the stuff they've got on the bullet trains could make them last longer," said the Bristolian, who retired from Sunday's HRDC Allstars race following three spins caused by brake issues. His Cheetah is the first of only 11 built by Bill Thomas to help Chevrolet beat Carroll Shelby's Cobras.



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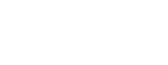
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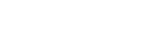
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Parr was victorious as woes for Baxter helped Blaine claim the championship



## Parr scores three as Blaine plays a cautious game to land Saloons title

KIRKISTOWN  
500MRCI  
21 OCTOBER

Storm Babet has been tempestuous for the UK and, while her effect on Scotland was little short of devastating, she still had enough energy to also provide Northern Ireland with a demonstration of her powers – which was not helpful for Kirkistown's final meeting of the year.

Two days before Saturday's event, the circuit was more boating lake than race track. But, when race day dawned, Babet had fled, leaving a drying circuit and sunshine to greet the competitors.

The first of three Saloon/GT bouts should have provided a title battle between the SEAT Supercopas of Gareth Blaine and Peter Baxter, but Baxter's car decided to spontaneously combust after qualifying and was too badly damaged to continue.

This took the pressure off Blaine, who instead left it to the SEATs of Paul Parr and Patrick Corbett to head the field as he settled for a canny third place. And not just once, nor twice,

but all three times to secure the title.

Joe Yates topped two of the three concurrent GT encounters in his Wildcat but had to give best to John Newport's similar car in a paint-swapping finale.

There was title tension, too, in Formula Ford 1600. With only four cars on the grid, the two races should have been boring. But, with enough points still to play for, Alan Davidson had a chance of snatching the honours from David McCullough. He came close to winning the opener, having fought hard all the way and he led for several laps before McCullough took the spoils.

However, post-race scrutineering revealed a tyre legality issue, which removed the Van Diemen driver from the results and left Davidson and his trusty Mondiale with a win and a real chance of grabbing the title. Yet, despite this unexpected bonus, Davidson's task was just too much, and McCullough had other ideas so took race two in style to keep hold of the trophy for another year.

The growing Mini Cooper series provided a bit more variety. Darren Gilmore reached the flag first in race one by a nose from Peter Bennett, with Ben McFall completing the podium. Bennett made no mistakes in race two, however, rocketing off the line and into a lead that he still held when the red flags came out after a couple of members of the midfield ushered one another into the pitwall after just nine laps. Gilmore was second at that point, ahead of Paul Stewart.

Megan Campbell took back-to-back Fiesta honours in their two races, ahead of Stephen Walker, while David Cousins did likewise among an encouragingly

### WEEKEND WINNERS

#### LIBRE SALOONS/GTs

Races 1, 2 & 3 Paul Parr (SEAT Supercopa)

#### FORMULA FORD 1600

Race 1 Alan Davidson (Mondiale M89S)

Race 2 David McCullough (Van Diemen RF00)

#### IRISH MINI COOPERS

Race 1 Darren Gilmore

Race 2 Peter Bennett (below)

#### MAZDA MODI-5-CUP/FIESTA ZETEC

Races 1 & 2 David Cousins (MX-5)

#### ROADSPORTS

Race 1 Jim Larkham (Radical PR6)

Race 2 Steven Larkham (Radical PR6)



For full results visit: [speedhive.mylaps.com](http://speedhive.mylaps.com)

McCullough took title despite failing scrutineering after opener



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: GARY CUMS

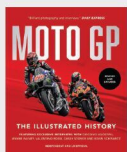
large field of Mazda MX-5s. Rob Kennedy finished second in race one and Francis Allen in race two, with Damian Moran placing third both times.

It was an all-Radical affair at the front of the Roadsports contests, with Jim Larkham and nephew Steven taking a victory apiece – Jim took the first race and Steven the second, although Mike Ward beat Jim to the flag second time around. In the one-litre Class B, Ethan Campbell (Locost) and Allen Millar (GMS) shared the glory while Brian Crawford's Vortex scored a brace of seconds.

RICHARD YOUNG

# FINISHING STRAIGHT

## The story of top-level two-wheeled racing



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**MOTOGP:  
THE ILLUSTRATED  
HISTORY  
(INDEPENDENT  
AND UNOFFICIAL)**  
Michael Scott  
RRP £30

There is something unique about the attraction of MotoGP. While it is widely accepted that motorsport will never be 100% safe, four-wheeled competitions are generally environments where a driver will take to the track, compete and return to the paddock intact, even if the machinery is slightly battered and bruised.

For two-wheeled competitions, however, this is not the case. It takes a special breed of racer to cling onto a set of thin handlebars, squeeze their thighs around a hugely powerful engine and set off at speeds of over 200mph, knowing that they could be flung off into the air and seriously injured with the slightest mistake.

While the speeds and exact nature of the bikes have changed significantly over the years, the danger and the thrill has remained pure and animalistic since motorcycle racing began. It is this ever-present risk that acts as a magnet for riders and fans.

Now, it cannot be said that reading a book carries the same risk as pushing a MotoGP bike to the limit, but *MotoGP: The Illustrated History* works wonders in conveying the raw nature of the competition. For the most part, the publication is divided into 10-year chunks, beginning with the 'birth of the series' in

1949, but this is prefixed by a summary of how the championship got to this point, giving mention to how the motorcycle came into being, with efforts from Edward Butler and Karl Benz in the late 1800s highlighted. The infamous 1903 Paris-Madrid 'Death Race' and its debilitating effect on road racing is also explained, with this a key factor in pushing motorcycle competitions off the road and onto the track, via velodromes.

Once you get into the real meat of the

book, the pacing certainly ramps up a notch. Covering the complete history of a competition in 263 pages and with a significant number of photos – more on those in a minute – and high-profile interviews is no mean feat, so you should not be fooled into thinking that this is a comprehensive guide to every race and overtake that has happened since 1949.

What this does is guide you through the key events, the championship-defining incidents or successes and the controversies along the way. Imagine it like the string section of an orchestra. On its own, it can be very nice, but then you add the detail of the brass, you dig deeper and add some percussion and woodwind, and everything gets richer and deeper.

*MotoGP: An Illustrated History* is that single section of the orchestra. If you've watched the competition for a number of years, you will likely already have the colour to put around the edges, and this book will remind you of things that you may have forgotten.

Obviously, images are a key factor in this publication and you will not be let down. If you can think of an iconic photo from the history of the championship, odds are it



SUTTON/MOTORSPORTIMAGES





GOLD AND GOOSE  
motorsport  
IMAGES

features here, from the grainy black-and-white pictures of day dot to the crisp ultra-HD offerings of the modern era.

A particularly sobering offering comes on page 219, with a picture of the 2011 Australian Grand Prix podium. The caption reads: 'Racing's highs and lows: [Casey] Stoner has just won his home GP for the fifth time straight, securing the 2011 World Championship; Marco Simoncelli is celebrating a career-best second, after outfumbling Andrea Dovizioso. One week later, Simoncelli would be dead.'

There are, naturally, the glossy pictures of riders in perfect formation, taking the apex of famous corners but, especially in the earlier days, there are examples of when things went wrong that will cause you to pause for breath.

Adding further colour are the wide range of interviews from each era. Stars including John Surtees, Kenny Roberts, Mick Doohan and Valentino Rossi all share their stories, with the book taking readers to the end of the 2022 season.

If you are a MotoGP fan, and particularly if you are new to the competition, this is a great first step into a far wider world.

**SAM HALL**



autosport.com/podcast



CHRIS GRANT/GETTY IMAGES; RED BULL CONTENT POOL

### United States Grand Prix review

Alex Kalinauckas, Matt Kew and Stuart Codling are all in Austin, joining Martyn Lee to discuss the US GP. Max Verstappen took his 50th grand prix victory as the drama continued to unfold after the flag, with Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc being disqualified.



## WHAT'S ON

### INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

#### Mexican GP

**F1 World Championship**  
**Round 19/22**

Mexico City, Mexico

**29 October**

**TV** Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1955

**TV** Highlights Sky Sports F1, Sun 2330, Channel 4, Mon 0100

#### Super Formula

**Round 7/7**

Suzuka, Japan

**28-29 October**

**TV** Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0600, Sun 0600

#### NASCAR Cup Series

**Round 35/36**

Martinsville, USA

**29 October**

**TV** Live Viaplay, Sun 1800

#### NASCAR Xfinity Series

**Round 32/33**

Martinsville, USA

**28 October**

**TV** Livestream Viaplay, Sat 2000

#### Australian Supercars

**Round 11/12**

Surfers Paradise, Australia

**28-29 October**

**TV** Live TNT Sports 1, Sat 0630, Sun 0630

#### Central Europe Rally

**World Rally Championship**

**Round 12/13**

Germany, Austria, Czech Republic

**26-29 October**

**TV** Live TNT Sports 2, Thurs 1300, TNT Sports 1, Fri 0845, 1100, 1245, 1545, TNT Sports 4, Sat 0700, TNT Sports 2, 1000, TNT Sports 3 1415, 1545, TNT Sports 4 1700, TNT Sports 3, Sun 0700, 0830, 1100

**TV** Highlights

TNT Sports 1, Fri 2300, TNT Sports 2, Sat 2300, Red Bull TV, Fri 2000, Sat 2000, Sun 2000

#### MotoGP

**Round 17/20**

Buriram, Thailand

**28-29 October**

**TV** Live TNT Sports 2, Sat 0830, Sun 0730

**TV** Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

### UK MOTORSPORT

#### Oulton Park BRSCC

**28 October**

Fun Cup, MG Metro Cup, Super Classic FF1600

#### Silverstone 750MC

**28 October**

Birkett Six-Hour Relay

**TV** Livestream alphalive.co.uk

#### Brands Hatch MSVR

**28-29 October**

EnduroKa, Miata

Trophy, MSVT Trackday Championship, MSVT Trackday Trophy, United FF1600

#### Silverstone 750MC

**29 October**

Alfa Romeos, Bikesports, Club Enduro, Hot Hatch, Ma7das, Sport Specials, Sports 1000

#### Cambrian Rally

British Rally Championship

**Round 7/7**

Llandudno, Wales

**27-28 October**



#### FROM THE ARCHIVE

Celebrations are in full swing following the conclusion of the 1956 Le Mans 24 Hours. The victorious driver pairing, who had shared an Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type, take

centre stage for this group photo: Ninian Sanderson (side on, in conversation), with co-holder of the floral arrangement Ron Flockhart behind. Joining them are Peter Collins (plus companion) and

Stirling Moss, runners-up in their works Aston Martin DB3S. On the far right of the group are Ecurie Ecosse co-founders, legendary mechanic 'Wilkie' Wilkinson and team chief David Murray.



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**S**ebbring International Raceway's 3.741 miles of bumpy asphalt is unique. And in choosing it as his favourite track, Oliver Gavin makes several references to the airfield venue's one-of-a-kind nature that, in his estimation, narrowly elevates it above the Circuit de la Sarthe where he took five Le Mans 24 Hours class victories.

Gavin raced at Sebring every year from 2001-20, winning on his first visit to the track in a Konrad Saleen S7-R. As the scene of the first and last victories of his 18-year stint with Corvette Racing, Sebring proved a happy hunting ground.

The Briton was a Sebring 12 Hours class winner on six occasions, and also triumphed in July 2020 when it staged the first IMSA SportsCar Championship round after the COVID hiatus. That 51st victory with the Pratt & Miller-run team was especially noteworthy since it meant he'd won at the track in every model of Corvette he'd raced.

Sebring was Corvette Racing's traditional season opener for many years before the American Le Mans Series and Grand-Am union for 2014, so Gavin says "it's a track that I ended up driving a lot, testing at relentlessly", which gave him an excellent feel for its many nuances. He describes it as "a rhythm track" that he would in places be "driving by feel".



"It's got a number of characteristics about it that just made it really special to me," he reflects. "Nowhere else in the world is like it in terms of the bumps, the corners, the sand that you inevitably get on the track in certain spots, and running the 12 Hours there you do get some pretty unique moments. If you happen to be in the car when the sun is going down, you're driving right into the sunset down into Turn 17 and that's a pretty special experience."

Gavin understands why "many drivers just hate the place", but to him it's precisely the "just brutal" nature of Sebring that makes it so appealing to conquer. "That's what I liked about it," he says. "I loved the challenge of the track, the challenge of the race, competing against other cars there. It's one of the hardest races in the world to win."

**JAMES NEWBOLD**



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