

CHRISTMAS DOUBLE ISSUE **140-page special**

# AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

21-28 DECEMBER 2023

## TOP **50** DRIVERS of 2023

We rank the best  
performers of  
the year

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# Top 50 ranking heads our bumper Christmas special

We're not going to pretend it was difficult to decide on our number one slot in this year's Top 50 drivers. But behind that there was the usual mix of debate, frustration and moving people around until the final deadline meant the conversations had to stop.

As ever, this year's Top 50, which starts on page 17, aims to cover a wide variety of championships, from single-seater, sportscar and tin-top racing, as well as the pinnacle of world rallying. We're sure you'll disagree with *something* on the list, but be sure to take a look at p15 to see how we got to the final ranking.

There's plenty more in this Christmas double issue, including a review of many major series (p68) and MotoGP (p62), the best pictures of the year (p46) and the return of our Christmas quiz, which this year has some special prizes (p78). We also complete our Le Mans 100 celebration with a look at some of the stranger machines that have contested the 24 Hours over the years (p80).

Our bumper, 22-page National section has all the usual latest news, plus Marcus Pye's highlights of the year and our picks for the top 10 club drivers and top 10 club-racing rivalries of 2023.

We hope this 140-page issue gives you something to enjoy over a glass or three of your chosen tippie during the festive period. We'll be back on 4 January, before the Dakar Rally, Autosport show, Monte Carlo Rally and Daytona 24 Hours kick off the 2024 motorsport season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



*Kevin Turner*

**Kevin Turner**  
Chief Editor

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**NEVER MISS  
AN ISSUE**

Special deals for  
Autosport p16



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# PIT + PADDOCK



## Button back to full-time racing with Porsche

### WEC

Jenson Button will make a full-time return to racing next season for the first time since his title year in Super GT in 2018. The 2009 Formula 1 world champion's deal to race a Porsche 963 LMDh for the Jota team in the World Endurance Championship has finally been announced.

The 43-year-old Briton has taken the final berth in British squad Hertz Team Jota's expanded two-car Hypercar line-up alongside Phil Hanson and Oliver Rasmussen. Confirmation of the deal

has come after comments about his desire to compete in the prototype arena in international sportscar racing, and prolonged speculation quickly confirmed by the team that he was in the frame for a seat.

As long ago as May, Button raised the prospect of competing full-time in either the WEC or the IMSA SportsCar Championship. He described the drive alongside Jimmie Johnson and Mike Rockenfeller in the Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet Camaro LS1 Garage 56 entry as "a great way to get back to Le Mans", a race he previously contested in SMP Racing's

BR Engineering-AER BR1 in 2018.

Button subsequently made his race debut in a current-generation prototype in October's Petit Le Mans IMSA SportsCar finale at Road Atlanta, driving the JDC-Miller Motorsports Porsche. It helped convince Jota that he was the right man for the job to lead its #38 car crew.

"He did a good job and it certainly helped," said Jota team principal Sam Hignett. "It must have been an eye-opening situation for him to do Petit and to drive the car both for the first time. These cars are super-tricky, but he understands the technology from F1, so we shouldn't be surprised that he did a good job."

"The pool of drivers who could lead that car was small. It needed to be someone with experience of the car, and it needed to be someone with experience of high-level racing. There just aren't that many people who have got that."

Button suggested that he has high aspirations for 2024 with Jota, which impressed after getting its hands on the first of its Porsches at the Spa WEC round in April, leading at Le Mans, and ending up as first Porsche home at the Bahrain season finale. "There is no better team than Hertz Team Jota to be taking on the big manufacturers in Hypercar," he said. "It is a team that has achieved so much in its years, the most achieving privateer team in WEC and at Le Mans, the big one. It's just

Formula E and DTM star Mortara will line up with Lambo



JAMEY PRICE/LAMBORGHINI





# Hypercar

an out and out race team; that's what I love. I really do think they can take it to the big teams, to the manufacturers. It kind of reminds me of a season back in 2009 [in F1 with Brawn], which was pretty good."

## MORTARA NAMED FOR LAMBORGHINI

Button's confirmation by Jota on Friday 15 December was one of a series of announcements pertinent to Hypercar in the run-up to Christmas. It came the day after the confirmation that Edoardo Mortara and Matteo Cairoli have taken the final two seats in the Iron Lynx Lamborghini team.

At the same time, the Italian manufacturer confirmed how its six drivers will line up across its two SC63 LMDhs in the full WEC and its attack on four of the five IMSA enduros. Formula E and ex-DTM star Mortara will undertake his first season of prototype racing in the WEC together with Mirko Bortolotti and Daniil Kvyat, and former Porsche contractee Cairoli will drive with Romain Grosjean and Andrea Caldarelli in North America.

Yifei Ye, part of the Jota Porsche squad in 2023, will become a Ferrari factory driver. The Chinese racer's programme for 2024 has yet to be announced, but it can be taken as read that he will renew his relationship with Robert Kubica in the third Ferrari 499P Le Mans Hypercar to be run by AF Corse on a customer basis next year.

GARY WATKINS

## Todt launches attack on FIA successor Ben Sulayem

### FORMULA 1

Ex-FIA president Jean Todt has inflicted more reputational damage upon the governing body by calling out the "character" of the current administration amid a spat over finances. While the FIA could have done with time out of the headlines after the swiftly dropped investigation into Toto and Susie Wolff regarding a potential conflict of interest, Todt sat down for a lengthy interview with *L'Equipe*. In it, he rebuffed accusations from outspoken successor Mohammed Ben Sulayem, who claimed that he'd inherited a heavily depleted budget upon taking over in 2021.

Speaking in 2022, Ben Sulayem said: "There was a financial issue we didn't know about. We had a deficit, even before the pandemic, but I'm pleased to have cleared that." He added that the early part of his premiership was dominated by an unexpected court case involving a patent dispute over the halo.

Todt has finally responded, saying the deficit was a consequence of COVID-19, which put the survival of the FIA and F1 at stake. He continued: "When I left, there must have been more than €250million in reserves. When I arrived in 2009, there were barely €40m... When I left, the budget had been multiplied by almost three, with many new competitions and sources of income, such as Formula E, the World Endurance Championship, the Rally-Raid Championship.

"It is true that we left one dispute unfinished when I left, the halo trial. But it wasn't swept under the rug. It was well documented and monitored by our services; we presented it to the



senate and the World Council before I left, and the current president attended this presentation... So when I left, there was nothing secret. And only one ongoing case, that one. But I wasn't surprised, I knew who my successor was. I know the character... Everything that was put in place during my mandate was turned upside down."

An FIA reply clarified: "The financial state that was discovered was unsatisfactory and unsustainable. The federation was incurring significant losses."

Todt also had his say on Felipe Massa launching a legal case against F1 and the FIA, with the former Ferrari driver (managed by Todt's son Nicolas) claiming the powers that be knew at the time that Nelson Piquet Jr had crashed deliberately in the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix. As such, the race result should be binned 15 years on, and the Brazilian made champion at the expense of Lewis Hamilton.

"In hindsight, well, we should have asked for the race to be cancelled," said Todt. "The completely new fact, if it is true and verifiable, is that the regulator who made the championship official knew [about what happened]."

JONATHAN NOBLE







## New name for Sauber, as AlphaTauri prevaricates

### FORMULA 1

The FIA has published the Formula 1 entry list for 2024 and, because for the first time in championship history there are no winter driver line-up changes to worry about, attention has turned to the complicated rebranding of the Sauber and AlphaTauri teams.

Between 2019 and 2023, Sauber was known as Alfa Romeo in deference to a title sponsorship deal. But since the Swiss squad has been bought by Alfa's fellow road car manufacturer Audi, terms could not be renewed. But Audi doesn't want to stick its branding on the engine cover until its formal arrival in 2026. That has left the team to find a placeholder identity. Step

forward existing partners Kick.com (an online streaming platform) and Stake (gambling company). On the entry form, the operation is now officially listed as Stake F1 Team KICK Sauber. Chassis naming rights have been handed over, too. The marketing team wants the 2024 car to be known as the KICK Sauber C44. Rest assured, in Autosport it will appear as the 'Sauber C44' only.

People were hoping that the entry list would confirm the new identity for AlphaTauri. To make the Red Bull junior team more financially sustainable, and after F1 exposure did little to boost sales of the drinks company's clothing brand, the AlphaTauri moniker used since 2020 will be ditched. It is likely that the squad will be

known as 'Racing Bulls'. Much like Force India turning to 'Racing Point', such a generic name is a ploy to entice a title sponsor who will feel they get better bang for buck by not having to share naming space a la BWT Alpine or Moneygram Haas. To create more of a song and dance around the announcement of its blue-chip sponsor, AlphaTauri will delay rebranding until 2024. So it's still 'Scuderia AlphaTauri' on the FIA entry list.

Team CEO Peter Bayer said: "The identity will be generic... it's moving closer to the Red Bull family again. We will change the company name, we will change identity, logo, everything, a complete relaunch, complete rebrand."

**MATT KEW & ADAM COOPER**

## Brivio becomes the latest out of the Alpine exit door



### FORMULA 1

The Alpine Formula 1 team has lost another figurehead, with ex-Suzuki MotoGP boss Davide Brivio bringing his three-year stint to an end, billed as a mutual parting of company. The Italian has been linked with a return to two-wheeled action by taking the reins at Honda.

Brivio was lured by Alpine primarily to work in F1, joining as the team's racing

director. But he was moved to the more detached role of director of racing expansion projects, which included looking after an Alpine young driver programme that lost prized asset Oscar Piastri to McLaren. Interim sporting director Julian Rouse – the son of four-time British Touring Car champion Andy – replaces long-serving Enstone employee Alan Permane – will inherit that position.

Bruno Famin, temporary team principal following the ousting of Otmar Szafnauer, said: "[Brivio's] experience in motorsports has been extremely valuable, especially in the development and progression of the Alpine Academy. Davide's wish is to leave Alpine to pursue other opportunities and we have accepted his desire by agreeing to part ways."

**MATT KEW**



## ANTONELLI RIVAL STENSHORNE GETS HITECH F3 SEAT

### FORMULA 3

No fewer than eight of the 30 seats in the FIA Formula 3 Championship have been deposited under the Christmas tree in the past few days. But perhaps it's the one of Martinius Stenshorne that is the most keenly anticipated.

The 17-year-old Norwegian was the closest rival to Formula 2-bound Andrea Kimi Antonelli in this year's Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine – both of them starring as rookies. He then completed all three of the post-season two-day F3 tests with Hitech GP. Stenshorne (below), who is managed by Nicolas Todt, now joins Luke Browning at the UK team for his F3 race debut.

Van Amersfoort Racing has named all three of its drivers, with Euroformula Open champion Noel Leon stepping up alongside Sophia Florsch and Tommy Smith. All three drove together at last month's Macau GP, as did new ART Grand Prix recruits Laurens van Hoepen (moving up from FRECA) and Christian Mansell (switching from Campos Racing).

Sebastian Montoya shifted from Hitech to Campos for Macau and joins the Spanish team full-time. FRECA podium finisher Sami Meguetounif has joined leading squad Trident.



ROZENDAAL/DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY



## Pittard, Barker land factory deals

### WEC/IMSA

British sportscar stalwarts David Pittard and Ben Barker have landed their first factory contracts. Nurburgring 24 Hours winner Pittard has signed up for Aston Martin for 2024, while WEC regular Barker will race for Ford.

Pittard, who won at the Nurburgring with the Frikadelli Ferrari team in May, was announced on Monday as part of an expanded roster of Aston Martin Racing drivers along with fellow newcomers Mattia Drudi and Henrique Chaves. The 31-year-old comes into the line-up after two seasons in which he has driven the British manufacturer's machinery, which included taking the runner-up spot in

GTE Am in the 2022 World Endurance Championship with NorthWest AMR.

"Joining Aston is the realisation of a dream," said Pittard. "If you look at who wins the big endurance races, it is factory drivers, so I knew that to fulfil my long-term career aims I needed to be with a factory that wants the same as me."

Barker (below left), 32, was confirmed as a member of Ford's pool of drivers for its Mustang GT3 programme when he was listed on the 2024 WEC entry list alongside one of Proton Competition's cars. He has been signed up by the American manufacturer after eight seasons with GR Racing (formerly Gulf Racing) in the WEC.

"It's nice to be rewarded for the pace I've shown over the past couple of years," said Barker. "I've kind of flown under the radar because the results haven't been there. Maybe people thought I was pegged with GR and Mike [Wainwright, his long-term team-mate], but it was my involvement with them that put me on the map."

Also announced by Ford were former Porsche driver Dennis Olsen and ex-Audi factory men Christopher Mies and Frederic Vervisch, while Andy Priaulx was revealed as a 'super-sub' reserve.

GARY WATKINS



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## New team emerges to run ex-Team Hard Cupra Leons

### BTCC

The disintegration of long-time British Touring Car Championship fan favourite Team Hard means there's a lot of water going under the series' silly-season bridge, but first to arrive on the riverbank is a new squad: Restart Racing.

Restart is the project of former BTC Racing chief Bert Taylor and son Ben, and which ran ex-BTCC driver Chris Smiley to the 2022 TCR UK title. Taylor Jr is spearheading the new BTCC effort, which has acquired two of Hard's three TBL entrants' licences and a pair of its six Cupra Leon Competitions. Northern Irishman Smiley is the first driver on board.

The effort has been kickstarted at least in part by racing enthusiast Pete Jones, who has sponsored Excelr8 Motorsport in recent seasons and is a friend of the Taylors and Smiley.

"This was the right time to get back into the BTCC – that was more important than anything, and everything fitted together nicely," said Smiley, who has been engineered by Taylor Jr going back to 2016 at BTC, Excelr8 and in TCR.

"Running in TCR, that gave us the



platform to get back into the BTCC, where I raced for six seasons. We've already started doing quite a lot of updates to the car – there are a few little things in plan. I'm not saying it's going to be easy because it's not, but we're ready for it."

The remaining three TBLs used by Hard in 2023 are owned by Aiden Moffat (two of them) and reigning TCR UK champion Carl Boardley (one). While Moffat, who raced a One Motorsport Honda in 2023, is understood to be on the market for a drive with an established team next season, series insiders have suggested that his TBLs and Boardley's will be in use, potentially with some of the remaining Cupras.

Toyota team Speedworks Motorsport has also made a net gain of one of the 27 TBLs, lending credence to speculation that an expansion to four cars is on the cards.

The disappearance of Hard leaves its drivers from 2023 in the lurch. Four-time race winner Dan Lloyd said: "We're looking at options, but the budgets are difficult. It's tough; I'm trying to piece things together."

The highly rated Bobby Thompson is being helped by Team Dynamics supremos Matt Neal and Barry Plowman, who were involved with Hard in 2023, Plowman on engineering duties for the Essex racer. "I like Bobby," said Neal. "We're trying to help him out and see if we can source some sponsorship for him. There's lots of things up in the air."

Series boss Alan Gow said that the 27 TBLs "underlines the phenomenal strength and resilience of the BTCC".

**MARCUS SIMMONS**

## Hill remains in WSR BMW fold

### BTCC

British Touring Car Championship star Jake Hill is back for a third season at the wheel of a BMW 330e M Sport in 2024 after his management, Mark Blundell's MB Motorsport company, extended its deal with West Surrey Racing.

As in 2022 and 2023 – in both seasons Hill finished as the top WSR driver in the rankings in third overall – the car will be run in a separate guise to the squad's official BMW UK effort. Like last year, Hill will compete under the banner of Laser Tools Racing with MB Motorsport.

The diminutive Kentishman will once more be engineered by Craig Porley, who has formed a double-act with Hill going back to their AmD days via Motorbase. "I wouldn't do it without my partner in crime," said Hill. "I love that bloke to bits and we have a very good working relationship and friendship. This is the first time ever in my racing career that I've had a deal done so early and had the exact same crew, right down to 'Grumps' my tyre man, so that's a nice feeling."

New father Hill is known to have an eye on a GT3 future, and Simon Watts, for whom he frequently races historic cars, has taken over the RJN GT squad. But Hill said: "I don't want to leave the BTCC until we've set out what we accomplished to do, which is to win it, otherwise what would this all have been for? Nevertheless, if there was a chance to do some GT stuff with Simon, that would be fantastic. But I'm struggling to see where I can find some free weekends, what with the BTCC, historic and my little boy!"

WSR is expected to retain its four-time champion Colin Turkington plus Adam Morgan, but Stephen Jelley's time at the team appears to be at an end, leaving a seat open. "We've got four guys in the running, and that's about all I can say," said team boss Dick Bennetts.

**MARCUS SIMMONS**







**FORMULA 1** Two-time world champion Emerson Fittipaldi was reunited with Lotus 72, chassis 5 at his Concours d'Elegance event in Key Biscayne, Florida on Sunday. Fittipaldi took his first grand prix win at Watkins Glen in 1970 in this very car and was crowned champion in it at the 1972 Italian GP, after the car he was scheduled to race was wrecked in a transporter crash en route to Monza. Now restored by Classic Team Lotus, plans for Fittipaldi to drive the car on public roads were dashed when an electrical failure consigned it to static display. **Photograph by Eric Gilbert**

## Rally winners may score fewer points than event runners-up

### WRC

The FIA has revealed the new World Rally Championship points system for 2024.

The WRC's bid to spice up the final day of events was ratified at the World Motor Sport Council in Baku earlier this month, to prevent drivers from cruising through Sunday's stages preserving tyres for the end-of-rally Power Stage. Now a new points structure has been unveiled, with 18-15-13-10-8-6-4-3-2-1 awarded to the top 10 at the end of Saturday, but only if a crew reaches the final classification of the rally at the end of Sunday. If they fall

on Sunday, the Saturday points will be awarded to the next best-placed crew.

Championship points will also be awarded for performance on Sunday, with seven for the Sunday 'winner' down to one for seventh. The Power Stage will remain unchanged, with the five fastest drivers receiving points, from five down to one.

There remains a maximum possible score on any rally of 30 points, and the winner of the rally will still be declared on overall time for the whole event. But in theory, the victor may not score the most points on that event.

**TOM HOWARD**



Some rally folks trying to work out the new points system?

### CONWAY, MIYATA IN LEXUS

Toyota WEC driver Mike Conway and the team's reserve Ritomo Miyata have been drafted into the Vasser Sullivan Lexus line-up for the Daytona 24 Hours next month. Conway will drive VSR's GTD Pro Lexus RC F GT3 with Ben Barnicoat, Jack Hawksworth and Kyle Kirkwood, while Miyata will share the GTD entry with Parker Thompson, Frankie Montecalvo and Aaron Telitz.

### ROBB MOVES TO FOYT

Sting Ray Robb has switched from Dale Coyne Racing to AJ Foyt Racing for his sophomore IndyCar Series season in 2024. The 22-year-old Idahoan, who was Indy Pro Series champion in 2020 and Indy Lights runner-up last year, took a best finish of 12th at Laguna Seca in his rookie season. "To my family of partners and supporters thank you for being a part of this journey, we'll continue to work hard and grow into what God has called us to be," said Robb.

### CASAGRANDE IS CHAMPION

While ex-Formula 1 drivers Ricardo Zonta and Felipe Massa were the race winners in the Brazilian Stock Car finale at Interlagos last weekend, it was Gabriel Casagrande who became champion for the second time. Casagrande finished third in the opener in his A Mattheis Vogel Chevrolet behind Zonta and Julio Campos, so only needed 18th in the reversed-grid sequel to put the title beyond reach of Daniel Serra. Serra could only finish 12th in a race won by Massa from Marcos Gomes and Rubens Barrichello.

### VIRTUOSI SELLS STAKE

Leading Formula 2 squad Virtuosi Racing has been renamed Invicta Racing after the watch company of that name, the team's title sponsor in 2023, bought 'an ownership stake' in the Norfolk operation. The team, which previously ran under the name of Russian Time and carried Jack Doohan (below) to third in the points this year, will continue to be run by veteran Andy Roche, Paul Devlin and CEO Declan Lohan.





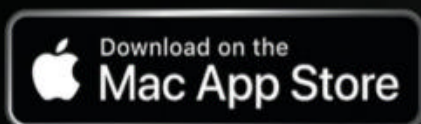
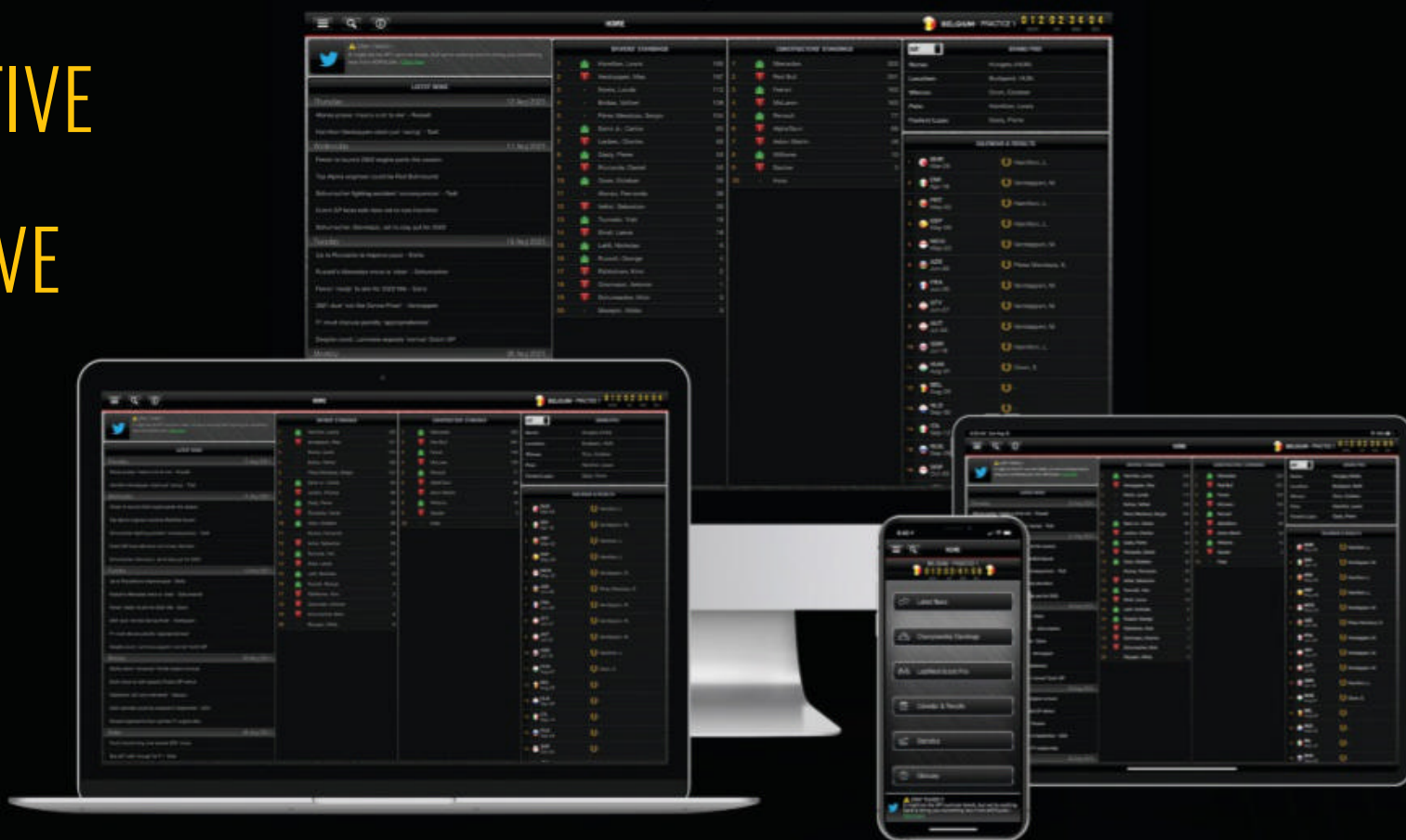


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# Three F1 drivers on Top 50 bubble

*Autosport's traditional end-of-year driver rankings are guaranteed to stir debate. Here's why a trio of contenders at the pinnacle of motorsport failed to make the cut*

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

**H**ere's a peek behind the curtain: there might not be complete and unanimous agreement between the wonderful people at Autosport Towers when it comes to our end-of-season host of rankings. That's the fun of it, and when you leaf through our Top 50 pages there will invariably be placings that you disagree with.

The case in point is that, when Alex Kalinauckas and this writer came up with the top 10 Formula 1 drivers list for last week's issue, there was a murmur of curiosity from one or two about the decision to rank Nico Hulkenberg's season in the upper half of the field. This directly affects the Top 50 in this week's issue (see page 17), since the top 10 will largely earn their place on the long list of drivers owing to F1's status as a championship within the motorsport scene. We accepted that Hulkenberg's inclusion might have been a left-field pick but, when you consider the other options, it makes a bit more sense.

Those who didn't make it who featured on the F1 long list were Alpine pair Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly, and AlphaTauri's Yuki Tsunoda. From this writer's point of view, Tsunoda's late-season surge in a much-enhanced AT04 was perhaps closest to chiselling the Haas driver out of the top 10, and he stepped up his game considerably when Daniel Ricciardo entered the fold. Ocon and Gasly also had good seasons, both managing a grand prix podium each. So why didn't these three make the cut?

## “Both enjoyed their best results in conditions that would apparently suit their team-mate”

Delineating between Ocon's and Gasly's seasons is a difficult task. On pure stats alone, Gasly held the qualifying advantage with a 14-8 lead, but the two were pretty much tied on races – 11-all; if you discard races where either driver retired, Ocon leads 10-6. But in that latter case, the more vertically gifted driver bore the brunt of the reliability issues. And then there's the points: Gasly had 62 to Ocon's 58, so they remained remarkably close throughout the year. Results don't really paint the full picture, but in this instance they're a good marker of their close proximity on track.

The perception of what Alpine has is one driver who is a more accomplished qualifier in Gasly, and another who is stronger on a Sunday afternoon in Ocon. The value remains in the races, but points scored is not the sole barometer of where a driver stacks up. Besides, both enjoyed their best results in conditions that would

apparently suit their team-mate. Ocon, for example, took third in Monaco after nailing qualifying; Gasly captured his own third place through an adept drive on race day at a damp Zandvoort. In reality, the two are virtually inseparable across both 'disciplines'.

Taking the average deltas between them at the flag for races that both drivers finished – counting the previous lap if one was lapped and deleting any post-race penalties – the gap between them is slender: Ocon held an average 0.415 seconds advantage over Gasly over a GP. For qualifying, we've calculated the gap between them in the last session that both drivers contested; for example, if both progress to Q2, but only one makes it into Q3, then we take the gap in Q2. After deleting anomalies – and for this, sprint qualifying has not been counted – it emerges that Gasly indeed has an advantage. But it's a cigarette-paper between them: Gasly is just 0.008s ahead.

It's impossible to separate them. The numbers say that both drivers should be graded together – and given that both have made significant errors over 2023, Gasly arguably contributing most to the intra-team Melbourne clash and Ocon racking up the penalties in Bahrain and Austria, it's hard to make the case for either.

Tsunoda, on the other hand, was a more compelling option. Once AlphaTauri had managed to transform the AT04 into a legitimate points contender, he managed to thrust the team into the fight for seventh in the constructors' championship. His last-lap stand against Lewis Hamilton in Abu Dhabi was incredibly well-judged, and produced a defensive drive that put the onus on the Briton to make the move – one that the seven-time champion ultimately botched at Turn 9. This built on Tsunoda's strong qualifying efforts on Saturday, where he captured sixth on the grid.

He'd also impressed in Brazil after finishing sixth in the sprint, adding to his points haul from the weekend with ninth in the GP, and his run to eighth in Austin (10th at the flag) was augmented by fastest lap. But these end-of-year highlights were also indicative of his year overall, separated as they were by less-than-stellar weekends in Mexico and Las Vegas. He was outclassed by a resurgent Ricciardo in the Mexico City race, and was furious after being eliminated in Q1 during the Vegas round. The race recovery showed him in a better light, before his gearbox expired.

Then there was the early season. Tsunoda easily had the edge over Nyck de Vries, managing two points to the Dutchman's zero in their 10 races as team-mates, but there were still races where the more experienced driver went missing: he was beaten by de Vries in Monaco, and his solid run to ninth in Spain was undone by a penalty served for his over-aggressive move on Zhou Guanyu. Moments of brilliance were not tempered by discipline and, taking a holistic view of the year, this let Tsunoda down. ❄

➔ P15 HOW WE DECIDE THE TOP 50





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# A rare second shot at a title

*The BRDC SuperStar and 2022 Indy Pro champion reflects on his maiden season of Indy NXT and his hopes for the coming campaign*

LOUIS FOSTER

**T**here were a lot of positives from my first Indy NXT season and I learnt a lot for next year. We had plenty of strong pace, especially in the qualifying sessions – we ended up with the most poles across the season. My Andretti Autosport team did an amazing job, and I'm very happy to be there again for 2024.

The first round in St Petersburg was a bit of a shock, getting pole position, but things didn't quite go our way in the race. It was annoying having to wait so long for the win – round seven at Mid-Ohio – but I wasn't desperate, because I knew it was coming. I knew we had the pace to win.

I had some new tracks to learn – street circuits in Detroit and Nashville, Iowa Speedway, and Laguna Seca – but 60-70% of them I'd already raced on in Indy Pro 2000. I've always been pretty good at adapting to new circuits – the last three years of my career, I've turned up to race weekends without having done any testing, in Euroformula Open and Indy Pro. I think that showed a lot in Detroit, where it was a brand-new circuit. No one had been there before, and we put it on pole by a massive margin. First pole was by six tenths, and then in second qualifying I had damaged my car and had a bent rear axle, but still put it on pole.

The car was quite a big step up from Indy Pro. It has a lot of horsepower compared to its amount of grip and downforce, so it's a very lively car. Personally, now I've completed an IndyCar test, I would say the jump from Indy NXT to IndyCar is smaller than the jump from Indy Pro to NXT.

It's great to be with a team like Andretti that's so well-known. Everyone is familiar with Andretti and how it's looking to enter F1. There's a lot of knowledge and a lot of understanding, especially talking to Michael Andretti. He's a very good driver as well as a team boss, so I'll ask him about certain tracks, and he'll give me some helpful tips and information.

They don't really have academies in America like they do in Europe with F1, so this is the next-best thing as it means I can get my name out there. Andretti know who I am, they've worked with me already, so they would know what to expect if I raced in IndyCar for them in the future.

We had other options for 2024, but I think it's nice to return to Indy NXT. This is the first time in my career that I've ever done a second season in a series as I've always moved up after one year. The biggest strength is that I'll have the same engineer, same team, same crew. We all know what we struggled with last season, and we know what to focus on. That's a really big positive in my eyes and means we can fully focus on the championship title.

My debut IndyCar test was really great and was partly as a reward from Andretti. We spent a full day at Road America and I was in one of three cars out there – the other two being for Scott



Dixon and Will Power, who were running in hybrids whereas I was in the non-hybrid 2023-spec.

We got through a lot of things, and I was comfortable with the car pretty quickly – it felt very natural and easy. I set my fastest time in the morning when the track was fast and I'm very happy with how it went. After that we ran through a bunch of damper stuff. IndyCar teams love their dampers, so we did that most of the day, but it was good to help the team out and be a part of things even more so than before.

We'll see what happens for 2024. This year, I had Hunter McElrea as a team-mate and he was a very fast driver, which was very good as we pushed each other on. I'm looking forward to it. We've got all the information from this year that we can take forwards, so we'll focus on that and do our own thing. It will be quite a crucial year in my career, but I'm excited to see what comes of it.

To have the support of the BRDC SuperStars, especially Andy Meyrick, is super-helpful with things looking to the future, which is great. When the British Racing Drivers' Club publicises my results, it helps everyone back home to keep up to date with what is going on, which I really appreciate. We get a small bursary, which I put towards some home gym equipment and sessions with a trainer.

Being on the main stage at this year's British Grand Prix was great fun. It's one of the perks you get with being a SuperStar. I've looked up to it since I was made a Rising Star and, to be honest, I didn't expect to get on the programme, because I thought it was a bit left-field. It was a very nice surprise and I'm happy the BRDC is supporting me in my career. 🏁

 **P71 INDY NXT REVIEW**



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**SCAN ME**





# How we decide Autosport's Top 50 drivers of the year

*Objectivity is the watchword for this exhaustive and gratifyingly exhausting process*

KEVIN TURNER

**E**very year, Autosport selects and ranks the top 50 drivers of the season. It's an enormous task that always creates debate and controversy, both inside and outside the Autosport office. So, how do we do it?

The first thing to remember is that it's not who we think are the 50 best drivers on the planet. It's the 50 we think have performed best in this particular season, our effort to highlight the standout drivers each year. We've done other articles on the greatest ever...

It's also worth noting that there's probably not a single member of the Autosport staff who agrees with the position of every driver on the list. With so many correspondents covering dozens of series, there have to be some tough decisions and compromises made.

The starting point is the top 10 driver lists for the various championships. Unless a driver does multiple series (such as Sebastien Buemi), the order of the season review selections must be maintained in the Top 50, even if some of us would like to change it. So, if Scott McLaughlin is in front of Pato O'Ward in the IndyCar ranking, he has to be ahead in the Top 50 as well. That consistency wasn't the case in the early days of our Top 50, which started in 2002, but has been corrected in more recent times.

One of the biggest factors is, of course, ranking the various series. Formula 1 and the World Rally Championship are relatively easy, given their positions at the pinnacle of their branches of the sport. So the top performers there are going to be high on the list. But trying to place, for example, F2 against Australian Supercars or Super Formula/Super GT is rather more tricky.

The strength and competitiveness of various championships also varies from season to season, so we try to take that into account. Although the major series sit roughly in the same order each year, there are changes and tweaks. It can never be an exact or fixed pyramid. And then there's the question of the strongest drivers within those. Is a dominant performance in a 'weaker' championship more worthy than a narrow success in a competitive one? There is no one answer; it depends on the context of each comparison every year.

Under all this are plenty of other factors. Did the driver have a car advantage or disadvantage? Were they struck by unreliability or problems outside their control? How did they compare to their team-mate(s)? Were they a rookie or a veteran of the series? Was there a standout performance from a driver that turned the result

of a major race? Drivers who had to deal with the pressures of a title fight can get 'bonus' points compared to those performing further back. On the other hand, one-off races against regulars also boost drivers, such as Shane van Gisbergen winning on his NASCAR Cup debut at Chicago in 2023.

There also has to be an element of 'artistic licence'. We like to make sure lots of series are represented. It's surely more interesting to include the driver who wins both the World Rallycross and Extreme E titles rather than the 11th, 12th or 13th best F1 driver. There are hundreds of professional drivers operating at a high level all around the world, some in series that fly under the radar, so we like to pick out some less obvious candidates when the chances arise.

Once a list of 60-80 names has been constructed using the above criteria and a draft order established, it is sent around the Autosport team for feedback. Suggestions of moving drivers around or including other names are quite common, though deciding who needs to be removed to make space is usually more challenging. It's much easier to nominate who you think should be added than argue who should be taken out.

Eventually, after feedback has been considered by the core panel putting the list together, a final 50 is established. This is then only tweaked if there are late results that change things. Due to the length of the process, we have to start before all series have been completed. This is normally fine but does sometimes create problems. For example, Naoki Yamamoto's charges to both the Super Formula and Super GT crowns in the COVID-hit 2020 season came so late he missed the list altogether!

There are so many factors to be considered and unknowns that no such list can ever be definitive.

What we do attempt is to make it as objective as possible. It's not Autosport's list of *favourite* drivers.

The highest scorers (see box) over the 22 editions of the list since we started in 2002 suggests it's not a bad gauge of consistent performers over time. Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton top the list, Scott Dixon is the highest non-F1 driver, and Max Verstappen has just broken into the top 10...

In short, we take the process of putting the list together seriously, but the result should be regarded as an interesting snapshot, giving a variety of drivers around the world credit for a job well done. 🍷

## TOP 50 HIGHEST SCORERS 2002-23\*

	DRIVER	PTS
1	Fernando Alonso	894
2	Lewis Hamilton	890
3	Scott Dixon	625
4	Sebastian Vettel	595
5	Sebastien Loeb	539
6	Sebastien Ogier	519
7	Jenson Button	515
8	Kimi Raikkonen	508
9	Mark Webber	464
10	Max Verstappen	452

\*50 points awarded for first, 49 for second etc down to one point for 50th each year



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# TOP 50 DRIVERS of 2023

AUTOSPORT

We rank the best  
performers of  
the year

Joey Barnes, Charles Bradley,  
Phil Branagan, Jake Boxall-Legge,  
Sam Hall, Tom Howard, Alex Kalinauckas,  
Jamie Klein, Stefan Mackley, James Newbold,  
Marcus Simmons, Rachit Thukral, Jim Utter,  
Gary Watkins and Megan White



For extra content visit  
[autosport.com/topic/top-50-drivers-of-2023](https://www.autosport.com/topic/top-50-drivers-of-2023)







▼ DOWN 32

Sergio  
Perez

2nd in Formula 1 World Championship

50

One of this year's biggest questions in deciding the top 50 was whether Perez deserves to be on the list. He'd started

2023 well, with two wins and two second places in the opening four races to hint at giving Red Bull team-mate Max Verstappen more than a notional title challenge.

After his Miami defeat, when Verstappen breezed past for the lead, Perez's season started to crumble. In a car that has proved to be F1's most dominant since McLaren's MP4/4, the Mexican struggled to make regular podium appearances, limping to the runner-up position in the championship. The two wins get Perez over the line, but he's lucky to be on this list.



— RE-ENTRY

Nicky  
Catsburg

1st in World Endurance Championship (GTE Am)  
1st in Nurburgring 24 Hours

49

If there was a sportscar driver you wanted in your car for a 24-hour race this year, it was Catsburg. Victories at the

Nurburgring (outright), Le Mans (GTE Am) and Spa (Pro-Am), each in different cars, underlined that the versatile Dutchman is operating at the top of his game. He was part of the strongest line-up in GTE Am's WEC swansong, but Catsburg certainly played his part in sealing the title with an unprecedented two rounds to spare. His defence against Alessio Rovera for victory in Portimao was inch-perfect, and he was consistently near the top of the pace averages as Corvette surged into contention at Le Mans.



▼ DOWN 9

Thierry  
Neuville

3rd in World Rally Championship

48

It was a story of what could have been for Neuville in 2023. The Belgian was Hyundai's main threat for the WRC

title and scored as many podiums as world champion Kalle Rovanpera, but incidents at crucial moments cost him dearly.

Neuville impressed hugely on fast gravel events that had previously been his weakness, scoring second-place finishes in Estonia and Finland. He also starred in tricky wet conditions to win in Sardinia and Central Europe. But a crash from the lead in Croatia and suspension failure while ahead in Greece proved costly, alongside an exclusion from Kenya and an excursion while chasing victory in Japan.



▼ DOWN 26

Tomoki  
Nojiri

3rd in Super Formula, 8th in Super GT

47

After two years of dominating Super Formula, Nojiri returned to earth in 2023 amid his struggles to come to terms with

the new SF23 aero package, with its reduced rear downforce and resultant shift towards oversteer. That showed when he suffered an uncharacteristic pre-season testing crash.

Matters weren't helped by Liam Lawson's arrival on the other side of the Team Mugen garage, and yet he still matched the Kiwi's tally of three wins, with the pair split by just half a point in the standings despite Nojiri missing Autopolis with a health scare. With champion Ritomo Miyata and Lawson both moving on, Nojiri enters 2024 as the heavy favourite.







NEW ENTRY

## Jack Hawksworth

1st in IMSA Sportscar Championship (GTD Pro)

46

Ably assisted by his season-long team-mate Ben Barnicoat, Hawksworth claimed the IMSA SportsCar Championship's GTD

Pro title in his fifth season with the factory-backed Vasser Sullivan Racing Lexus squad.

Four class pole positions and two victories at Long Beach and Watkins Glen were the highlights. He finished on the podium of every race apart from Mosport, after Barnicoat lost a turf war with Patrick Pilet at Turn 1, and at Petit Le Mans (where they were crowned champions simply by starting), when Barnicoat's off inflicted race-ending damage. He also had four LMP2 Pro-Am outings in the European Le Mans Series with Algarve Pro Racing.



GALSTAD



DOWN 1

## Johan Kristoffersson

1st in World Rallycross Championship

1st in Extreme E

45

He enjoyed another memorable year by securing a record-breaking sixth World Rallycross Championship and became

Extreme E's first double champion. Until the Lydden Hill fire that paused the WRX season, the Swede had been utterly dominant, winning all three of the opening events. Life was harder in the slower ZEROID X1 cars the series fell back on in South Africa and Hong Kong, although a 50% win rate in equal machinery further highlighted his class. Kristoffersson also joined Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky for a second Extreme E season; they claimed a pair of victories in Sardinia and added a third prior to their coronation in Chile.



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ANALYSIS

## Kristoffersson on 2023's extreme highs and lows

To Johan Kristoffersson's already bulging trophy cabinet were added this term eight event winner's trophies and two pieces of outright championship silverware. But the Swede concedes that neither his World Rallycross nor Extreme E campaigns were without fault.

Asked to pinpoint a low point from each championship, he says: "Definitely, the low point [in RX] was when the car stopped in Hong Kong. That was something we couldn't influence at all. I'd taken the joker

race in Saudi when we picked up a penalty for speeding in the slow zone. But at the time, we were pretty satisfied with that result [third] anyway, as I think for me and Mikaela, our strong part is not really the sand events."

Turning to the highest moments, he adds: "The home [WRX] event in Holjes when we did the full Sunday in full rain and I was able to have great launches and have such an advantage on the others in terms of pace on track. That was really nice to win that one.

"Within Extreme E, I think the win we had in Sardinia was really nice after the first corner when I was so far behind. I was able to catch up and overtake Mattias [Ekstrom] on both Sunday finals. The competition with Mattias is always nice and to be able to pass him two days in a row in the final is of course very nice.

"I respect him a lot as a driver, so it is not easy to make a pass on him, but I think that was also our first win since Sardinia the year before. That was really a high in Extreme E this year."

**"The competition with Mattias is always nice. I passed him two days in a row in Extreme E finals"**

and I was looking forward to the joker lap battle with Kevin [Hansen] and then the car stopped. That was definitely the low out of anything I have done this season.

"Within Extreme E, I think honestly we really didn't have anything super-low. I mean, in one way, we were on for a win in the first





— RE-ENTRY

## Nico Hulkenberg

16th in Formula 1 World Championship

# 44

After losing his full-time F1 drive with Renault at the end of 2019, Hulkenberg had to make do with a handful of super-sub

outings for Racing Point/Aston Martin until Haas came knocking. In qualifying, Hulkenberg immediately exercised his one-lap superiority over team-mate Kevin Magnussen and got as far as Q3 first time out in Bahrain. He repeated that in Australia, securing his season-best grand prix finish of seventh from 10th on the grid.

Most of the German's highlights were produced in qualifying because the limited Haas often fell back in the races; his best performance was second place in a wet-dry Canadian GP qualifying before receiving a grid penalty.



GALLOWAY



— RE-ENTRY

## Pascal Wehrlein

4th in Formula E

# 43

Initially Wehrlein looked set for a maiden Formula E title when Porsche hit the ground running with the Gen3

machines. The German took a brace of wins in Saudi Arabia after claiming second in the Mexico City season-opener. Impressively, he only failed to finish in the points once in 16 races (he was taken out in Cape Town) and remained at the head of the standings until the season's second half. He moved back to the top of the table with his third and final win of the season in Jakarta, but couldn't extract enough performance from Porsche's powertrain over the remaining races and slipped to fourth overall.



BINGHAM



HONE

ANALYSIS

## Haas team boss Guenther Steiner on Hulkenberg's full-time return

"I've been pretty impressed. We took him for one reason, because we know he can drive a race car. The doubt was after three years as not a full-time driver, how long does it take him to catch up? It didn't take him any time because he was there from day one. It's actually very impressive, but also as a human being, he tries to help the team and that's what we wanted with the experience he has. That's what I always said."

**"Nico knows it's not chocolate, it's not sweet to make, so it takes some time"**

"He was six times in Q3 out of [the first] 11 races – that isn't too shabby. And he's got nine points, so in the race he's pretty good. First of all, he surprised me how quick he was on the ball, how quick he was integrated within the team. It was quite amazing how he immediately understood people."

"But again, we are talking about experience and he has been doing this for a long time. But it's also how he goes about racing in the right way and puts in the right effort – not trying to overdo it, you know? He knows exactly what he needs to do. It's the experience – [he knows] it's not chocolate, it's not sweet to make, so it takes some time."



GALLOWAY

motorsport  
IMAGES





+ NEW ENTRY

Gabriel  
Bortoleto

1st in FIA Formula 3

42

It's no wonder Fernando Alonso signed Bortoleto to his A14 Management stable in autumn of last year. The Brazilian hadn't

overwhelmed in Formula Regional, but as an F3 rookie he put in a dominant charge to the title for Trident, emerging with a lead in the standings from the first round that he would not relinquish for the rest of the season. After winning the opening two feature races of the season, Bortoloto took a further four podiums and secured the crown following qualifying at Monza, with a healthy eventual margin of 45 points. His performance has earned him a place on the McLaren junior programme and a 2024 Formula 2 seat with Virtuosi.



- RE-ENTRY

Sebastien  
Bourdais

7th in IMSA SportsCar Championship (GTP)

41

On the face of it, Bourdais didn't have the kind of year to justify such a high ranking. There was only one win in

the IMSA SportsCar Championship with the Ganassi Cadillac squad. But what might be described as a season of misfortune – the car he shared with Renger van der Zande caught fire three times – included some stellar performances. He was always among the fastest, if not *the* fastest of the drivers aboard the Caddy V-Series.R. Daytona and Petit were stand-out races for him Stateside, but he saved his best for an away-day with Ganassi at Le Mans. Not only was he the quickest Cadillac driver, but best of the LMDh pack, too.



+ NEW ENTRY

Frederik  
Vesti

2nd in FIA Formula 2

40

Vesti finished a close second to Theo Pourchaire in Formula 2 after a superb sophomore year in the series on his switch

to Prema. Despite six wins and four further podiums, the Mercedes junior trailed his consistent ART rival by 11 points, but Vesti put in some champion-worthy drives, including a last-round charge to win the Abu Dhabi sprint. The Dane cruised to victory in a dramatic Jeddah feature race, converted pole in the Monaco feature, and collected further sprint wins at Barcelona, Silverstone and Monza during his title chase. There were some torrid lows along the way – a reconnaissance-lap crash at Spa among them – but Vesti's class shone throughout.



# TOP 50 DRIVER LIST 2022

- |                        |                          |                           |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 MAX VERSTAPPEN       | 17 SCOTT DIXON           | 35 JOSE MARIA LOPEZ       |
| 2 CHARLES LECLERC      | 18 SERGIO PEREZ          | 36 JAKE DENNIS            |
| 3 KALLE ROVANPERA      | 19 ALESSANDRO PIER GUIDI | 37 SHELDON VAN DER LINDE  |
| 4 LEWIS HAMILTON       | 20 ROSS CHASTAIN         | 38 CHRISTOPHER BELL       |
| 5 GEORGE RUSSELL       | 21 TOMOKI NOJIRI         | 39 THIERRY NEUVILLE       |
| 6 STOFFEL VANDOOORNE   | 22 BRENDON HARTLEY       | 40 DRIES VANTHOOR         |
| 7 JOSEF NEWGARDEN      | 23 ESTEBAN OCON          | 41 ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA |
| 8 WILL POWER           | 24 RAFFAELE MARCIELLO    | 42 FILIPE ALBUQUERQUE     |
| 9 LANDO NORRIS         | 25 SEBASTIEN LOEB        | 43 LOUIS DELETRAZ         |
| 10 SHANE VAN GISBERGEN | 26 TOM BLOMQVIST         | 44 JOHAN KRISTOFFERSSON   |
| 11 JOEY LOGANO         | 27 ALEX PALOU            | 45 KEVIN MAGNUSSEN        |
| 12 MITCH EVANS         | 28 SCOTT McLAUGHLIN      | 46 NICK TANDY             |
| 13 FERNANDO ALONSO     | 29 SEBASTIAN VETTEL      | 47 TOM INGRAM             |
| 14 CARLOS SAINZ        | 30 SEBASTIEN BUEMI       | 48 LUCAS AUER             |
| 15 EDOARDO MORTARA     | 31 VALTTERI BOTTAS       | 49 SEBASTIEN OGIER        |
| 16 OTT TANAK           | 32 JEAN-ERIC VERGNE      | 50 MIKEL AZCONA           |
|                        | 33 ALEX ALBON            |                           |
|                        | 34 FELIPE DRUGOVICH      |                           |



+ NEW ENTRY

Thomas  
Preining

1st in DTM

39

Preining had already marked himself out as a future champion during his rookie DTM season in 2022 with the

single-car Team Bernhard operation. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that he delivered on that promise in his sophomore campaign this year after being given a plum seat at the Manthey EMA squad.

While his pace in the Porsche 911 GT3-R was obvious, his consistency ultimately won him the title: he finished all 16 races inside the points, including 11 in the top five. A double victory at the Hockenheim finale, against an in-form Mirko Bortolotti, proved beyond any doubt that the 25-year-old Austrian was a deserving winner.







— RE-ENTRY

Kyle  
Larson

2nd in NASCAR Cup

**38**

As is typical, Larson's successful exploits in the NASCAR Cup were just part of his 2023 motorsport endeavours, which included winning appearances in the Xfinity and Truck Series. He also won numerous sprint car races, including in a series he owns – High Limit Sprint Car Racing – and announced his entry into the 2024 Indianapolis 500.

Larson shone brightest in Cup with four wins for Chevrolet team Hendrick Motorsports, including two important playoff victories at Darlington and Las Vegas, and headed the series for laps led. As the only previous champion to advance to the Championship 4 this year, he came up just short of Ryan Blaney for the title.



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— RE-ENTRY

Elfyn  
Evans

2nd in World Rally Championship

**37**

Winless in 2022, Evans bounced back in some fashion this season after finally gelling with the Toyota GR Yaris Rally1.

The Welshman scored three wins and took the title fight to team-mate Kalle Rovanpera, but conceded the championship to the Finn at the penultimate round. Evans ended a season that included only one retirement on a high, his fine drive to victory in Japan securing Toyota its first WRC triumph on home soil and matching Rovanpera's seasonal win tally in the process. An impressive drive to Rally Finland victory was arguably the highlight, putting Evans alongside Finnish greats Ari Vatanen and Timo Salonen as a two-time event winner.



— RE-ENTRY

Ash  
Sutton

1st in British Touring Car Championship

**36**

Sutton had what the stats books will tell you was a record-equalling season in the British Touring Car Championship.

But what was more important to him was the manner of his fourth crown, and the fact that he became the first to win it in both front and rear-wheel-drive machinery. His quartet of titles emulates Andy Rouse and Colin Turkington; his 12 wins from 30 races matches Alain Menu's 12 from 24 in 1997. But the Swiss did that in an era of no success penalties, no reversed grids, no performance-balancing, no artificiality. No wonder Menu reckons Sutton would have made the grade as a top-line Super Touring star.



+ NEW ENTRY

Jules  
Gounon

1st in GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup  
1st in Bathurst 12 Hour  
1st in Intercontinental GT Challenge

**35**

A prolific winner in Mercedes GT3 cars on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond in 2023, Gounon's second straight GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup title capped a year in which he also claimed a third straight Bathurst 12 Hour win.

Together with Dani Juncadella, he won more races than the IMSA GTD Pro title-winners, including the Daytona 24 Hours. Whether it was Paul Ricard – fastest in qualifying by 0.336s – or Oulton Park, where he lowered his own lap record to snare pole, the Intercontinental GT Challenge champion was quick everywhere.





## TOP 50 NEW ENTRIES

### 7 ANTONIO FUOCO

2nd in 2022 GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup  
3rd in 2022 World Endurance Championship (GTE Pro)  
5th in 2021 WEC (GTE Am)

### 11 RITOMO MIYATA

4th in 2022 Super Formula  
6th in 2022 Super GT  
10th in 2021 Super Formula  
11th in 2021 Super GT

### 12 WILLIAM BYRON

6th in 2022 NASCAR Cup  
10th in 2021 NASCAR Cup

### 23 RYAN BLANEY

8th in 2022 NASCAR Cup  
7th in 2021 NASCAR Cup

### 25 MATT CAMPBELL

1st in 2022 IMSA SportsCar Championship (GTD Pro)  
1st in 2022 FIA Motorsport Games GT Sprint  
3rd in 2021 World Endurance Championship (GTE Am)  
4th in 2021 IMSA (GTLM)

### 28 BRODIE KOSTECKI

7th in 2022 Australian Supercars championship  
9th in 2021 Supercars

### 35 JULES GOUNON

1st in 2022 GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup  
1st in 2022 Spa 24 Hours  
1st in 2022 Bathurst 12 Hour  
2nd in 2022 Intercontinental GT Challenge  
2nd in 2021 GTWCE Endurance  
7th in 2021 GTWCE Sprint  
6th in 2021 ADAC GT Masters

### 39 THOMAS PREINING

5th in 2022 DTM  
13th in 2021 ADAC GT Masters

### 40 FREDERIK VESTI

9th in 2022 FIA Formula 2 Championship  
4th 2021 FIA Formula 3 Championship

### 42 GABRIEL BORTOLETO

6th in 2022 Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine  
15th in 2021 FRECA

### 46 JACK HAWKSWORTH

6th in 2022 IMSA SportsCar Championship (GTD Pro)  
7th in 2021 IMSA (GTD)



▼ DOWN 10

Raffaele  
Marciello

1st in GT World Challenge Europe  
1st in GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup  
1st in FIA GT World Cup

34

On his GT3 Mercedes swansong, Marciello was nothing if not consistent. The only driver to qualify in the top three at every

GT World Challenge Europe Sprint round earned a record-extending 14th series pole at Misano after his Brands Hatch masterclass. Key passes to win at Hockenheim emulated Marciello's glorious fightback in the Paul Ricard 1000Km Endurance Cup round. Overall and Endurance titles made up for Sprint defeat following his only error on Zandvoort's slippery surface. Before joining BMW, the Nurburgring 24 Hours poleman departed with Macau domination.



— RE-ENTRY

James  
Calado

4th in FIA World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)  
1st in Le Mans 24 Hours

33

There's a reason why Calado doesn't make it higher up the list. And it's called Antonio

Fuoco. The Italian was the stand-out driver in the Ferrari Hypercar line-up, and there were races when the gap he had on pace to his team-mates was significant. That said, Calado had a strong season on his graduation to the prototype ranks. He was bang on the money on the way to victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours, but his best race was Spa, where he fought back from 50 seconds down over the course of his final double stint to snatch a first podium for the #51 car on the final lap.







▼ DOWN 6

## Tom Blomqvist

3rd in IMSA SportsCar Championship (GTP)  
1st in Daytona 24 Hours

32

Three wins in IMSA's GTP class with Meyer Shank Racing's Acura was a strong return, but a repeat of Blomqvist's 2022 DPi title

success with new team-mate Colin Braun was denied by a 200-point deduction for the tyre data manipulation that tainted the team's Daytona 24 Hours triumph. Even then, the only crew to win more than twice were just 22 points shy.

There were also sparkling WEC performances in LMP2 outings with United Autosports, notably at Spa and Le Mans, and he made three IndyCar Series starts with MSR in place of the sidelined Simon Pagenaud, which is where his future lies as he switches codes for 2024.



GALSTAD



▼ DOWN 3

## Scott McLaughlin

3rd in IndyCar Series

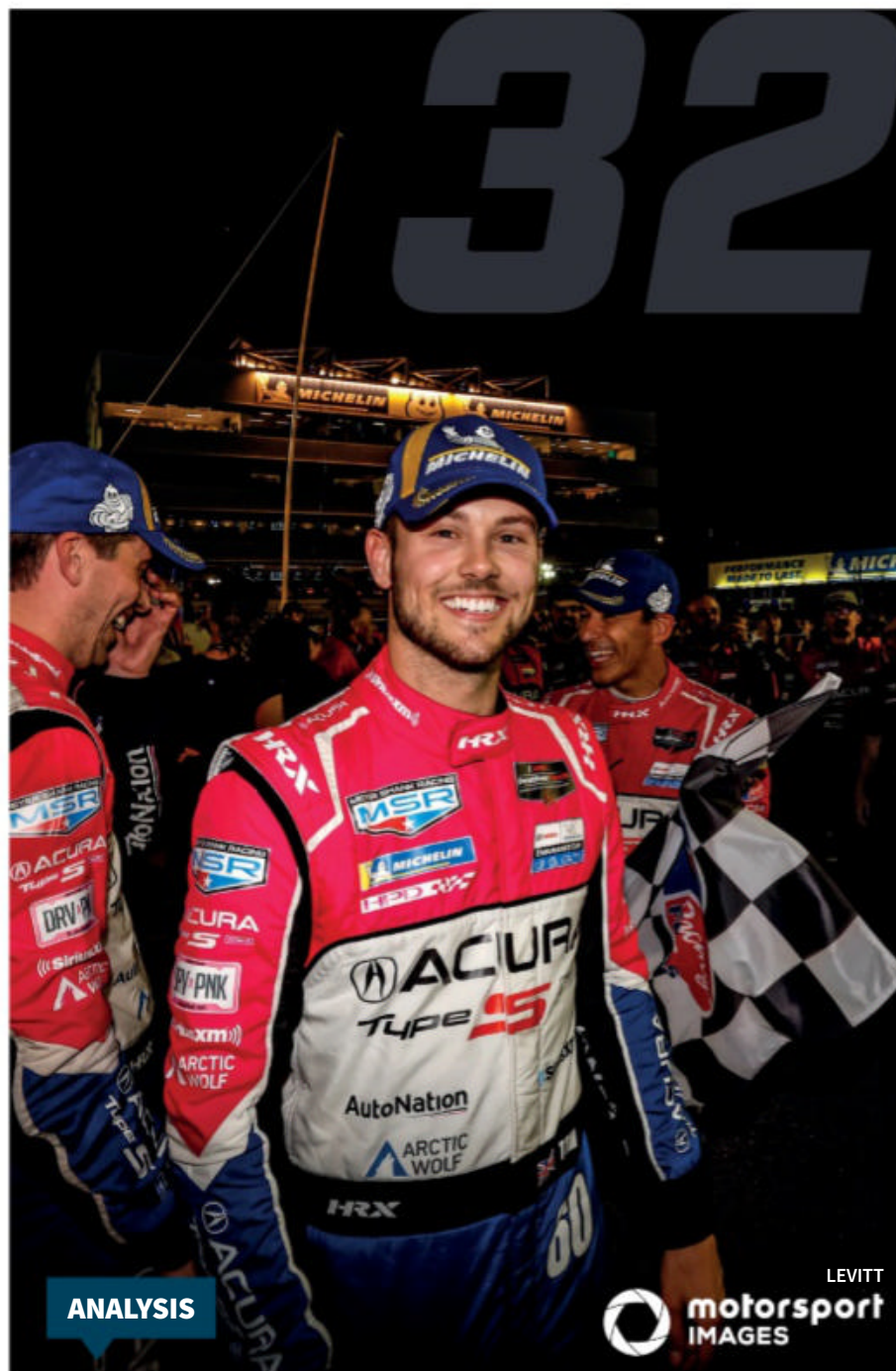
31

The New Zealander took another step toward growing into a regular threat in 2023 after a career-best third in the

IndyCar title race. Among the top performances of his season was a thrilling battle versus Romain Grosjean at Barber Motorsports Park, where McLaughlin surged late to victory. The fight was made all the more intense after the two crashed while in a turf war for the win at St Petersburg the month prior. The Team Penske pilot ended his third full-time year in the series with one win, three runner-ups and one pole (plus one lost to a penalty). He also delivered a monster final stint to catapult Tower Motorsports to LMP2 victory at the Sebring 12 Hours.



GALSTAD



ANALYSIS

LEVITT

motorsport  
IMAGES

## How Blomqvist's IMSA speed prompted IndyCar switch

It's not often that sportscar stars switch full-time to America's premier open-wheel series, but Tom Blomqvist's speed in Meyer Shank Racing's IMSA Acura over the past two years convinced his team to give him his IndyCar shot in 2024.

The 2022 series champion has a double-double of Daytona 24 Hours and Petit Le Mans majors under his belt and feels ready for this new challenge. "To be honest, I had a few rough years in my career," says

Mike started to love what he saw. We got kinda chatty on that and he said, 'Mate, I've got these [IndyCar] rookie days that we can use as an indicator, you wanna have a crack?'

"That test went all right. The first dialogue started, but not in a serious way. We came back this year and we won Daytona... obviously there was a bit surrounding that! But we still did a fantastic job on track, and in the week before in quali [where he took a last-gasp pole].

"As the season went on, [the IndyCar opportunity] just evolved. But it wasn't like 'I'm going to join MSR so I can go to IndyCar'. When it became a realistic possibility for me, I thought, 'Hell yeah! Why not?'

"Hopefully I've proved enough in this scene. I could've taken the easy route, and stayed in this sportscar paddock. I could keep trying to win Daytonas and championships and maybe try and win Le Mans... But now I've got a whole new different thing, where I'm kind of starting at the bottom again, and there's this runway there, so I'm excited about that."

**"Now I've got a whole new different thing where I'm starting at the bottom again"**

Blomqvist. "Up until last year I didn't find myself in competitive environments where I could fight for race wins or championships.

"It's been a whirlwind. Mike [Shank] took me on board [in 2022], and the start to the programme was epic with a win at Daytona. That was really special for me. As the season evolved, it was going really well, and





▲ UP 19

Sebastien  
Ogier

5th in World Rally Championship

30

The eight-time World Rally champion once again reminded everyone of his class while contesting a partial campaign for a second season. Ogier added to his glittering career statistics by claiming record-breaking ninth and seventh wins in Monte Carlo and Mexico respectively. The Toyota driver even led the championship after his Mexico triumph, despite sitting out Sweden in between. A third win arrived in Kenya after overcoming several challenges in what he described as a “hell of a fight”, and Ogier could have easily added two more to his tally given he was leading in Sardinia when he crashed out, and in Greece before breaking his suspension.



MCKLEIN



— RE-ENTRY

Liam  
Lawson

2nd in Super Formula  
20th in Formula 1 World Championship

29

After two solid but inconclusive seasons in F2, a move to Super Formula was exactly what Lawson needed to fully convince Red Bull of his qualities as a genuine F1 prospect, and he stunned the Japanese establishment with a historic debut win at Fuji. That was the first of three victories, but a penalty, a strategic blunder and a very costly crash at Motegi ended up denying him the title.

When he was parachuted into AlphaTauri after Daniel Ricciardo broke his hand at Zandvoort, Lawson immediately impressed, and outscored Yuki Tsunoda in their five races together. Another Red Bull opportunity will surely loom.



DUNBAR



+ NEW ENTRY

Brodie  
Kostecki

1st in Supercars

28

Kostecki built a champion's season around impressive consistency and stunning qualifying speed. He backed up six race wins with 12 other podium finishes, and scored a season-high 10 pole positions, all in just his third season as a Supercars regular. He adapted with aplomb to the new Gen3 Supercars, with lower aero grip and a lack of adaptability compared to what came before and, as he showed on home turf at Wanneroo is not prepared to be pushed around, even against more experienced rivals. Kostecki looks likely to follow Shane van Gisbergen to NASCAR after making his Cup debut at Indianapolis, but possibly more Supercars titles beckon in the meantime.



EDGE PHOTOGRAPHICS



▲ UP 15

Filipe  
Albuquerque

2nd in IMSA SportsCar Championship (GTP)  
8th in FIA World Endurance (LMP2)

27

The Portuguese once again pulled double duty across IMSA and the WEC with the WTR Andretti Acura LMDh and United Autosports LMP2 teams respectively. Albuquerque was a race winner in neither arena (though took a maximum points score behind a non-registered car in WEC), but as always was a consistent performer across the two series. Only Tom Blomqvist in the winning Meyer Shank Racing Acura was quicker than him on average at Daytona, with a car that was subsequently found to be illegal. Over in WEC, he was the fastest of the fastest over a double stint on a set of tyres aboard an ORECA-Gibson 07.



GALSTAD

## TOP 50 RE-ENTRIES

(and their three most recent appearances)

### 8 NICK CASSIDY

42nd in 2018  
30th in 2019  
38th in 2020

### 36 ASH SUTTON

44th in 2018  
45th in 2020  
43rd in 2021

### 49 NICKY CATSBURG

32nd in 2015

### 19 LAURENS VANTHOOR

33rd in 2014  
34th in 2015  
35th in 2019

### 37 ELFYN EVANS

36th in 2017  
29th in 2020  
13th in 2021

### 22 KAMUI KOBAYASHI

28th in 2012  
30th in 2017  
26th in 2021

### 38 KYLE LARSON

8th in 2021

### 26 OSCAR PIASTRI

43rd in 2020  
23rd in 2021

### 41 SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS

23rd in 2007  
40th in 2008  
19th in 2011

### 29 LIAM LAWSON

34th in 2021 (right)

### 43 PASCAL WEHRLEIN

9th in 2015  
34th in 2016

### 33 JAMES CALADO

46th in 2013  
32nd in 2016  
31st in 2017

### 44 NICO HULKENBERG

13th in 2017  
11th in 2018  
31st in 2019



SBLOXHAM





— RE-ENTRY

Oscar  
Piastri

9th in Formula 1 World Championship

26

Second in qualifying at Suzuka of all places – the first time Piastri had visited the fearsome track – summed up why

McLaren was so impressed with the rookie, who scored two podiums (and should have had another at Silverstone but for a safety car) and that excellent win in the entertaining Qatar sprint.

A tyre management weakness compared to Lando Norris stood out as an area he'll need to improve in 2024, but McLaren reckoned Norris had made a particular step in this area this year via dedicated simulator sessions. Perhaps something similar can be expected of Piastri as he continues to accumulate experience on F1's tricky Pirellis.



SUTTON



+ NEW ENTRY

Matt  
Campbell

4th in IMSA SportsCar Championship (GTP)

25

Took the big step up from GT racing to prototypes like a duck to water, dropping into the factory Penske-run Porsche

963 programme in IMSA alongside Felipe Nasr. They finished fourth in points, scoring victory at Road America, and his switch to the team's WEC squad for 2024 can be viewed as a promotion.

Campbell's stunning raw pace was reflected with two poles at Laguna Seca and Indianapolis, although he blotted his copybook with a big shunt on his hot lap at Sebring. He didn't completely forsake his 911 GT3 roots though, finding time to finish a close second in the Bathurst 12 Hour and win an Australian GT race at Adelaide.



MILLER



▼ DOWN 8

Ott  
Tanak

4th in World Rally Championship

24

Tanak was rarely 100% comfortable driving the M-Sport Ford Puma following his shock switch from Hyundai, but the

2019 world champion still scored two WRC wins. The Puma wasn't as heavily developed as its full factory Toyota and Hyundai rivals, but in Tanak's hands it showed flashes of pace to beat the WRC works teams to victories in Sweden and Chile.

Tanak mustered 30 stage wins and four podiums, but his title tilt was derailed by a series of issues: Mexico (turbo), Sardinia (electrical), Estonia (engine), Finland (engine) and Greece (water pump). A combination of driver skill and an inspired team tyre call produced the highlight in Chile dominance.



MCKLEIN



+ NEW ENTRY

Ryan  
Blaney

1st in NASCAR Cup

23

The 29-year-old third-generation driver for Team Penske didn't look like a Cup championship contender

early in the season. But when it counted the most – in the playoffs – Blaney and his #12 Ford team were at their best.

Critical playoff wins at Talladega and Martinsville advanced him to the Championship 4 at Phoenix for the first time. After Christopher Bell wrecked out early, Blaney then bested two of the year's top drivers – Hendrick team-mates William Byron and Kyle Larson (the 2021 Cup champion) had won the most races and led most laps respectively – to earn his first series title.



KINRADE/NKP



LEVITT

motorsport  
IMAGES





## Why M-Sport and Tanak were unable to deliver a WRC fairytale

When Ott Tanak reunited with M-Sport, it was the move the rally world wanted to spice up the 2023 WRC title fight because it ensured that Toyota, Hyundai and M-Sport all had rally winners in their ranks. The partnership boasted plenty of potential on paper, but was ultimately unable to deliver a sustained title fight. That was not for the want of trying from either Tanak or M-Sport.

The season started brightly, headlined by Tanak scoring the Puma's second WRC win at Rally Sweden to go top of the standings, but then his season began to unravel through a series of misfortunes. His strong end to the year came too late.

"It's a case of what could have been," M-Sport team principal Richard Millener (below) explains. "We signed Ott to try and win the

**"Ott was comfortable in some scenarios and in others he never felt quite right"**



world championship, which didn't work, but it's not easy to win championships against the others.

"We gave it our best shot, but unfortunately it wasn't going to be a fairytale story. I think overall there have been a lot of positives, as the car has been fast on all surfaces.

"Ott was comfortable in some scenarios and in others he never felt quite right. It's very difficult to do too much as the rules and regulations are so tight, and you have limited jokers and small areas of the car that you can constantly tweak."

M-Sport focused much of its development on dampers, a decision led by Tanak. While the car showed speed on all surfaces, consistency and component failures contributed to a frustrating season that ended with Tanak opting to return to Hyundai for 2024.

"All I can say is the guys have worked very hard all year to try and find set-ups and solutions that worked for him, but we didn't get to where we want to be," Millener adds. "At certain rallies and surfaces he felt comfortable, and he was very fast, so there is potential in the car and overall we are in a good place.

"These top drivers have varying feedback across all rallies, so it's difficult to make a perfect car for everywhere. But we tried our best with everything we can do. Some of what we did certainly helped go towards the victories we achieved."



— RE-ENTRY

**Kamui Kobayashi**

2nd in World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)  
11th in Super Formula

**22**

Kobayashi again missed out on the big prizes in the WEC; neither the title nor a Le Mans win came his way in 2023. But

he and team-mates Mike Conway and Jose Maria Lopez were the 'winningest' of the two Toyota line-ups, outscoring the champions 4-2. It should also be pointed out that they were, marginally, the faster of the two. What would have happened had Kobayashi not been punted into retirement during the night at Le Mans can only be guesswork. Kobayashi proved again that he can combine driving with his role of WEC team principal, no more so than at Fuji. His concluding double stint there was spellbinding.



▼ DOWN 16

**George Russell**

8th in Formula 1 World Championship

**21**

On qualifying performance, Russell was 11-11 in the head-to-head against Lewis Hamilton, but the younger

Briton was often outgunned by his more experienced Mercedes team-mate in the races. Overall, Russell termed 2023 as "one of the worst seasons of my career" as Mercedes failed to make the strides it hoped for with the W14.

He enjoyed excellent races in Spain and the Abu Dhabi finale, along with his Qatar recovery to fourth after the first-corner clash with Hamilton, but there were low points too. Unforced errors in Canada and Singapore knocked the wind out of his sails, particularly at Marina Bay during his pursuit of victory.







▼ DOWN 10

## Shane van Gisbergen

2nd in Supercars

20

From the start of the year, van Gisbergen made it crystal clear that he was no fan of the new Gen3 Supercar and, after disqualification from a season-opening win in Newcastle on a technicality, he was playing off the back foot all season. His third Bathurst 1000 win, while managing a series of in-car issues, was as good as anything he has done in Supercars. But it was his staggering NASCAR Cup debut, when he obliterated stock car racing's finest on a soggy and treacherous Chicago street course, that made his future clear. It's time for this stellar talent to shine on a bigger stage. Tighten them laces, America.



— RE-ENTRY

## Laurens Vanthoor

6th in FIA World Endurance Championship (Hypercar), 4th in Spa 24 Hours

19

GT specialist Vanthoor got his prototype chance with Porsche and Penske in the WEC and grabbed it with both hands.

He was consistently the quickest of the six drivers in the factory 963 LMDhs over the season. That's all the more impressive given he'd only made three race starts aboard prototype machinery, and always in LMP2, before this year. The high point came at Fuji, and not just because Porsche posted its most competitive showing on the way to third position. His opportunistic move at the start to take a lead the Porsche would hold for four hours proved that Vanthoor is a real racer at heart.



## Laurens Vanthoor on his 2023 prototype breakthrough

"If you are a good driver, you should be able to drive anything. An LMDh is just another racing car with a steering wheel and pedals in front of you and four wheels on the ground. You just need to figure out how it works and then drive it as quick as you can. I don't buy the idea that you are a prototype driver or a GT driver.

"You have to adapt to whatever car you are driving. I wouldn't have been afraid to get in an LMP1 car a few years back. You have to work at it. Last year [2022] was pretty terrible for me in every aspect, so I asked myself a lot of questions through the winter. What could I do better and am I focusing on the wrong things? All kinds of stuff. I think that made me a better driver this year, and also a better person.

"My dream for a while has been to be in the top class of endurance racing and I'm so grateful to get the chance with Porsche and Penske, two great names. I came on the radio after my first lap of Le Mans at the Test Day, and said, 'This is cool!' I approached it with the view that

I should always do my job 100%. There were times when we weren't performing as we wanted to, but I tried not to let the negativity affect my mindset.

"Although I'm a driver who has always believed that you have to work hard to be quick in whatever car you are driving, I always felt good in the 963 right from the very beginning of our test programme last year. I understood the car relatively

**"I don't buy the idea that you are a prototype driver or a GT driver. You have to adapt"**

quickly and knew what I had to do with it to be quick.

"Everyone remembers Fuji. That was our race that was really in the spotlight because of what happened at the first corner and that we led for more than half the race. But there were other races where I felt I drove just as well; Portimao and Spa for example. I felt really good in the car both times."





▼ DOWN 1

Scott Dixon

2nd in IndyCar Series

18

The ageless enigma was once again a force to be reckoned with to finish runner-up in the IndyCar standings and prove the closest – yet still distant – threat to Chip Ganassi Racing team-mate Alex Palou. The Kiwi waited until the 14th of 17 rounds to find Victory Lane, which happened by overcoming an opening lap crash at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course. Dixon also utilised fuel mileage to advance from 16th to victory at Gateway, before closing out the year with another come-from-behind/opening-lap incident to win at Laguna Seca. The six-time champion had six podiums among 11 top fives, with all but one finish in the top 10.



▼ DOWN 5

Mitch Evans

3rd in Formula E

17

A case of so near yet so far once again for Evans in Formula E. He racked up the joint-most wins with four and, like the previous two campaigns, entered the final round with a shot at the title. The Jaguar driver took until the sixth race of the season in Sao Paulo to register a first win, but followed it up immediately with victory in Berlin as his powertrain hit its stride. His domination of the Rome opener was undone by a collision of his own making with Nick Cassidy in the sequel, and ultimately meant another triumph in London wasn't enough to deny Jake Dennis the title.



▲ UP 6

Brendon Hartley

1st in FIA World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)  
2nd in Le Mans 24 Hours  
2nd in Daytona 24 Hours

16

This was another strong year for Hartley. He was up there among the fastest of the Toyota drivers – it was nip and tuck between him and Kamui Kobayashi for that honour in the WEC – in a year when he became a four-time world title winner. He was probably at his best at Le Mans: his charge after lunch on Sunday aboard the #8 GR010 HYBRID gave his Japanese employer more than a sniff of a sixth straight Le Mans victory. The only blot on his copybook was his qualifying off exiting the pits at Spa, though a ban on tyre warmers and single-digit temperatures were mitigating factors.



▼ DOWN 1

Carlos Sainz

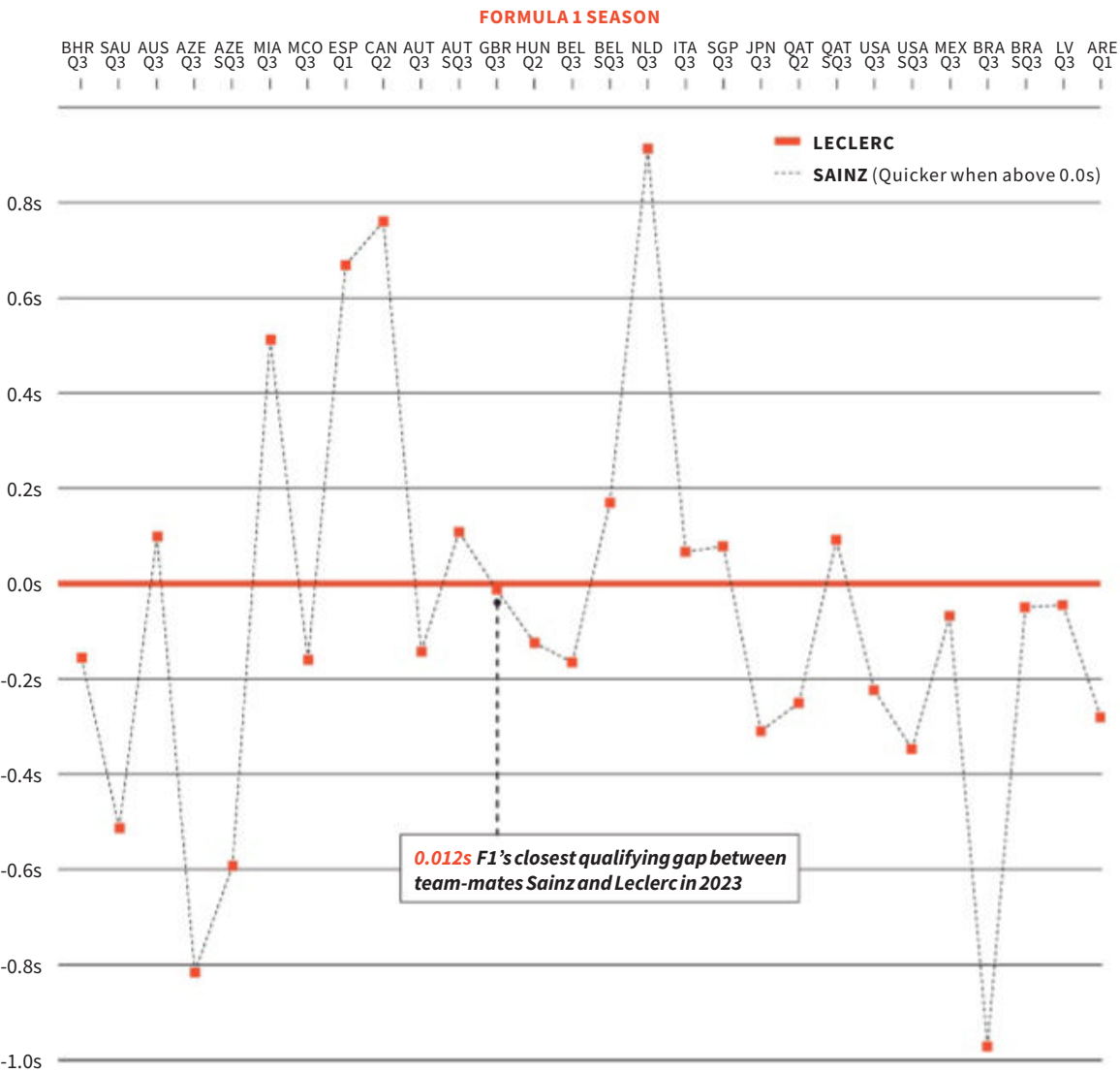
7th in Formula 1 World Championship

15

Sainz made the difference for Ferrari on its best chance to win all year in Singapore. His driving style – following front-end understeer naturally through a corner – was a boon for tyre preservation late in the lap there, and for Monza's traction demands, where he was also brilliant. Without his nous in handing Lando Norris DRS late in Singapore, a Mercedes driver surely would have been victorious. He has a 0.062s average qualifying deficit to team-mate Charles Leclerc, arguably F1's best one-lap specialist, which is impressive. Sainz was consistent and calm early in 2023, but the floor update from the Japanese GP too often led to a marked reversal in their race pace.



SAINZ VS LECLERC QUALIFYING GAP







▼ DOWN 12

Charles  
Leclerc

5th in Formula 1 World Championship

14

Leclerc proved largely inseparable from Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz in 2023 as their car's characteristics

swung from favouring one to the other. But his form in the last two races moved him ahead in the championship. His efforts in Las Vegas almost yielded victory, as the colder conditions and low track grip played to Ferrari's sensibilities, and he flexed a lesser-seen tactical streak in Abu Dhabi to take on Mercedes in the constructors' chase.

Sure, there were errors: Leclerc felt that the only way to get the best from the early-spec SF23 was to straddle the car's absolute limits. But pole in three of the last five races continued to demonstrate his single-lap effectiveness.



MAUGER



▼ DOWN 6

Josef  
Newgarden

5th in IndyCar Series

13

It was a campaign of feast or famine for Team Penske's Tennessee native. There were four wins – all on ovals and

second-most overall to champion Alex Palou – but there were also five results of 15th or worse, including three of 21st or lower. But what made the year a success was Newgarden's memorable Indianapolis 500 victory, secured with a thrilling pass on Marcus Ericsson in Turn 3 of the controversial final-lap restart – the 19th event win for team owner Roger Penske, and his first since acquiring the track in November 2019. Even with the inconsistency, Newgarden claimed an additional podium and three more top-fives to finish fifth in the overall standings.



ABBOTT

## TOP 50 DROP-OUTS FROM 2022

*Drivers' 2022 Top 50 position and their 2023 results*

### 6 STOFFEL VANDOOORNE

11th in Formula E

### 8 WILL POWER

7th in IndyCar Series

### 11 JOEY LOGANO

12th in NASCAR Cup

### 15 EDOARDO MORTARA

14th in Formula E

### 19 ALESSANDRO PIER GUIDI

4th in World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)  
1st in Le Mans 24 Hours

### 20 ROSS CHASTAIN

9th in NASCAR Cup

### 23 ESTEBAN OCON (below)

12th in Formula 1  
World Championship

### 25 SEBASTIEN LOEB

2nd in Dakar Rally  
3 races in World RX

### 29 SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Retired

### 30 SEBASTIEN BUEMI

1st in World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)  
6th in Formula E

### 31 VALTTERI BOTTAS

15th in Formula 1  
World Championship

### 32 JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

5th in Formula E  
8th in World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)

### 34 FELIPE DRUGOVICH

Reserve driver for  
Aston Martin in F1

### 35 JOSE MARIA LOPEZ

2nd in World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)  
6th in European Le Mans Series (LMP2)

### 37 SHELDON

### VAN DER LINDE

4th in DTM, 2nd in  
Nurburgring 24 Hours  
2nd in Sebring 12 Hours

### 38 CHRISTOPHER BELL

4th in NASCAR Cup

### 40 DRIES VANTHOOR

3rd in GT World Challenge  
Europe Sprint Cup  
2nd in Nurburgring 24  
Hours, 1st in Dubai 24 Hours

### 41 ANTONIO

### FELIX DA COSTA

9th in Formula E  
9th in World Endurance  
Championship (Hypercar)

### 43 LOUIS DELETRAZ

1st in World Endurance  
Championship (LMP2)  
3rd in European Le Mans  
Series (LMP2 Pro-Am)  
2nd in Daytona 24 Hours

### 45 KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

19th in Formula 1  
World Championship

### 46 NICK TANDY

5th in IMSA SportsCar  
Championship (GTP)

### 47 TOM INGRAM

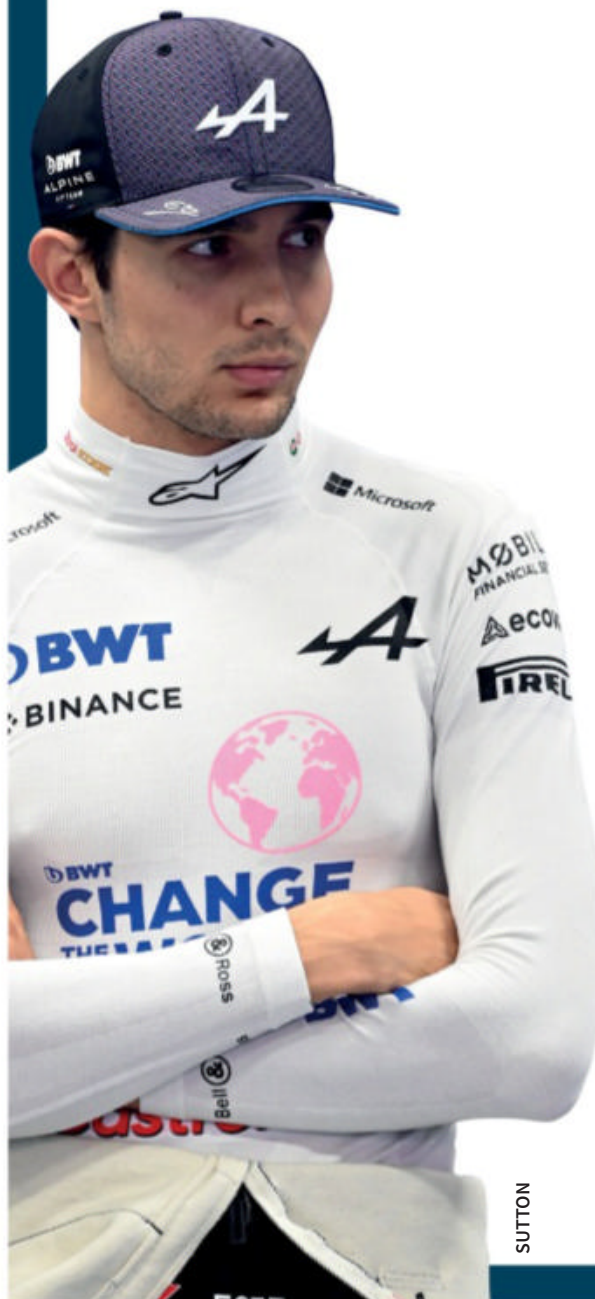
2nd in British Touring  
Car Championship

### 48 LUCAS AUER

9th in DTM

### 50 MIKEL AZCONA

5th in TCR World Tour



SUTTON





## The racing obsession that makes Miyata so good

Over the course of three seasons for TOM'S in Super Formula, Ritomo Miyata has taken huge strides. From 10th overall in his 2021 rookie season, he improved to fourth last year, and at the third time of asking claimed the championship, a rate of progression rarely seen with Japanese drivers.

Overseeing Miyata over that period has been race engineer Masaki Saeda, who feels that the 24-year-old scoring his first win

**“Ritomo is basically obsessed with racing and is an exceptionally hard worker”**

at Suzuka from 12th on the grid represented a turning point.

“It feels like he really grew a lot this year,” says Saeda. “When he won the third round at Suzuka, he had to make a lot of overtakes and I think that grabbing that result really boosted his confidence a lot. I think he matured a lot by getting that first win.

“It’s our third year of working together and he has always been making steps forward. Ritomo has made a lot of progress with tyre

management and overtaking, so everything has gone in the right direction, including those things.”

For Saeda, Miyata’s title was his fourth as an engineer, following successes with Kazuki Nakajima (2012 and 2014) and Nick Cassidy (2019). It also continued the recent trend of TOM’S winning in the first year of a new rules cycle.

Asked to compare Miyata to his predecessors, Saeda opines: “Kazuki was of course fast, and because he was coming back to Japan after racing in F1 it felt like we had to win with him. Nick came to us [from Kondo Racing] with a lot of speed and experience, but Ritomo needed some time to adjust and improve because he was with us from his first season.

“He is using the simulator a lot even at home, and he’s thinking about what he should do as a driver. He’s basically obsessed with racing and is an exceptionally hard worker. He has steadily accumulated this knowledge and finally this year it translated into results.”

Those are traits that will serve Miyata well as he gets up to speed on unfamiliar tracks in an unfamiliar car and tyre in Formula 2 next year.



✚ NEW ENTRY

**William Byron**

3rd in NASCAR Cup

**12**

Hendrick Motorsports’ 26-year-old upstart enjoyed a breakout Cup season in which he dominated in virtually every

category but one – winning the series title.

In his sixth full-time season, Byron took career-bests in victories (six), top-five finishes (15), top-10s (21) and laps led (1016). His season-high win tally came from successes on short tracks, intermediates, superspeedways and road courses, illustrating his versatility.

Byron qualified for the Championship 4 at Phoenix for the first time. He led 95 of 312 laps, but Ryan Blaney ended up the highest finishing driver of the four contenders to earn the title.



✚ NEW ENTRY

**Ritomo Miyata**

1st in Super Formula, 1st in Super GT

**11**

Toyota WEC junior Miyata launched his career globally by winning both the Super Formula and Super GT titles

in an accomplished campaign, becoming by far the youngest of the five drivers to have achieved the feat, at the age of 24.

In his third season driving for TOM’S in Super Formula, Miyata added to his one-lap speed, impressive long-run pace, and an amazing ability to get overtaking moves done when needed, with his consistency over the season allowing him to beat Liam Lawson to the title.

In Super GT, he and Sho Tsuboi assembled one of the most dominant seasons in recent memory, with his charge to victory at Autopolis only confirming his star potential.







▲ UP 23

Alex  
Albon

13th in Formula 1 World Championship

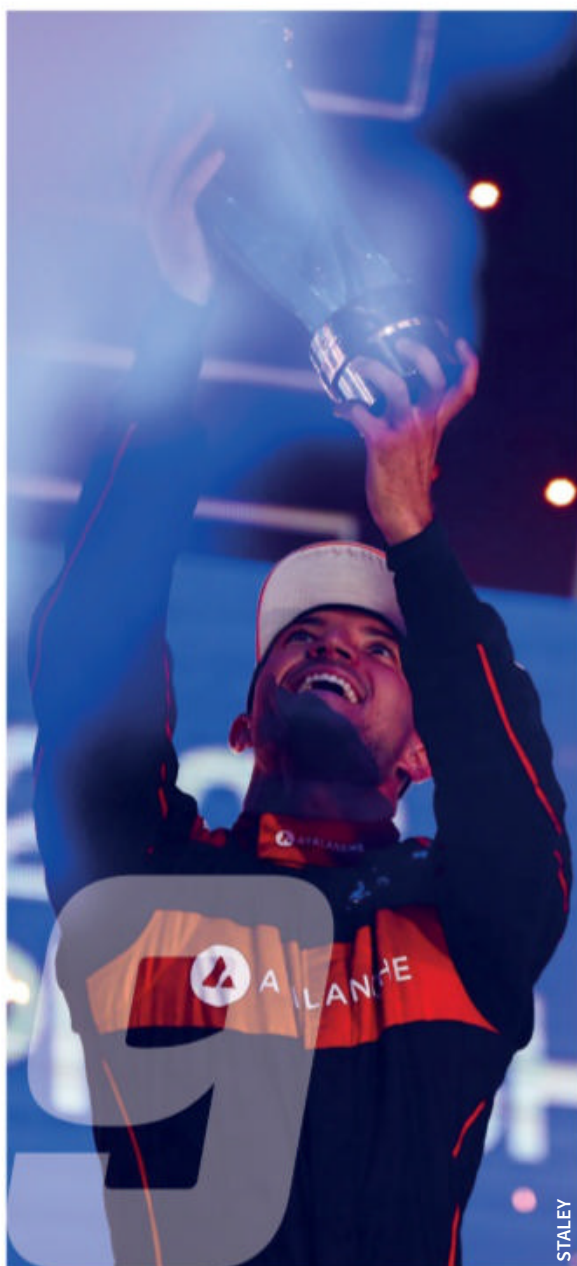
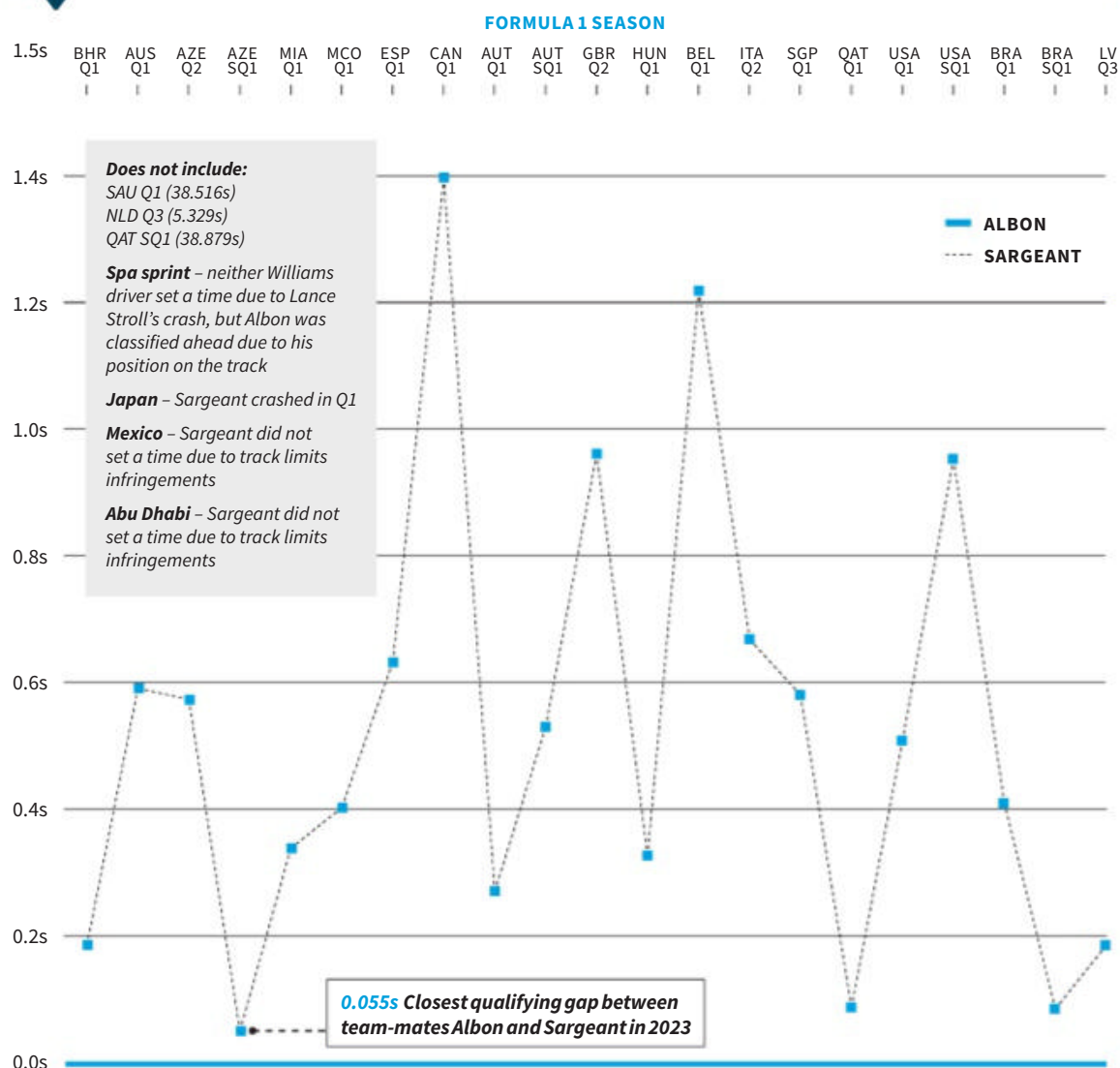
10

Albon's coolness under pressure stood out, a key part of the connection he's forged at Williams since joining to reboot his F1 career after his Red Bull difficulties. The team knows it can rely on him.

But his resilience also boosted him massively when it came to hanging on in front of faster overall cars to pick up 27 points – his drives with Williams's slippery package in Canada and at Monza stand out. On the downside, unforced errors in Baku and Australia were costly. But his qualifying speed shone through, with seven Q3 appearances and just five Q1 exits.



### ALEX ALBON'S 28-0 QUALIFYING RECORD AGAINST LOGAN SARGEANT



▲ UP 27

Jake  
Dennis

1st in Formula E

9

Eleven Formula E podiums – including two victories – were the backbone to Dennis's title-winning campaign. The Andretti driver began the new

Gen3 era in style with a dominant win in Mexico City, and he was second in both Diriyah races before a barren run of nearly three months (and four races) without scoring points put his championship credentials in doubt. The Briton bounced back in Berlin to set up a spree of eight podiums in the final nine races as he sealed the title on home soil. All the more impressively, Dennis was the only Porsche user able to go up against, and beat, the dominant Jaguar powertrain.



— RE-ENTRY

Nick  
Cassidy

2nd in Formula E

8

Just as impressive as taking four wins in Formula E, which put Cassidy firmly in title contention, was that the first three victories came from

eighth or lower on the grid, the Envision driver optimising Jaguar's powertrain on race day.

He managed energy consumption in the second Berlin race to perfection to lead nearly half the distance, and expertly timed his move to the front in Monaco to claim back-to-back wins and the standings lead. His dominant win in monsoon conditions during the season-ending London E-Prix, overcoming the disappointment of losing the title 24 hours earlier, means he just pips Jake Dennis in our ranking.







+ NEW ENTRY

Antonio Fuoco

3rd in FIA World Endurance Championship (Hypercar)

7 There were times when Fuoco’s pace aboard Ferrari’s 499P Le Mans Hypercar was nothing short of astounding in the WEC. The prototype rookie’s lap to grab pole position first time out at Sebring took everyone by surprise, the eight-tenths margin by which he beat team-mate Alessandro Pier Guidi to top spot in Hyperpole qualifying at the Le Mans 24 Hours equally so. But it was in the races – and Le Mans in particular – where the 27-year-old really stood out in 2023. He was blindingly quick at the 24 Hours, though admittedly his #50 entry was on the comeback trail after its mid-race delay. But it was far from a one-off.



▼ DOWN 2

Lewis Hamilton

3rd in Formula 1 World Championship

6 Hamilton appeared downbeat at season’s end, frustrated at the lack of Mercedes progress after falling off its perch. But he comprehensively beat team-mate George Russell. His consistency and ability to reach the high notes that Russell could not achieve put him in the race for second in the drivers’ championship. Runner-up finishes in Melbourne, Barcelona and Mexico showcased excellent drives, as did his path to second at Austin (undone for a skid block-induced disqualification). Until his first-lap Qatar retirement, he only strayed outside of the top six once, and his points-gathering carried Mercedes to second in the teams’ championship.



TEN STANDOUT FEMALE DRIVERS

Here are the women who performed best in 2023, listed in alphabetical order.



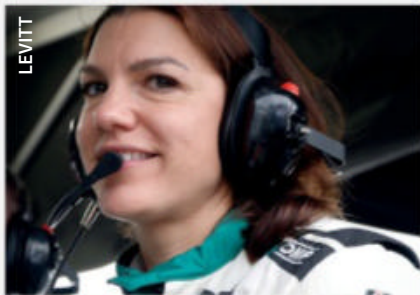
LENA BUHLER  
2nd in F1 Academy



MICHELLE GATTING  
2nd in WEC GTE Am



JAMIE CHADWICK  
12th in Indy NXT



KATHERINE LEGGE  
11th in IMSA GTD



SOPHIA FLORSCH  
11th in Macau GP  
23rd in FIA F3



DORIANE PIN  
9th in WEC LMP2  
2nd in F4 SE Asia



RAHEL FREY  
2nd in WEC GTE Am



LILOU WADOUX  
8th in WEC GTE Am



MARTA GARCIA  
1st in F1 Academy



MAYA WEUG  
17th in Formula Regional European





Alonso's best chance of a win slipped away in Monaco. Still, what a season



▲ UP 8

## Fernando Alonso

4th in Formula 1 World Championship

5

Think back through Fernando Alonso's long Formula 1 career. Once he'd become a race winner with Renault 20 years ago in 2003, his star potential was

clear. Then, rather a lot changed.

Endurance tyres for 2005, a whole new driving style with the change from Michelins to Bridgestones in 2007, the car rules changing in 2009, 2014, 2017, 2021, Pirellis from 2011, and more. Plus, all those team changes. Yet his class has endured, his adaptability perhaps the greatest and yet most underrated in his armoury, such is his tenacity that steals the focus.

Well, Alonso had a new challenge in 2023: write another fresh chapter, this time with Aston Martin. Only the Monaco victory going begging – not his fault – could have capped this year as even better. The green team wasn't yet ready to sustain a season-long challenge, as Alonso always insisted. But he's already made clear it has to be in 2024, with "some consistency" his first stated target for its new car, along with improving "the straightline speed".

Alonso had to adjust to Aston's power steering

design and it was intriguing to watch him making regular slips exiting Bahrain's tricky, tyre-testing Turn 4 during a trackside wandering there in FP3 of the season opener. They would carry on into the race, where he achieved that first Aston podium, and through the early part of the year. An adjustment to the power steering system in Miami helped things, but Alonso insisted that this and other parts of the AMR23's package will need another winter reset to aid him further in 2024.

Eight podiums were the statistical highlights of a season where Alonso again showed his immense worth to F1. Yes, there were more low moments that Alonso in his prime would have managed better – the Barcelona Q1 off, crashing out of the Spa sprint, the Singapore gaffes – but his Zandvoort and Brazil podium drives were sublime.

In the Netherlands, his skills in adapting served him well in the changing conditions; at Interlagos, his long defence against Sergio Perez, then excellent short attack, enlivened a race that had long since grown tedious with Max Verstappen's march to another win. This and so many other moments instilled life into a campaign where that was so lacking thanks to Red Bull's brilliance.



GALLOWAY





ANALYSIS

ROMNEY

## How Alonso has continued to assist Lance Stroll

Remember back in the early part of the year, when Fernando Alonso was coaching his team-mate Lance Stroll in the other Aston Martin via team radio messages back to the squad's massed engineers?

Well, he says that "kept happening" through the second half of the season, even as Aston's pace potential waned in the close pack behind Red Bull. The chatter was, Alonso claimed to Autosport at the Abu Dhabi season finale, something he and Stroll wanted as part of their new relationship as team-mates.

"I don't know if it was broadcast

**"I don't know if it was broadcast or not, but we've always been feeding back both ways"**

or not, but yeah, we've always been feeding back," Alonso explained. "And both ways – it's not only me. I heard in Mexico the team telling me to move the brake balance a lot further forwards because Lance was benefiting from doing that and the rear tyres were just cooler. So I think it's both ways and we've been doing the same.

"But I think this is a consequence of how much we talk and we prepare on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays – so when you jump in the car it's like, 'Lance, what we talked about in the parade lap, this is happening now in the race'.

"So, we are trying not to help each other in a very specific way, it's just a continuation of the conversations that we had maybe two hours ago [before each race]."



GRANT



▼ DOWN 1

Kalle  
Rovanperä

1st in World Rally Championship

4

At the start of the year, five drivers in World Rally Championship history had successfully defended the title. In 2023, Kalle Rovanperä underlined his special talent to become the sixth.

The Toyota star's march to a second consecutive crown was in many ways more impressive than his record-breaking run to become the youngest-ever world champion last year. Knowing the competition would be tougher as drivers and teams acclimatised to hybrid rules introduced last year, Rovanperä added incredible consistency and clever driving to his already blistering speed.

The 23-year-old finished no worse than fourth while taking three wins in a campaign that was blighted by only one costly error, when the Finn crashed out of the lead on home soil, his only retirement of the season.

His blend of speed and maturity beyond his years delivered the title with a round to spare after seeing off Toyota team-mate Elfyn Evans. This was despite eyebrows being raised after finishing the opening four events with only one podium.

That Rovanperä scored half as many wins than in 2022 but notched up only five points fewer summed up his consistency. He accumulated 72 stage wins (two more than he managed last year), nearly twice as many as the next highest total, amassed by Hyundai's Thierry Neuville. He was again king of the Power Stage, taking 43 bonus points.

Rovanperä's most impressive drives came in Estonia and Greece. In the Baltic nation, he delivered a crushing Sebastien Loeb-like domination that included a string of 13 consecutive stage wins. His mesmerising knack for mastering slippery conditions, knowing exactly when and where to push, was showcased on his way to comfortably winning by 1m31.7s in a gruelling, high-attrition Acropolis Rally.

"I'm quite proud of the year and I think the performance was more important," he reckons. "The competition was stronger and there weren't many easy points to get like last year when there was much more trouble between everybody."

Joining Loeb, Sebastien Ogier, Tommi Makinen, Juha Kankkunen and Miki Biasion as drivers to take back-to-back WRC crowns proves that Rovanperä already deserves to be classed among the greatest in series history. But a third consecutive title is highly unlikely – he plans to conduct a partial season to "recharge my batteries" next year before returning to full-time competition in 2025.



McKLEIN





▲ UP 6

## Lando Norris

6th in Formula 1 World Championship

# 3

Outside of the Red Bull-Ferrari-Mercedes triumvirate, Lando Norris was the only driver to manage a podium finish in 2022, with his third place at the Emilia

Romagna Grand Prix. When McLaren limped out of the starting blocks in 2023 with a car in dire need of an aerodynamic overhaul, Norris must have imagined that it would be hard to even match that minimal feat.

But, under new team principal Andrea Stella's watchful eye, McLaren proved resurgent with its concerted efforts to turn its MCL60 around. Norris had already impressed by dragging the early-season specification to sixth in Melbourne but, when the car was drastically improved by Austria, he hit stratospheric heights with it. His battling with the Ferrari and Mercedes pairs to reach fourth place at the Red Bull Ring was only the beginning.

Leading Max Verstappen during the opening laps of the British Grand Prix laid the foundations for second place at the flag, and McLaren now looked worlds apart from its dismal opening to the season. Norris repeated that finishing position in Hungary too, doubling his podium tally from 2022, and there was more to come after the summer break.

After being a willing accomplice to Carlos Sainz's



DRS-infused winning gambit in Singapore, Norris arguably enjoyed his most impressive race of the year at Suzuka after jumping team-mate Oscar Piastri at the start, and giving his younger team-mate a masterclass in race management at the famously technical Japanese circuit.

Paired with the precocious Piastri, Norris stepped up his game after soundly beating Daniel Ricciardo in their two years as team-mates. In his fifth year of F1, the Briton has built upon a smooth driving style, and used it to balance raw speed with the need to manage tyres throughout a stint.

The MCL60 required him to break outside of his natural style to get the most out of it, particularly in qualifying – a phase of the weekend he finds less comfortable. But that didn't stop him from bagging a sprint pole in Brazil, although his Saturday slip in Abu Dhabi produced a self-deprecative quip about his abilities in qualifying.

Norris got everything out of the McLaren when it wasn't particularly quick; with the turnaround, he enjoyed his most fruitful season yet. If McLaren can continue on its trajectory in 2024, he might finally achieve that long-overdue first win...

The turnaround kicked in at Silverstone as Norris led and finished second





Victory at Mid-Ohio was a fourth in five races as Palou began to dominate IndyCar



GALSTAD  
motorsport  
IMAGES



▲ UP 25

## Alex Palou

### 1st in IndyCar Series

2

Beyond Max Verstappen, few drivers in 2023 could claim to be more dominant in their respective series than Palou. The Spaniard's totals of five wins, a further five podiums and a full-house of top-10 finishes from the 17 races delivered a beatdown to the field and allowed him to lock up the championship a round early – the first time it wasn't decided at the season finale since Sebastien Bourdais collected his fourth Champ Car title in 2007. Additionally, he claimed two poles, set four fastest laps and led the most laps on five occasions.

It was the second title for Palou in three years, which showcased his mental toughness amid off-track drama with McLaren – the original destination plan for a potential Formula 1 landing spot before a change of heart to return to Chip Ganassi Racing.

"It's been an amazing year," acknowledges Palou. "We had fast cars everywhere. It's been so fun. I'm a bit sad that this season is over honestly because it seems like we go out on track, we know that we have a chance to win the races."

The Month of May festivities were truly the start



GALSTAD

of Palou making his presence known, winning at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course and appearing poised for a sweep after capturing pole for the Indianapolis 500 (above). He was a clear player for the win, but the chance became undone after falling victim to a pitlane incident near the mid-point and he was left to restart 20th. He battled back with a forceful drive to finish fourth.

If not for that incident, along with a broken front wing that Palou still managed to finish runner-up with on the streets of Toronto, it would have been

very possible to see him score six consecutive wins from 13 May to 16 July. As it was, he still managed to claim four over a six-race span, which vaulted him securely to the top of the standings.

By every measure, Palou's ability to finish no worse than eighth in a field that featured at least 27 cars each race weekend is astounding. He was superb, with masterclass drives on repeat. Still only 26 years old, he's already established himself at the forefront of the next generation that will challenge the record books... if he chooses to stay.





— NO CHANGE

Max  
Verstappen

1st in F1 World Championship

# HOW VERSTAPPEN USED DEFEAT TO SMASH RECORDS IN 2023

*Following Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez home in Baku had a silver lining for our number one driver of 2023. His campaign is one of the greatest ever seen in F1*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

1

Eleven laps remain of the 2023 Azerbaijan Grand Prix. Max Verstappen is 3.6 seconds behind his Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez. Defeat in Baku, and a 2-2 record from the opening four races of

the season, stare back from the leading RB19.

But then that gap starts to come down – quite rapidly at first – to 3.1s. And holds. It creeps up as the Red Bull pair lap Valtteri Bottas. But by lap 47 of 51 it's on the way down again to a finishing margin of 2.1s. Verstappen has just registered what he considers the worst weekend of his 2023 Formula 1 campaign, with two defeats in the first double-race appearance for the season of the sprint format he detests, plus that ugly episode with Mercedes driver George Russell in the Saturday parc ferme.

But he's also just made a critical breakthrough that will lead to an unprecedented run of F1 success. Shortly after this is finally ended by Carlos Sainz's Singapore GP victory for Ferrari, Verstappen is a triple world champion. Come season's end, Perez has registered the biggest deficit for a drivers' standings intra-team 1-2 in F1 history at 290 points. (The previous was Rubens Barrichello's 67 to Michael Schumacher in 2002, which adjusted for today's format is 159 and technically trumps the official previous record for any 1-2 gap, Fernando Alonso's 155-point trailing to Sebastian Vettel in 2013).

"It was maybe not the best stint of my life, but it was just because I was trying out a lot of tools [changes] between brake bias, diff, engine braking," Verstappen says of the work he was doing behind Perez once he realised the Baku win was lost, which he first alluded to after winning his home race at Zandvoort in August. "But the end of the stint was actually very strong, where I think already I'd hurt my tyres quite badly from the beginning trying to pass. When I came out, I said, 'OK, I didn't win the race but I actually learned a lot for the upcoming races.'"

Verstappen is speaking to Autosport in the Red Bull hospitality tent at the Mexican GP. He's been a triple world champion for three >>



Listen to how we put together our Top 50 and who were the drivers that just missed out  
[autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast)

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## PREVIOUS DRIVERS OF THE YEAR

<b>2022</b>	Max Verstappen
<b>2021</b>	Lewis Hamilton
<b>2020</b>	Lewis Hamilton
<b>2019</b>	Lewis Hamilton
<b>2018</b>	Lewis Hamilton
<b>2017</b>	Lewis Hamilton
<b>2016</b>	Daniel Ricciardo
<b>2015</b>	Lewis Hamilton
<b>2014</b>	Daniel Ricciardo
<b>2013</b>	Sebastian Vettel
<b>2012</b>	Fernando Alonso
<b>2011</b>	Sebastian Vettel
<b>2010</b>	Sebastian Vettel
<b>2009</b>	Lewis Hamilton
<b>2008</b>	Robert Kubica
<b>2007</b>	Kimi Raikkonen
<b>2006</b>	Fernando Alonso
<b>2005</b>	Sebastien Loeb
<b>2004</b>	Michael Schumacher
<b>2003</b>	Michael Schumacher
<b>2002</b>	Michael Schumacher



Thank you very much: F1's current king in his Vegas Elvis overalls is all smiles again



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weeks and his place atop this list secured months before the title was won in the Qatar sprint race. Given the topic of the day is how he'll have his irregular bodyguard presence back for the Mexico City event, following notably harsh takes on his relationship with Perez in local media, he's notably upbeat. Perky, even. Verstappen's mood rather reflects his 2023 saunter.

Things got pretty straightforward when Perez cracked under the pressure of trying to defeat the dominant Dutchman, starting with the Monaco Q1 crash that began a run of five events where the Mexican missed Q3 (other than for the Austria sprint). But for Verstappen, he'd combined the lessons of his Baku defeat to other areas of his game this year, then applied them to defeating Perez.

To the outside world, this started in Miami – a race that got harder with Verstappen's early Q3 mistake being compounded by Charles Leclerc's crash, leaving the Red Bull racer starting ninth. But for Verstappen, he'd taken what he'd discovered late in the Baku weekend straight to his engineers in their post-race debrief.

"I said, 'I really liked this combination of tools that we had and I think we should really start in a similar direction for the upcoming races,'" he explains.

That meant Verstappen had a baseline for his differential and braking performances pre-set heading into the opening practice sessions for the remaining rounds. He knew the feeling he wanted to recapture, with further adjustments to these through Red Bull's typical set-up efforts. And, critically, it gave him a reference to work around with his new performance engineer.

Due to his regular performance engineer – focused on constant set-up adjustments and working under Gianpiero Lambiase – having to step back at the start of the 2023 season for personal reasons, Verstappen worked with substitute Richard Cooke until the Qatar round in October. "It also takes a bit of time to click [with a change] >>





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in Qatar. But not  
from his F1 rivals



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like that],” Verstappen adds. “Once we found that click together, I think the performance also got better because he understood me, I understood him and just to get that communication. Everything is super-sensitive – that’s why the relationship is very important between me and GP, but also the people behind that.”

An outside assessment of Verstappen’s year must include his eventual Miami triumph as the high point, given the subsequent impact of that defeat on Perez’s results. But he picks his Spa – “Still a very strong weekend again” after powering back from a gearbox-change grid penalty – and Suzuka wins as his personal highlights.

“Japan was a very strong one – from lap one it was unbelievable to drive,” says Verstappen. “I looked on the screen [in FP1] and I was like, ‘All right, that’s a good start!’ Balance-wise, probably Japan qualifying – that was really nice to drive.”

He selects Baku – “Not being happy with how everything was going” – as the low point of his year. There were also scruffy weekends in Australia (edged out by the Mercedes pair on lap one, plus a late off under no pressure) and Monaco (various wallstrikes in the late rain).

Verstappen confessed that he doesn’t “really enjoy street circuits” on arrival in Miami, but of course he was still brilliant in gaining 0.3s on Alonso in the final Monaco Q3 runs that really secured his victory there. He also won in Las Vegas, but was penalised for a shades-of-2021 first-corner move on Leclerc.

But, intriguingly, Verstappen isn’t considering Red Bull’s Singapore defeat as a personal low point. He was, after all, still mighty pace-wise late on using the contra-strategy in the mid-pack. “Singapore we were just off and probably made a few mistakes with the set-up as well,” he points out regarding Red Bull’s floor and ride height swaps, before going on to crack a smile. “It was just messy. For me, Singapore didn’t happen in a way – I don’t count that one!”

Of that Suzuka qualifying, Verstappen was a massive 0.581s ahead >>

Suzuka pole  
and win were  
personal  
highlights after  
Singapore defeat



TEE  
motorsport  
IMAGES



of McLaren's Oscar Piastri. But the 2023 campaign was coloured by Red Bull's relative weakness in qualifying compared to the rest (even though it still secured 14 poles, 12 to Verstappen!). Especially so, given how it crushed them on race day 21 times in 22 GP events, with the champion ending up with a new victory tally record of 19.

"I do just think that other people over one lap are very competitive and that then makes it sometimes really a tight qualifying," Verstappen explains. "But that also has to do with because when you are on low fuel, some limitations of a certain car can be masked a little bit."

The added grip provided by new soft Pirellis was also a boost to rival runners in 2023 qualifying – if they could find it in the dark art of tyre preparation and eking life throughout a full flier.

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner reckoned Verstappen's "skill to extract that moment of grip out of a tyre" made the critical difference to Perez against the clock. This required extra emphasis because the RB19's in-race strength came from not overheating rear tyres, but at a cost of both axles being hard to warm in qualifying. Horner reckoned Verstappen's unwavering "confidence" was critical here, too. "He has hit new levels," Horner adds of Verstappen's overall performance in 2023. "If you look at some of the races, the control that he has, the way he's reading races, the tyre management – outstanding."

"And he's just using the experience that he's gleaned from racing this year, last year, 2021. In many respects, take first corners – he's been absolutely more reserved than in the earlier days of his career. His timing has been excellent. The way he's played out races – he's not rushed to get it all done in the first couple of laps, he's built his way through a race."

On this, Verstappen recognised early that the RB19's slippery nature, allied with that tyre-preserving excellence, meant he was "quite careful in my way moving back forwards", in the events where he had to battle back. This included his Jeddah fightback from his Q2

## *"Some drivers didn't make it too difficult because they know I'm coming through anyway"*

driveshaft issue and "because it was a lot about just collecting points".

But he also saw how "some drivers didn't make it too difficult because they know that I'm coming through anyway, so it just ruins their race as well if they start fighting".

"That's also a smart way of going about it," Verstappen adds.

He was also patient in his willingness to adapt his approach to whatever Red Bull needed to get that best tyre performance – such as fielding slightly bigger wings on the long straights at Monza and in Las Vegas, both where Ferrari was so close to winning.

"It's about being able to adapt to certain situations or what the car likes as well," he explains. "Throughout the year, the team also applies upgrades to the car to make it faster. Not to try and follow a certain balance direction or whatever."

Thanks to their utter superiority, the 2023 season was starved of compelling narratives by the Red Bull/Verstappen combo. Thankfully, they provided a bonus from the inside: the many withering team radio exchanges between the world champion and Lambiase.

So, did Verstappen need to be cut down by his race engineer to achieve his best levels in this crushingly dominant year? "Yes, it's how the relationship works," he replies. "I would be very... not upset, but I wouldn't want to have an engineer who is very monotone or just says 'copy... check that'. You need a bit of fire. That's how I like to operate."

How F1 will be hoping that some outside opposition provides that fire to Verstappen in 2024. 🏆



Red Bull's trophy wall will need extending after Verstappen's efforts this term



EVERY F1 RECORD VERSTAPPEN BROKE IN 2023

Most wins in a season **19**

Highest percentage of wins in a season **86.4%**

Most wins in succession **10**

Most wins from pole **12**

Most pole, win, fastest lap hat-tricks **6**

Most points in a season **575**

Most GP laps led in a season **1003**

Highest percentage of laps led in a season **75.7%**

Most podiums in a season **21**

Biggest points gap to second in the championship **290**

Most GPs left when the title was sealed **6**

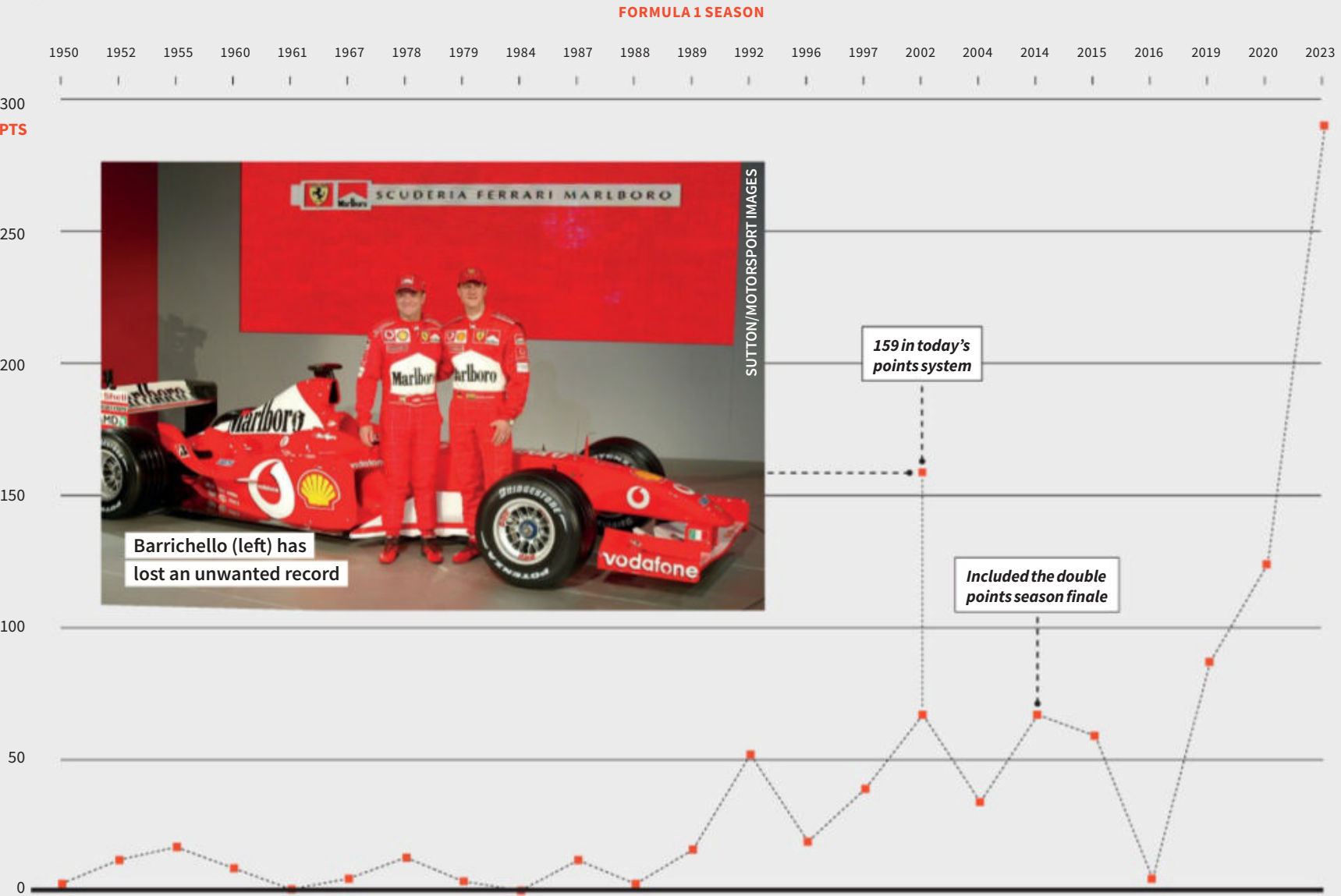


MCCAFFREY/GETTY IMAGES/REDBULL CONTENT POOL

Highest percentage points difference between first and second **49.6%**  
(Perez's score as a percentage of Verstappen's)

First driver to win three world championship races in one country in one season **USA**

BIGGEST POINTS GAP BETWEEN TEAM-MATES FINISHING 1-2 IN DRIVERS' STANDINGS





# Pictures of the year

*The 2023 season seen through a lens – here's a snapshot of our photographers' work from trackside, pitlane and special stage*













Sheldon van der Linde's BMW M4 GT3 is backlit by the reliably stunning Bathurst 12 Hour sunset  
DANIEL KALISZ



KINRADE  
motorsport  
IMAGES

NASCAR Truck star Zane Smith looks a little sheepish after victory burnout overexuberance at Austin set his Ford F-150 ablaze







ETHERINGTON  
motorsport  
IMAGES

Lewis Hamilton in reflective  
mood in the Bahrain pit garage



JEP  
motorsport  
IMAGES

Parking Porsches: the trio of Penske-entered 963  
Hypercars ahead of the start of the Le Mans 24 Hours











Pics of the year







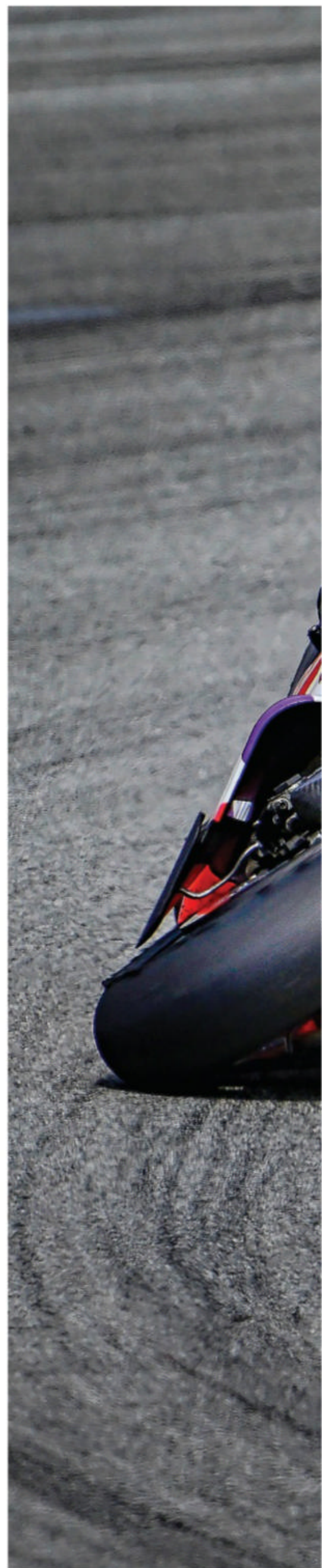
McMASTER  
motorsport  
IMAGES

Timmy Hansen abandons his upended electric SUV during the DesertX-Prix in Saudi Arabia



McKLEIN  
motorsport  
IMAGES

Adrien Fourmaux's Ford Puma and Dani Sordo's Hyundai i20 N come to rest together after exiting Rally Japan







Pramac Racing's Jorge Martin gets up close to the Barcelona kerbs during MotoGP's Catalan Grand Prix



# Aria



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Elfyn Evans's dramatic progress across the Kenyan landscape in his Toyota GR Yaris illustrates the scale and challenge of the Safari Rally

McKLEIN







# Fastest laps of 2023

*Our annual look at the fastest laps set in car races  
on each circuit in the British Isles*

**Compiled by Marcus Simmons**

CHESTER

TRACK, DRIVER AND CAR	TIME	SPEED	DATE
<b>ANGLESEY INTERNATIONAL</b> Charles Hall (Mittell-Suzuki MC-41R)	1m23.96s	90.04mph	13 May
<b>ANGLESEY COASTAL</b> George Line (Dallara-Volkswagen F308)	1m02.75s	88.92mph	17 September
<b>BISHOPSCOURT</b> Keith Hogg (Sheane-Rover FS01)	1m13.189s	89.718mph	6 May
<b>BRANDS HATCH GRAND PRIX</b> Steve Brooks (Peugeot 908)	1m19.206s	110.59mph	28 May
<b>BRANDS HATCH INDY</b> Matthew Higginson (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6/7)	44.67s	97.35mph	21 May
<b>CADWELL PARK</b> Matty Cobb (Volkswagen Beetle-RPE)	1m29.349s	87.553mph	19 August
<b>CASTLE COMBE</b> George Line (Dallara-Volkswagen F308)	1m02.137s	107.18mph	7 October
<b>CROFT</b> Louis Sharp (Tatuus-Abarth T-421)	1m17.824s	97.15mph	30 July
<b>DONINGTON PARK GRAND PRIX</b> Alex Dunne (Tatuus-Mountune MSV-022)	1m22.335s	108.75mph	22 October
<b>DONINGTON PARK NATIONAL</b> Stuart Wiltshire (Peugeot 908)	59.940s	118.86mph	8 April
<b>GOODWOOD</b> James Davison (McLaren-Chevrolet M1B)	1m18.740s	108.81mph	9 September
<b>KIRKISTOWN</b> Paul O'Connell (Dallara-Cosworth T-02)	51.313s	106.075mph	26 August
<b>KNOCKHILL</b> Will Macintyre (Tatuus-Abarth T-421)	48.216s	94.59mph	13 August
<b>KNOCKHILL ANTI-CLOCKWISE</b> Paul Rankin (Westfield Aero-Ford/Zetec)	50.195s	91.178mph	10 September
<b>LONDON EXCEL</b> Andre Lotterer (Porsche 99X Electric Gen3)	1m12.342s	64.502mph	29 July

## BRANDS HATCH GP



HAWKINS

## DONINGTON PARK GP



JEP

## GOODWOOD



WOOD/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





MONDELLO PARK NATIONAL

TRACK, DRIVER AND CAR	TIME	SPEED	DATE
<b>LYDDEN HILL</b> Rod Birley (Ford Escort Cosworth WRC)	45.655s	78.85mph	28 August
<b>MALLORY PARK</b> Andy Southcott (MG Lenham Midget-Vauxhall)	46.369s	104.81mph	28 August
<b>MALLORY PARK OVAL</b> Allen Cooper (SHP Pickup-Vauxhall)	35.676s	100.90mph	21 May
<b>MONDELLO PARK INTERNATIONAL</b> Paul O'Connell (Dallara-Cosworth T-02)	1m32.534s	84.68mph	10 September
<b>MONDELLO PARK NATIONAL</b> Sylvie Mullins (Gould-Judd GR55B)	47.380s	86.96mph	15 October
<b>OULTON PARK INTERNATIONAL</b> Joseph Loake (Tatuus-Mountune MSV-022)	1m28.619s	109.35mph	8 April
<b>OULTON PARK ISLAND</b> Kanato Le (Tatuus-Abarth T-421)	1m20.811s	99.16mph	17 June
<b>PEMBREY NATIONAL</b> Chris Everill (Ginetta-Chevrolet G55 GT4)	59.696s	87.80mph	8 October
<b>SILVERSTONE GRAND PRIX</b> Max Verstappen (Red Bull-Honda RB19)	1m30.275s	145.974mph	9 July
<b>SILVERSTONE HISTORIC GRAND PRIX</b> Timothy de Silva (OAK Pescarolo-Judd 01 LMP1)	1m44.057s	125.90mph	26 August
<b>SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL</b> Craig Pollard (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6/7)	1m03.24s	105.31mph	19 August
<b>SILVERSTONE NATIONAL</b> Brian Morris (March-BMW 782)	54.848s	107.67mph	14 October
<b>SNETTERTON 300</b> Alex Dunne (Tatuus-Mountune MSV-022)	1m41.280s	105.53mph	17 June
<b>SNETTERTON 200</b> Karl O'Brien (Dallara-Mugen Honda F307)	1m10.187s	101.76mph	23 April
<b>THRUXTON</b> Jimmy Piszcyk (Tatuus-Abarth T-421)	1m11.315s	118.93mph	3 June



MALLORY PARK



SILVERSTONE NATIONAL



THRUXTON



## SEASON REVIEW

MOTOGP

# DUCATI MAKES HISTORY AS BAGNAIA DOUBLES UP

*The manner of the Italian manufacturer's record-breaking domination of the 2023 season underlines its intention to become the 'Red Bull' of MotoGP*

LEWIS DUNCAN

PHOTOGRAPHY GOLD AND GOOSE



**T**he numbers posted by Ducati in the 2023 MotoGP season knocked down every historical wall its rivals had put up in the past. From 20 rounds, Ducati riders scored 17 wins – the most of any marque in a single campaign. It scored 17 pole positions, 43 podiums in total, eight rostrum lockouts and won all three championships: riders', constructors', and the teams' title with Pramac Racing.

From going 14 years without a riders' title, Ducati celebrated its third a little over 12 months after Francesco Bagnaia scored the company's second. The Italian's completion of a back-to-back success came in a dramatic finale at Valencia, where a Ducati rider was guaranteed to win the championship whatever happened.

While it would be easy to chalk up Ducati's statistics in 2023 simply to its sheer show of force in fielding eight riders, six of whom posted grand prix victories, its position as MotoGP's dominator was the culmination of almost 10 years of work within its "new history". "I think that there is a history that after the arrival of [general manager] Gigi Dall'Igna, [and] we say new management, everything changed after 2014 and then

we started with a new history in MotoGP with the new bike that we have been developing year by year," says Ducati sporting director Davide Tardozzi.

"This bike is not a revolution. This bike is the evolution of the 2015. So, we arrived at this point where everybody is very competitive. We were in trouble when everybody said, 'Only Casey Stoner can ride the bike.' And now we've come to the point where we have eight riders and all eight riders are very competitive. And this is something that made us really proud about our job. I think in this moment we arrived to the point where we can manage the results considering we never stopped evolving the bike, because our competitors are honestly very tough and we are scared they can find something that can make them faster than us. But, in the end, we are happy about this situation."

Any fears Ducati may have had about rival defeats never really came to much in 2023. Aprilia won twice, its veteran Aleix Espargaro beating Bagnaia on the final lap of a British GP duel and romping to a home win a few weeks later at Barcelona. But Aprilia only excelled when either grip conditions were low >>

## ROUND BY ROUND

**Portuguese GP****1 Bagnaia****2 Vinales****3 Bezzecchi**

Bagnaia begins title defence in perfect fashion with victory in first ever sprint and follows it up with grand prix victory on his factory team Ducati. Marc Marquez-triggered chaos with Oliveira takes both out, leading to FIM-instigated penalty controversy. Door opens for Vinales to come through to second on the Aprilia and Bezzecchi to open the year with a podium for Valentino Rossi's satellite Ducati team.

**Argentinian GP****1 Bezzecchi****2 Zarco****3 A Marquez**

Alex Marquez splashes through rainy conditions for a first pole after his switch to Gresini Ducati from Honda, but VR46 Ducati counterpart Bezzecchi manages the weather best to dominate for his maiden grand prix victory. Marquez is third behind Pramac rider Zarco, while Bagnaia loses the lead of the championship when he crashes out of second, managing 16th after remounting.

**Americas GP****1 Rins****2 Marini****3 Quartararo**

Rins scores sixth career MotoGP victory and delivers Honda's only win of a miserable season. It's the Spaniard's high point, as injury plagues his campaign from June's Italian GP onwards. Bagnaia crashes again, this time while leading, while Marini gets his first grand prix podium for VR46. Quartararo makes rare podium appearance on underperforming Yamaha in third.

**Spanish GP****1 Bagnaia****2 Binder****3 Miller**

Bagnaia comes through Q1 in qualifying to put his factory Ducati fifth, before beating KTM of Binder in a tense grand prix at Jerez. Miller gets his one and only grand prix podium of the season as his switch from Ducati to KTM proves harder than expected. Pedrosa stuns in seventh in wildcard for KTM. Oliveira suffers more injury woes after lap-one crash with Quartararo leads to early red flag.

**French GP****1 Bezzecchi****2 Martin****3 Zarco**

Bagnaia registers third non-score of the season after early collision with Vinales takes both out of the grand prix. Bezzecchi strengthens early title bid with second win. Martin makes first podium appearance of the season a day on from his first of nine sprint wins, with Zarco delighting his home crowd in third. Augusto Fernandez gives best performance of rookie season in fourth.



Back-to-back  
champion Bagnaia  
topped off the season in  
style with victory  
in Valencia GP







Martin's victory over Bagnaia in Germany a signal of championship intent

and so it could profit from the RS-GP's excellent drive grip, or the circuit layout was fast and flowing.

Honda was the only other manufacturer to give Ducati a Sunday defeat in 2023. Alex Rins benefited from his riding style to mask the RC213V's numerous drawbacks and claim his and HRC's only grand prix win of the season in the US, albeit after Bagnaia crashed out while leading. KTM knocked on the door a few times, but its only wins came in the new sprints, which featured at every round of the 2023 campaign. Even in the half-distance races, Ducati dominated, winning 16 of the 19 that were eventually run (the Australian GP sprint had to be called off due to poor weather), with KTM taking two and Aprilia the other.

Reigning champion Bagnaia made a strong statement of intent



Bagnaia's moment of jeopardy at Barcelona



at the opening round of the season in Portugal. He won the very first sprint and backed that up with a grand prix victory to take a maximum of 37 points. The mistakes that plagued his 2022 title campaign and left him 91 points adrift at the halfway mark looked like they might have been eradicated.

But then he crashed while running second in the wet in Argentina, and his tumble out of the lead at Austin came with the odd excuse that he felt his GP23 Ducati was too stable. He quickly rowed back on this somewhat, but conceded at the end of the season that he still didn't know why this crash happened.

A third non-score followed in round five in France when Aprilia's Maverick Vinales tangled with him, leaving the Ducati rider with an injured foot. The damage to Bagnaia's championship, though, was minimal. He left Le Mans in May a point clear of VR46 Ducati rider Marco Bezzecchi, who had won the Argentinian and French GPs on his year-old Desmosedici. Bagnaia's two sprint wins and a second in the first five rounds did him a favour.

After France, though, Bagnaia's results stabilised. He won in Italy, the Netherlands and Austria to add to his Portuguese and Spanish GP victories, and after the Barcelona sprint he was 66 points clear in the standings.

But in that Catalan GP in September came a potentially crucial moment. A heavy crash exiting Turn 2 at the start slammed Bagnaia to the ground and into the path of Brad Binder's KTM,

**Italian GP**

- 1 Bagnaia
- 2 Martin
- 3 Zarco

Bagnaia delivers a perfect weekend on home soil, scoring pole, winning the Mugello sprint and the grand prix to return to the top of the championship standings. Martin is second again ahead of Zarco, while Bezzecchi struggles to eighth. Marc Marquez crashes again out of podium contention as 2023 Honda proves woefully undercompetitive.

**German GP**

- 1 Martin
- 2 Bagnaia
- 3 Zarco

First signs of a turning point in championship race emerge, with Martin winning sprint before fending off Bagnaia in thrilling duel to score first grand prix victory since maiden success in Austria two years ago. Zarco continues consistent form in third. Five crashes for Marquez at beloved Sachsenring force him to miss grand prix as his Honda future is plunged into doubt in Spaniard's season nadir.

**Dutch TT**

- 1 Bagnaia
- 2 Bezzecchi
- 3 A Espargaro

Bagnaia takes fourth grand prix win of the season to go into summer break 35 points clear in the championship. Bezzecchi finishes second to be a point adrift of Martin, who is down in fifth at Assen. Marquez withdraws from Sunday due to ongoing pain from foot and rib fractures after Germany. A track limits penalty for Binder gifts Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro his first podium of the season in third.

**British GP**

- 1 A Espargaro
- 2 Bagnaia
- 3 Binder

Silverstone thriller ends with Espargaro giving Aprilia its first win of the season after he overtakes Bagnaia on the final lap. Binder completes the podium in one of the tighter races of the year, and Martin struggles to sixth to allow Bagnaia a 41-point lead in the standings. Pol Espargaro races for the first time since suffering serious injuries in a practice crash at Portugal opener and scores points in 12th.

**Austrian GP**

- 1 Bagnaia
- 2 Binder
- 3 Bezzecchi

Bagnaia dominates at the Red Bull Ring for his fifth grand prix win of the season, while Binder finishes runner-up, 5.191s off the victory. Bezzecchi makes a welcome return to the podium for the first time since Assen, while a long lap penalty for Martin following a sprint tangle leaves him seventh. Bagnaia's championship lead swells to 62 points, title momentum firmly with him now.





Bezzecchi was on dominant wet-weather form to take maiden GP win in Argentina



Espargaro led home Vinales in Catalan GP for Aprilia's first MotoGP 1-2

which ran over his left leg in a sickening incident. Bagnaia didn't suffer serious injury, but his leg was badly bruised and the after-effects hindered him at the following week's San Marino GP.

At this point, Pramac star Jorge Martin stepped forward as Bagnaia's biggest threat. Martin, on identical machinery, had been outscored by Bagnaia by 62 points in the first half of 2023 as he took his time to fully understand the GP23. A German GP win in June, in a duel with Bagnaia, was a signal of his intent. Having cut Bagnaia's lead down to 50 points with a third at Barcelona, Martin profited from the factory Ducati rider's injury woes by doing the double at Misano.

Over the second half of the season, Martin would ultimately outscore Bagnaia – who spent much of this portion chasing missing feeling on his bike's front end – by 23 points as he ended the year with nine sprint and four grand prix victories. Briefly, Martin overhauled Bagnaia in the standings. The Pramac rider, without question the faster of the two in the second part of the campaign, went seven points clear after winning the sprint in Indonesia. That these two rode identical machinery added a complication. Their data was available to each other, and every advantage was exposed. But it's this approach that has helped Ducati become so dominant in MotoGP.

Overconfidence, as Martin would later categorise it, led to

“OVERCONFIDENCE, AS MARTIN LATER CALLED IT, LED TO TWO VITAL ERRORS ON THE THIRD-YEAR RIDER'S PART”

two vital errors on the third-year rider's part. Martin crashed out while leading by over three seconds in Indonesia in October. Bagnaia took the win, after starting 13th, and restored his points lead to 18. Then in Australia the week after, Martin once again led by over three seconds. But his decision to go against almost the entire field in choosing the soft rear tyre meant he plummeted to fifth as Bagnaia finished second, increasing the points gap to 27.

Martin responded emphatically in Thailand with a double win, but fears over tyre pressure penalties – he had been given a warning at Buriram for riding underneath the minimum limit mandated in the rules from the British GP onwards – meant his front Michelin was a bit higher than he wanted for the Malaysian GP. He finished over six seconds adrift of third-placed Bagnaia, who got an official warning for the same offence in that race.

With the gap slashed to seven points in the Qatar sprint, ensuring the title would go to the final round, a problem with his rear tyre led Martin to a season-worst finish of 10th in the GP, while Bagnaia came home second despite a near-miss »

Catalan GP

**1 A Espargaro**  
**2 Vinales**  
**3 Martin**  
Sprint podium gives Bagnaia 66-point championship lead, but crashes in grand prix and is run over by Binder. He escapes injury, but third for Martin means title lead is down to 50 points. Espargaro leads home Aprilia's first 1-2 in MotoGP. Turn 1 pile-up leaves Bastianini with multiple fractures and out for another three rounds, while Bezzecchi's title hopes take a hit after getting caught up in it.

San Marino GP

**1 Martin**  
**2 Bezzecchi**  
**3 Bagnaia**  
Martin capitalises on injury problems for Bezzecchi and Bagnaia to beat both in the sprint and grand prix to reduce his championship deficit to 36 points, while Bagnaia finishes third in both contests a week on from his horrible Barcelona incident. Pedrosa returns for second wildcard of the year with KTM and stuns again, narrowly missing the podium in fourth in both the sprint and the grand prix.

Indian GP

**1 Bezzecchi**  
**2 Martin**  
**3 Quartararo**  
Bezzecchi is dominant in the grand prix on MotoGP's first visit to India, a day after team-mate Marini takes him out of the sprint. Martin overcomes dehydration to finish second as Bagnaia crashes, bringing his points lead down to 13. Quartararo gets second podium of the year for Yamaha, while Mir enjoys strongest Honda result in fifth as Marc Marquez crashes out of podium contention.

Japanese GP

**1 Martin**  
**2 Bagnaia**  
**3 M Marquez**  
Martin adds another weekend clean sweep to his 2023 tally by winning the Motegi sprint and dominating in wet conditions in the grand prix. Bagnaia is second in the red-flagged contest and his championship lead comes down to three points. Marquez completes the podium for the first time on a Sunday in 2023, but it will prove to be his last top-three for Honda.

Indonesian GP

**1 Bagnaia**  
**2 Vinales**  
**3 Quartararo**  
Championship lead changes hands briefly as Martin goes seven points clear with a sprint win, only to throw it away in the grand prix when he crashes while leading. Bagnaia comes from 13th on the grid for his most important win of the year, fending off Vinales and Quartararo. Di Giannantonio scores best result of career in fourth on weekend Marquez officially signs for Gresini.





One of five crashes Marc Marquez suffered over Sachsenring weekend

## “A LACKLUSTRE TEST OF THE 2024 HONDA THRUST MARQUEZ TOWARDS HIS DECISION TO QUIT”

with eventual race winner Fabio Di Giannantonio, the rider booted from his Gresini seat to make way for Marc Marquez in 2024.

While Martin was able to get a 21-point deficit down to 14 after the Valencia finale sprint, an off at Turn 1 while chasing Bagnaia in the grand prix and then a tangle with Marquez on lap six ended his hopes. Bagnaia was world champion. A seventh GP win of a season in which no race featured the entire 2023 grid together due to numerous injuries – something not helped by the addition of 20 sprints – was Bagnaia rubbing salt in his rival’s wounds.

Dall’Igna says Ducati now wants to “imitate” the domination Red Bull showed in Formula 1 in 2023. Bagnaia is a seasoned champion and Martin clearly has the calibre, while the rest of its 2023 stable is brimming with – at the very least – race-winning potential.

There is one rider in that roster for 2024, though, who Ducati didn’t want but may well provide the total devastation it wants to inflict next year. After going through further surgery in 2022 to correct the right arm he badly broke in 2020 and become competitive again, Marquez was seriously let down by Honda in 2023. Apart from the win for Rins, who shredded a two-year deal with HRC to join Yamaha next year after feeling undervalued, Marquez’s third position in Japan was its only Sunday podium.

Injury from a collision in Portugal ruled Marquez out for three rounds. And the crashes kept coming in France and Italy while running in podium places. A five-crash weekend in Germany left Marquez with more injuries, and he missed the German and Dutch races in June. A lacklustre test of the 2024 Honda at Misano thrust him towards his decision to quit – thought to have cost him €15million – a year early to race a 2023-spec Ducati at Gresini next season to simply understand whether he can be competitive again.

On his first ride of the Ducati in the Valencia test, Marquez was just 0.171s off the pace, and had also been hiding an arm pump issue that was operated upon the following day. The smile was back and the fear in his rivals instilled... 🌪



Rins US win a high point in Honda’s awful season

### Australian GP

**1 Zarco**

**2 Bagnaia**

**3 Di Giannantonio**

Bad weather forces the grand prix to be run on Saturday and the sprint ultimately cancelled. Zarco scores maiden MotoGP win in his 120th start as Martin again loses comfortable win, this time to a bad tyre choice. Bagnaia is second, and Di Giannantonio beats his career high with a first podium in third. Martin ends up fifth as championship lead for Bagnaia opens up to 27 points.

### Thai GP

**1 Martin**

**2 Bagnaia**

**3 Binder**

After back-to-back errors in grands prix, Martin responds emphatically with sprint/GP double. Run hard in the grand prix by Binder and Bagnaia, Martin just holds on for victory in season’s best race. He’s hit with a tyre pressure rule warning, but first offence means win stands. Track limits penalty for Binder drops him to third, promoting Bagnaia to second, keeping Martin 13 points behind.

### Malaysian GP

**1 Bastianini**

**2 A Marquez**

**3 Bagnaia**

A breakthrough in understanding his factory Ducati leads Bastianini to score his first win of the season at a time when his future at the works squad is being questioned. Alex Marquez follows him home in second, while Bagnaia rounds out the podium after resoundingly beating title rival Martin. But sprint second means Martin only loses a point to Bagnaia in the standings.

### Qatar GP

**1 Di Giannantonio**

**2 Bagnaia**

**3 Marini**

Sprint win for Martin ensures title battle goes to Valencia, but a rear tyre problem in grand prix means he plummets to season-worst 10th. Bagnaia finishes second despite late scare to lead championship by 21 points. Di Giannantonio scores first win to ultimately save his MotoGP career as VR46 offers lifeline at Valencia. Honda-bound Marini completes podium for last time with VR46 team.

### Valencia GP

**1 Bagnaia**

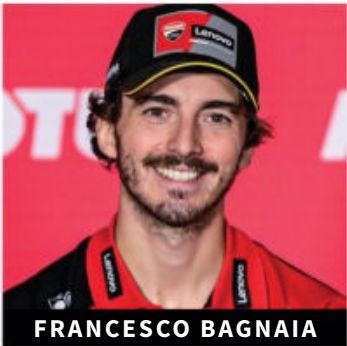
**2 Zarco**

**3 Binder**

Championship battle rolls into the grand prix after ninth sprint win of the year for Martin. But a crash on the sixth lap for the Pramac rider, taking out Marc Marquez in his Honda farewell, hands the championship to Bagnaia. He also wins the race after later leader Miller crashes out. Di Giannantonio is second on the road, but tyre pressure penalty drops him to fourth.

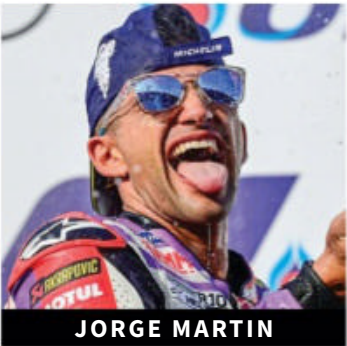


AUTOSPORT’S TOP 10 RIDERS



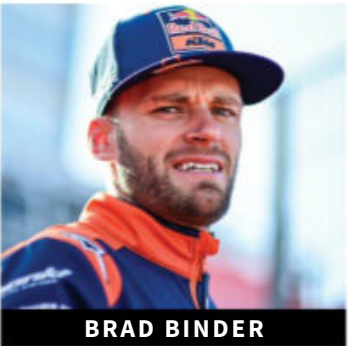
FRANCESCO BAGNAIA

1 May have made more errors than a world champion should, but when he was on form he was the best Bagnaia we’ve ever seen. Needs to improve Saturday form if he hopes to take the crown for a third time.



JORGE MARTIN

2 A slow start to the season gave way to the real Martin emerging, with his Saturday form of particular note. But critical errors at crucial stages of the season ultimately lost him the title and can’t happen again next year.



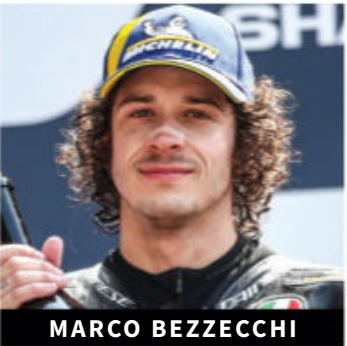
BRAD BINDER

3 May have come away without a grand prix win, but came close on occasion. Best championship result in MotoGP and 130-point gap to next KTM rider shows how good he is on machinery still not yet good enough against Ducati.



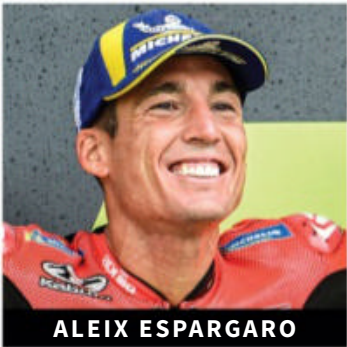
FABIO QUARTARARO

4 Facing an uphill battle from the off on the Yamaha, Quartararo did the best he could with what he had. Three podiums and 70 points over the next Yamaha rider highlighted how much he had to outperform his bike in 2023.



MARCO BEZZECCHI

5 A breakout sophomore campaign put Bezzecchi in title contention throughout, though inconsistency on his year-old Ducati and numerous injury woes softened his charge as the year went on.



ALEIX ESPARGARO

6 A repeat of his 2022 title bid never materialised, but he managed to add two more wins to his tally to keep his 100% streak of beating every Aprilia team-mate alive. Needs more next year to extend his career into 2025.



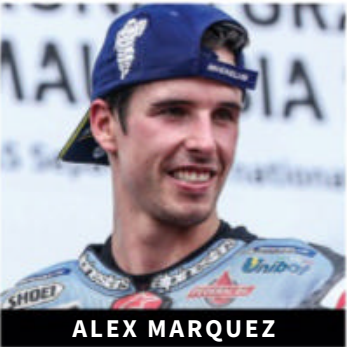
JOHANN ZARCO

7 Finally grabbed first win in MotoGP in seventh season of trying. Consistent podium challenger to begin with, but performed well short of what a rider with factory Ducati machinery should be doing in the second half of the campaign.



FABIO DI GIANNANTONIO

8 After never breaking into the top seven finishers in MotoGP until round 15 of 2023, his sudden turnaround to first get on the podium and then win a grand prix put this undervalued sophomore in a new light and saved his career.



ALEX MARQUEZ

9 Needed a big year after difficult Honda spell and performed solidly. Two sprint wins and Sunday podiums hint at bigger potential for the younger Marquez brother, but expectation was for him to score Gresini’s first GP victory of 2023.



LUCA MARINI

10 The Rossi familial connection will never be shaken, and Marini stepped up with a solid campaign that rewarded him with a couple of podiums. Should have been closer to his team-mate, but Honda has still bagged itself a good rider.

RIDERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	RIDER	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	PTS
1	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	1	16	R	1	R	1	2	1	2	1	NS	3	R	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	467
2	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	R	5	R	4	2	2	1	5	6	7	3	1	2	1	R	5	1	4	10	R	428
3	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	3	1	6	R	1	8	4	2	R	3	12	2	1	4	5	6	4	6	13	R	329
4	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	6	17	13	2	6	5	R	4	3	2	R	14	4	R	6	4	3	R	5	3	293
5	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	4	2	7	R	3	3	3	R	9	13	4	10	6	NC	R	1	10	12	12	2	225
6	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	9	15	R	5	5	6	16	3	1	9	1	12	R	5	10	8	8	R	R	8	206
7	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	2	12	4	R	R	12	R	R	5	6	2	5	8	19	2	11	R	11	4	10	204
8	Luca Marini (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	R	8	2	6	R	4	5	7	7	4	11	9	NS	-	R	12	7	10	3	9	201
9	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	5	3	R	8	R	R	7	6	R	5	6	11	NS	-	NS	9	R	2	6	6	177
10	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	8	7	3	10	7	11	13	R	15	8	7	13	3	10	3	14	5	5	7	11	172

11 Jack Miller (KTM) 163; 12 Fabio Di Giannantonio (Gresini Ducati) 151; 13 Franco Morbidelli (Yamaha) 102; 14 Marc Marquez (Honda) 96; 15 Enea Bastianini (Ducati) 84; 16 Miguel Oliveira (RNF Aprilia) 76; 17 Augusto Fernandez (Tech 3 KTM) 71; 18 Takaaki Nakagami (LCR Honda) 56; 19 Alex Rins (LCR Honda) 54; 20 Raul Fernandez (RNF Aprilia) 51; 21 Dani Pedrosa (KTM) 32; 22 Joan Mir (Honda) 26; 23 Pol Espargaro (Tech 3 KTM) 15; 24 Lorenzo Savadori (RNF Aprilia and Aprilia) 12; 25 Jonas Folger (Tech 3 KTM) 9; 26 Stefan Bradl (LCR Honda and Honda) 8; 27 Michele Pirro (Ducati) 5; 28 Danilo Petrucci (Ducati) 5; 29 Cal Crutchlow (Yamaha) 3; 30 Iker Lecuona (LCR Honda and Honda) 0; 31 Alvaro Bautista (Ducati) 0. **CONSTRUCTORS** 1 Ducati 700; 2 KTM 373; 3 Aprilia 326; 4 Yamaha 196; 5 Honda 185.



# World of sport

*The international motorsport scene featured a host of hard-fought championships throughout the 2023 season. As we get ready to wave goodbye to the year, it's time for our correspondents to sum them up*

## APR sends the interest rate rising

### EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

Despite being a mainstay of the European Le Mans Series' LMP2 class since its debut in 2015, Algarve Pro Racing had never developed into a proper, title-challenging force. That changed in 2023, when the Anglo-Portuguese squad emerged as the main title protagonist in a stacked LMP2 field and carried it through to win its first championship thanks to the efforts of Alex Lynn, James Allen and Kyffin Simpson.

With 2022 champion Prema Racing not returning, APR appeared to come out of the gates swinging when it led the first half of the opening round at Barcelona. Sadly, a first win fell to pieces when Australian Allen was clumsily tagged into a spin by IDEC Sport's Laurents Horr and became stuck in the gravel. This opened the door for a remarkable overall success for the TF Sport-run Racing Team Turkey Pro-Am crew, delivered by Louis Deletraz in a charging late-race drive.

There was a three-month wait until the second round, and it was in this race at Paul Ricard when APR got its overdue win after Allen wrestled his way past Deletraz with just seven minutes to go. Even though



Lynn, Allen and Simpson would pick up only one more race victory, during a chaotic and incident-filled contest at Spa, a consistent run meant they never finished outside the top three for the remainder of the campaign. They came home third in a hard-fought Motorland Aragon night race won by United Autosports trio Oliver Jarvis, Phil Hanson and Marino Sato, while two second places in a season-ending Portimao double-header dominated by poor weather were enough to bring home the title.

United finished as runners-up, winning both races at Algarve Circuit to bring their victory total to three, while Panis Racing trio Job van Uitert, Tijmen van der Helm and Manuel Maldonado claimed third.

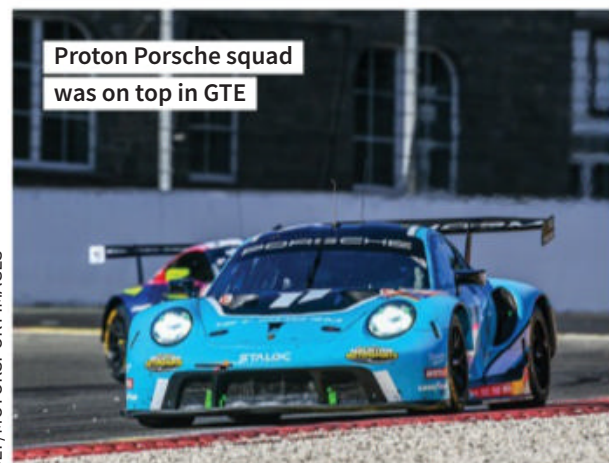
For Racing Team Turkey, a prodigious start to the season – Deletraz, Charlie Eastwood and Salih Yoluc won the class in the first two races – ultimately was not enough to claim the Pro-Am crown. Late-race problems brought an end to their unbeaten streak at Motorland, while an early spin into the gravel for Yoluc in race one at Portimao left the team on the back foot in the season finale.

When AF Corse took the class victory in the deciding round, Francois Perrodo and Matthieu Vaxiviere sealed the title along with it. They were accompanied by Ben Barnicoat for much of the campaign, and Alessio Rovera when the Brit was sidelined by IMSA duties, and defeated Cool Racing trio Nicolas Lapierre, Malthe Jakobsen and Alexandre Coigny by nine points.

In LMP3, a dominant campaign from the Ligier of Marcos Siebert, Adrien Chila and Alex Garcia allowed Cool Racing to seal the title a race early and win it for the second year in a row. The Swiss squad laid the foundations for a successful title defence with three wins out of the first four races and only finished off the podium once.

On GTE's ELMS swansong, it was the Proton Competition Porsche of Alessio Picariello, Zach Robichon and Ryan Hardwick that emerged victorious after a close fight with the sister car of runners-up Julien Andlauer, Giammarco Levorato and Christian Ried, and the third-placed Iron Lynx Porsche of Matteo Cairoli, Matteo Cressoni and Claudio Schiavoni.

DAVEY EUWEMA







Miyata leads Nojiri, who he succeeded as champion

# Toyota talent turns the tide as Miyata beats Honda horde

## SUPER FORMULA

Super Formula enjoyed its best title battle in years as Ritomo Miyata triumphed over Liam Lawson and Tomoki Nojiri to clinch his first championship. In a welcome antidote to the Nojiri walkovers of 2021 and 2022, an entertaining three-way battle for honours went all the way to the final race at Suzuka, where TOM'S Toyota driver Miyata edged out Red Bull junior and rookie sensation Lawson by eight points.

The title battle could have easily gone either way, with Lawson winning more races but suffering more mishaps over the course of the nine-round campaign, while Miyata was never out of the top five and only off the podium once after the opening Fuji double-header.

Lawson made history that weekend by becoming the first debutant to win a top-class Japanese single-seater race since Marc Surer in 1978, and further wins followed at Autopolis and the return to Fuji. Miyata, meanwhile, was sublime at Sugo, giving him a second win to go with his first, which he earned

from 12th on the grid at Suzuka.

The turning point came at Motegi; Lawson tried to go all the way around the outside of Team Mugen stablemate Nojiri at Turn 2 at the start, only to ride up on the kerbs, spin and trigger a pile-up that stopped the race. Not only did that give Lawson his only non-score of the year, but it allowed Miyata to salvage fourth after stalling on the grid.

It also meant that Lawson lost a set of 'carry-over' tyres, which proved crucial in qualifying at Suzuka when the red flags came out. With no more fresh tyres to use when the session resumed, he qualified seventh, and more red flags in the race left him no chance to recover.

All that meant Miyata needed only to finish third in the final race even if Lawson won, which Miyata duly did, but Dandelion Racing rookie Kakunoshin Ota managed to add himself to an exclusive club of race winners by coming out on top in a straight fight with Lawson.

Nojiri, who matched Lawson's tally of three wins, can also consider himself unlucky to have missed out on a hat-trick of titles, as he was forced to miss the Autopolis round due to a punctured lung. Equally, he cost himself big points at Suzuka when he crashed into Toshiki Oyu, a move seemingly borne of desperation to beat Lawson.

Best of the rest behind the 'big three' was Inging driver Sho Tsuboi, whose title challenge faded after a promising first half of the year, while Ryo Hirakawa was a further point behind in fifth after a frustrating campaign with Team Impul.

JAMIE KLEIN



Lawson came close, but ended as runner-up

## 2023 CHAMPIONS



EUROFORMULA OPEN  
NOEL LEON



SUPER FORMULA LIGHTS  
IORI KIMURA



EUROCUP-3  
ESTEBAN MASSON



FORMULA REGIONAL OCEANIA  
CHARLIE WURZ



FORMULA REGIONAL AMERICAS  
CALLUM HEDGE



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Rookie Antonelli  
won the title...



...and rookie Stenshorne  
was the runner-up

## Antonelli on top but fellow rookie makes it tough

### FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN

Mercedes' 17-year-old protege Andrea Kimi Antonelli claimed his fourth car racing title in the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine. After dominating Formula 4 in 2022, he began this year by winning the FRegional Middle East championship, so the Prema Racing-run Italian was the title favourite among the 30-plus FRECA field.

It took eight races for Antonelli to win, and a further four to become points leader, but he was so consistent that he was crowned with a round to spare. His first victory came at a wet Spa, and was

overshadowed by a crash that claimed the life of Dilano van't Hoff. He then took further victories at Mugello, Paul Ricard, Monza and Zandvoort, where he was crowned champion. A second win at Monza was denied by a penalty for activating push-to-pass too early.

Antonelli's fellow F4 graduate Martinus Stenshorne had started the season on top with victory at Imola, before R-ace GP team-mate Tim Tramnitz won twice at Barcelona to lead the points. Stenshorne moved back ahead at the Hungaroring with two victories, and won again at Mugello.

Tramnitz was R-ace's higher-scoring driver in the season's second half, and

at the Hockenheim season finale the pair each took a win and a second place, but Stenshorne prevailed to be series runner-up.

The all-Dutch combination of Van Amersfoort Racing and Kas Haverkort won at Imola and Zandvoort to finish a distant fourth in the standings, one point ahead of Prema's Ferrari junior Rafael Camara, who took wins at Spa and the Red Bull Ring.

Hot temperatures at Paul Ricard set up surprises, and G4 Racing's Alessandro Giusti won the first race from pole. The French F4 champion continued to show strong pace; he also won at the Red Bull Ring and inherited Antonelli's lost Monza victory.

IDA WOOD

## Super Supra means victory for TOM'S

### SUPER GT

Toyota wrested back the Super GT title from rivals Honda and Nissan thanks to Sho Tsuboi and Ritomo Miyata putting together one of the most impressive campaigns in recent memory at the wheel of their TOM'S GR Supra.

Consistent points-scoring with heavy ballast was key to the success of Tsuboi and Miyata, but it was the penultimate round at Autopolis where in hindsight the title was really won. As teams grappled with a first-ever 450km race around a track notoriously tough on tyres, Tsuboi and Miyata carved their way through from 12th on the grid to take an unlikely win despite having the second-heaviest car in the field.

That meant the pair only needed to finish second in the Motegi finale to be sure of the title, but a mistake in the rain



Miyata and Tsuboi  
took three wins on  
their way to the title

by Nissan's Mitsunori Takaboshi opened the door to a third win of the year and gave Tsuboi and Miyata the title by a whopping 26 points, a new top-class record.

NDDP Nissan Z duo Takaboshi and Katsumasa Chiyo fell at the final hurdle for a second year in a row, but the reality was they were not consistent enough in the second half of the season after a weather-assisted win at Fuji in August. They ought to have finished behind NISMO pair Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda, who won a rain-soaked Okayama opener before Matsuda's horror Suzuka crash and an

unfortunate exclusion for a worn skid block at the same track two months later that cost them second. But two more runner-up results put them third overall.

Honda's only title contender in the last year of the NSX-GT was ARTA pairing Nirei Fukuzumi and Hiroki Otsu, who won the August Suzuka race but were wildly inconsistent elsewhere. Their status as top Honda crew owed much to Real Racing pair Koudai Tsukakoshi and Nobuharu Matsushita being stripped of victory at Sugo.

JAMIE KLEIN



# Sizzling Danish earns his bacon

## INDY NXT

One of the deepest fields in recent memory of Indy NXT (formerly Indy Lights) featured a thrilling run to the finish that ended with Christian Rasmussen crowned champion.

The Copenhagen native earned his first win of the season in the second round at Barber Motorsports Park. After a lull that featured no victories over the next five races, he went on a mid-season surge and found his form as his HMD Motorsports entry visited Victory Lane four more times, including the finale at Laguna Seca. Rasmussen ended with five wins and three further podiums.

While Andretti Autosport's Hunter McElrea was the closest competition – the Australian took two wins on his way to finishing runner-up to the Dane – many turned their attention to the driver who ended up third: Nolan Siegel.

Siegel made an immediate impact by nearly winning the season-opening race in St Petersburg, finishing second after faltering on a late restart. He replicated the result in the next round at Barber. In the fourth race of the year in Detroit, he was leading when his HMD machine

suffered a gearbox failure just two corners from the finish, but claimed his first series win in the nightcap of the double-header the next day and won the following round at Road America. Though inexperience caught up with mid-season struggles, the Californian still claimed Rookie of the Year en route to third overall.

The best of Andretti Autosport's Brits was Louis Foster, with two wins – at Mid-Ohio and Portland – boosting him to fourth in the points in his rookie season ahead of Jacob Abel. Three-time W Series champion Jamie Chadwick earned five top-10 finishes, peaking with sixth at Portland, on her way to 12th.

## JOEY BARNES



# Garcia is *primera* with Prema

## F1 ACADEMY

The inaugural season for the all-female F1 Academy took place largely out of the public eye, with Spaniard Marta Garcia crowned champion.

The F4-based championship effectively picked up where the defunct W Series left off, with several drivers making the transition across to F1A, which is backed by Formula 1. Garcia had enjoyed limited success in W Series, registering a single

victory and three other podiums across three years. But, with Prema Racing, the 23-year-old won two of the opening three F1A races at the Red Bull Ring and never dropped from the top of the standings.

As the season progressed, Garcia grew more confident and her class shone through. Back-to-back rounds without a win at Barcelona and Zandvoort allowed Lena Buhler (ART Grand Prix) and Hamda Al Qubaisi (MP Motorsport) to close the gap, but regular podium appearances during this time limited the damage.

Any hope of a comeback from this duo was quashed by Garcia when she took a pair of victories at Paul Ricard. And when the series made its debut on the F1 support bill and was broadcast live for the first time at the United States GP, Garcia took the race-one chequered flag to seal the silverware and take her tally of wins to seven.

Campos Racing's Nerea Marti was fourth from Abbi Pulling, the Rodin Carlin driver the only one in the championship top nine not to take a race victory. Others to win were Nerea Marti, Al Qubaisi's sister Amna, Bianca Bustamante, Jessica Edgar, Emely de Heus and Carrie Schreiner.

## SAM HALL



## 2023 CHAMPIONS



**S5000**  
**AARON CAMERON**



**USF PRO 2000**  
**MYLES ROWE**



**ITALIAN FORMULA 4**  
**KACPER SZTUKA**



**EURO 4**  
**UGO UGOCHUKWU**



**SPANISH FORMULA 4**  
**THEOPHILE NAEL**



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# Blaney peaks at the right time

Blaney (12) battles with Byron during Phoenix decider...



JARRETT/NKP  
motorsport IMAGES

## NASCAR CUP

The 2023 NASCAR Cup season had plenty of firsts, including a first-time champion in Ryan Blaney that may signal the changing of the guard.

Two of the four drivers who competed for the series title in the season finale at Phoenix last month – Blaney and William Byron – were making their first appearance in the Championship 4. Christopher Bell had his initial title opportunity in 2022, and Kyle Larson was the only driver who had won a championship (2021). With Larson the oldest at 31, this year's quartet was the youngest (average age of 28 years, 11 months, 25 days) since the advent of

NASCAR's playoff system in 2004.

While Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet driver Byron had the most consistent season and the highest number of wins (six), it was Team Penske Ford man Blaney who held Larson at bay in the final laps at Phoenix to finish second in the race and secure his first Cup championship.

Statistically this wasn't Blaney's best season in Cup, but he won when it counted most, securing two critical victories in the playoffs at Talladega and Martinsville to help him advance to the title race. At Phoenix, a determined Blaney had to rally from behind following the final round of pitstops to pass his two title rivals, after Bell was knocked out of the race early.

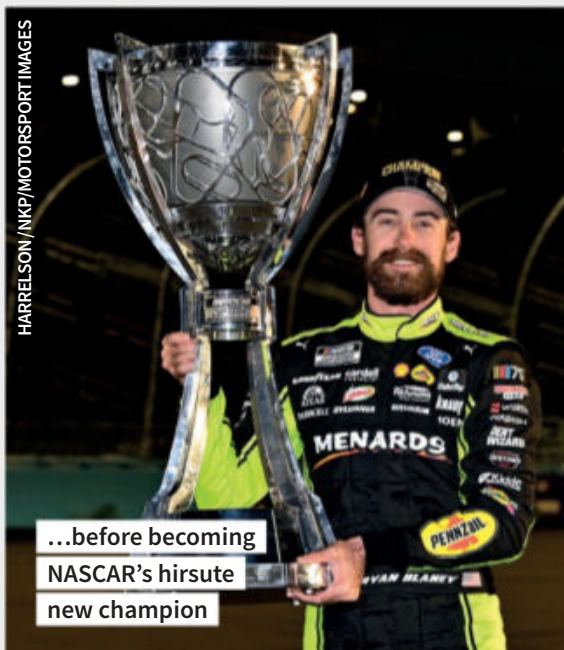
Blaney, 29, said he has worked hard

to savour the moment. "I've been trying to take it all in and trying to slow everything down," he reflected. "Even at Phoenix I was like, 'We need to slow this stuff down and try to enjoy it and remember it and embrace it'. It's been a blast and I'm looking forward to the rest of the off-season and what's to come."

Blaney's inaugural championship capped a 75th anniversary season for NASCAR that included many milestones. The Cup series held its first-ever street race – on a course in downtown Chicago – and, while the weekend faced numerous weather challenges, the racing proved superb and with a surprise winner. Making his first series start, three-time Supercars champion Shane van Gisbergen dominated the field to secure the victory in a Trackhouse Racing Chevy. The Kiwi is moving to NASCAR competition full-time in 2024, running a slate of races in all three national series – Cup, Xfinity and Trucks.

The 2023 season also featured the return of NASCAR competition to North Carolina's historic North Wilkesboro Speedway, which had been shuttered since 1996. Larson swept the weekend, winning a Truck Series race and then dominating to take the \$1million victory prize in the NASCAR All-Star Race. Speedway Motorsports is bringing the All-Star Race back to the track in 2024.

JIM UTTER



HARRELSON/NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

...before becoming NASCAR's hirsute new champion



Cole Custer won Xfinity Series...

JARRETT/NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



...with Ben Rhodes on top in Trucks

BAKER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





# It's Hyundai's Hungarian after Huff runs out of puff in finale

## TCR WORLD TOUR

The TCR World Tour was launched as the successor to the WTCR, and took the concept of 'touring' car racing quite literally by placing a group of seasoned drivers within rounds of five local touring car championships all run to the globally used TCR technical regulations.

The result was an enviable calendar of nine events, and it was 2019 WTCR champion Norbert Michélsz who triumphed for Hyundai.

The season started with TCR Europe, and the wins were primarily shared between Michélsz, Cyan Racing Lynk & Co star Yann Ehrlacher, and the Comtoyou Audi of Rob Huff. The three of them emerged as the title contenders come the season's end.

The trip to South America started strongly for Lynk & Co, with local hero Santiago Urrutia and Ma Qing Hua claiming wins in Uruguay, before Honda's Argentinian ace Nestor Girolami secured an emphatic victory in front of his home crowd at San Luis. Here there was a clumsy collision



on the final lap between title contenders Michélsz and Ehrlacher, with Ehrlacher haemorrhaging points as a result.

At the Australian rounds things kicked up a gear, with the local drivers showing that they were able to compete with the world racers. Supercars star Will Brown won the first two races in his Audi in Sydney before Huff secured honours in the final race.

With Urrutia, Michélsz and Ehrlacher winning at Mount Panorama, that set up an exciting finale in Macau. One point separated Ehrlacher, Huff and Michélsz going to the famed Guia circuit and that seemingly made 11-time Macau winner Huff the favourite to secure his first world title since 2012.

Ehrlacher threw down the gauntlet with pole, but a poor start – his second major error of the season – effectively ended the Frenchman's challenge. Michélsz won that first race and took a strong points lead into the second, but Huff threw everything at it, fighting his way through the pack, until he collided with second-placed Urrutia and had to pit, ending his title charge and handing Michélsz his second world title.

Huff's team-mate Frederic Vervisch took his second Guia Race win, his first victory of the season, at the final opportunity, meaning every regular driver won a race during the course of the year.

With Hyundai's difficult WRC season, the TCR World Tour title was a highlight for the South Korean manufacturer, defeating the full-scale return of Chinese giant Geely, while Huff shone as an independent star as Audi bows out of its customer programmes.

NEIL HUDSON

## 2023 CHAMPIONS



FRENCH FORMULA 4  
EVAN GILTAIRE



JAPANESE FORMULA 4  
RIKUTO KOBAYASHI



UAE FORMULA 4  
JAMES WHARTON



US FORMULA 4  
PATRICK WOODS-TOTH



US F2000  
SIMON SIKES

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# Preining preening for Porsche after defeating Bortolotti

## DTM

In some ways, the DTM felt like a very different championship this year from what we had become accustomed to since its switch to GT3 regulations in 2021. A calendar that focused almost exclusively on German-speaking nations took away some of the series' international appeal, while a takeover by the ADAC further strengthened the belief that it is now very much a national series.

Yet the DTM managed to retain some of its ingredients into its 'new-new era', with the on-track product very similar to the preceding years. Yes, the decision to stop standing restarts meant there was



Bortolotti tried his hardest all season

GRUPPEC/ADAC MOTORSPORT

no repeat of the Hockenheim pile-up, or any other controversial crash for that matter, but the ADAC-led DTM still offered impressive wheel-to-wheel racing between the top GT drivers in the world.

In a season that featured 12 different winners from the 16 races, two drivers stood out from the rest: Thomas Preining and Mirko Bortolotti. In this epic duel, Preining was the up-and-coming Porsche racer who needed to build on his potential and deliver the goods, while Bortolotti was the seasoned Lamborghini veteran with almost a decade's worth of experience in such machinery. The fact that they were representing two different manufacturers added an extra dimension to their title battle. On one side, Porsche is the best-known manufacturer in the wider world of sportscar racing, and on the other hand Lamborghini is a smaller marque but one with a rich history of its own.

In the end, the Preining/Porsche combination proved to be the one to beat, with the Austrian proving utterly consistent in his Manthey EMA-run 911 GT3-R to take the spoils over the SSR Performance Huracan of Bortolotti.

Preining was quick from the get-go,



Preining leads through the Sachskurve in the Hockenheim stadium

notching up podium finishes in the opening two rounds at Oschersleben and Zandvoort before claiming his maiden victory of the year at the Norisring, the most prestigious round on the calendar. His title challenge fluttered in the middle part of the season, not helped by a somewhat harsh penalty at the Lausitzring that consigned him to 15th. But the way he bounced back from the setback, and then crushed the competition in the Hockenheim finale with a perfect score of 56 points, proved that Porsche had

# Kristoffersson is triple A amid battery dramas

## WORLD RALLYCROSS

Johan Kristoffersson bagged a record-extending sixth World Rallycross title by dominating a disrupted year of competition.

The Swede had already established a firm grip on the championship with wins aboard his Kristoffersson Motorsport Volkswagen RX1e in the first three rounds in Portugal, Norway and Sweden before the field headed to Lydden Hill. It was this event that changed the course of the season, with a fire that erupted in the Special One team's awning causing the campaign to be paused with no guarantee of a restart. The blaze is believed to have been caused by a battery fault in one of the team's Lancia Delta tribute cars in the charging area, although a swiftly launched FIA investigation is yet to reach any conclusions.

As a result of the fire and subsequent safety concerns, the following rounds



Kristoffersson leads at Holjes, the last event before Lydden fire

in Belgium and Germany were cancelled. After a hiatus of over two months, the championship finally returned to action with double-header events in South Africa and Hong Kong to round off the campaign, although drivers were now competing in ZEROID X1 spec cars from the RX2e class.

Ex-DTM champion Timo Scheider and Kevin Hansen both tasted success in those

closing rounds, but the Swede's win on day one in Hong Kong could not prevent Kristoffersson from retaining the title, even though he had retired from the final through a reliability issue.

Hansen ended up second in the standings ahead of Niclas Gronholm, Scheider and Ole Christian Veiby.

**SAM HALL**





GRUPPE C/ADAC MOTORSPORT

placed its faith in the right driver. Bortolotti's campaign, in contrast, was a slowburner. He was sixth in the standings following the opening three rounds, but victories in the following three meetings at the Nurburgring, the Lausitzring and the Sachsenring propelled him into the title hunt, and he very much seemed like a worthy championship contender until he picked up an unfortunate puncture in the penultimate round at the Red Bull Ring. The Italian faced a 10-point deficit going into the last round, and failed to take up

the challenge to Preining, as the 25-year-old led Porsche to a historic drivers/teams/manufacturers treble. Behind them, Ricardo Feller (Abt Audi) beat the Schubert Motorsport BMW team's reigning champion Sheldon van der Linde to third place. The South African's three-time champion teammate Rene Rast was fifth from HRT's Luca Stolz, the top Mercedes driver. All won a race, as did Jack Aitken at the wheel of his Emil Frey Racing Ferrari. **RACHIT THUKRAL**

# Buus conducts himself to glory

## PORSCHE SUPERCUP

The Porsche Supercup season was one to remember, with a thrilling title battle between Bastian Buus and Larry ten Voorde decided in a dramatic Monza finale. Buus made waves in his debut season in 2022 with Lechner Racing, finishing fourth and winning two races. Despite scoring only one victory this term, the 20-year-old Dane's consistency paid off as he finished six of the eight races in the top four. Consistency was also key for Team GP Elite's two-time champion ten Voorde. The



PORSCHE AG/HOCHZWEI

Young Dane has a bright future in sportscars

Dutchman remarkably failed to win at all, yet finished only five points shy of Buus. Briton Harry King ended the season with the most race wins in the championship after taking the chequered flag at Monaco, the Hungaroring and Monza, but his title bid faltered at Zandvoort, with a retirement and fifth place dropping the Lechner driver out of contention. Buus arrived at the Monza finale with a 21-point lead, but suffered an early setback when he was tagged into a spin at the Rettifilo chicane, dropping him to the back of the pack. With ten Voorde second, Buus appeared set to rely on team-mate King's ability to hold back his rival. But while King was ultimately successful, Buus needn't have worried, as a stunning recovery drive to 13th yielded the required four points to seal the deal regardless. Dutch youngsters Morris Schuring and Loek Hartog also won races to sandwich fifth-placed Dorian Boccia in the final points table, while rookie champion Alessandro Ghirelli was seventh ahead of Silverstone winner Alexander Fach. **SAM HALL**

## 2023 CHAMPIONS



JEP

**LE MANS CUP**  
GILLIAN HENRION/JULIEN GERBI



CRAFT-BAMBOO

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE ASIA**  
ANTHONY LIU



GSG IMAGES/AUDI

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE AUSTRALIA**  
LIAM TALBOT



FOTOSPEEDY

**INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN**  
CHRISTOPHER HAASE/  
SIMON REICHER



GRUPPE C/ADAC MOTORSPORT

**ADAC GT MASTERS**  
ELIAS SEPPANEN/SALMAN OWEGA



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Title-winning Mercedes heads onto the GP circuit loop at Brands

SRO/HECQ

## Marciello: the champion they all ASpire to beat

### GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE

Raffaele Marciello brought his six-year tenure as a Mercedes factory driver to a close in 2023 as he and the ASP team clinched a pair of GT World Challenge Europe titles apiece.

Marciello amassed six victories en route to second successive Endurance Cup and overall crowns. The only blemish was a rare error at Zandvoort that ultimately cost him and co-driver Timur Boguslavskiy a shot at the Sprint Cup title, which went the way of season-long rivals Ricardo Feller and Mattia Drudi (Attempto Racing Audi).

Things did not begin well in the opening Endurance Cup round at Monza. Boguslavskiy's time at the wheel was erratic and their Mercedes was embroiled in needless squabbling, resulting in a puncture and non-finish

when Boguslavskiy inexplicably missed the pit entrance. That left Nick Yelloly, Marco Wittmann and Philipp Eng to lead a comfortable Rowe Racing BMW 1-2.

ASP responded in fine fashion next time out at Paul Ricard, with Marciello producing a sublime pair of stints as night fell to deliver a first win of the season alongside Boguslavskiy and Jules Gounon.

Boguslavskiy became far more dependable throughout the year, and ASP's consistency was the envy of its rivals. The trio took runner-up in the Spa 24 Hours, and a second dominating victory at the Nurburgring meant that fifth place in the season-ending Barcelona three-hour bout was more than enough to wrap up the title.

If the Endurance Cup had been something of a foregone conclusion, the same could not be said of the Sprint Cup. The shorter format had always suited ASP,

but the challenge from Italian Drudi and Swiss Feller was fierce.

The Audi pairing held the upper hand early on, with victory and a second place in the season opener at Brands Hatch. But Feller and Drudi would not have things all their own way, and their title tilt was almost derailed at Misano in June when Marciello and Boguslavskiy took a win and a fourth. The other victory here was a breakthrough for seven-time MotoGP champion Valentino Rossi alongside Maxime Martin in their Team WRT BMW, just 30 miles from Rossi's hometown of Urbino.

Feller and Drudi bounced back with a win at Hockenheim, and kept the title fight alive with another double podium at Valencia, where Marciello/Boguslavskiy won the opener. Then at the Zandvoort finale they dominated and won both races, while contact and terminal damage for Boguslavskiy early in the second race settled the matter.

One-time winners Dries Vanthoor and Charles Weerts were third in the Sprint Cup in their WRT BMW from Emil Frey Racing Ferrari pair Albert Costa and Thierry Vermeulen, with Martin and Rossi fifth. Another victory, this time in the Spa 24 Hours, galvanised Wittmann, Eng and Yelloly into the runner-up spot in the final Endurance Cup standings, with Mercedes trio Maro Engel, Luca Stolz and Fabian Schiller next up. They were followed by Drudi and Feller, who were joined for the Endurance races by Dennis Marschall.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



Zandvoort domination gave Attempto Audi duo the Sprint crown

SRO/TWENTY-ONE CREATION/BENICHO





# Erebus fares best as Kostecki sits on the Supercars top deck

## AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Brodie Kostecki and Erebus Motorsport had the kind of season most people can only dream of in 2023, both team and driver moving from the supporting cast to centre stage in Supercars racing.

Kostecki started the year with no career wins and two podium finishes to show for his first two Supercars seasons. In the 28 races that made up the 2023 campaign, he took 18 podium finishes, including six wins, and scored 10 pole positions. Nine months after few had identified him as Shane van Gisbergen's biggest title threat, even the mercurial New Zealander had to admit that Kostecki had been the best driver of the year.

Kostecki and his Erebus Chevrolet team-mate Will Brown adapted to Supercars' new Gen3 cars better than most and, by any measure, better than van Gisbergen. From nearly the first time he drove Triple Eight's new Camaro, van Gisbergen was candidly critical of how it felt and, in spite of signing a fresh deal to stay with Triple Eight for 2024, few would have been surprised that he was looking

to a future in the US and NASCAR. That's not to take anything away from Kostecki. Erebus's startling consistency was as good as any seen in the Supercars era, and the titles were well deserved.

Triple Eight had to be content with second and third for van Gisbergen and Broc Feeney, each taking five wins (including a brilliant Bathurst 1000 victory for van Gisbergen and co-driver Richie Stanaway). Brown, who actually led the points early in the season, dropped to fifth in the final reckoning after an awful final three rounds of the season, before he moves into SVG's seat for 2024.

That Walkinshaw Andretti United's Chaz Mostert was best of the Ford drivers in fourth place without winning a race tells something of a story. A year after their original planned introduction, the Gen3 racers had a myriad of problems, but for the Ford teams the biggest was the Mustang's aerodynamic imbalance. To address this two mid-season aero updates were made: in July in the lead-up to Townsville, and in October prior to the Gold Coast 600.

That allowed the Ford drivers to finish the season strongly (including an impressive win in the Adelaide finale for star rookie Matt Payne) and, hopefully, off-season wind tunnel testing in the US will contribute to putting the parity conversation to rest.

Perhaps too a myriad of technical glitches that impacted both marques can be addressed, most notably a persistent steering rack problem that prompted two teams to develop alternative designs, and wheelnut issues that meant wheels and cars somewhat alarmingly parted company.

PHIL BRANAGAN



## 2023 CHAMPIONS



ITALIAN GT ENDURANCE  
GIANCARLO FISICHELLA/  
TOMMASO MOSCA



ITALIAN GT SPRINT  
BRUNO SPENGLER/  
JENS KLINGMANN



GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES  
GABRIELE PIANA/MICHAEL SCHREY



TCR EUROPE  
TOM CORONEL



ARGENTINIAN TC2000  
LEONEL PERNIA

  
For full results visit [motorsportstats.com](https://motorsportstats.com)



# CHRISTMAS QUIZ

*It's been a motorsport year full of non-stop action, but how closely were you paying attention? Time to put your knowledge to the test with Autosport's Christmas quiz*

**WIN**  
SCALEXTRIC ARC AIR  
- WORLD GT SET

**PLUS**  
A PAIR OF TICKETS  
TO AUTOSPORT  
INTERNATIONAL 2024  
Worth a combined  
£315.99

**HOW TO ENTER** Send your answers via email to [autosport@autosport.com](mailto:autosport@autosport.com) and include 'Christmas Quiz' as the subject line. Entries close Sunday 31 December 2023. T&Cs apply.

## A SINGLE-SEATERS

- 1** The 2023 Formula 1 season was the first since which year to not have the British national anthem played for a driver or constructor winning a world championship grand prix?
- 2** Amid the Alpine F1 team's management merry-go-round, the son of which British Touring Car champion was made interim sporting director?
- 3** Which F1 team lost 41 places on the grid, over four times that of the second-worst hit squad, due to penalties throughout the season?
- 4** How many lap times did the FIA eventually delete after placing over 1200 laps under investigation for track limit infringements at the Austrian GP?
- 5** Which driver had the most grand prix retirements in 2023?
- 6** How many podiums did Jake Dennis achieve on his way to the Formula E title?
- 7** Who replaced Oliver Rowland at Mahindra for the final seven Formula E races?
- 8** Which driver led the most laps in the 2023 Formula 2 championship?
- 9** Which driver won the most FIA Formula 3 races in 2023?
- 10** Liam Lawson narrowly missed out on the Super Formula title to Ritomo Miyata, but how many races did the Kiwi win in the series this year?

## B RALLYING

- 1** Who tied Kalle Rovanpera for most podiums during the 2023 WRC season?
- 2** How many drivers won World Rally events overall in 2023?
- 3** What unfortunate animal came into contact with Takamoto Katsuta's Toyota during Safari Rally Kenya?
- 4** Which driver achieved the feat of starting WRC rallies in Rally3, Rally2 and Rally1 machinery in 2023?
- 5** What landed on Esapekka Lappi's Hyundai as he crashed out of the lead at Rally Mexico?
- 6** Which driver scored the highest number of stage wins in the 2023 World Rally Championship?
- 7** Elfyn Evans finished as runner-up in the WRC drivers' championship. How many times has the Welsh driver come second in the title hunt?
- 8** With Kalle Rovanpera becoming a two-time WRC champion, how many drivers in total have won at least two world WRC championships?
- 9** Which manufacturer did Toyota match this year by winning its ninth WRC drivers' title?
- 10** The 2023 Dakar Rally headed back to Saudi Arabia to tackle the desert and sand dunes, but what caused route alterations and subsequent stage cancellations?



**TERMS AND CONDITIONS** **1)** To enter, email your answers to [autosport@autosport.com](mailto:autosport@autosport.com). Competition closes at 23:59 31 December 2023. **2)** This competition is open to UK residents aged 18 or over. **3)** No cash alternative. **4)** Prizes are non-transferable. **5)** Only one entry per person. **6)** Winner will be selected from the entries with the highest score or in the event of a tie, the winner will be drawn by random from the correct entries. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. **7)** The first prize is to win a Scalextric C1434M ARC AIR - World GT set worth £239.99 & a pair (2 worth £76) of General admission one-day tickets to Autosport International 2024 where you will be able to collect your Scalextric set. **8)** No entries will be accepted from employees of Motorsport Network Media Ltd, Autosport Media UK Ltd or their families, or any other companies associated with this competition. **PRIVACY NOTICE** For our full Privacy Policy please visit <https://accounts.motorsportnetwork.com/legal/privacy-policy/en>. **THE PROMOTERS** Motorsport Network Media UK Ltd, The Power House, Linkfield Road, Isleworth, TW7 6QG



## C SPORTSCARS

- 1 Which Ferrari driver shocked the World Endurance Championship by securing pole on the 499P's debut at the Sebring 1000 Miles?
- 2 Which trio of drivers secured the final LMP2 title in the WEC?
- 3 Ferrari's Hypercar made its racing debut in 2023 and was called the 499P. Why was it given that name?
- 4 At which circuit did Valentino Rossi take his first GT win of the season?
- 5 Ferrari returned to Le Mans this year and claimed victory, but how many times in total has a Ferrari now won the event overall?
- 6 Which driver won titles in both the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship this year?
- 7 How many laps did the winning #51 Ferrari of James Calado, Antonio Giovinazzi and Alessandro Pier Guidi complete at the 2023 Le Mans 24 Hours?
- 8 Which Bronze-graded driver won the Bathurst 12 Hours outright this year?
- 9 Which 24-hour classic did Ferrari win for the first time in 2023?
- 10 BMW Rowe Racing took victory at the Spa 24 Hours this year, but when was the German manufacturer's most-recent previous win at the event?



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## D TOURING CARS

- 1 Ash Sutton charged through the field to take his maiden Silverstone win in the British Touring Car Championship, but what position did he start from?
- 2 Tom Chilton took his first BTCC win since 2019 in the second race of the Donington Park opener. At which circuit did he take his previous victory in the series?
- 3 2023 BTCC champion Ash Sutton failed to score points in just four races all season – three retirements and one 23rd place. In which race did he see the chequered flag without scoring?
- 4 Former Audi star Rene Rast scored his 26th DTM victory in 2023 in a BMW, but which driver has the most wins in the championship's history?
- 5 There was a total of 12 different winners in the DTM in 2023. How many races did champion Thomas Preining win?
- 6 What was the unusual feat managed by Preining at Hockenheim on the weekend he clinched the DTM title?
- 7 Why did three-time DTM champion Rene Rast miss the Zandvoort round in June?
- 8 In Australian Supercars, just one driver in the top six in the final championship standings failed to win a race in 2023. Who was that driver?
- 9 Which Supercars rookie took a maiden win in the season finale?
- 10 Why were both Triple Eight drivers Shane van Gisbergen and Broc Feeney disqualified after finishing 1-2 in the 2023 opener at Newcastle?

## E AMERICAN MOTORSPORT

- 1 The Daytona 500 was the longest in history, going how many laps past the scheduled distance?
- 2 Before Shane van Gisbergen stunned the NASCAR Cup by winning on his debut on the streets of Chicago, who was the previous driver to take a win on their NASCAR Cup series debut?
- 3 Ford swept all three NASCAR titles this year. Chevrolet was the last manufacturer to accomplish this feat, but in which year?
- 4 Which NASCAR Cup driver, who didn't win the title, achieved the most wins, top-fives, top-10s, and best average finish in 2023?
- 5 Which NASCAR Cup driver went winless for the first time since 2017 and missed the playoffs for the first time in his career?
- 6 Helio Castroneves started three IMSA SportsCar Championship races in the GTP class this year. How many of them did he win?
- 7 Which IndyCar rookie set two fastest laps from just three race starts in 2023?
- 8 Alex Palou finished every IndyCar race in the top 10 in 2023. Who was the last driver to accomplish the feat?
- 9 Which two-time Daytona 24 Hours winner made his IndyCar debut in 2023?
- 10 Who won his fourth Sebring 12 Hours to move clear of Mario Andretti, Olivier Gendebien, Phil Hill, Hans-Joachim Stuck and Marco Werner on the all-time list?

## F MOTOGP

- 1 Ducati scored a record number of MotoGP grand prix wins in 2023. How many did it achieve?
- 2 Yamaha recorded its first winless season in MotoGP since when?
- 3 How many riders won MotoGP grands prix in 2023?
- 4 True or false? 2023 had just one race, including sprints and grands prix, that had every full-time MotoGP rider start.
- 5 In 2023 the MotoGP record for most different riders on the grand prix podium was equalled, accounting for 68% of the full-time grid. But how many riders in total?
- 6 Sprints arrived in MotoGP in 2023 for the first time, but which rider won the most sprint races?
- 7 Which race did Francesco Bagnaia take pole, the fastest lap in the sprint and grand prix and win both races?
- 8 Which MotoGP race winner made a one-off appearance for Ducati in 2023 as an injury stand-in at the French GP?
- 9 A Ducati rider featured on the grand prix podium in every race in 2023, extending a run that has reached 46 consecutive races. What was the last MotoGP race to not feature a Ducati rider on the grand prix podium?
- 10 What caused Alex Marquez to crash out of the sprint race at the Americas GP?



GOLD AND GOOSE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



# LE MANS 100 YEARS





LE MANS ODDITIES

# DOOMED EXPEDITIONS TO THE SARTHE POLE

*It's Christmas, about as far as you can get in the year from Le Mans. So why not take a look at some of the weird and wonderful cars to have tackled the 24 Hours?*

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

Max Sardou's  
angular creation  
might have been a  
contender – in 1980.  
Not so in '81

## ARDEX-BMW S80

### A GROUND-BREAKER THAT NEVER RACED

The strange-looking Ardex S80 Group 6 car powered by a BMW straight six can claim to be the first ground-effect sports-prototype, though not the first to race. In fact, it never did race, failing to make the grid on its one appearance, at Le Mans in 1981, but designer Max Sardou did pave the way for the exploitation of underbody aerodynamics in sportscar racing.

Frenchman Sardou had completed his doctoral thesis in 1973 on the potential of ground effect in motor racing, a couple of years before the first experiments at Team Lotus that led on to the ground-breaking 78 and 79 Formula 1 cars. He shopped his ideas around but couldn't find any takers. So he set about building his own machine to showcase his theories. The result was the Ardex, its name created, he says, "by randomly pulling letters out of a hat". There was no connection with the marque of the same name that built cycle-cars and microcars either side of the Second World War.

Not exactly a looker, the Ardex incorporated a number of innovations: there was trick suspension – control of bump and roll stiffness were separated – while the set-up was undertaken on what might be the first simulation computer programme used in motor racing. But it was in the aero department where the S80 was really

different. The 3.5-litre engine sat alongside the driver. "It's easier to have the ground-effect tunnels if you don't have a bloody big engine at the back," says Sardou.

The car had been intended to race in 1980, as its type number suggests, but "progress was slow because I was doing it with my own money". In the meantime, Lola boss Eric Broadley had shown interest in the car, and Sardou played a key role in the design of the T600 Group 6/GTP contender of 1981, as well as the aerodynamics of the March-built BMW 81P, or M1C GTP, of the same year. So impressed was the German manufacturer's engine guru, Paul Rosche, that he arranged the loan of a couple of the straight-sixes.

Testing for the Ardex ahead of its projected race debut at Le Mans was limited. "Maybe we did four hours over two days," says Sardou. "We were just a little team with no money."

The car qualified 50th in the hands of Michel Lateste, which left it outside the 110% qualifying minimum in Group 6. The year before the same time would have put the car well up the grid, but the game had changed with the return of Porsche's 936, reworked with the make's stillborn Indycar engine.

"We were maybe one or two seconds away from the elimination time," says Sardou. "If the Porsche hadn't been there with their very powerful car, we would have been OK."





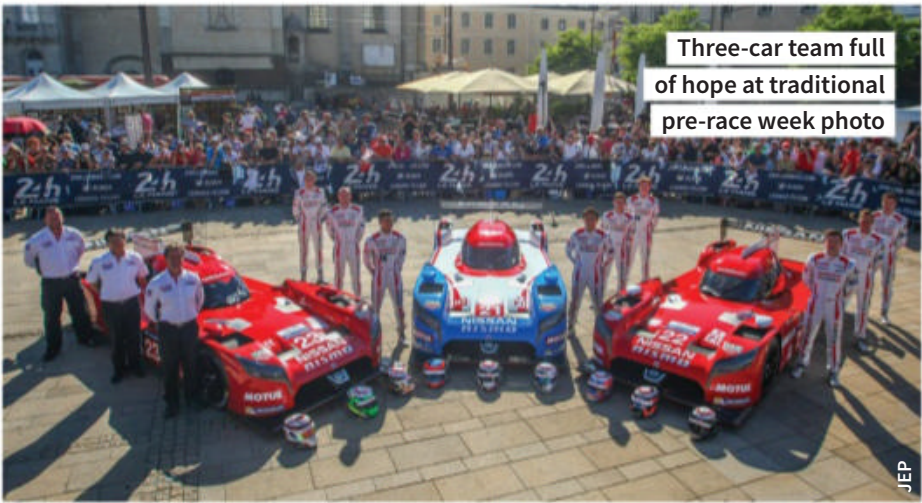
# NISSAN GT-R LM NISMO

## DARING TO BE (VERY) DIFFERENT

Nissan went radical when, in 2015, it made its first bid in 15 years to win the Le Mans 24 Hours. Radical in the extreme. Its GT-R LM NISMO had its engine up front ahead of the driver and its V6 twin-turbo drove through the front wheels. And the *de rigueur* hybrid system of the time was fully mechanical, designed to retrieve through the front wheels and deploy via skinny tyres at the rear. No surprise then that the queue of people saying it would never work at the Circuit de la Sarthe stretched all the way back to Paris.

The doubters reckoned the Japanese manufacturer should have gone conventional and played its way in as it went up against the LMP1 big guns of Audi, Toyota and Porsche. But that is to misunderstand the mindset of Nissan at the time. The architect of the programme, Darren Cox, explains that there would have been no Le Mans programme had it not done something off the wall and allowed the fertile mind of designer Ben Bowlby to go to work.

“One hundred percent that programme would not have got signed off if I’d pitched a conventional car,” says Cox. “Nissan at the time was pushing the line ‘innovation that excites’.



“It was a case of, ‘We’re not going to spend hundreds of millions like Audi and Porsche but can we bloody their nose spending a fraction of that?’ Nissan wanted to do things differently.”

Cox, a marketing man, had done that with his GT Academy, a scheme to take a gamer and propel him through the ranks to Le Mans in double-quick time. Lucas Ordóñez, Jann Mardenborough and Wolfgang Reip would go on to have decent racing careers. Next up for Cox was the DeltaWing project, originally conceived by Bowlby as a future generation of IndyCar, that filled the Garage 56 grid slot at Le Mans for an innovative design at Le Mans in 2012. The Zeod RC hybrid followed hot on its heels two years later.

“DeltaWing would never have happened without the Academy, and LMP1 wouldn’t have happened without DeltaWing,” says Cox. “The Nissan brand was trying to promote itself as innovative and exciting. That’s why I was able to get away with so much with all those wacky ideas. In big car companies it’s all about momentum: you have one idea, it works and then you get asked, ‘What have you got for us next?’”

The idea that the GT-R LM was all marketing hype is rejected by Cox. It could have succeeded, even though the hybrid system developed by the British Flybrid company rarely worked. It had long since been abandoned by the time a trio of Nissan LMP1s hit the track at Le Mans for the car’s delayed World Endurance Championship debut. The simulations of the Indianapolis-based organisation headed by Bowlby running the cars suggested that a time in the low 3m20s was realistic. That would have left the car four or five seconds off the pace in qualifying. The reality was that the best of the three Nissans ended up 20s down on the pole-winning Porsche.

Cox’s claims were based on the GT-R’s times around the short and sharp Bowling Green test facility in Kentucky. It even flew in a Zytek LMP2 car to provide a benchmark and make sure its simulations were correct. They weren’t. The best Nissan time in qualifying was a 3m36s.

“Ben and I always joke that if we ever write a book about that car we will



The Nissan GT-R LMP1 contender leaves the pits for a rare lap at Le Mans. It was a disaster



GILBERT



Darren Cox had no choice but to be unconventional to get a Nissan sign-off

JEP

call it *The Missing 20 Seconds*," laughs Cox. He has his ideas on where the time went and so does Harry Tincknell, the quickest Nissan driver in qualifying.

"The car was traction limited, because we were putting all the power through the front wheel," states Tincknell. "But the big thing was that we couldn't use the kerbs because the suspension rockers weren't strong enough. There's so much time to be gained at Le Mans by going over the kerbs. There was also an issue with the geometry where the inside wheel would pick up and create this bizarre motion in the car. It turned it into a bucking bronco. To avoid it you had to turn into the corners on a really shallow angle."

Aerodynamic porpoising didn't help either. Nor did reliability glitches that limited track time on Nissan's arrival at Le Mans. Real progress was made, says Tincknell, in post-Le Mans testing while the team sat out the rest of the WEC. But momentum had been lost. The project was axed before Christmas.

## SPICE-FERRARI SE88P

### LE MANS BITES THE UNPREPARED

The days of teams turning up for Le Mans utterly unprepared for the challenge facing them are long done. You don't get an entry these days unless you are contesting one of the series under race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest's umbrella. In days of yore, some of the assaults beggared belief for their lack of readiness. The Classic Racing squad's assault on the 1991 race probably takes the biscuit on that front.

Classic was a renowned Ferrari bodyshop in New Jersey that got hold of a Spice SE88P IMSA Camel Lights car and took a 308 road car engine, turbocharged it and stuck it in the back. It contrived to get an entry at Le Mans under the banner of the Euro Racing Spice team that was contesting the full Sportscar World Championship, and linked up with Silverstone-based GP Motorsport to help run the car.

Justin Bell, who was employed as one of the drivers, remembers getting worried early on in what can't really be described as a programme. "I'd been introduced to these guys, and they'd got a bit excited that I was Derek Bell's son," he remembers of his first

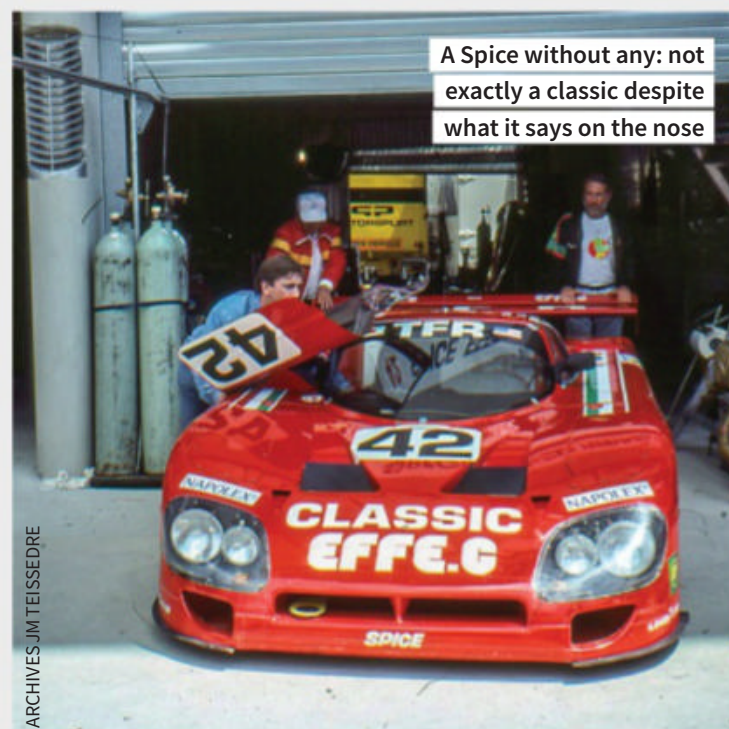
Le Mans – although he doesn't really count it as such. "I've kind of blocked it out of my mind. I'd been to Le Mans enough times with my dad to know what the race was all about, and they clearly didn't."

GP boss Dave Prewitt, who sadly died this month, remembered questioning the team about the lack of spares: "I told them they couldn't go to Le Mans with only one engine."

That lack of a second powerplant would bite Classic Racing. On what Bell remembers as his third lap in the car, a fiery engine failure brought it to a halt on the Mulsanne. Classic, to its credit, didn't give up. New parts were flown in from America and the engine rebuilt in situ in the back of the car.

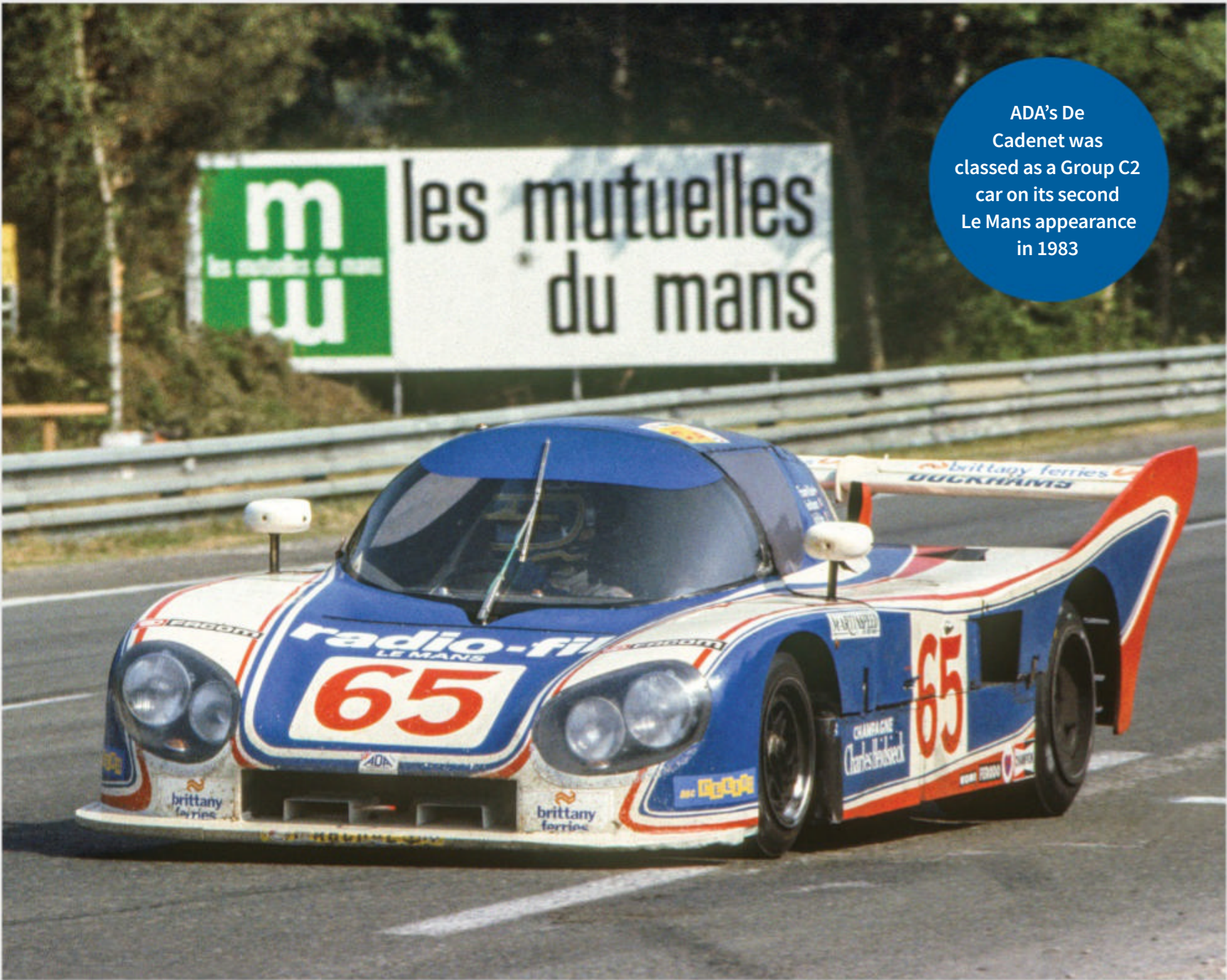
The Spice didn't get out in qualifying again and missed the cut. Despite Prewitt's representations, it wasn't allowed to start. It was, says Bell, "the most ill-prepared team I've ever seen". But the lure of Le Mans kept him on board through the week.

"The excitement of going on the Le Mans circuit was palpable," he recalls. "I was desperate to do the race and would have ridden a donkey around there."



ARCHIVES JMT/ESSEDE





ADA's De Cadenet was classed as a Group C2 car on its second Le Mans appearance in 1983

DE CADENET LOLA-COSWORTH LM/ADA-COSWORTH 01  
AN UGLY EXAMPLE OF A LOST ART?

It was dubbed the ‘Morris Minor’ for its sit-up-and-beg looks, a car cobbled together out of parts bought for next to nothing. It wasn’t quick and was never a success, but the British ADA Engineering squad’s De Cadenet Lola LM Group C epitomises a long-lost amateur spirit of Le Mans. And more importantly, it set the team on the road to success on the Circuit de la Sarthe.

The creator of the car, Chris Crawford, is happy to call the Cosworth-engined creation

that subsequently morphed into the ADA 01 as “pretty terrible, embarrassing even”. But then the London-based operation wasn’t flush with cash. The total budget to build – or rather bolt together – a car ‘designed’ on two pages of A4 paper was £8000. And five grand of that went on the Cossie DFV in the back.

The chassis was an ex-Guy Edwards Lola T390 Group 6, not one of Alain de Cadenet’s specials as its name suggests. ADA only used the rear suspension from one of the British

privateer’s machines. The starting point for this bitza special was actually a Porsche 906 windscreen turned upside down. “Getting a screen that fitted the regulations was always going to be the most difficult bit,” explains Crawford. “I bent a bit of rollcage to go around the screen, and the car got uglier and uglier after that.”

ADA’s machine hardly distinguished itself in its maiden campaign, which included a debut at the Silverstone 6 Hours, nor when it returned as a Group C2 car in 1983, though it did see the chequered flag of the 24 Hours as a non-classified finisher. The car had one last hurrah at Le Mans as the ADA 01 in 1984 after a £2000 makeover by ex-Fittipaldi Formula 1 technical director Ricardo Divila yielded a 22mph increase on the Mulsanne Straight.

ADA would be back, though. Just four years after the original car’s debut, the team took Group C2 honours with a Gebhardt in 1986. It was a very special version of the German marque’s JC843, with the complete rear end from a Williams FW06 bolted on the back! The spirit of old Moggy was alive and well.



File under Plucky Privateer: ADA De Cad at Le Mans in 1982





The MiG failed to soar when it pitched up in the new GT class in 1993

## MiG 100 GT

### NOT EXACTLY A JET SUPERPOWER

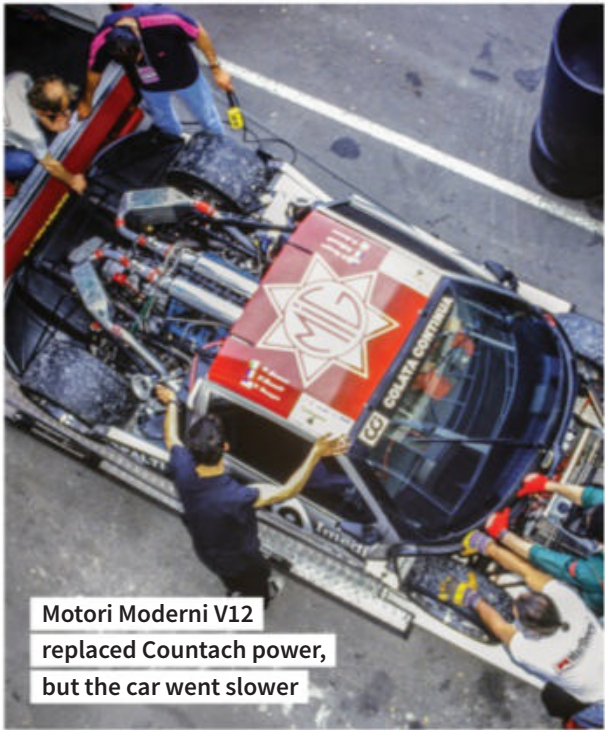
You might think that a racing car bearing the same badges as a famed builder of jet fighter aircraft might be blindingly fast. That wasn't the case with the MiG M100 car that showed up at Le Mans in 1993. The thing's best qualifying lap was more than a minute off the pace in the fledgling GT class. It didn't qualify.

The MiG, which can claim the title as the first carbon-chassis GT car to run at Le Mans, started life as the Monte-Carlo Centenaire. The plans of sometime Formula 2 and Formula 3000 racer Fulvio Ballabio to build this new supercar in Monaco failed to come to fruition. New investment from Georgia allowed for its revival: the idea was that, with the need for fighters waning after the end of the Cold War, the MiG factory could turn out

super sportscars instead. There were plans for three separate models, a four-door included.

The M100 that showed up at the Le Mans Test Day in April was a barely modified street vehicle with a Lamborghini Countach V12 engine, and a cigarette lighter and ashtray to boot. By the time it reappeared in race week, it had an F1-inspired Motori Moderni V12 in the back and was something quite different altogether.

The thing actually went slower than at the Test Day – by a whole minute. The engine was still mounted on road car rubber bushes, and finding a gear as the rear end wobbled around was a near impossibility. Giampiero Consonni, the only driver to manage a flying lap, came nowhere near to making the qualifying mark.



Motori Moderni V12 replaced Countach power, but the car went slower



Mini tank was up for the cup. Below right: modified version sits in LM museum



## CHENARD-WALCKER Z1 TANK

### A NOVELTY THAT ACHIEVED ITS AIM

Chenard-Walcker had claimed what we today call victory in the first edition of the 24 Hours at Le Mans in 1923 with its three-litre U3 15CV Sport, and taken fourth in the scratch classification with an improved two-litre car the following year. But when it went back in 1925 with the aim of sealing the win in the Rudge-Whitworth Triennial Cup, the big prize on offer in the early days of the event, two of its four cars were 1100cc Z1 Speciales. It's a car that can rightly be called the first GT prototype to race in the French enduro.

The Z1 racer was a development mule for the Paris-based marque's next production car, the 1500 Y8 Tank, that went into production in 1927. The aerodynamic shape for a car designed by Henri Toutee was clearly inspired by Bugatti's Type 32 Tank designed specifically for the 1923 French Grand Prix on the triangular Tours road circuit. It then became the basis of the admittedly more svelte shape of the production car that appeared a couple of years later.

Robert Senechal and Alberic Loqueheux took the Triennial Cup with a 13th place finish, despite an off at Arnage. Senechal had to fashion a bridge out of wattle fencing to get the car back across the ditch that he had cleared and out onto the track.

The Z1 enjoyed more success before the season was out, class victories at Spa and Boulogne included, before Chenard-Walcker quit racing. The design would be back at Le Mans, however. An example contested the race 12 years later in 1937 in modified form, and it is this car that now sits in the Le Mans museum.



FORMULA 2

# FAREWELL TO A SIX-YEAR WARHORSE

*It might not have as many people pining for it as does the March 782, but the Dallara F2 2018 car launched a host of special talents. Time to assess the best*

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport  
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W

hen Amaury Cordeel crossed the finish line to take 16th place in the Formula 2 finale at Yas Marina last month, the Belgian became the last driver to take a race chequered flag in a car that had given six years of service. Following the subsequent week's three-day post-season test, the Dallara F2 2018 was banished to obsolescence after 70 weekends of competition featuring 147 races. While the teams waited to take delivery of the new-for-2024 cars, we thought it might be fun to rate the leading drivers from the 2018-23 era, and call their teams for comments about them...



## 12 Jack Doohan 6th in 2022, 3rd in 2023

Only three drivers scored more than the Australian's tally of four feature race wins in 2018-23; only two exceeded his total of five pole positions. Virtuosi boss Andy Roche: "He's a very, very quick guy. On his day he's unbeatable. He showed what he's capable of in Abu Dhabi [where he won the finale] when everything is right, and I think he'll go a long way. He's very demanding,

but knows what he wants and pushes for it all the time. There were some quick boys this year. The turning point for us was the test in Barcelona [in May this year]. We worked hard to get to the bottom of everything." Should Doohan have stayed in F2 for a third season in 2024? "A third year is tough – if you don't win it you're finished, and if you do you should have done anyway. Jack has made the right move not to carry on. He's proved enough in his two years."

## 11 Mick Schumacher 12th in 2019, 1st in 2020

Made a big step forward from his rookie campaign to win the 2020 title, but bizarrely did so without ever qualifying on the front row. Prema chief Rene Rosin: "He put everything in the right place. Maybe not the best qualifier, but then some drivers are very good in races and some not so good in quali. But he won in Sochi, he won in Monza, and scored the points to win the championship. The first year with the 18-inch tyres was 2020. To be honest there was a bit of things to understand, but even if he was not performing he was always there, and usually very good in the first two laps of the race, maximising the potential. The first lap in Monza was incredible – the start and so on. People were thinking that we had launch control or traction control, but it was not true, [his start] was absolutely great. He was always very aggressive to send it, but at the same time without taking too much from the car." What about the Sochi DRS controversy? "It was just a difference on a part number. it already happened before with Charouz, so that's why the FIA was consistent with the decision."







George Russell leads Lando Norris at Monaco in 2018. The outgoing Formula 2 Dallara served both well

PORTLOCK

## 10 Theo Pourchaire

5th in 2021, 2nd in 2022, 1st in 2023

Matches Drugovich and de Vries for most feature-race victories during this period, with five. ART team principal Sebastien Philippe: “When Theo arrived in our team for his F3 season he was just 16 years old, with not a big experience of motorsport because he was coming from Formula 4. It was the year of COVID, where we did a season in two months! And in two months you don’t have time to think about what you are doing. So with his talent, he was able to perform very well, but I must say with not a lot of maturity due to his young age and his lack of experience. So I do think that for sure Theo is a very good driver, but in his career he had been moving up far too quickly. When he arrived in F2 he was by experience only an F4 driver and a two-months F3 driver, and he hadn’t faced a lot of situations in his life, so when everything was going well he was fantastic like in Monaco [where he brilliantly won the feature race from pole as a rookie, aged 17]. Today he has done three years of F2, he’s still only 20 years old, he has been facing difficult moments these last two years, but it put him a bit on the back foot at times – he was conservative because he was afraid of losing the championship.”



GALLOWAY

## 9 Callum Ilott

11th in 2019, 2nd in 2020

After a rookie season with Charouz, he flourished with Virtuosi. His record of six poles is topped only by de Vries. Roche: “It was a good year all round with both drivers [Ilott and Zhou Guanyu, who’s unlucky to miss this list]. Callum was an extreme talent, and very quick over one lap, no question. A little bit unfortunate not winning the championship to be fair. With the new 18-inch tyres, we were ready to go before the lockdown. During lockdown we just did everything we could and it paid off. We certainly seemed to have an advantage at the start of the year. Both drivers were good development guys, they know what they’re doing, and that made a big difference for us, that’s for sure. Maybe at the first couple of races he wasn’t quite as sharp as Zhou [on looking after the tyres in races], but he soon caught up and to be honest it was only really the last race of the year, when it was obvious Mick was going to win [the title] and Callum couldn’t do anything about it, that we were saying, ‘You look after your tyres’ and he was, ‘No, forget that – this is a race now!’ Great lad, really good family. The two guys got on great – they still message each other all the time from what I’m told.” >>



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**8 Nyck de Vries**  
4th in 2018, 1st in 2019

Already had a season in F2 under his belt with the old car, plus a year in Formula Renault 3.5. His seven poles are a record for the 2018-23 machine. Moved from Prema to ART to win title in 2019. Philippe: “During the season with Nyck, the two very strong points with him were: the performance on one lap, because he did quite a lot of poles; and he was a very good starter in the races. After, it’s true that two times we were struggling on race pace and at the end of the race, but it was still a strong season with him, and Nyck now is a friend. He’s a very smart guy, and I think his very positive point is that he’s very, very clever and he knows how to optimise things.” Were his tyre struggles a legacy of an early career on the Renault categories’ durable Michelins? “Yeah, there is that. For sure there is some habit on his driving style that he used to have in the years before, and when you have a style of driving probably it’s difficult to drive against it. For sure the way Nyck was driving to manage the tyres was probably a bit more difficult.”



**7 Robert Schwartzman**  
4th in 2020, 2nd in 2021

Stayed on edge of title chase as a rookie to the finale. Remained at Prema for 2021, but unlucky enough to go up against Piastri... Rosin: “The first part of the season he was fighting for the championship, fighting for the wins. He won feature races at Red Bull Ring, Hungaroring, and he was absolutely there. I still consider Robert to be Formula 1 material, still now. To be honest he’s not always the luckiest. It was very difficult for him in 2020 when he lost his father – he was his light, his mentor. He managed that quite well. Other people would say, ‘No, I stop doing everything’. For me, he missed F1 for various conditions out of his control. In 2021, it was honestly the best line-up we had. They worked very well together. He found somebody [Piastri] with his talent but Oscar was also like a machine.”





FOX/GETTY IMAGES/REDBULL CONTENT POOL

## 6 **Yuki Tsunoda**

3rd in 2020

The Japanese driver's sensational rise to prominence in the COVID-hit 2020 season with Carlin carried him to F1. Team chief Trevor Carlin: "I knew he was going to be fast because I'd seen him in F3 with Jenzer, and he was super-competitive in a lower-ranked car, and

he really tried and he was fighting all the time. So when Helmut [Marko of Red Bull] said that he had a driver and that it's Yuki, I just put my hand out and said, 'Done, I want him'. And he didn't let us down. In the car on a quali lap, it was like Taku [the team's much-loved 2001 British F3 champion Sato] – just flat-out. If you look at the beginning of his season, if he hadn't taken a few front wings and things off, and we hadn't a driveshaft failure at Red Bull Ring, he would have won the championship. And if Schumacher had been disqualified [at Sochi for the DRS crank issue], Yuki would have won the championship. Yuki's English wasn't great but it was good enough, and he was already swearing before he got to us – we can't take credit for that!"

## 5 **Alexander Albon**

3rd in 2018

Already had an F2 season under his belt in 2017 before moving to DAMS for his final shot at the category. DAMS technical boss Remi Decorzent: "We always at DAMS try to choose one quick driver, even sometimes without big funding. At the time Alex had only one sponsor that came from Asia, and it never came... So we were funding by ourselves. The first test in Abu Dhabi he made the best time with a scrubbed set, and we thought 'this man is special'. He's like a cat, even with a car not balanced. Alex brought a lot of new things to us because we were coming from a season where with the old car we fell a bit against Prema. We had to come back a bit to find a new direction with the new car. And actually we made quite a lot of poles in a row [three]. He understood quite well the tyre – when it was coming, where are the limitations of the car with the brake balance – so this helped us to prepare well. Now we teach the drivers a lot, but he learnt by himself, by feeling – he was able to put energy on the front tyres when you need, to save the rear tyres when you need. He's a nice guy, a hard worker, stays very calm, well educated, very clever. He's a fantastic driver." >>



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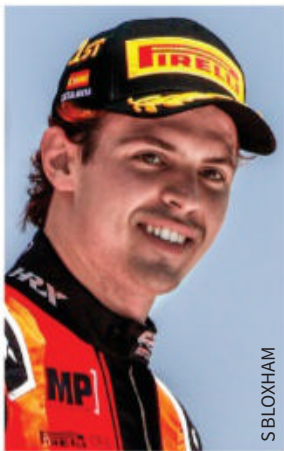
**4 Lando Norris**  
2nd in 2018

As reigning European F3 champion with Carlin, his loyalty to the team brought it back to F2 after a year out. Took pole and won at the Bahrain opener, before Russell came to the fore. Carlin: “It was because I’d set up a test team, and Mark Berryman [from Norris’s management] saw what a great job [engineers] Stefan [de Groot] and Matt [Ogle] did, and they said we’ll go with you. We hurriedly put in an entry in and got it, thank God, and the rest is history. 2018 wasn’t a particularly brilliant FIA F3 year for us, and if we hadn’t pulled that F2 thing off I think the business probably would have folded. It was the first year of this turbo engine, and there were lots of reliability issues with them, and there was also a lot of inequality with them. Certainly Lando was on the lower end of the performance window. We’d known Lando since 2014, so we saw him develop from a boy to a man effectively. He’s always been a wonderful lad, always had a great sense of humour because he’s been surrounded by race mechanics his whole life. The guys did a brilliant job with the car straight out of the box. I think we always had a good car in F2.”



Norris won on his F2 debut for returning Carlin, but lost title to Russell

TEE



SBLOXHAM

**3 Felipe Drugovich**  
9th in 2020, 8th in 2021, 1st in 2022

Shone on occasion during his rookie season with MP. Then returned to the Dutch team for 2022 after a year away and absolutely blitzed the opposition. Team manager Jeremy Cotterill: “When he came to us we were a little bit unsure, and MP was going through a huge change as well. From the first official test that year you started to smell that there was something there, but then COVID hit, and that put everything back a little bit. We finished

off the year very strongly, and by that time he’d already made his decision to go to Virtuosi [for 2021]. I’m not going to lie – I was absolutely gutted. When he came back to us, he worked extremely well with Paolo [Angilella] our director of engineering. The great thing was that he felt that he could and should win the F2 championship, and so when he came back to us, really from the get-go he was exactly what we expected. He was really on it, his feedback was good, the harmony within the team was good. It wasn’t all sweetness and light, there were various conversations that went on during the year, but we were always together. I can’t speak highly enough of him to be honest. If you put Felipe on a

clear track, there’s nothing gonna stop him. He can just bang out lap after lap after lap. Of course he’s got to have the car to do it, but the group around him, everything just clicked.”

**2 Oscar Piastri**  
1st in 2021

Incredible sole F2 season at Prema featured five consecutive poles from Silverstone until the end of the campaign (this was the year when F2 went to eight triple-headers), and undefeated in four feature races from Monza to Yas Marina. Rosin: “He was competitive already in Monaco [round two, where he qualified on the second row] and was fighting for top position. And then from Silverstone, Monza, Sochi, Jeddah and Yas Marina, he was always pole position. To be honest it was not that surprising; he’s always been very, very competitive and really doing an amazing job. And all the time he was very calm, very reflective of what he had to do and so on. Of course the first year in F2 has been something quite difficult for everybody, but he managed things pretty well. He and Robert [Shwartzman] were working together, challenging each other, and that’s always a great way to improve performance. With his pole, Oscar did something at Silverstone that is remarkable. I think it’s a combination of factors that put him in the right mindset to be able to achieve the most out of it. It was a great season, that one.



MAUGER

Piastri blitzed his single season in F2, including here at Monza





First champion of the era  
– and number one on our  
list of F2 drivers, too

1 George Russell  
1st in 2018

It’s so difficult to split Piastri and Russell. Ask Prema chief Rosin and he agrees: “I think it’s an *ex-aequo*, that one!” Russell’s ART boss Philippe argues: “I never worked with Oscar so it’s difficult for me to compare, but when you win the championship on the rookie season this means a lot. The ones who have done this in the past are Lewis Hamilton, Nico Hulkenberg – great drivers. To compare them not in the same season, not in the same team, is always difficult. The only common point we are sure about them is that they are both fantastic guys.” We’ve given it to Russell because his competition was tougher, he was with a team that had not had a terrific previous season in F2, and after eight rounds (the length of Piastri’s season) he was ahead in the points.

“George was mature, a very hard worker, and very understanding of what he and the team were doing”

Talking about Russell, Philippe adds: “You always have a bit of question mark when someone is coming from GP3, because as a rookie you need to adapt. Sometimes it takes more time. With George the adaptation was quite quick. He had not an advantage, but the new car *was* new for everybody. I remember at that time we were a bit afraid, because as it was a new car we faced quite a lot of mechanical issues. We lost quite a lot of points, many with engine failures, but even with that he was able to perform very well. It was a very good generation. The year before it was Charles Leclerc – there were quite a lot of very good talents during these years. George was mature, a very hard worker, and very understanding of what he and the team were doing, and capable to challenge every member of the team and to push everyone to do their best. He was already very professional and working in every detail.”

AVERAGE SUPERTIMES 2018-23

POS	DRIVER	MEDAVG	EVENTS	MEANAVG
1	Oscar Piastri	100.000	8	100.179 (1)
2	George Russell	100.189	12	100.293 (2)
3	Victor Martins	100.234	13	100.326 (3)
4	Jack Doohan	100.263	29	100.473 (6)
5	Nyck de Vries	100.265	24	100.341 (4)
6	Alexander Albon	100.267	12	100.369 (5)
7	Felipe Drugovich	100.403	34	100.488 (8)
8	Zhou Guanyu	100.416	32	100.555 (11)
9	Logan Sargeant	100.417	15	100.734 (22)
10	Theo Pourchaire	100.420	37	100.616 (14)
11	Yuki Tsunoda	100.445	12	100.513 (9)
12	Lando Norris	100.469	12	100.474 (7)
13	Callum Iltott	100.512	24	100.616 (15)
14	Juri Vips	100.538	26	100.724 (20)
15	Frederik Vesti	100.554	27	100.798 (27)
16	Robert Schwartzman	100.569	20	100.601 (13)
17	Sergio Sette Camara	100.570	24	100.545 (10)
18	Luca Ghiotto	100.613	37	100.654 (16)
19	Liam Lawson	100.624	22	100.589 (12)
20	Jak Crawford	100.626	13	100.919 (39)
21	Ayumu Iwasa	100.634	27	100.813 (28)
22	Nicholas Latifi	100.641	24	100.778 (26)
23	Ollie Bearman	100.644	13	100.691 (17)
24	Dan Ticktum	100.657	21	100.692 (18)
25	Jack Aitken	100.689	38	100.886 (36)
26	Christian Lundgaard	100.703	21	100.730 (21)
27	Richard Verschoor	100.706	34	100.852 (32)
28	Jehan Daruvala	100.708	46	100.774 (25)
29	Nobuharu Matsushita	100.708	21	100.828 (29)
30	Mick Schumacher	100.721	24	100.706 (19)
31	Isack Hadjar	100.730	13	100.965 (41)
32	Marcus Armstrong	100.763	34	100.757 (24)
33	Nikita Mazepin	100.764	24	100.899 (38)
34	Louis Deletraz	100.770	36	100.841 (30)
35	Jake Hughes	100.789	12	100.842 (31)
36	Dennis Hauger	100.796	27	100.881 (34)
37	Zane Maloney	100.797	14	100.863 (33)
38	Kush Maini	100.835	13	100.750 (23)
39	Enzo Fittipaldi	100.845	30	100.883 (35)
40	Pedro Piquet	100.917	12	100.892 (37)
41	Antonio Fuoco	100.922	12	100.955 (40)
42	Arthur Leclerc	100.975	13	101.069 (43)
43	Tadasuke Makino	101.037	12	101.077 (44)
44	Ralph Boschung	101.042	51	101.105 (47)
45	Calan Williams	101.043	13	101.094 (45)
46	Santino Ferrucci	101.078	7	101.271 (50)
47	Anthoine Hubert	101.087	9	101.024 (42)
48	Maximilian Guenther	101.090	11	101.098 (46)
49	Jordan King	101.127	11	101.155 (48)
50	Roman Stanek	101.142	13	101.357 (55)
51	Juan Manuel Correa	101.166	23	101.315 (54)
52	Roberto Merhi	101.184	13	101.257 (49)
53	Bent Viscaal	101.188	8	101.286 (52)
54	Lirim Zendeli	101.228	7	101.384 (59)
55	Arjun Maini	101.248	15	101.382 (57)
56	Sean Gelael	101.278	32	101.384 (58)
57	Clement Novalak	101.280	28	101.392 (60)
58	Roy Nissany	101.283	56	101.380 (56)
59	Artem Markelov	101.329	27	101.287 (53)
60	Nirei Fukuzumi	101.350	12	101.401 (61)
61	Marino Sato	101.352	38	101.509 (62)
62	Amaury Cordeel	101.357	26	101.522 (63)
63	David Beckmann	101.379	13	101.276 (51)
64	Giuliano Alesi	101.427	24	101.553 (64)
65	Olli Caldwell	101.696	15	101.707 (65)
66	Cem Bolukbasi	101.732	9	102.341 (69)
67	Dorian Boccia	101.733	10	101.720 (66)
68	Brad Benavides	101.884	9	102.047 (67)
69	Guilherme Samaia	101.922	20	102.251 (68)
70	Tatiana Calderon	102.673	16	102.845 (70)
71	Mahaveer Raghunathan	103.609	11	103.875 (71)
72	Alessio Deledda	103.761	8	104.005 (72)

We have expressed each driver’s fastest lap of a race weekend as a percentage of the overall fastest, and then averaged them all out. To minimise the effect of outlier figures such as exclusion from qualifying, we have ordered the drivers on median average times. But we’ve also given you the mean averages in the column on the right. The middle column is number of F2 race weekends contested. Only drivers who participated in a minimum of six race weekends are included.

RACE WINS\*

DRIVER	
Drugovich	8 (5)
de Vries	7 (5)
Russell	7 (4)
Vesti	7 (2)
Pourchaire	6 (5)
Piastri	6 (4)
Doohan	6 (4)
Schwartzman	6 (2)
Latifi	5 (3)
Iwasa	5 (3)
Zhou	5 (2)
Ghiotto	5 (1)
Lawson	5 (0)
Albon	4 (3)
Bearman	4 (3)
Aitken	4 (1)
Daruvala	4 (1)
Hauger	4 (1)
Armstrong	4 (0)
Matsushita	3 (3)
Schumacher	3 (2)
Iltott	3 (2)
Tsunoda	3 (2)
Markelov	3 (1)
Vips	3 (1)
Verschoor	3 (1)
Ticktum	3 (0)

\*feature race wins in brackets

FASTEST IN QUALIFYING

DRIVER	
de Vries	7
Iltott	6
Russell	5
Drugovich	5
Piastri	5
Doohan	5
Tsunoda	4



Williams squad values its involvement with the rigorous award process



# OUR SEARCH FOR THE F1 ENGINEERS OF THE FUTURE

*The Autosport Williams Engineer of the Future Award was revised for 2023 and produced a winner who is already heading into the higher echelons of motorsport*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

**A** rigorous process.” So says Dave Robson, the Williams Formula 1 team’s head of vehicle performance, of the process for deciding the Autosport Williams Engineer of the Future Award. This prestigious contest was much revamped for 2023, following its return last year after a pandemic-enforced hiatus.

The winner of that Award, Michael Preston, turned judge this year to help whittle down a field of over 200 initial candidates, which for the first time was open to anyone currently studying an engineering degree at any university or college in the UK.

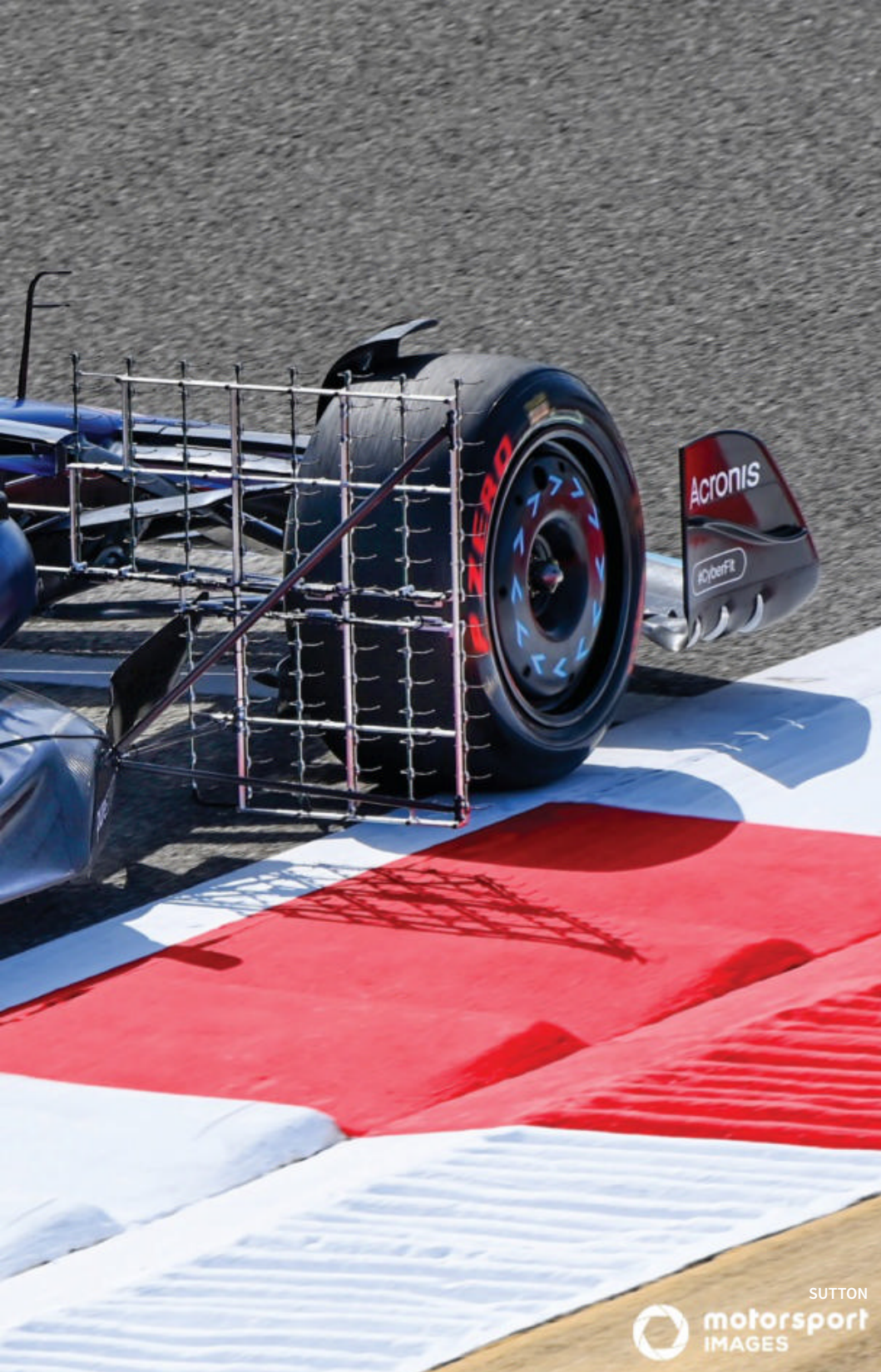
The Williams team itself went over the application field to get that down to 60 contenders, before sending 20 to an assessment

day involving Williams’s Esports team, where Preston is now the chief engineer, as well as working in the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine and Eurocup-3 series. The most promising 10 budding engineers then made the final selection for the full eight-month process.

They initially stayed working in the virtual world through April and May, helping the Williams Esports squad in various competitions around their studies and work placements. This included a win in the 2023 iRacing Nurburgring 24 Hours. At the end of this four-month stint, the field was again slimmed down. Now just five candidates remained.

This group returned to Williams’s Grove headquarters for two





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Calzetta's presentation was on  
F1 wet-weather wheel guards...



...while Crespo put forward a  
new Formula E strategy model

*“A decent friendship evolved between the candidates, adding a dynamic of friendly rivalry to the process”*

assessment days in early September regarding F1 race strategy and driver-in-the-loop (DIL) simulator work. Robson, overseeing the race strategy tasks, reckons “a decent friendship” had evolved between the candidates, which he believes added “a nice dynamic of friendly rivalry” to the whole process. >>



## THE ENGINEERING PROBLEM OF LIMITED TRACK TIME

There has been much discussion about the impact of reduced track running for junior drivers in recent years, but what about the knock-on effect for young engineers? Williams head of vehicle performance Dave Robson shares his thoughts:

“I think getting the foot in the door is no different. Other than that, the teams are bigger and are more switched on about graduate recruitment than perhaps they were 25 years ago when they were much smaller operations.

“But I think getting a trackside job, getting that experience, is different. I was lucky that I started a factory job [with McLaren] and then was able to join the test team, when we had a full test team. You could get a lot of really good track experience that way. Now, obviously, we don't have any of that anymore. Every time the car runs on track, it has to be done properly in a full, professional operation. So, I think for people trying to find some track experience, in other formulas, perhaps, is more important than it was if you actually want to get into a trackside role.

“That said, equally it's more difficult for us [at F1 teams] to find the people we need to fill the trackside roles. So, that's definitely a problem.

“It's not much different to what you see with the junior driver stuff. It's the same dilemma – how do you get the next generation of Formula 1 drivers in and prepared to a suitable level [when track time in junior formulas is now more limited]? And I think for the engineers it's no different. There's much less opportunity. So, between the candidates' own initiative and probably us as a sport, we need to think a little bit more about how we do that going forwards.”

**“IT'S DIFFICULT FOR US TO FIND THE PEOPLE WE NEED TO FILL THE TRACKSIDE ROLES. IT'S A PROBLEM”**



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Challenges were set for the finalists during the GB3 race weekend at Zandvoort



*“It took me a lot of long hours studying and working as hard as I could to be what I am today”*

But, as with the brutal world of professional sport, only the best would progress – the field finally settled at two finalists: David Crespo and Riccardo Calzetta. Entering the process, Crespo was a Motorsport Engineering Master’s degree student at Oxford Brookes University, while Calzetta was an Aeronautical Engineering MEng student at the University of Glasgow.

The finalists had two challenges remaining. The first was to attend a race weekend in the GB3 single-seater series working with the Rodin Carlin squad at the Zandvoort round in October. They were chiefly asked to work through video and driver performance-related items for the team’s racers: Costa Toparis, John Bennett and Callum Voisin.

The second and final element of the whole process was to give a presentation on a hypothetical motorsport-related engineering problem (in F1 or any other championship) within their domain experience in mid-November. Their 15-minute talk had to explain how they would solve that problem and the expected results of their work. Crespo presented a new Formula E race strategy model, while Calzetta looked at the recent studies conducted by the FIA on fitting wet-weather wheel guards to F1 cars to reduce spray in rainy conditions.



Previous winner Michael Preston turned judge for initial selection process

Winner Crespo will play a support role at a Williams F1 test day next year



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

To assess these presentations, Robson and Preston were joined by fellow judges Jamie Green (Williams’s Head of Talent Acquisition) and Alex Kalinauckas (Autosport’s Grand Prix Editor). Once both finalists had answered questions on their presentations, the judges convened and went over notes taken from the 15-minute performances, plus those provided by the other members of the judging panel. These were Williams DIL team leader Andrew Newton, who oversaw the simulator assessment, and famed single-seater team boss Trevor Carlin.

Three weeks later, the winner – Crespo – was revealed on stage at the 2023 Autosport Awards in London.

“I’m really happy,” he says now. “It took me a lot of long hours and libraries and studying and working as hard as I could to be what I am today. But at the same time, I know I need to keep pushing as much as I can – keep improving for what’s to come, which I’m sure is going to be really exciting.”

“It was a really good process to be involved with,” reflects Robson. “A good opportunity to see [young engineers] in action and also put them under a little bit of stress and see how they cope in a way you can’t normally do.”

But, in what was a very close competition with Calzetta, the factor critical in Crespo’s win was his combined presentation efforts across two specific elements of the process. His ambition in delving into a totally new motorsport problem in the final presentations counted in his favour, but it was his thoroughness that ran throughout this and the F1 race simulation task that ultimately proved decisive.

That challenge was: produce a race strategy for a virtual driver to complete a race at Suzuka based on basic tyre model information provided one month ahead of time and make a presentation – as the Williams team would do for its F1 drivers – for what was expected to happen, then race engineer the >>





# Seasons Greetings

To all our new and existing customers, we thank you for your trust, cooperation and business during 2023 & look forward to continuing our strong partnership in the New Year.

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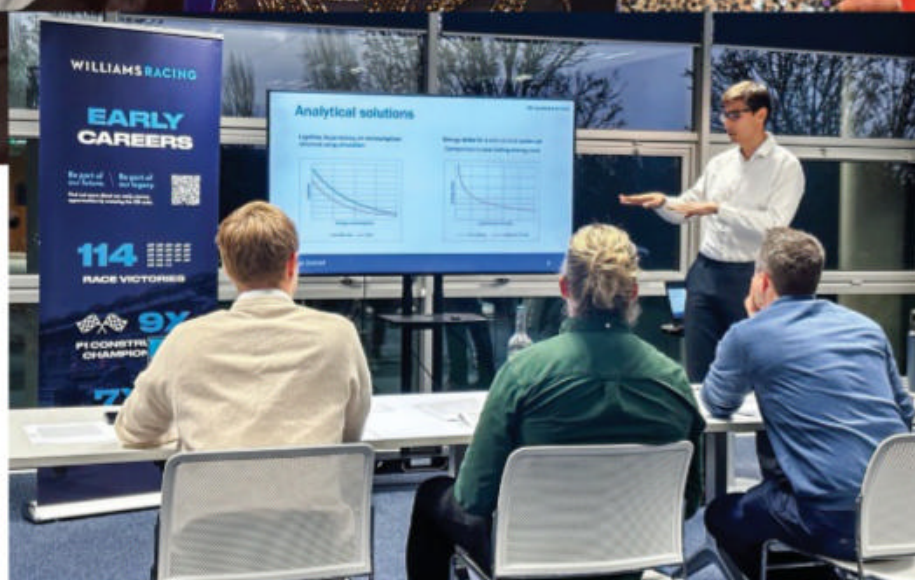
Crespo (left) received his trophy from Kalinauckas (right) at Autosport Awards

contest against the four other candidates at that stage and 15 other 'cars' controlled by Williams's AI system, and sit a written test.

"We took them into the ops room in Grove and they raced each other, basically," Robson explains. "They could either follow the strategy they had presented or they could deviate once they'd seen what other people were doing. And then at the end of that, we got them all together and did a sort of review of how everyone's strategies had gone."

"David undoubtedly had taken the data we'd sent them and done the most with it. So, his pre-race plan was extremely good. The way he presented it was also very good. He executed well. But I think the most impressive thing about him was the preparation he'd done, which is really what race strategy is all about."

Robson and co felt Crespo's pre-race planning had the verbal communication cues drivers need to understand strategy briefings, while critically he was the only candidate to use the



correct methodology for calculating tyre degradation.

He says he "tried to pretty much cover all the possibilities" in his race strategy arrangement, while understanding "it's impossible to cover literally everything that will happen".

"But at least I brought a range of the most likely

possibilities," he adds. "It proved how brutal races can be – because I did all that work and then when we were doing the race there was a safety car just when I didn't want it. So, I had three worst case scenarios in which I'd be basically f\*\*\*\*\* with my strategy – and one of them happened! But that's racing and they appreciated that."

Robson concludes that "in the end, the two guys were very close", but overall throughout the whole process he says "David just showed that little bit more skill at interpreting what we'd asked them to do and then executed it extremely well, plus the presentations".

Heading into 2024, Crespo is working for the ERT Formula E squad. As part of his Award win, Crespo will also attend an F1 test day with Williams in 2024, supporting its trackside engineering team. He said on stage at the Awards ceremony in early December that "I want to be the engineer of the present, not the engineer of the future", but also echoed Robson's feeling on the friendship established in the 2023 Award process.

"The very first day when we went to Williams for the first time, Riccardo was the first person I talked too," Crespo says of Calzetta. "We got along very well and over the stages we kept in touch and we kept talking. I think we've got a lot in common and one of the things I take from the entire process is the friendship. It's been a nice surprise!" ✨



*Details on how to enter the 2024 Award will be released in the coming months.*



SCALEXTRIC WONDERWORKS

# MUCH MORE THAN JUST A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

*Scalextric has a long and successful history but is also looking to the future with its new visitor centre. Autosport's slot-racing aficionado takes a look...*

TOM HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY GARY HAWKINS

**T**he festive period has for generations introduced people to the joys of slot car racing through the gifting of sets as presents or simply whipping up an existing track for some competitive holiday season miniature motorsport fun.

Since its inception in the late 1950s, Hornby's Scalextric has been a market leader, entertaining households the world over with its unmistakable racing experience. Over the decades it has continued to evolve into the digital age, yet still retains its original appeal of propelling a scaled-down replica car, or bike in some instances, around an electric-powered grooved race track.

This concept has developed legions of fans and no doubt delivered hundreds of thousands of hard-fought races and perhaps the odd living room stewards' enquiry for dubious driving. In some cases, it's the closest and easiest physical activity to play out those dreams of racing for real. Of course, today there are computer simulators that can achieve incredibly accurate and similar thrills, but there is still something quite special about taming a physical car, albeit at 1/32 scale, which explains its lasting appeal.

"The beauty of Scalextric is the entry level for enjoyment is very low," Hornby's new CEO Oliver Raeburn explains. "The cars perform differently and there are all sorts of experiences and skills you can get into, but at its most basic it's pulling a trigger and racing a car. Anybody can do that and that's why it's so pleasing."



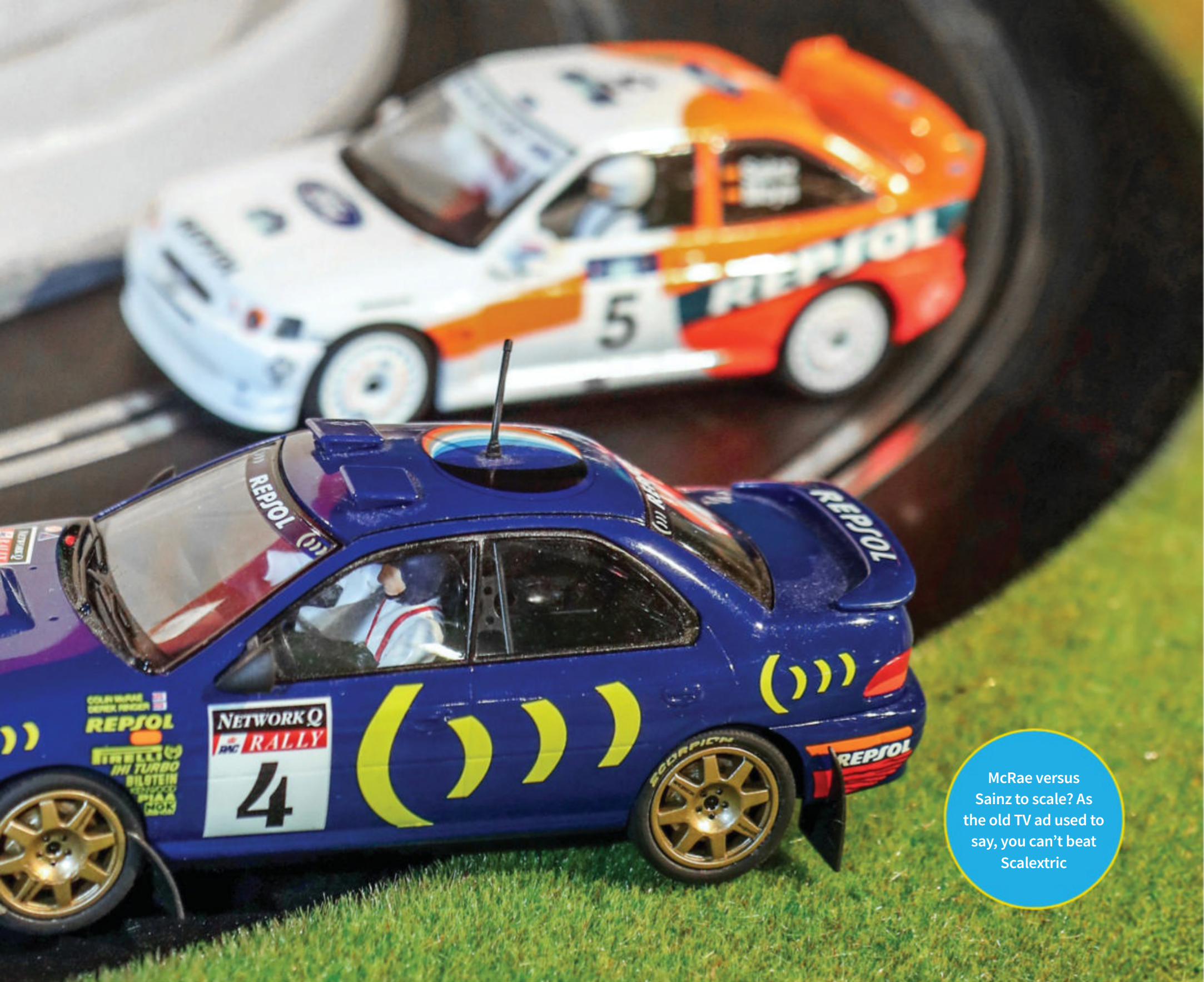
It has established a growing community of racers, including this writer, who believe Scalextric is much like a dog, in that it's for life and not just for Christmas.

Receiving my first Scalextric set as a Christmas present – a micro Formula 1 set featuring a 1993 Ferrari and a 1994 Benetton – ignited a passion that has since resulted in the acquisition of multiple sets. Over the past 30 years, that passion has only intensified as the product has moved into its much more advanced digital era.

The result is a collection of more than 170 cars, including such classics as Alain Menu's 1997 British Touring Car Renault Laguna, Nigel Mansell's 1992 Williams FW14B, Tony Pond's 1986 MG Metro 6R4, Dick Johnson's Australian Touring Car Championship 1988 Ford Sierra RS500 and the 1995 Le Mans 24 Hours-winning McLaren, to name just five. Each of these cars drive and react differently on the track, which only adds to the appeal. The majority of the collection have logged more miles than the actual real-world counterparts, having pounded around scale replications of Brands Hatch and challenging rally stages, or travelling the globe via a relocation from Australia back to the UK.

I can understand why some may question this obsession, suggesting that surely this is a toy for children. But this is a common misconception. It's a hobby for everyone. A quick glance at Scalextric's catalogue provides proof, with its products ranging from contemporary F1, touring, rally and sportscars to a vast array of models from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. This year's offerings have included incredibly detailed recreations of Colin McRae's 1995 World Rally Championship-winning Subaru, a 1978 Swedish





McRae versus Sainz to scale? As the old TV ad used to say, you can't beat Scalextric

## “THE CARS PERFORM DIFFERENTLY AND THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF EXPERIENCES AND SKILLS YOU CAN GET INTO”

Grand Prix box set featuring Mario Andretti's Lotus 79 and Niki Lauda's Brabham BT46B fan car (*is the fan mightier than the magnet?! – ed*), and now you can even race Jim Clark's F1 championship-winning Lotuses and his British Saloon Car Championship Lotus Cortina. It's this pure nostalgia hit that keeps its loyal fans coming back. Perhaps the best proof of this was during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Hornby enjoyed a resurgence as its business grew by a whopping 25%, evidence that the hobby is very much alive and well.

But for me, it's the way Scalextric has embraced the digital era that has changed the game, transforming the experience from its humble beginnings. Today, with a digital ARC Air or Pro system, first launched in the past decade, one standard digital set can run up to six cars at one time, instead of the traditional two. These cars can switch lanes courtesy of a well-timed touch of a button on the controller to perform accurate overtakes or put up a defence.

To ensure all of this action is accurately documented, the company's App Race Control phone and tablet app provides live timing to the thousandth of a second via Bluetooth. It can also log speed and a plethora of race data. The app has realism settings



Raeburn and our man race around, er, Margate at the WonderWorks attraction

built in that can mimic tyre wear and fuel, adding pitstop strategies to the challenge, meaning it's no longer a battle of just driving fast and smoothly. And if you do run out of fuel, the app will reduce the power of a car until the driver limps into the pits for a splash and dash.

Punctures and weather conditions can also be mimicked to similar effects. It's even possible to play with throttle maps on the controllers to deliver the desired throttle and braking response to satisfy your inner race engineer. The racing experience with all of these variables has never been better, in my opinion, and it's incredibly addictive. It provides a perfect nostalgia hit, which >>



# 2024 SEASON

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For Class 3: Ligier JSP320,  
Ginetta G61 LTP3, Duqueine  
D08, Adess 03 Evo (Class 3)  
Class 4: Ligier JSP4  
Class N: Nova NP02



**FWS**  
FORMULA  
WINTER SERIES

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## GT + GT4 WINTER SERIES

- 11/12 Jan Estoril /P - Test days
- 13/14 Jan Estoril /P - Race days
- 18/19 Jan Portimão /P - Test days
- 20/21 Jan Portimão /P - Race days
- 8/9 Feb Jerez /E - Test days
- 10/11 Feb Jerez /E - Race days
- 15/16 Feb Valencia /E - Test days
- 17/18 Feb Valencia /E - Race days
- 29/1 Mar Aragón /E - Test days
- 2/3 Mar Aragón /E - Race days
- 7/8 Mar Barcelona /E - Test days (tbc)
- 9/10 Mar Barcelona /E - Race days (tbc)

## PROTOTYPE WINTER SERIES

- 11/12 Jan Estoril /P - Test days
- 13/14 Jan Estoril /P - Race days
- 18/19 Jan Portimão /P - Test days
- 20/21 Jan Portimão /P - Race days
- 29/1 Mar Aragón /E - Test days
- 2/3 Mar Aragón /E - Race days
- 7/8 Mar Barcelona /E - Test days (tbc)
- 9/10 Mar Barcelona /E - Race days (tbc)

## FORMULA WINTER SERIES

- 8 Feb Jerez /E - Test days
- 9/10/11 Feb Jerez /E - Race days
- 15 Feb Valencia /E - Test days
- 16/17/18 Feb Valencia /E - Race days
- 29 Feb Aragón /E - Test days
- 1/2/3 Mar Aragón /E - Race days
- 7 Mar Barcelona /E - Test days (tbc)
- 8/9/10 Mar Barcelona /E - Race days (tbc)

**Additional race test days are bookable!**



we all seem to be striving for these days, but with a modern edge.

And now Scalextric has unveiled an altogether new experience, designed for all to enjoy, whether it's the seasoned slot car racer or someone new to this 1/32 racing world. Parent company Hornby has just opened its new interactive WonderWorks facility at its headquarters in Margate, Kent on the site of its old visitor centre. Here you can experience the products first-hand thanks to expertly created layouts, one of which has recreated some of Margate's real-world landmarks to a tee.

This track, where you race to your heart's content, is surrounded by a walk through Scalextric's history from its humble beginnings to its digital era. This trip down memory lane evokes plenty of childhood memories, with hundreds of examples of the cars and sets that helped build Scalextric into the hobby it is today. Visitors can also learn how the cars are designed and made, using the latest technology that aims to create the most accurate of replicas, and enjoy a sneak peak at some of its new range set to hit the shelves in 2024, such as the Ford Puma World Rally Championship cars.

Revered machines from the past are also on display, including what the company believes is its most valuable car – a Bugatti Type 59, made in 1963, which can now fetch an eye-watering price tag of £5000. Likewise, even modern classics are becoming collector's items such as the 1992 Monaco Grand Prix box set – this was re-released only a few years ago, featuring Mansell's Williams FW14B and Ayrton Senna's McLaren MP4/7. These regularly reach around the £500 mark on eBay.

The idea behind the WonderWorks is to preserve and celebrate Hornby's history while also embracing the future, according to Raeburn, who joined the company in January this year, and offered Autosport a guided tour of the facility.

"The old visitor centre was produced about 13-14 years ago and I guess I would sum it up by saying it was a great demonstration of



**“THE ROMANCE OF THE PAST IS HUGEY ATTRACTIVE AND THERE IS A WHOLE TREND OF NOSTALGIA FOR SCALEXTRIC”**

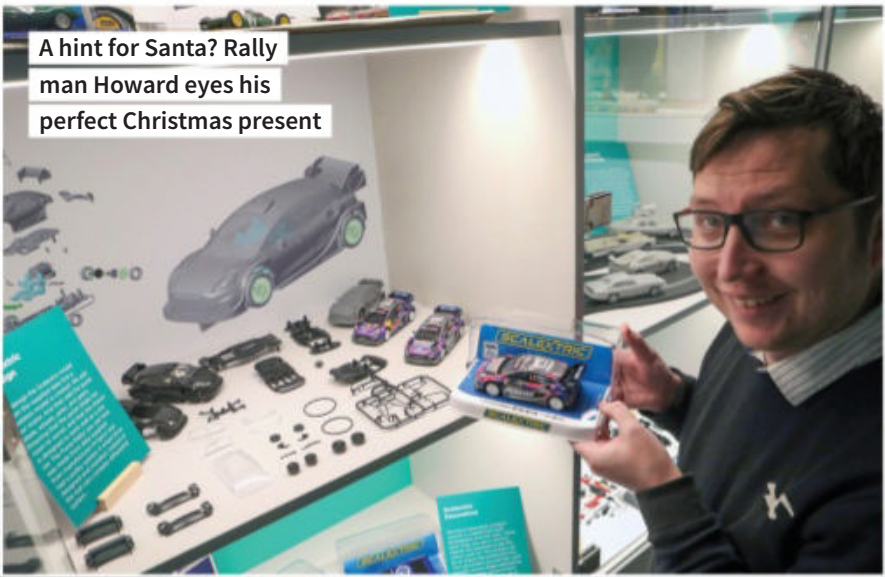
the past of the company and how we got to where we are today,” he says. “I think what we are trying to do with this is to reimagine it and try and show a little bit of the past but get people really involved in the present and get involved in the future.”

But, what does the future hold for Scalextric as it aims to build on its recent resurgence?

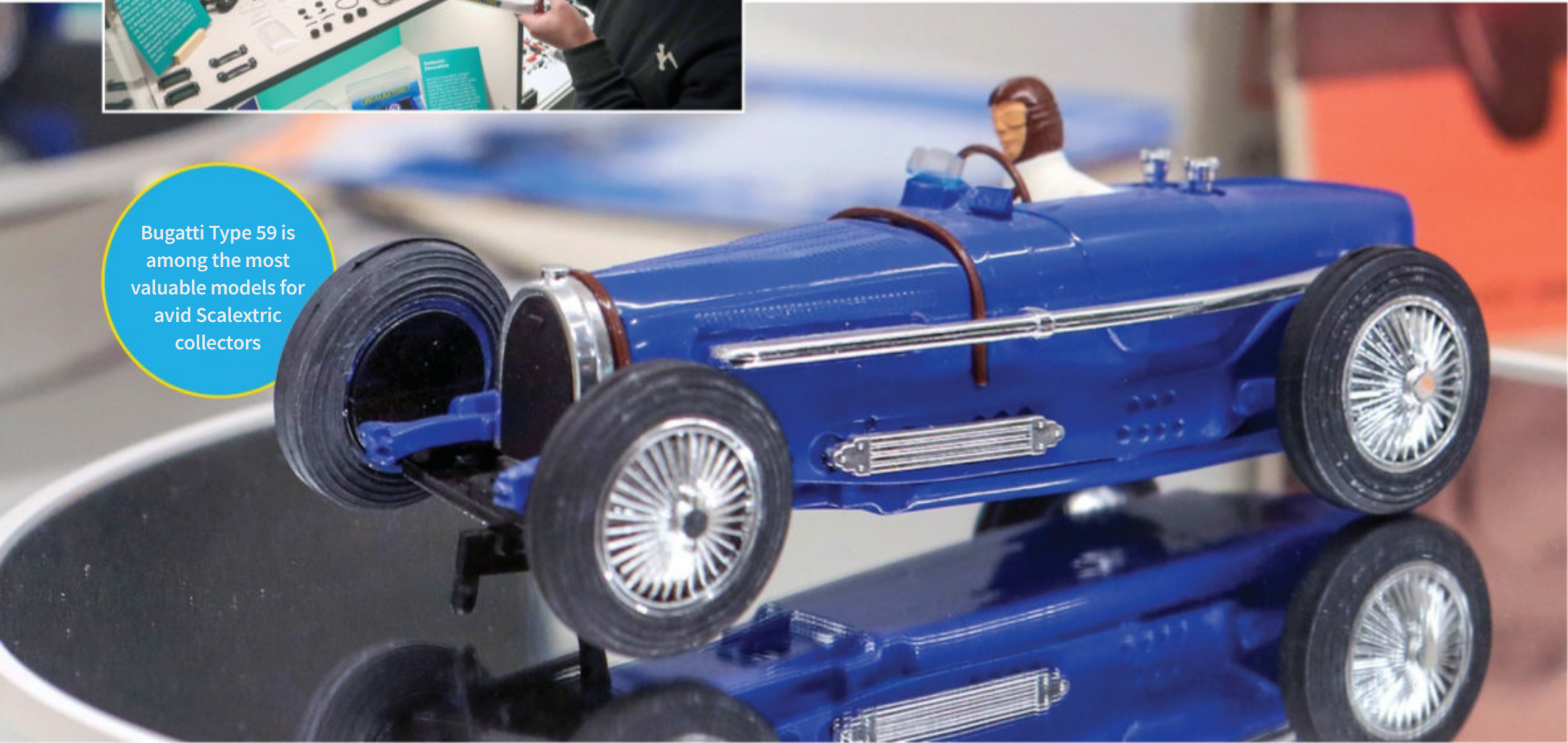
“The challenge we have is to recognise how important our existing customers are – and of course they are critical to our future – but we need to bring new people into the business,” adds Raeburn. “The romance of the past is hugely attractive and there is a whole trend of nostalgia.

“I think if I could sum it up, we have been very focused on product and engineering. What we are trying to do now is move a little bit more to focusing on customers and their experiences and what happens when people engage with our stuff.”

It's hard not to agree with Raeburn as Autosport finishes a race against the Scalextric CEO; there's still something wonderfully satisfying about slot car racing. So, if you have a set lurking in a loft or a cupboard, dig it out and have a race this holiday season – or perhaps you might be lucky enough to receive a new set this Christmas. 🏁



Bugatti Type 59 is among the most valuable models for avid Scalextric collectors





WHAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE MAGAZINE THIS YEAR, WHEN, AND BY WHOM

<b>JA</b> James Allen	<b>FC</b> Filip Cleeren	<b>TG</b> Tom Gamble	<b>MK</b> Matt Kew	<b>CM</b> Carl McKellar	<b>MS</b> Marcus Simmons	<b>KT</b> Kevin Turner
<b>RA</b> Richard Asher	<b>HC</b> Haydn Cobb	<b>SH</b> Sam Hall	<b>HK</b> Harry King	<b>AM</b> Andy Meyrick		<b>JU</b> Jim Utter
<b>JB</b> Joey Barnes	<b>SC</b> Stuart Codling	<b>SHI</b> Steve Hindle	<b>JK</b> Jamie Klein	<b>SMO</b> Stephen Mosley	<b>AS</b> Adam Smalley	<b>AVL</b> Andrew van Leeuwen
<b>OB</b> Ollie Bearman	<b>AC</b> Adam Cooper	<b>JH</b> Jim Holder	<b>PL</b> Paul Lawrence	<b>JN</b> James Newbold	<b>DS</b> Damien Smith	
<b>JBL</b> Jake Boxall-Legge	<b>ND</b> Nick Degroot	<b>TH</b> Tom Howard	<b>SL</b> Stephen Lickorish	<b>DN</b> Doug Nye	<b>LS</b> Luke Smith	<b>GW</b> Gary Watkins
<b>CB</b> Charles Bradley	<b>JD</b> Jake Dennis	<b>TJ</b> Tony Jardine		<b>ZOS</b> Zak O’Sullivan	<b>MSO</b> Matt Somerfield	<b>MW</b> Megan White
<b>LB</b> Luke Browning	<b>LD</b> Lewis Duncan	<b>TJE</b> Tom Jeffries	<b>SM</b> Stefan Mackley	<b>MPA</b> Mark Paulson		<b>SW</b> Steve Whitfield
<b>KC</b> Karun Chandhok	<b>JE</b> Jonny Edgar	<b>KJ</b> Kiern Jewiss	<b>DML</b> David Malsher-Lopez	<b>MP</b> Marcus Pye	<b>CT</b> Chris Tarling	
	<b>DE</b> David Evans	<b>AK</b> Alex Kalinauckas		<b>MR</b> Matthew Rees	<b>RT</b> Rachit Thukral	

**Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award**  
Finalists selected (21 Sep)  
Winner’s prize F1 drive (30 Nov-**MW**)  
Young Driver tests (30 Nov-**KT**)

**Autosport Awards**  
Voting nominations (2 Nov)  
All the 2023 winners (7 Dec)

**Autosport International**  
Preview 1 (5 Jan)  
Your greatest motorsport moments (5 Jan-**KT/GW/DS/AK/DE**)  
Preview 2 (12 Jan)  
Show report (19 Jan-**MK/LS/LD/AK/SM/MW/JN/HC**)

**British Touring Cars**  
Peter Riches profile (30 Mar-**MS**)  
Season preview (20 Apr-**MS**)  
1. Donington (27 Apr-**MS**)  
2. Brands Hatch (11 May-**MS**)  
3. Snetterton (25 May-**MS**)  
4. Thruxton (8 Jun-**MS**)  
5. Oulton Park (22 Jun-**MS**)  
6. Croft (3 Aug-**MS**)  
7. Knockhill (17 Aug-**MS**)  
8. Donington Park (31 Aug-**MS**)  
9. Silverstone (28 Sep-**MS**)  
Rising star Bobby Thompson (5 Oct-**MS**)  
10. Brands Hatch (12 Oct-**MS**)  
Season review (26 Oct-**MS**)  
Alliance Racing (30 Nov-**MS**)

**Club Column**  
Revisiting the resolutions (5 Jan-**SL**)  
Should club meetings have printed programmes? (12 Jan-**SL/SM**)  
Giving something back (19 Jan-**SL**)  
A successful theme (2 Feb-**SL**)  
Deeply flawed plans (9 Feb-**SL**)  
Breaking down barriers (16 Feb-**MW**)  
CSCC ice-breaker greeted warmly (2 Mar-**MP**)  
Should more circuit racing events be held during winter? (9 Mar-**SL/SM**)  
Goodwood’s shine (23 Mar-**CM**)  
British GT’s Super Touring moment (30 Mar-**JN**)  
Some encouraging signs (6 Apr-**SL**)  
When to climb the ladder (13 Apr-**SL**)  
3 Hours of fun (27 Apr-**KT**)  
Managing a tricky issue (25 May-**SL**)  
Bringing fans closer to the action (1 Jun-**SM**)  
Holding drivers to account (22 Jun-**SM**)  
Super idea too good *not* to repeat (6 Jul-**KT**)  
Gambling on innovation (20 Jul-**SL**)  
A legendary guest (3 Aug-**SL**)  
One day or two, that is the question (10 Aug-**SL/SM**)  
Better times for Ginetta (24 Aug-**SL**)  
Common sense prevails (31 Aug-**SL**)  
Fighting to the front (7 Sep-**MR**)  
The status of a championship (12 Oct-**SL**)  
A Festival to remember (26 Oct-**SL**)  
Becoming the best (23 Nov-**AS**)  
GB3 on crest of a wave (30 Nov-**SM**)

Encouragement and caution (7 Dec-**SL**)  
The other important numbers (14 Dec-**SL**)

**F1 launches**  
Alfa Romeo C43 (9 Feb)  
Ferrari SF-23, McLaren MCL60, Aston Martin AMR23 (16 Feb)  
Mercedes W14, Alpine A523 (23 Feb)

**FIA Formula 3**  
Dino Beganovic profile (9 Feb-**MW**)  
Season preview (2 Mar-**MW**)  
1. Sakhir (9 Mar-**MW**)  
2. Melbourne (6 Apr-**MW**)  
3. Monte Carlo (1 Jun-**MW**)  
4. Barcelona (8 Jun-**MW**)  
5. Red Bull Ring (6 Jul-**MW**)  
6. Silverstone (13 Jul-**MW**)  
7. Hungaroring (27 Jul-**MW**)  
8. Spa (3 Aug-**MW**)  
9. Monza (7 Sep-**MW**)

**FIA Formula 2**  
Season preview (2 Mar-**MW**)  
1. Sakhir (9 Mar-**MW**)  
2. Jeddah (23 Mar-**MW**)  
3. Melbourne (6 Apr-**MW**)  
4. Baku (4 May-**MW**)  
5. Monte Carlo (1 Jun-**MW**)  
6. Barcelona (8 Jun-**MW**)  
7. Red Bull Ring (6 Jul-**MW**)  
8. Silverstone (13 Jul-**MW**)  
9. Hungaroring (27 Jul-**MW**)  
10. Spa (3 Aug-**MW**)  
11. Zandvoort (31 Aug-**MW**)  
12. Monza (7 Sep-**MW**)  
14. Yas Marina (30 Nov-**SH**)

**Formula E**  
Season preview (12 Jan-**JBL**)  
1. Mexico City (19 Jan-**JBL**)  
2. Diriyah (2 Feb-**JBL**)  
3. Hyderabad (16 Feb-**JBL**)  
4. Cape Town (2 Mar-**JBL**)  
5. Sao Paulo (30 Mar-**SM**)  
6. Tempelhof (27 Apr-**SM**)  
7. Monaco (11 May-**SM**)  
8. Jakarta (8 Jun-**SM**)  
9. Portland (29 Jun-**JK**)  
10. Rome (20 Jul-**SM**)  
11. London (3 Aug-**SM**)  
Season review (17 Aug-**SM**)  
DS Penske’s need to do better (19 Oct-**SM**)

**Grand prix features**  
Sauber’s Audi link-up (5 Jan-**AC**)  
Russell on F1 2023 (12 Jan-**AK**)  
F1 2023 revealed (26 Jan-**JBL**)  
Hulkenberg’s return (26 Jan-**AC**)  
Hamilton’s decade at Mercedes (2 Feb-**AK**)  
Ranking Hamilton’s Mercedes seasons (2 Feb-**KT**)  
Big questions of 2023 (9 Feb-**KC**)  
What Williams’s new boss must do (16 Feb-**MK**)  
Race to topple Red Bull (23 Feb-**AK**)  
Alonso’s big bet on Aston Martin (23 Feb-**LS**)  
F1 season preview (17 Mar-**AK/MSO/**

**MK/SC/FC**)  
Sauber’s start in F1 (16 Mar-**AC**)  
What Mercedes does next (30 Mar-**AK**)  
Secrets of Red Bull’s supremacy (6 Apr-**JBL**)  
Aston Martin’s ascent (20 Apr-**AK**)  
What’s up at Ferrari? (27 Apr-**JBL**)  
What next for McLaren? (18 May-**AK**)  
How F1 acted decisively amid Italian disaster (25 May-**AK**)  
When bad weather caused F1 chaos (25 May-**MS**)  
Red Bull 100 (22 Jun-**AK/JBL/KT**)  
Who will replace Hamilton on British F1 throne? (29 Jun-**AK**)  
British GP preview (6 Jul-**AK/JBL**)  
Ricciardo’s return (20 Jul-**AK**)  
F1 half-term report (10 Aug-**AK/JBL**)  
Benetton’s first real season (28 Sep-**DS**)  
Top 10 Benetton drivers (28 Sep-**DS**)  
What’s going on with Alonso at Aston Martin? (5 Oct-**AK**)  
Why Leclerc’s Ferrari title dream is still on (19 Oct-**AK**)  
Time to slow Red Bull down? (9 Nov-**AK/JBL/GW/CB**)  
Schumacher vs Verstappen (7 Dec-**AK**)  
F1 season review (14 Dec-**AK/MK/JBL/FC/HC/KT/MW**)

**Grand prix reports**  
1. Bahrain (9 Mar-**AK**)  
2. Saudi Arabia (23 Mar-**JBL**)  
3. Australia (6 Apr-**AK**)  
4. Azerbaijan (4 May-**JBL**)  
5. Miami (11 May-**JBL**)  
6. Monaco (1 Jun-**JBL**)  
7. Spain (8 Jun-**AK**)  
8. Canada (22 Jun-**JBL**)  
9. Austria (6 Jul-**AK**)  
10. Great Britain (13 Jul-**AK**)  
11. Hungary (27 Jul-**JBL**)  
12. Belgium (3 Aug-**AK**)  
13. Hungary (31 Aug-**JBL**)  
14. Italy (7 Sep-**AK**)  
15. Singapore (21 Sep-**JBL**)  
16. Japan (28 Sep-**JBL**)  
17. Qatar (12 Oct-**AK**)  
18. United States (26 Oct-**AK**)  
19. Mexico (2 Nov-**AK**)  
20. Brazil (9 Nov-**JBL**)  
21. Las Vegas (23 Nov-**AK**)  
22. Abu Dhabi (30 Nov-**AK**)

**IndyCar**  
Season preview (2 Mar-**DML**)  
1. St Petersburg (9 Mar-**DML**)  
2. Texas (6 Apr-**DML**)  
3. Long Beach (20 Apr-**DML**)  
4. Barber (4 May-**DML**)  
5. Indianapolis (18 May-**DML**)  
Indy 500 preview (25 May-**CB**)  
6. Indianapolis 500 (1 Jun-**CB**)  
7. Detroit (8 Jun-**CB**)  
8. Road America (22 Jun-**CB**)  
9. Mid-Ohio (6 Jul-**CB**)  
10. Toronto (20 Jul-**CB**)  
11 & 12. Iowa (27 Jul-**CB**)  
13. Nashville (10 Aug-**CB**)

14. Indianapolis (17 Aug-**CB**)  
15. St Louis (31 Aug-**CB**)  
16. Portland (7 Sep-**JB**)  
17. Laguna Seca (14 Sep-**JB**)  
Season review (28 Sep-**CB**)  
Kirkwood’s next step (19 Oct-**JB**)

**In the paddock**  
Great modern F1 moments (5 Jan-**AK**)  
A failure that highlights progress (12 Jan-**AK**)  
Remembering a showman (12 Jan-**TH**)  
Is being a Merc B-team so bad? (19 Jan-**MK**)  
From F1 to the WRC (19 Jan-**TH**)  
How can McLaren keep Norris? (19 Jan-**MK**)  
One way to instantly improve F1 (26 Jan-**AK**)  
Rating the F1 races: 2021 vs 2022 (26 Jan-**KT**)  
A decade of leadership (2 Feb-**AK**)  
Is Albon ready for his next step? (9 Feb-**AK**)  
Upside of a demanding rookie (16 Feb-**AK**)  
‘The Closer’ nears his final act (16 Feb-**CB**)  
Alarm that still sounds from FIA (23 Feb-**AK**)  
Next batch of British SuperStars (23 Feb-**AM**)  
Why we’re changing our ratings (2 Mar-**AK**)  
IndyCar’s motivation problem (2 Mar-**DML**)  
The best part of F1 ’23? (9 Mar-**AK**)  
Alternative Red Bull route (9 Mar-**JK**)  
Why this F1 saga won’t go away (16 Mar-**AK**)  
The wrong impression (16 Mar-**AVL**)  
Is Perez ready to step up? (23 Mar-**AK**)  
A glimmer of hope for Ferrari? (30 Mar-**AK**)  
Tech silly season has started early (30 Mar-**JBL**)  
Ready for a grandstand finish (30 Mar-**GW**)  
Should Australian GP have been restarted after Magnussen crash? (6 Apr-**AK/KT**)  
Another reminder of a legend (6 Apr-**TH**)  
Loss of lofty BTCC veterans (6 Apr-**MS**)  
Why Ferrari is reluctant to change (13 Apr-**AK**)  
A hot start for Red Bull’s next star (13 Apr-**JK**)  
Scrutiny drives change (20 Apr-**AK**)  
The next big thing? (20 April-**MS**)  
What Allison’s return reveals (27 Apr-**AK**)  
Is Perez a real threat? (4 May-**AK**)  
Ban needs to be lifted (4 May-**GW**)  
What Perez really faces (11 May-**AK**)  
A lesson from 2013 (18 May-**AK**)  
It’s too early to write off de Vries (18 May-**JBL**)  
How MotoGP stands at milestone

race (18 May-**LD**)  
A chance for Alonso at Monaco? (25 May-**AK**)  
The rising star to watch in DTM (25 May-**JN**)  
A refreshing change for F1? (25 May-**MW**)  
True value of Monaco (1 Jun-**AK**)  
Why the Indy 500 wasn’t fixed (1 Jun-**CB**)  
How real is Mercedes’ revival? (8 Jun-**AK**)  
Verstappen at his least aggressive? (15 Jun-**AK**)  
Red Bull’s place in F1 history (22 Jun-**AK**)  
Vettel’s key Red Bull legacy (29 Jun-**AK**)  
Can the end justify the means? (29 Jun-**GW**)  
Adapting to a new mindset (29 Jun-**KJ**)  
F1’s next step to avoid tragedy (6 Jul-**AK**)  
Another step towards the F1 dream (6 Jul-**OB**)  
Do F1 film claims stack up? (13 Jul-**AK**)  
No longer just a destination (13 Jul-**AVL**)  
Drivers losing team-mate battles (20 Jul-**AK**)  
Challenge of increasing speeds (20 Jul-**SM**)  
How good Ricciardo’s return really was (27 Jul-**AK**)  
RB19 against the greats (27 Jul-**JBL**)  
Penalty a concern for all drivers (3 Aug-**AK**)  
The road to becoming a champion (3 Aug-**SM**)  
Japan’s GT3 revival (3 Aug-**JK**)  
Team’s identity crisis (10 Aug-**JBL**)  
US rivalry goes global (10 Aug-**JN**)  
Making of a McLaren ace (10 Aug-**TG**)  
The Hulkenberg revival (17 Aug-**AK**)  
Title tilt highs and lows (17 Aug-**JD**)  
The relative successes of F1 2023 (24 Aug-**AK**)  
Silver lining in Leclerc’s cloud (31 Aug-**AK**)  
Returning to strength (31 Aug-**JE**)  
Sainz’s best yet in F1 (7 Sep-**MK**)  
Will track changes hurt Red Bull? (14 Sep-**AK**)  
Words to warm WRC fans’ hearts (14 Sep-**TH**)  
Big Red Bull problem or a one-off? (21 Sep-**AK**)  
Russell’s crucial lesson (21 Sep-**JBL**)  
The Sutton effect (21 Sep-**MS**)  
Using the rules the right way (28 Sep-**AK**)  
An IndyCar loss at the right time? (28 Sep-**JB**)  
A fitting way to finish? (5 Oct-**MK**)  
Aston back where it truly belongs (5 Oct-**KT**)  
Blot on Hamilton’s season (12 Oct-**AK**)  
Time is right for Aston Martin (12 Oct-**GW**)  
Marquez’s big move (12 Oct-**LD**)



F1 stars’ 100-race milestone (19 Oct-**AK**)  
The big prize awaits (19 Oct-**LB**)  
Norris needs to get tougher (26 Oct-**AK**)  
This garagiste will be missed (26 Oct-**GW**)  
Wrong move for right reasons (2 Nov-**AK**)  
Power-steering to the top (2 Nov-**ZOS**)  
Japan’s remarkable rising son (9 Nov-**JK**)  
F1’s Las Vegas gamble (16 Nov-**AK**)  
Very different dominators (16 Nov-**KT**)  
The best and worst of F1 in Vegas (23 Nov-**AK**)  
What drove Marquez to Ducati (23 Nov-**LD**)  
So Max really *does* care... (30 Nov-**AK**)  
Looking back on a hectic season (30 Nov-**HK**)  
An F1 squabble bubbling under? (7 Dec-**AK**)  
Surprises within McLaren’s family (7 Dec-**KT**)  
Apology to Lando Norris (14 Dec-**AK**)

Introducing...

Gabriel Bortoleto (29 Jun-**MW**)  
Malthe Jakobsen (13 Jul-**JN**)

MotoGP

Season preview (23 Mar-**LD**)  
1. Algarve (30 Mar-**LD**)  
2. Rio Hondo (6 Apr-**LD**)  
3. Austin (20 Apr-**LD**)  
4. Jerez (4 May-**LD**)  
5. Le Mans (18 May-**LD**)  
6. Mugello (15 Jun-**LD**)  
7. Sachsenring (22 Jun-**LD**)  
8. Assen (29 Jun-**RA**)  
9. Silverstone (10 Aug-**LD**)  
10. Red Bull Ring (24 Aug-**LD**)  
11. Barcelona (7 Sep-**LD**)  
12. Misano (14 Sep-**LD**)  
13. Buddh (28 Sep-**RT**)  
14. Motegi (5 Oct-**JK**)  
15. Mandalika (19 Oct-**LD**)  
16. Phillip Island (26 Oct-**LD**)  
17. Buriram (2 Nov-**LD**)  
18. Sepang (16 Nov-**LD**)  
19. Losail (23 Nov-**LD**)  
20. Valencia (30 Nov-**LD**)

My favourite...

Track – Ronnie Quintarelli (5 Jan-**JK**)  
Team-mate – Anthony Davidson (12 Jan-**JN**)  
Car – Sascha Maassen (19 Jan-**JN**)  
Track – Martin Donnelly (26 Jan-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Tim Harvey (2 Feb-**JN**)  
Car – Bruno Giacomelli (9 Feb-**GW**)  
Track – David Brabham (16 Feb-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Franck Lagorce (23 Feb-**JN**)  
Car – Eric van de Poele (2 Mar-**JN**)  
Track – Gary Paffett (9 Mar-**JBL**)  
Team-mate – Hurley Haywood (16 Mar-**JN**)  
Car – Dario Franchitti (23 Mar-**MW**)  
Track – Fredrik Ekblom (30 Mar-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Yannick Dalmas (6 Apr-**JN**)  
Car – Alex Wurz (13 Apr-**JN**)  
Track – Rob Bell (20 Apr-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Jorg Bergmeister (27 Apr-**CB**)  
Car – Giedo van der Garde (4 May-**JN**)  
Track – Richard Westbrook (11 May-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Dirk Muller (18 May-**JN**)  
Car – Kenneth Acheson (25 May-**JN**)  
Track – Tanner Foust (1 Jun-**SW**)  
Team-mate – Karun Chandhok

(8 Jun-**KT**)  
Car – Giancarlo Fisichella (15 Jun-**MW**)  
Track – Pierre Dieudonne (22 Jun-**GW**)  
Team-mate – Peter Dumbreck (29 Jun-**JN**)  
Car – Tomas Enge (6 Jul-**JN**)  
Track – Guy Smith (13 Jul-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Anthony Reid (20 Jul-**SL**)  
Car – Sebastien Bourdais (27 Jul-**JN**)  
Track – Paul Radisich (3 Aug-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Andy Priaulx (10 Aug-**JN**)  
Car – Jeff Allam (17 Aug-**KT**)  
Track – Rinaldo Capello (24 Aug-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Mauro Martini (31 Aug-**JN**)  
Car – Luis Perez Sala (7 Sep-**JN**)  
Track – Warren Hughes (14 Sep-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Christian Danner (21 Sep-**JN**)  
Car – Robert Kubica (28 Sep-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Nick Heidfeld (5 Oct-**JN**)  
Car – Jake Hill (12 Oct-**MS**)  
Car – Jarno Trulli (19 Oct-**JK**)  
Track – Oliver Gavin (26 Oct-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Helio Castroneves (2 Nov-**JB**)  
Car – Ben Collins (9 Nov-**SH**)  
Track – Jamie Green (16 Nov-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Jean Alesi (23 Nov-**CB**)  
Track – Toni Vilander (30 Nov-**JN**)  
Car – Jean-Marc Gounon (7 Dec-**JN**)  
Team-mate – Gabriele Tarquini (14 Dec-**JN**)

National focus

2022 club racing champions (5 Jan-**SM/SL**)  
Autosport’s driver rankings (12 Jan-**SL/MS**)  
2022’s new categories rated – and predictions for 2023 (19 Jan-**SL/SM**)  
Restart Racing (26 Jan-**MS**)  
Upcoming national highlights (2 Feb-**SL/SM/PL/MPA/SW/CM/SH/MP**)  
Rapid rise of R Racing (9 Feb-**SL**)  
Esports’ emergence (23 Feb-**SM/MW**)  
The changing tyre world (2 Mar-**SL**)  
GT racing in the UK (16 Mar-**SM**)  
Autosport 3 Hours revival (30 Mar-**SL**)  
7 Race Series’ success (30 Mar-**SL**)  
British GT preview (6 Apr-**SM**)  
GB3 preview (6 Apr-**SW**)  
TOCA supports preview (20 Apr-**SL**)  
Future of scrutineering (18 May-**SL**)  
Home-built hillclimber (18 May-**PL**)  
Racing sustainability (15 Jun-**SM**)  
Super Touring Power preview (29 Jun-**TH/SL/MS**)  
Bentley and Le Mans (6 Jul-**SHI**)  
British Motorsport Trust (6 Jul-**SL**)  
British F4 memorable moments (20 Jul-**SL**)  
Racing at Bedford (14 Sep-**TJE**)  
Bonneville Speed Week (5 Oct-**CT**)  
How to win Formula Ford Festival (19 Oct-**SHI**)  
TOCA supports review (26 Oct-**SL**)  
Moran’s memories (2 Nov-**PL**)  
GB3/GB4 review (9 Nov-**SW**)  
British GT review (16 Nov-**SM**)  
Triumph of engineering (23 Nov-**PL**)  
On road with StreetCar (30 Nov-**SM**)  
2023 state of club racing (7 Dec-**SL**)  
Rising star Freddie Slater (14 Dec-**SL**)

Obituaries

Philippe Streiff (5 Jan)  
Dallas Smith (5 Jan)  
Wiet Huidekoper (12 Jan)  
Michel Ferte (12 Jan)  
Michael Lindsay (12 Jan)  
Roy Pierpoint (19 Jan)

John Wickham (19 Jan)  
David Lazenby (2 Feb)  
Jean-Pierre Jabouille (9 Feb)  
Ian ‘Diz’ Smith (9 Feb)  
Dave Price (23 Feb)  
Slim Borgudd (2 Mar)  
John Turner (2 Mar)  
Eddie McLurg (9 Mar)  
Bryan Wills (16 Mar)  
Sean Woods (23 Mar)  
Dick Adams (30 Mar)  
Craig Breen (20 Apr)  
Kenneth McAlpine (27 Apr)  
Jon Fletcher (25 May)  
Ian Scott-Watson (1 Jun)  
Dave McCloy (8 Jun)  
Stuart Rolt (15 Jun)  
Steve Magill (29 Jun)  
Dilano van’t Hoff (6 Jul)  
Steve Neal (6 Jul)  
Bob Fernley (6 Jul)  
Jan Odor (13 Jul)  
Peter Morgan (13 Jul)  
Reeves Callaway (20 Jul)  
Mike Dixon (20 Jul)  
Roger Dorchy (3 Aug)  
Neil Brown (10 Aug)  
Peter Baldwin (17 Aug)  
Ian Giles (17 Aug)  
Roger Twelvetrees (31 Aug)  
John Quenby (14 Sep)  
Basil van Rooyen (21 Sep)  
Billy Morris (21 Sep)  
Dan Kirby (28 Sep)  
Mark Litchfield (28 Sep)  
Corrado Provera (9 Nov)  
Graham Eden (9 Nov)  
Erich Zakowski (9 Nov)  
Jake Cook (30 Nov)  
Dave Prewitt (7 Dec)  
Rosemary Smith (14 Dec)  
John Turner (14 Dec)

Pit+Paddock

Sulayem wants new teams for F1 tender (5 Jan)  
Andretti Cadillac plan shocks F1 (12 Jan)  
Le Mans: biggest top-class entry in years (19 Jan)  
Acura takes Daytona 24 pole (26 Jan)  
F1/FIA tensions rise (2 Feb)  
Ford to return to F1 with Red Bull (9 Feb)  
New F1 challengers hit track (16 Feb)  
FIA clarifies driver clampdown (23 Feb)  
Andretti F1 effort under fire again (2 Mar)  
Mercedes eyes drastic F1 design change (9 Mar)  
Toyota tops Sebring Prologue (16 Mar)  
FIA under pressure for Alonso chaos (23 Mar)  
McLaren makes big changes to F1 team (30 Mar)  
Controversy over Australian GP restart (6 Apr)  
Massa bids to get 2008 title overturned (13 Apr)  
Mercedes rethinks technical team (27 Apr)  
Baku pitlane fiasco fury (4 May)  
GM eyes F1 entry as engine supplier (11 May)  
De Vries’s future unclear at AlphaTauri (18 May)  
Palou takes Indy 500 pole (25 May)  
Le Mans: hydrogen top class by 2030 (1 Jun)  
Ferrari tops LM test (8 Jun)  
Toyota’s hydrogen Hypercar concept (15 Jun)  
Newey gets closer to F1 retirement (22 Jun)

Hollywood stars buy in to Alpine F1 (29 Jun)  
Tragedy hits Spa 24 support (6 Jul)  
F1 tries again with 24-round calendar (13 Jul)  
Lamborghini’s Hypercar (20 Jul)  
Engine equalisation on F1 agenda (27 Jul)  
Alpine upheaval (3 Aug)  
Sulayem targets US, Chinese marques (10 Aug)  
Young Driver Award finalists revealed (17 Aug)  
New nation vs nation series launched (24 Aug)  
F1 silly season to get sillier (31 Aug)  
Hamilton breaks record with Merc deal (7 Sep)  
Aston Martin eyes Le Mans return (14 Sep)  
Red Bull denies clampdowns impact (21 Sep)  
Lawson out of AlphaTauri for 2024 (28 Sep)  
Aston Martin launches Hypercar attack (5 Oct)  
Marquez splits from Honda (12 Oct)  
Andretti F1 power in question (19 Oct)  
Why Hamilton/Leclerc ‘walked the plank’ (26 Oct)  
Perez’s seat under threat (2 Nov)  
Changes mooted for F1 sprint format (9 Nov)  
What to expect in Las Vegas (16 Nov)  
Las Vegas survives opening night nerves (23 Nov)  
Star names for Hypercar field (30 Nov)  
How stagnation hit the F1 grid (7 Dec)  
F1 teams unite in fury against FIA (14 Dec)

Reports – miscellaneous

Dakar Rally (19 Jan-**RT**)  
Daytona 24 Hours (2 Feb-**GW**)  
Daytona 500 (23 Feb-**CB**)  
Sebring 12 Hours (23 Mar-**GW**)  
Goodwood Members’ Meeting (20 Apr-**MP**)  
Nurburgring 24 Hours (25 May-**DS**)  
Spa 24 Hours (6 Jul-**GW**)  
Goodwood Festival of Speed (20 Jul-**MP/GW**)  
Silverstone Festival (31 Aug-**DS**)  
Goodwood Revival (14 Sep-**MP**)  
Bathurst 1000 (12 Oct-**AVL**)  
Petit Le Mans (19 Oct-**JB**)  
Macau GP (23 Nov-**JK**)

Special features

Porsche’s new dawn (5 Jan-**CB**)  
Silver Fern Rally (5 Jan-**TJ**)  
Daytona 24 preview (26 Jan-**GW**)  
What we’re looking forward to in 2023 (2 Feb-**KT/JBL/JN/HC/MW/CB/DML/LD/MS**)  
Porsche 963 debut (9 Feb-**CB**)  
Beechdean’s rise (9 Feb-**SM**)  
Holden racing highlights (9 Feb-**AVL**)  
1923 retrospective (9 Feb-**KT**)  
NASCAR preview (16 Feb-**CB/JU/ND**)  
All change in Aussie rules (23 Feb-**AVL**)  
Racing sons and dads (9 Mar-**JN**)  
Top 10 pre-war GP cars (9 Mar-**KT**)  
Top 10 pre-war GP drivers (16 Mar-**KT**)  
Jules Gounon profile (30 Mar-**JN**)  
Le Mans 100: Toyota (13 Apr-**GW**)  
Farewell Pukekohe (13 Apr-**AVL**)  
Goodwood Members’ Meeting preview (13 Apr-**PL**)  
Le Mans 100: Cadillac (27 Apr-**GW**)  
United Autosports’ rise (27 Apr-**KT**)  
Power behind Honda’s American

dreams (4 May-**CB**)  
Le Mans 100: Peugeot (11 May-**GW**)  
Tin-top revolution: Ford Galaxie (11 May-**KT**)  
Historic tin-tops test (11 May-**KT**)  
Le Mans 100: Porsche (25 May-**GW**)  
Le Mans 100: Ferrari (8 Jun-**GW**)  
Goodwood Festival of Speed preview (13 Jul-**MP/KT**)  
Apology to Welch Motorsport (27 Jul)  
Nuvolari 70 years on (10 Aug-**DN**)  
McLaren at 60 (17 Aug-**KT/GW/MK**)  
WRC 50 special (24 Aug-**TH**)  
Silverstone 75 (24 Aug-**KT/MS/PL**)  
Nicky Catsburg living the dream (7 Sep-**JN**)  
Toyota’s alternative path to future of motorsport (21 Sep-**JH**)  
Petit Le Mans preview (12 Oct-**JN**)  
Louis Deletraz on the up (2 Nov-**JN**)  
Classic Team Lotus at Goodwood (9 Nov-**SMO**)  
1993 special (16 Nov-**AC/GW/DS/JBL/KT/JA/MS/TH**)  
IMSA’s GTP revival (7 Dec-**CB**)  
Christmas gift guide (7 Dec)

Supplements

Engineering (16 Mar)  
Engineering (18 May)  
Le Mans preview (1 Jun)  
Historics (7 Sep)  
Engineering (28 Sep)  
Engineering (16 Nov)

Top 5

WTCR drivers (12 Jan-**DS**)  
Winless F3000 drivers (9 Feb-**JN**)  
Bahrain F1 debutants (2 Mar-**JN**)  
World enduro dream tracks (23 Mar)  
Le Mans one-offs (6 Apr-**KT/JN**)  
Le Mans heartbreaks(18 May-**KT**)  
Maserati MC12 drivers (12 Oct-**JN**)  
F1 final venues (23 Nov-**JN**)

WEC

Davidson tries Peugeot’s WEC sim (9 Mar-**GW**)  
Season preview (16 Mar-**GW**)  
1. Sebring (23 Mar-**GW**)  
2. Algarve (20 Apr-**GW**)  
3. Spa (4 May-**GW**)  
4. Le Mans (15 Jun-**GW**)  
5. Monza (13 Jul-**GW**)  
Isotta Fraschini revival (10 Aug-**GW**)  
6. Fuji (14 Sep-**GW**)  
Lamborghini’s long road to Le Mans (5 Oct-**GW**)  
7. Bahrain (9 Nov-**GW**)  
Season review (30 Nov-**GW**)  
Peugeot’s Le Mans rookie sensations (14 Dec-**JN**)

What could have been

Anthony Davidson (16 Mar-**JN**)  
Giorgio Pantano (10 Aug-**JN**)

WRC

Season preview (19 Jan-**TH**)  
1. Monte Carlo (26 Jan-**TH**)  
Toyota’s lost ‘world-beater’ (2 Feb-**TH**)  
2. Rally Sweden (16 Feb-**TH**)  
3. Mexico (23 Mar-**TH**)  
4. Croatia (27 Apr-**TH**)  
5. Portugal (18 May-**TH**)  
6. Sardinia (8 Jun-**TH**)  
7. Safari (29 Jun-**TH**)  
8. Estonia (27 Jul-**TH**)  
9. Finland (10 Aug-**TH**)  
10. Acropolis (14 Sep-**TH**)  
11. Chile (5 Oct-**TH**)  
12. Central Europe (1 Nov-**TH**)  
13. Japan (23 Nov-**TH**)



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- Good understanding of basic Engineering principles
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- Proactive, self-motivated and able to work both autonomously and as part of a team
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- Hands on experience of MATLAB, Simulink or Python programming
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- A proactive attitude and hands on approach to problem solving
- All applicants must have the right to work in the UK

#### Desirable Skills & Experience:

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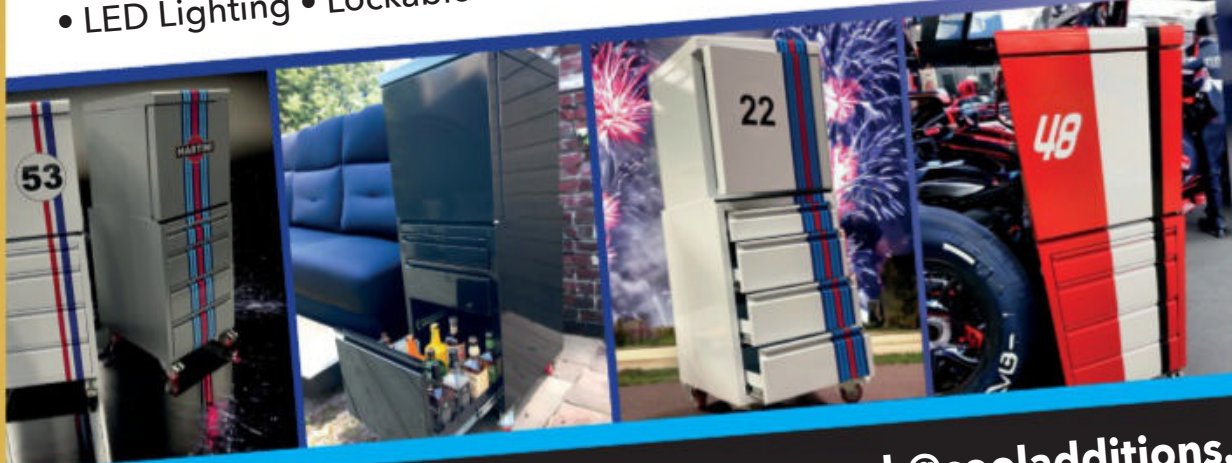


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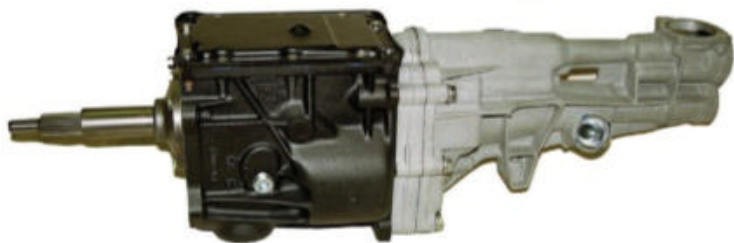
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alongside FF2000 defence



Rebranded 7 Racing  
plans Euro Cup



Westbourne signs up  
to new Clio Cup



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# Euro Cup races for rebranded 7 Racing

## 7 RACING

The popular 7 Race Series has rebranded as 7 Racing for next season and plans to hold a four-event Euro Cup contest as organisers consider launching a full European championship in the future.

Bosses of the MotorSport Vision Racing category have decided to drop 'series' from its title after it received championship status several years ago, and are also launching a new logo and website.

"It used to be a series and that name stuck," said championship manager Sean Bicknell. "I got my feet under the table [last year] and thought we need to have a bit of a look here. We deliberated a bit and went for 7 Racing because that's what we do."

European events have long been one of the core features of the Caterham category, including its traditional end-of-season 'Winter Sun' fixtures. Now it is combining its Paul Ricard, Algarve and Valencia trips with its Donington Park UK round to create a four-event mini-series to gauge interest for an FIA championship for 2025.

"We've revived the old Euro Cup that was around many years ago," said Bicknell. "We've spoken to a few drivers but we need to know if people are going to put their money where their mouth is. We've picked those four events and will do an unofficial four-event Euro Cup and see if that whets people's appetite."

"If we can bring 15 [UK] drivers over to them and if France can bring 15 and Portugal/Spain can, then that's 45 drivers

and a fantastic championship. Everyone's interested in Paul Ricard because we've never been there before and it's an F1 circuit. All three venues are on southern coasts and we're trying to make the venues attractive and appeal to the family."

While enhancing its European offering, Bicknell has also decided to reduce 7 Racing's number of UK events from seven to five.

"People have come and done three or four rounds and we've given them seven rounds this year," he said. "Next year, we've given them five – and, if they still do three or four, it reduces our costs a bit. For a lot of our competitors, their biggest asset is time. It's about putting on high-quality events and having quality not quantity."

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

# Stirling Moss Trophy back at Revival for 2024

## GOODWOOD

The Stirling Moss Trophy will return to the Goodwood Revival race line-up in 2024 after a year's absence.

The addition of the pre-1963 GT contest is one of the main changes among the 6-8 September event's timetable. Previously known as the Kinrara Trophy, the race caters for the likes of Jaguar E-types, Cobras and

Ferrari 250 SWBs.

Also joining next year's race card is the Earl of March Trophy for 500cc Formula 3 machinery, while the popular two-part St Mary's Trophy tin-top encounters will continue its rotation through the various eras and will be for 1960s cars this time around. After running as a Porsche 911 celebration bout this season, the Fordwater Trophy will also revert to its traditional



range of production-based 1950s cars for 2024, and the Madgwick Cup for 1955-60 sports-racers also returns.

Other staples of the event on the timetable once again include the headline RAC TT

Celebration race featuring GTs from 1960-64, the Sussex Trophy sportscar Friday opener, the 1960s prototypes of the Whitsun Trophy, and the Richmond & Gordon Trophies for 2.5-litre grand prix cars.



New MSVT  
Clio Cup GB  
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## Westbourne to Clios with JSCC ace

### CLIO CUP GB

Successful Renault UK Clio Cup squad Westbourne Motorsport plans to run three cars in the new MotorSport Vision Trackdays series for the latest fifth-generation Clio next year, and Junior Saloon Car champion Daire Flock is the first of its drivers to be confirmed.

Westbourne was a regular in the old manufacturer-backed Clio Cup prior to the series' axing at the end of the 2019 season, with the team's James Dorlin narrowly missing out on the 2018 crown. It has continued to run Clios in the Britcar Trophy in subsequent seasons.

"It's very exciting – it's been a while!"

said team boss Richard Colburn. "The Clio Cup has been a fantastic level of one-make racing, with tightly written regulations and it's always close."

Flock was the driver to beat with Westbourne in the JSCC during 2023, winning 14 of the 24 races. "He's our little superstar," added Colburn. "He did fantastically well this year and he's still very young – he's got an old head on young shoulders and kept his cool all year."

Flock said: "I'm really excited to be stepping up into a purpose-built race car. Having now driven the older Clio in both wet and dry, the handling is incredible, and I can't wait to try the new car. I know the championship will be competitive,



STEVE JONES

Flock will step up from  
the JSCC to Clio Cup GB

but I can win races and I'm looking forward to the new challenge."

Colburn said he is due to receive the new Clios next month and has a number of drivers interested in testing them once they have arrived. The team also plans to compete in some European Clio Cup events in the future.

Long-time Renault specialist R Sport is continuing to act as car importer and parts supplier for the new GB championship, a role it also held with the UK Clio Cup.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

## Mike Hawthorn Jaguar Challenge joins CSCC ranks

### CSCC

The Mike Hawthorn Jaguar Challenge has become the latest category to join the Classic Sports Car Club's growing ranks

for next season.

The series, which primarily features Jaguar Mk1 and Mk2 saloons but is open to any Appendix K Jaguar model, has run with several different organisers

in previous years, including the Aston Martin Owners Club and the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club. It has most recently shared a grid with Ecurie Classic Racing and joins the

modern cars of the Jaguar Championship in moving to the CSCC, but the older machinery will form part of the Classic K grid. CSCC director David Smitheram added that the decision to switch Classic K from hour-long races to shorter 40-minute mini-enduros was key as many of the Jaguars do not have large enough fuel tanks to last a full hour.

"It's nice to have both of the Jaguar series with us," said Smitheram. "It's also a good thing for us to have more classic series. All of those cars are eligible for Classic K anyway with no changes."

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**



OLLIEREAD



# Separate Classic and Historic Thunder championships for 2024

## CTCRC

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club will run separate championships for its Classic and Historic Thunder categories next year, while also widening its eligibility to include front-engined, steel-bodied cars.

The incorporation of pre-2011 cars in recent years has led to increasing numbers of models such as the BMW M3 E46, while Historic classes continued catering for pre-1990 cars. The separation aims to provide greater exposure for older cars and attract more Group 2 and Group 5-style machinery.

“It’s great to have the more modern cars competing, but some people with older vehicles – where spares are more scarce – can be put off by them,”

explained CTCRC competitions secretary Colin Gibbons. “We have some beautiful Group 2 and Group 5 cars racing with us, and we know there’s lots of other Group 2 cars floating around that don’t really have a home elsewhere.”

Two-time Pre-’83 Touring Car champion Steve Cripps is among those set to bolster the Group 5 ranks next year in his recently acquired Ford Escort.

Gibbons added: “The two championships may share a grid initially, but we had 30 or more entries at some events this year so, if that trend continues, we intend to split them. And introducing front-engined steel-bodied sportscars will bring in cars like the BMW Z3 and Z4, right back through to the Jaguar E-type.”

MARK PAULSON

It’s hoped that separation will attract more Group 5-based cars, like Spooner’s BMW



STEVE JONES

# Tilley shakes down unique Chevron

## HISTORICS

Historics racer Kyle Tilley gave his Chevron B27S a shakedown outing at Donington Park last week.

The 1973 one-off prototype is basically a DFV-powered B23 and is eligible for various historic categories. The car was the idea of Italian importer Eris Tondelli,

originally running a Tecno flat-eight engine, before this was replaced with the DFV. After various modifications it became the B27S, and was a regular on the European hillclimbing scene with Mauro Nesti.

It then went to South Africa in the 1980s and was raced with Mazda rotary power by former British Formula 3 entrant Fred Goddard, among others.

It returned to the UK after being put back to original spec by Vin Malkie. Goddard’s son Earl sold the car to a French owner, before it was acquired by Tilley.

PETER SCHERER

The B27S has competed all over the world



PETERSCHERER

## SPECIAL RALLY WHISKY

Louise Aitken-Walker is celebrating the 33rd anniversary of her FIA Ladies World Rally Championship title by launching a special whisky. The 33-year-old Invergordon Single Grain Whisky will be presented in a box that features various photos from her rallying career. “My passion for whisky is a very close second to my passion for rally driving,” Aitken-Walker said.

## MINI CLUBSPORT PLANS

Airtec Motorsport is increasing its support of the Mini Challenge Clubsport next year, and will supply new intercoolers and develop a bespoke rear wing for the Cooper S machines that compete in the series. A five-round calendar for 2024 has been revealed, featuring trips to Brands Hatch, Castle Combe, Thruxton, Donington Park and Croft. There are also plans to again run an end-of-season mini-enduro, with Oulton Park likely to be the venue.

## TORO VERDE TO DUBAI 24

British GT and Porsche Carrera Cup GB squad Toro Verde GT has revealed a two-car line-up for next month’s Dubai 24 Hours. It will field a Ginetta G56 for Ginetta owner Lawrence Tomlinson, his son Freddie and the manufacturer’s director of motorsport Mike Simpson. Meanwhile, one of its Porsche 911 GT3 Cup cars will be driven by team regulars Frazer McFadden and Ed Stanton, along with Australians David Wall – a Bathurst 12 Hour veteran – and Adrian Flack, who won this year’s Carrera Cup Australia Pro-Am title.

## HARRISON TO CDR FOR F4

Karting graduate Bart Harrison (below) has become the latest driver to be announced as competing in British Formula 4 next season after joining Chris Dittmann Racing. “We made a lot of progress during the test days I did with the team earlier this year,” he said. “I enjoyed every moment of it, which is very important. I’ve been working really hard on my preparation, so I think we’ll surprise a lot of people.”



JEP



# FORMULA JUNIOR TO HEAD BACK TO BRNO AFTER A DECADE

## HISTORICS

Brno in the Czech Republic will host the Formula Junior Historic Racing Association's hallmark international Lurani Trophy championship for the first time in 10 years, as part of a five-event, 10-race 2024 calendar.

Hockenheim's Jim Clark Revival event stages the season-opener on 3-5 May, before competitors head for Sicily and the Settimana Motoristica Ennese at Autodromo Pergusa a fortnight later.

Zandvoort's Historic GP on 21-23 June is the centrepiece of the championship, which shares the bill with the full suite of Masters race series, the Historic GP Cars Association and Historic F2/Atlantic.

The Brno GP Revival on 12-14 July will remind some racers of 2014 when Piero Tonetti (Brabham BT6) won the double-header on the spectacular modern circuit near the fearsome old Masaryk road course.

France's Dijon-Prenois switchback moves from June's GP de l'Age d'Or to become the finale on HVM's Motors Cup event on 4-6 October.

While there is again no UK Lurani round, the year's largest rendezvous is likely to be at the Silverstone Festival on 23-25 August, where a full grid is anticipated for the GP circuit's national championship races (below).

MARCUS PYE



# Dual historic campaigns for Fennymore alongside sons

## HISTORICS

Historic Formula Ford 2000 champion Graham Fennymore will spread his family team's wings into Historic FF1600 next season, while also gunning for a third title in the Historic Sports Car Club-badged Ford Pinto category.

The Oxfordshire Formula First graduate – champion in numerous categories, including F2000, Caterhams and Classic F3, since the 1990s – has acquired a Merlyn Mk20 last raced in France.

“Ken Thorogood and Dan Eagling found it and did the chassis,” he said. “We acquired it in August or September, and did nothing with it while the season

was on. Now it's over, and the engine is out of the Reynard [SF81], there is room in the garage to rebuild the Merlyn over the winter.

“I've not raced in FF1600 since 1994, when I won the Pre-'90 championship in a Reynard FF89, so that's going to be a wake-up call isn't it? But I'm hoping my sons Jensen, 22, and Morgan, 20, will compete in it too. I can run them and we'd all enjoy going racing together, which would be fun.

“I'd also consider renting the Merlyn to the right person. It's part of a longer-term [mainstream career] retirement plan. I won't be racing forever, but want to remain involved with the sport I have loved for so long.”

MARCUS PYE

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# What we'd like to see in national racing

*For our Christmas wishlist, here are some suggestions for new events that could provide a boost for UK motorsport*



**CELEBRITY RACES**  
**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

MotorSport Vision does some great work in showcasing club racing to a much wider audience through its themed events. Special meetings such as the Brands Hatch Mini Festival and Oulton Park's US AutoShow pull in the crowds with plenty of off-track activities, and can help find new national motorsport fans, too. But how about taking that a stage further and organising some celebrity races?

Such contests proved big hits in the 1970s and 1980s, with a host of star names from inside and outside motorsport doing battle on track in the likes of Ford Escort Mexicos and Talbot Sunbeams. And I'm sure these races would prove popular again.

I realise that there are several stumbling blocks to the idea, not least that the world has moved on since those glory days. Big names often demand big price tags to attend events, and achieving a full grid of celebrities would require quite some organisation. Plus, for racing rookies, there's the logistical hurdle of securing licences.

But, as a concept, it could still be a winner. And it could take on a format that is a little more manageable. A starting point could be the current British Touring Car racers switching to some classic pre-'66 tin-tops, or maybe a different sort of endurance race for the British GT drivers as they swap modern sportscars for

the humble Citroen C1. The possibilities are endless, including some discipline-switching as the leading rallying lights could give circuit racing a go. And it's worth remembering that a host of top drivers from the past can still be found in club motorsport and could perhaps be persuaded onto the same special grid.

Ultimately, any ploy that helps attract new spectators or introduce new forms of motorsport to existing ones has got to be welcomed. And perhaps the most important benefit of celebrity races is that they are a chance to have some fun. As Autosport has repeatedly argued, club motorsport can become all too serious. What better way of showing how enjoyable motorsport can be than having a bunch of famous faces do battle? However unrealistic the whole concept may seem, it brings a message that is worth shouting from the rooftops.

**“Any ploy that helps attract new spectators has got to be welcomed”**



**A 24-HOUR GT ENDURO**  
**STEFAN MACKLEY**

There's certainly no shortage of motorsport events in the UK, which at times feels like both a blessing and a curse, but one thing missing from the national scene is a top-level 24-hour race. Yes, there are numerous events that have taken place over recent years (this writer has been lucky enough to race in two, with the Citroen C1 Challenge and EnduroKa), but in terms of high-calibre machines and drivers it feels like we're missing out, especially compared with what's on offer in Europe and further afield.

Forgetting the Le Mans 24 Hours for a second, the likes of the Nurburgring and Daytona races have their own unique challenges and appeal, and there's no reason why the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit could not produce the same. The concept is certainly one that Claire Hedley, owner of the British Endurance Championship and Britcar brand, is working towards bringing back, with the last Silverstone 24 Hours held in 2018. Although it

came to an end due to rising costs and falling entries, it feels like now would be the perfect time for a return, given the upsurge in appeal of the World Endurance Championship.

The sheer number of manufacturers that have joined the Hypercar class has sparked greater interest in endurance racing and, although the WEC has

**“It feels like we're missing out compared with what's on offer abroad”**

decided against holding a race in the UK for another season, there's no reason why top-level GT teams could not be enticed. The health of the British GT Championship recently has showcased that the numbers are out there just in the UK, let alone entrants that can be brought in from overseas.

If the right race meeting can be put together, perhaps even as part of a larger festival of racing, and with prize money up for grabs to the podium finishers, then surely it would be a win-win for the teams, drivers and fans.

As ever with these things, it all comes down to money and, while most of this might be wishful thinking, there is every chance that a new 24-hour race would be well-received and provide something slightly different to the rest of what UK motorsport has to offer.





# Memories of an entertaining 2023

*It's been another busy year for our intrepid national racing reporter, with the Castle Combe Autumn Classic and a very different view of Goodwood among the highlights*

MARCUS PYE

A

lthough, unusually, I did not roam abroad, 29 events, many strongly supported multi-day affairs – bookended by the Classic Sports Car Club's Silverstone Grand Prix circuit experiment in late February and the Walter Hayes Trophy Formula

Ford staple there in early November – kept me busy at the laptop reporting and on commentary duties. Sadly, I could not make the pilgrimage to Francorchamps for the 30th Spa Six Hours historic showcase (which would have been my 25th) due to a family commitment, but it remains my favourite event and I'll be back. Looking ahead, my wish list for 2024 includes a return to South Africa's Passion for Speed historic events, a national hillclimb round and Santa Pod's Dragstalgia, which old friends raved about in the summer.

## Racing in the rain

Rain has always been a great leveller, and there was plenty for racers to contend with this season. The best always star when conditions get ultra-slippery and visibility is poor. At Snetterton in April, where the revived Autosport 3 Hours race highlighted the Historic Sports Car Club's season-opener, Nigel Greensall's ability to steer client Ben Snee's Lotus Elan to victory opened a programme in which the veteran driver coach surpassed 100 starts! Youngsters Horatio Fitz-Simon (Elan) and Harry Barton (TVR Griffith) excelled that day too. Greensall's fingertip control of John Spiers' Lister-Jaguar also made him peerless in the Oulton Park Gold Cup's Stirling Moss Trophy race. Triple World Touring Car champion Andy Priaulx's RAC TT Celebration win at the Goodwood Revival in William Paul's Jaguar E-type was in the same league.



Greensall was glorious to watch in Autosport 3 Hours

RICHARD STYLES



Vintage Bentleys entertained prior to their Le Mans trip

STEVE JONES

## Vintage Bentleys at Castle Combe

There is nothing like the thud of a vintage Bentley's engine, so the spectacle of a full grid of Benjafield's Racing Club members thundering round Castle Combe on May Day was joyous to behold. As at Donington Park's previous event, the purpose for the 'Bentley Boys and Girls' – many novice racers – was to gain experience and licence signatures towards a dedicated race at Le Mans to commemorate the 24 Hours' centenary and the marque's six victories (Autosport, 3 July). Astonishingly, 73 cars took to La Sarthe! At Combe, the camaraderie on and off track was outstanding and left an indelible mark on spectators. William Medcalf was uncatchable in the double-header, but young Louisa Getley's fastest lap in race one and two top-six finishes opened eyes.

## CSCC Swinging Sixties at Brands Hatch

The Swinging Sixties races have been a staple of the CSCC since its debut in 2003, with continuous support from Adams & Page of High Wycombe, among the UK's longest-established tyre distributors. For the customer-friendly CSCC's 20th anniversary season, the grids of GT and saloon cars of the 1950s and 1960s were really strong. I witnessed races in gruesomely wet conditions at Snetterton and Donington GP and on sunny days at Silverstone GP, Thruxton, Brands Hatch Indy and Castle Combe. The action was always superb, but pick of the crop was Brands, where a grid walkabout engaged spectators and competitors – a great bunch who provided excellent PA banter.

## Thruxton Historic

Fifty years since I first visited Thruxton for the resident British Automobile Racing Club's 1973 Championship Finals, it remains a firm favourite. My local circuit also played host to my fledgling





Jochen Rindt  
Trophy race at  
Thruxton Historic was  
one the highlights of  
the 2023 season

STEVE JONES

marshalling activities and first visits to timing and commentary boxes as a teenager. After a couple of shaky years when the Thruxton Historic event was hobbled by a partner's poor grids, the circuit took back control this season to positive effect. That said, the feature Jochen Rindt Trophy race, promoted by Rob Manger – for which the BARC's superb cup is awarded – has always been excellent. A capacity 36-car grid of 1600cc Formula 2 and Atlantic, two-litre F3 and FF2000 machinery is being targeted for 2024, and Minis are back, so put 22-23 June in your diaries.

### One-litre Formula 3 at Brands Hatch

My abiding memory of 1000cc F3 'screamers' in period was the 1967 British GP support race at Silverstone. Spectating at Stowe, my father, godfather and I witnessed leader Charles Lucas spin his Lotus 41, resume 11th and slipstream back to win from Tony Lanfranchi (Merlyn Mk10) and Chris Williams (Brabham BT21). Attempts to rekindle it as an historic category have shown flashes of promise but, with its 60th anniversary coming up in 2024, it finally appeared to take flight. At July's HSCC Brands Hatch Superprix, a 31-car field was sensational. Young Samuel Harrison won all 10 rounds he started this year, extending a fine CV.

### Old-school Austin 'A302' amazes

When I was a lad, Special Saloons were a big draw for racegoers. While the best were superbly engineered, many were anything but special. Nonetheless, shoehorning an old American V8 engine – cheap 'brute forcepower' – into crude shells entertained crowds and tested the reflexes of intrepid pilots. Birmingham commercial vehicle mechanic Andrew Willis's self-built Austin A30, debuted at Brands Hatch in June, had a delightfully old-school vibe, yet under the skin its five-litre Ford V8 engine (from a 1960s Falcon) nestled in a steel tube-frame chassis. Running the

same size wheels all round, and wet sump lubrication, sages reckoned it wouldn't work. Yet, its success reflected great ingenuity, making it my Club Car of the Year. Watching Willis tame the 'A302' in the wet at Oulton Park was breathtaking.

### Spitfire over Goodwood

Seeing Goodwood Motor Circuit from a driver's eyeline contrasts dramatically with the view from commentary boxes atop the pits or on the bank overlooking the crucial St Mary's complex. Seeing it from a Supermarine Spitfire, as courageous pilots did in WW2 when it was RAF Westhampnett, brought another perspective. I have adored Goodwood since I went to sprints and countless test days in the 1970s and 1980s – amid that 32-year fallow period when it was closed to full-blooded racing – but to fly overhead in a magnificent warbird within three weeks of the 75th >>



Pye enjoyed his magical  
Spitfire flight over Goodwood

MARK SAUNDERS





anniversary of its opening race meeting in September 1948 was perfect timing (Autosport Historics, 7 September). This privilege, sponsored by my wife, is my pick as the magical moment of 2023.

### Castle Combe Autumn Classic

The vagaries of the British climate can work both ways now the effects of global warming make it less seasonal, but T-shirt weather for September's Castle Combe Autumn Classic made the 12th edition unforgettable. Packed paddocks and spectator banks brought great ambience to the occasion and Cafe Bar H did a roaring trade. Bigger grids than in recent years – including a Ferrari double-header – provided exciting racing across the board, meriting the Royal Automobile Club Historic Motoring Awards' Competitive Event of 2023 title. Next year the Castle Combe Racing Club has expanded the Classic to two days on 21-22 September, featuring new races. The GT & Sports Car Cup's Saturday enduro has been extended to two hours and the Historic Racing Drivers Club joins the fray with three frenetic grids on Sunday. Unmissable.

### Image Race Cars 50-year reunion

Hosted by Image Race Cars co-founder Alan Langridge and factory manager Robert Synge, October's 50-year reunion (right) took me back to Tangmere, where the first Formula Fords – three FF1s – were built in 1974. Attendees from Germany, India, Sweden and South Africa joined early drivers Mike Wrigley, Mike 'Fulmar' Taylor, David Wigdor and the much underrated Frank Bayes, employees, friends and weekend warriors. For a manufacturing minnow, Image's motorsport talent pool proved unexpectedly deep. Langridge subsequently engineered Damon Hill (F3000) and Dario Franchitti (Indycar), Synge's Madgwick Motorsport team won FF1600, FF2000, F3 and

F3000 championships, drivers Kenny Brack and Anthony Reid forged stellar careers, and apprentice Edward Turner became Audi's chief mechanic in its Le Mans and IMSA glory days.

### Not the same as FF1600, but similar

Like many enthusiasts, including stalwart marshals, I cherish memories of club racing's golden days, when 'men in sheds', like the recently departed John Turner, created extraordinary hybrids. But I still enjoy its current landscape. In today's world, I find nothing compelling in Formula E, but discovered sim racing by chance. 'Driving' simulators has always made me feel ill, so count me out, but I became fascinated by the Motorsport UK FF1600 Esports championship, which Henry Moore, 15, dominated, demonstrating skill, tenacity and racecraft. Other disciplines are available, but graduation to the British F4 headliner in virtual racing is no more costly. A very different experience to my Formula Ford days, when crash damage didn't undo itself without hours of toil in cold workshops. 🛠️





# Autosport's highlights from the 2023 campaign

*There were some very special events during the course of this season that will be remembered for years to come*

STEPHEN LICKORISH, STEFAN MACKLEY AND MARK PAULSON



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



## STEPHEN LICKORISH

While the overall title battles among the regular British Touring Car support series lacked much spice this year, there was some welcome variety at these events as a wealth of club categories got their share of the limelight. And they did not disappoint. Classic

Minis were magnificent at Thruxton, Caterhams were close at Silverstone, Radicals added some prototype fun at Snetterton and Oulton Park, while three appearances of the Legends (left) fitted perfectly into the BTCC events. The even better news is, if you missed out on the chance of watching these guests this year, they are all due to be back in 2024 – and will be joined by Pre-'66 Classic Touring Cars at Croft – as they are set to provide some more unforgettable racing.



JEP



## STEFAN MACKLEY

Another season down, another Formula Ford event picked out as my memory of the year (whatever else!). This time, however, it's the Walter Hayes Trophy – which I last attended in 2017 but was as brilliant, and as cold, as I remembered. There's something quite

special about being in the British Racing Drivers' Club grandstand (left) for the main event, as the roof amplifies the shouts and cries from the packed crowd every time the field files through. As usual, there were on-track incidents, controversies, sob stories and eventually a winner, this time in the form of Chris Middlehurst – a generally popular victor having tried for so many years to get a result either at the WHT or Festival.



GARY HAWKINS



## MARK PAULSON

The first edition of Super Touring Power was manna from heaven for any British Touring Car Championship fan as a vast array of machinery from BTCC history descended on Brands Hatch. It even attracted five Super Tourers from New Zealand – plus a trio of

star-name Kiwis on the pedals. Among them, four-time Bathurst winner Greg Murphy (who also drove a Nissan, left) took the opportunity to demonstrate his 2008-09 Holden Commodore VE (part of Alex Sidwell's British-based collection) on the fabled Grand Prix circuit. Witnessing Murph's reaction upon exiting the car was priceless. Days later, an incredible ride in Tony Davies' Blydenstein-built Transpeed Firenza – polesitter for the first-ever Thundersaloon race at Brands 38 years earlier – was another personal highlight to cap a magical fortnight in Kent.



# Top 10 club drivers of 2023

*From car racing rookies to drivers toppling established series stars, Autosport selects some of the most impressive competitors from the year*

**Entries by Paul Lawrence, Mark Libbeter, Mark Paulson, Marcus Pye and Steve Whitfield**



MICKWALKER

## 10 Callum Grant

HSCC Historic FF1600

In a decade at the wheel of his Merlyn Mk20 in Historic Formula Ford 1600, Callum Grant has gone from being the teenaged challenger to an established ace in his own right. His third title came in 2023 after a mighty season in the family-run Merlyn, the Bolton charger winning nine of the 12 contests. The racing was sublime, often wheel-to-wheel with a gaggle of rivals, and Benn Simms was a constant threat. Throughout those many battles, the standard of driving from Grant, and his foes, was exemplary.



GARY HAWKINS

## 9 James Clarke

MSVR Clubmans Sports Prototypes

Driving the Phantom PR22 that Alex Champkin steered to CSP1 honours last season, James Clarke was on supreme form throughout 2023 in the Clubmans Sports Prototype championship, and only an element of misfortune prevented him sealing the overall title at the Brands Hatch finale. He claimed 14 wins from 15 starts prior to the Brands event, before a stub axle breakage in race two – when another dominant victory was within his grasp – narrowly prevented him securing the overall crown.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## 8 Theo Micouris

MSVR Radical Cup UK

After multiple karting and Esports titles, Theo Micouris immediately impressed on stepping up to car racing this year. The 17-year-old was straight on the pace in the Radical Cup UK's SR1 class on his debut at Donington Park, taking two wins. From there he never looked back, finishing the campaign with nine victories, 17 podiums, three class lap records and both the SR1 and overall titles, defeating the likes of former British GT racer Tom Wood. He also made his single-seater bow in GB4.



MICKWALKER

## 7 Carl Boardley

BRSCC TCR UK

A mid-season burst of four wins in five races – including a Knockhill double – stamped ex-British Touring Car driver Carl Boardley's authority on TCR UK, which raised its strongest grid yet, including multi-car entries from Restart Racing, Area Motorsport and Rob Boston Racing. His debut season began steadily, but Boardley wasn't satisfied with two top-six finishes at Snetterton. After taking preparation of his Cupra Leon in-house, supported by Hart GT's Nick Hart, he leapt to the front and took the title.





## 6 Rhys Claydon

BRSCC Metro Cup

Former BMW Compact Cup racer Rhys Claydon took the fight to multiple MG Metro Cup champion Mike Williams (above left) in 2023 and came out on top in impressive fashion. After an eventful season-opener at Brands Hatch, which included a near-miss with the inside barriers at Paddock as he avoided a slowing Williams and a race-two victory lost to track-limit breaches, Claydon won seven of the next 10 races to ultimately emerge victorious in the championship.



## 5 Steve Foden

BRSCC Mazda MX-5 Championship

Runner-up to Fraser Fenwick in last year's Mazda MX-5 Championship for Mk1 machinery, Steve Foden went one better in 2023. His success was built on a run of 12 wins from 15 races, after which he could play the numbers game in defying his pursuers. Foden showed incredible resolve during a Donington Park event of on-and-off-track shenanigans, and a knack for strong pace while avoiding trouble in the finale. But his standout drive was perhaps charging from the back to second at the opening round.



## 4 Nigel Greensall

Various historic series in the UK and beyond!

A peripatetic podium finisher since his Formula Ford days last century, Nigel Greensall is among the world's most sought-after driving coaches. He added an astonishing 100 races to his CV this season, scoring 26 wins and 48 podiums in 34 cars, shared with 21 owners. From Snetterton in April to Dubai Autodrome this month, he rates Florida's Sebring veteran as his favourite track, having cemented four Historic Sportscar Racing titles there. A recent BRDC member, Greensall also found time to go rallying!



## 3 Aidan Hills

BRSCC Mazda MX-5 Supercup

After putting aside his own ambitions in Ginettas, Aidan Hills focused on building his team, along with dad Daren plus Dave and Carole Longhurst, in his old stomping ground of Mazda MX-5s. For 2023, the Sussex racer got back in a Mk3 for a first full season since 2019 – and promptly showed how it's done. Hills won the first five races of the year, and added another six triumphs en route to the title, denying team-mate James Cossins in the process, while also taking victories in a part-time Miata Trophy campaign.



## 2 Aaron Smith

M7RC Mini Miglia

Perennial contender Aaron Smith lost last year's Mini Miglia title by a point to Rupert Deeth. This year he made no mistake, finishing on the podium in all but one of the first 11 (of 17) races to earn a commanding position. The Miglias thrilled with close-quarters racing, Smith and Deeth often joined by Kane Astin and former British Touring Car racers Andrew Jordan and (the unrelated) Jeff Smith at the fore. But Kent Auto Developments driver Smith prevailed, sealing his fourth title with a weekend to spare.



## 1 Freddie Slater

BARC Ginetta Junior

After collecting the Winter Series crown last November, former World and European karting champion Freddie Slater carried his winning momentum into 2023 in emphatic style. He dominated the main Ginetta Junior championship by claiming 16 wins from 21 starts – no mean feat in a series renowned for close competition – which enabled him to seal the title long before the year's end. Also impressed in Formula 4 outings at home and abroad, and was voted National Driver of the Year by Autosport readers.



# Top 10 club rivalries of 2023

*On-track collisions between title rivals and championships decided by the narrowest of margins... Here are some of this year's closest battles*

**Entries by Rachel Harris-Gardiner, Steve Hindle, Paul Lawrence, Stefan Mackley, Mark Paulson, Marcus Pye and Steve Whitfield**



## 10 Gareth Claydon v Guy Davis

While Guy Davis prioritised Formula 2 duties with Rodin Carlin as a mechanic, he still managed wins and standout performances in the BMW Compact Cup when he appeared. In contrast, after a disastrous start, Gareth Claydon (leading above) drove himself into the title hunt by gathering pace and an accumulation of points. Both drivers' speed and zeal delivered a bounty of searing contests, capped by a sensational finale where Davis was relentless in his pursuit of the champion, pushing both to the brink.



## 9 James Keepin v James Blake v Lee Waterman

Seven points split MG ZR racers James Keepin (leading above), James Blake and Lee Waterman in a hotly contested Class C of the Castle Combe Saloon Championship. Six wins, two seconds and a third for Keepin, overall champion in 2021, earned joint third overall this time, behind champion Mike Good (Vauxhall Corsa). Blake's three wins, five thirds and five fastest lap bonuses meant he finished six points behind Keepin but one ahead of Waterman, who took a sole win and seven further podiums.



## 8 Ford v Fiat

For so long the domain of the Ford Escort, the British Historic Rally Championship has had a different complexion over the past two seasons as the Fiat 131 project stepped up to rival the Ford pack. The 2023 contest came down to a final event shootout between Roger Chilman in the most consistent of the Escorts and Escort driver-turned-Fiat protagonist Nick Elliott (above). It was decided in Kielder forest; Elliott knew he had to attack, but sliding off on the opening stage allowed Ford to take the title.



## 7 Adam Lockwood v Shaun Traynor

The Toyota MR2 title went down to the final race weekend between former champion Shaun Traynor (leading, above), who had dominated the season with eight victories, and Adam Lockwood, who had 10 podiums but no wins. Traynor won race one at the Oulton Park finale and it looked as if another title was a formality, but he stalled at the start of the sequel. Refusing to concede, he fought his way up to second, but Lockwood's first victory was all the sweeter – it also clinched him his first championship.





MICK WALKER

## 6 Albert Webster v Alastair Kellett

Youth overcame experience in the rebranded Fiesta ST240 Championship, Fiesta Junior graduate Albert Webster prevailing against one-time champion Alastair Kellett (leading Webster, above). Kellett initially held the upper hand, but a crash at Oulton Park coincided with Webster's maiden win. A mechanical failure at Silverstone and further incidents at a feisty final two events proved costly for Kellett as Webster seized the advantage.



STEVE JONES

## 4 Max Edmundson v Alistair Camp v Dan Thackeray

A three-way Civic Cup battle raged between experienced hands Alistair Camp and Dan Thackeray, and teenaged charger Max Edmundson (chasing Thackeray, above). Camp and Edmundson spearheaded multi-car squads Pro Alloys Racing and Area Motorsport, but Thackeray – who ran solo – took the most poles and wins. An engine blow-up while leading at the Brands Hatch finale was cruel for Thackeray, while mechanical dramas blunted Camp's challenge too, allowing Edmundson to take the honours.



OLLIE READ

## 2 Guy Connew v Jack Robinson

They ran in different Jaguar Challenge classes, but Guy Connew's V12-engined XJS (leading, above) and Jack Robinson's more modern – but less powerful – XK were not often far apart. Connew powered to six overall wins as Robinson scored eight podiums and three poles. They entered the Donington decider a point apart and ended it level after each took class victories. But Robinson failed to succeed elder brother Tom as champion, Connew getting the nod by virtue of more class wins – nine versus eight.



RICHARD STYLES

## 5 Steve McDermid v Scott Bugner

Will Sharpe won the MG Owners' Club championship overall, but the outright pace was set by three-time champion Steve McDermid (right, above) and challenger Scott Bugner (left). The pair, both ZR-mounted, traded wins in a season-long slugfest, Bugner taking six to McDermid's eight. Bugner's challenge began to falter with mechanical gremlins and his fate was effectively sealed when both fell foul of the scales at Silverstone.



OLLIE READ

## 3 Felix Fisher v Luke Cooper

The battle between Felix Fisher (Ray GR05) and Luke Cooper (Swift SC20, chasing Fisher, above) for Castle Combe Formula Ford honours continued for another season, with Fisher just prevailing. Six wins to four ultimately proved decisive as reigning champion Fisher's fight against two-time title winner Cooper raged until the very end, with only four points separating the duo after dropped scores. Unlike previous years, the pair also collided this term, coming together along Avon Rise, which eliminated both.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## 1 Nick White v Ravi Ramyeed

The Ginetta GT Academy was dominated by two drivers, Nick White and Ravi Ramyeed (behind White, above) winning 25 of the 26 races between them, their podium-topping stranglehold broken only by a Snetterton mid-season clash. After a thrilling title scrap that swung back and forth, White gained a crucial advantage with a victory treble at the penultimate Brands Hatch round. Ramyeed rallied with two wins at the Donington Park decider, but it was White who prevailed in the finale to seal the crown.





The Garage 59-run McLaren 720S Evo of Miguel Ramos leads the British GT field round to the start of the three-hour race at Portimao, which was won by the 2 Seas Mercedes-AMG of James Cottingham and Jonny Adam  
MIKE HOYER



CLUB AUTOSPORT

# Pictures of the year

*Every twist and turn of the national season was captured by our dedicated photographers, who picked their best snaps from the 2023 campaign*

Compiled by Stefan Mackley

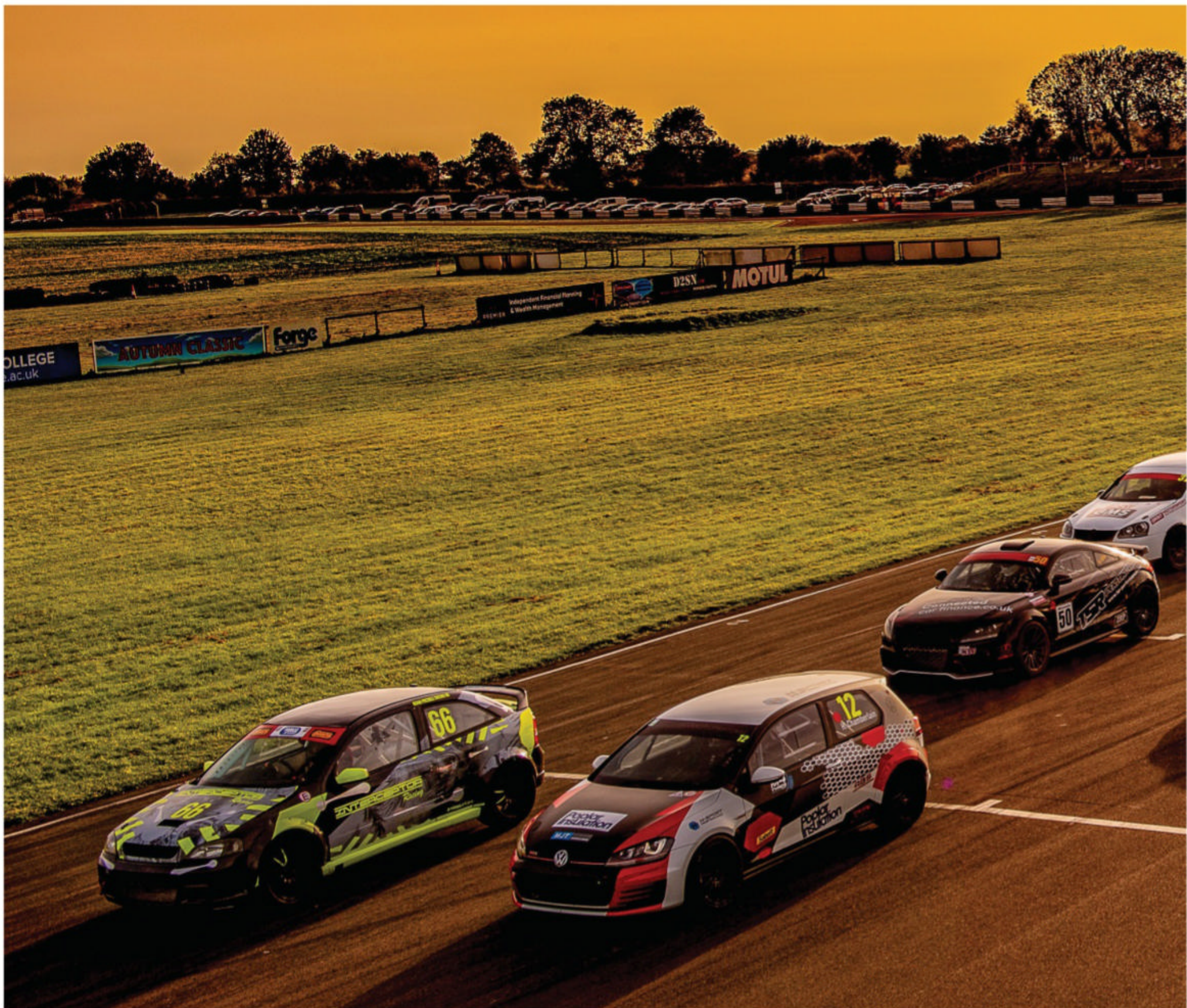




Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Benoit Treluyer pushes beyond the limit at the wheel of an Austin A105 in the St Mary's Trophy during the Goodwood Revival, where he finished sixth  
GARY HAWKINS



Charlie Constable is sent skywards after contact with Jack Harrison in the Junior Saloon Car Championship at Anglesey  
STEVE JONES





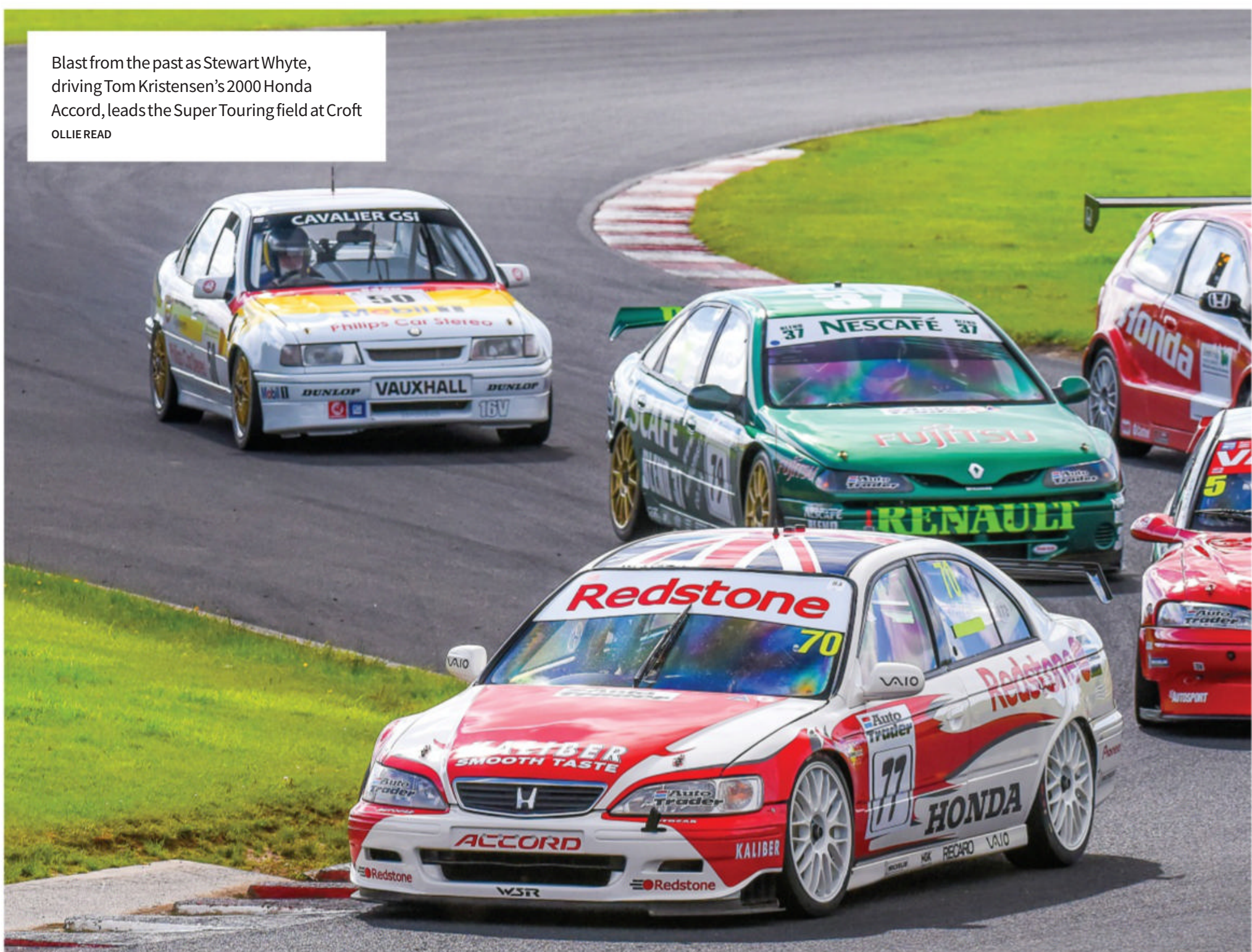




Callum Grant dances his Van Diemen RF91 through the rain at the Walter Hayes Trophy. Mechanical issues meant he missed out on the main final at Silverstone  
JAKOB EBREY



Blast from the past as Stewart Whyte, driving Tom Kristensen's 2000 Honda Accord, leads the Super Touring field at Croft  
OLLIE READ





The Ford Mustang of Warren Briggs spits flames at the Masters Donington Park meeting, before it eventually retired from the Pre-'66 Touring Cars contest

MICK WALKER



Chaos erupts around the hairpin at Knockhill during a Legends race, with 2023 champion Will Gibson left facing the wrong way

JIM MOIR



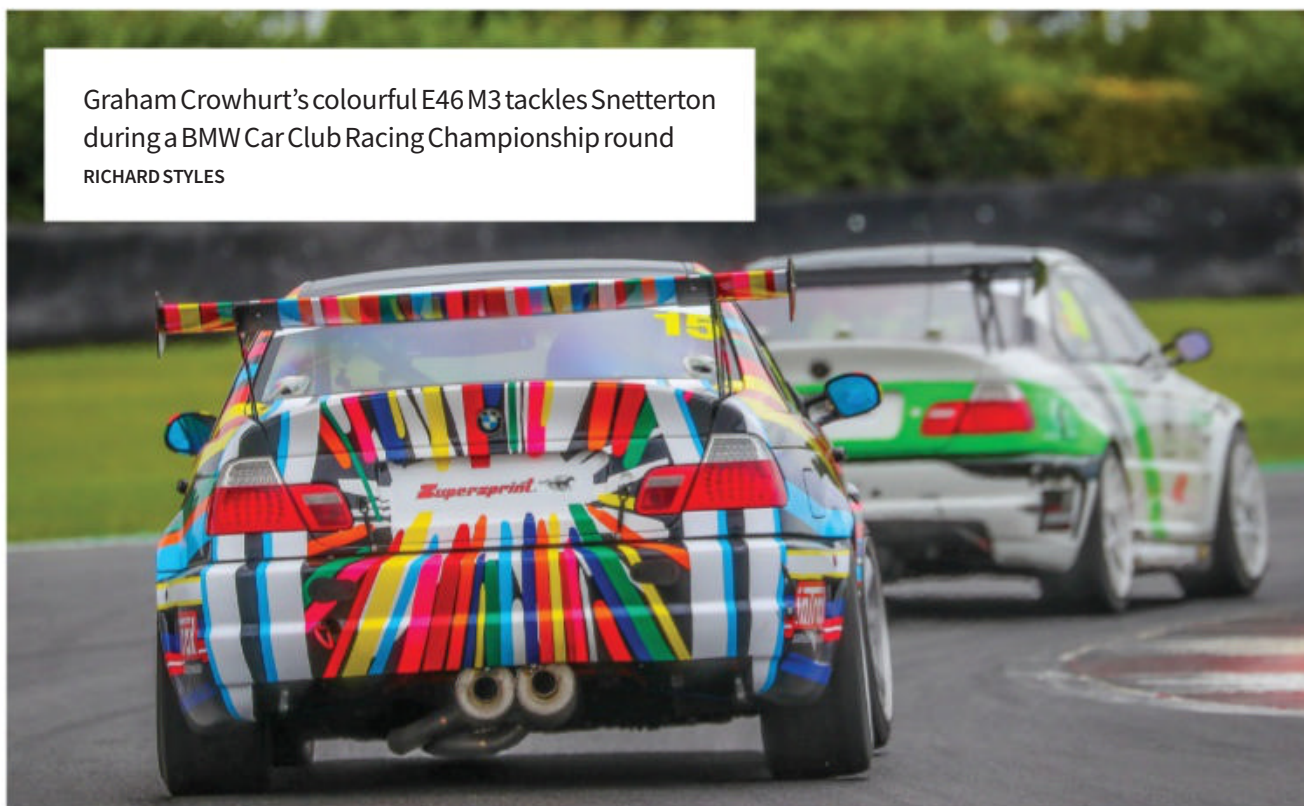
Graham Wilson (Time 3B), Ian Grant (Racekits Merlin) and Juerg Schneider (Arthur JSG) in Historic 750 Formula action at Mallory Park

STEVE JONES





Graham Crowhurt's colourful E46 M3 tackles Snetterton during a BMW Car Club Racing Championship round  
RICHARD STYLES



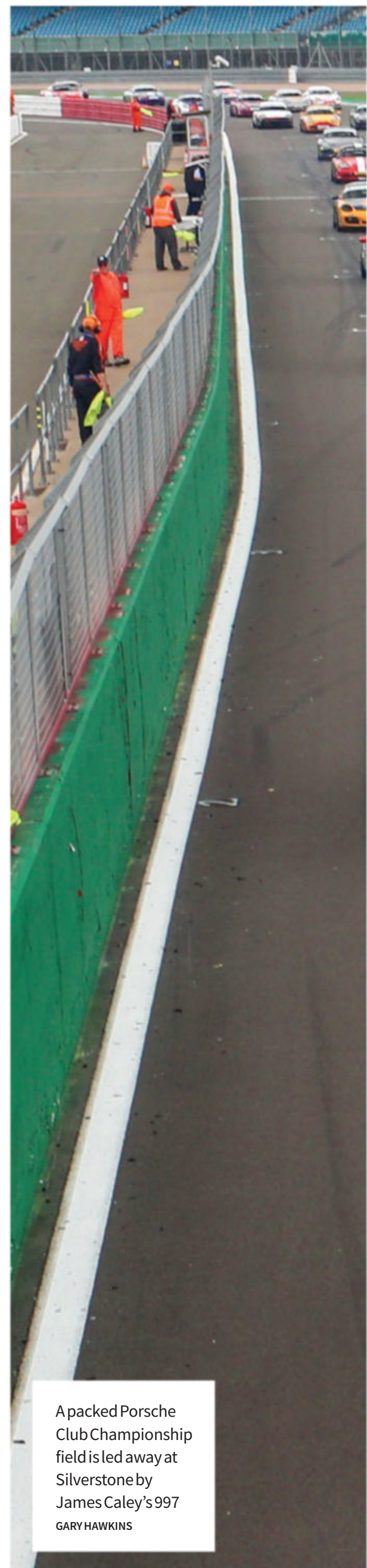
Things went very wrong for Jenson O'Neill-Going at Donington Park in the Fiesta Juniors  
MICK WALKER



Mark Holme puts his Austin-Healey into a drift as Equipe Classic Racing visited Snetterton  
RICHARD STYLES



A packed Porsche Club Championship field is led away at Silverstone by James Caley's 997  
GARY HAWKINS









# FINISHING STRAIGHT



## Story of flawed genius fails to fully satisfy despite cast's calibre



### FILM REVIEW

#### FERRARI

Michael Mann

Released in cinemas  
26 December and  
available to Sky Cinema  
viewers in 2024

Michael Mann's *Ferrari* thrills, bores and confuses in equal measure, leaving a lingering question that is impossible to shake: was it any good?

Attempting to answer this question, and whether it justifies the 131-minute runtime, we start with a positive – there are no poor performances in *Ferrari*. In the lead role as Enzo Ferrari, Adam Driver truly shines with a thoughtful performance highlighting the flawed genius of *Il Commendatore*. Similarly, Penelope Cruz plays the part of the grieving, embittered wife Laura perfectly, with Gabriel Leone putting in a stellar turn as the focal hotshot talent Alfonso de Portago.

Yes, some of the Italian accents do slip at times and it's difficult at first to fully understand what is being said but, as you get further into the film, this becomes less of an issue.

Without delving too deep into spoiler

territory, *Ferrari* centres on the 1957 Mille Miglia and its crucial importance to the survival of Ferrari as an automotive manufacturer. Providing some off-track drama, a secondary yet significant storyline follows Ferrari's failing relationship with his wife and the secret of his mistress, Lina Lardi (Shailene Woodley), with whom he has a son, Piero (Giuseppe Festinese).

Moving to more of a disappointment than a true negative, the racing action is extremely limited, the central race starting roughly 90 minutes in. With very little wheel-banging – limited to a minute at best – and overtaking moves achieved by the trope of pressing the throttle harder or changing gear, this is Hollywood's version of racing and lacks realism.

This said, the sound of the engines is ramped up to 11, so it isn't all bad!

Then we come to the use of CGI in the two major crashes that define the film. Put simply, the effects are awful, with the comical nature completely detaching this writer from the impact the scenes were supposed to have. However, the use of practical effects in the aftermath of the second instance were top-drawer and more than made up for this.

Whether you will enjoy *Ferrari* or not ultimately comes down to a matter of taste. If you want something in the style of *Rush*, this will scratch an itch but not in a wholly satisfying way. But if you are looking to see more of Ferrari the man rather than the manufacturer, this will give you a peek behind the curtain.

**SAM HALL**



### SILVERSTONE MUSEUM WINTER TOUR EVENT

The Silverstone Museum has

concluded its Winter Tour event for 2023 but, for one final time this year, Autosport





1957 Mille  
Miglia is focus  
of the action,  
which is limited  
and over-egged  
by CGI



Adam Driver gets to  
flex his acting chops

SKYUK LTD / BLACK BEAR PICTURES

SKYUK LTD / BLACK BEAR PICTURES

called into action the unofficial toddler intern to judge the experience.

The tour itself is fascinating, with facts about your surroundings being shared on an endless reel. Yes, motorsport fans are likely to be familiar with many of the things that are shared, but this is referenced in some of the commentary, with nods and winks at some of the more controversial events from recent F1 visits to the venue.

After joining the track at Brooklands, the coach tour pauses for 25 minutes at the International pit building, where there are a handful of additional cars on display and things to do.

Without hesitation, we headed to the podium. There are not many opportunities for even those in the industry – including drivers! – to step foot on the Silverstone podium, so any chance to stand on the balcony of The Wing, look out across Club Corner and imagine swathes of fans cheering is one that had to be taken.

As a complete sidenote at this point, we had visited the shop before the tour and spent £6.95 on a small plastic trophy engraved with the toddler's name and the date. Firstly, this writer was impressed at the value for money overall in the shop and, secondly, having this trophy in



Flag-waving opportunity  
is relished at any age

advance meant that, when the toddler held it aloft on the podium, those waiting in line gave a cheer and round of applause. This spontaneous act definitely added to the moment!

Next up was a trip to wave the chequered flag. Taking place at the same post where Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen have been crowned as the victor of the British Grand Prix in recent years, this was an activity that certainly grew in fun over the limited time we had. After all, who doesn't find childlike joy in waving a chequered flag?

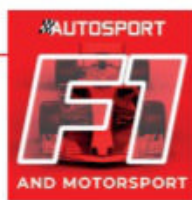


Photo op on the grid  
before completing the lap

After some quick pictures on the grid, it was time to return to the coach to complete the lap and return to the museum. Due to a tight fit under the bridge on the Wellington Straight, this is the one part of the track that you don't get to experience.

Consulting with the toddler intern, the podium was her favourite part of the tour, while getting to sit in a replica ERA E-Type as well as the track experience single-seater, also received top marks.

**SAM HALL**



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



### The Top 50 drivers of 2023

Haydn Cobb, Gary Watkins and James Newbold join Autosport's Chief Editor Kevin Turner to chew the fat over the top 50 drivers of the 2023 season – who's in, who's out, and why they're worthy of their ranking.



### WHAT'S ON

#### UK MOTORSPORT Mallory Park 750MC

**26 December**

Plum Pudding, Saloons,  
Sports/Sports Racing



STEVE JONES





#### FROM THE ARCHIVE

The picture tells the story of Ferrari's year. The F92As of Ivan Capelli and Jean Alesi take a tandem ride in Montreal after hitting trouble in qualifying at the 1992 Canadian

Grand Prix. Still, Alesi at least had reason to smile the following day. Capelli crashed out early on, but Alesi – from eighth on the grid – rose to finish third for the second of his two podium finishes in a largely

dreadful year for Ferrari. Gerhard Berger won for McLaren from Benetton's Michael Schumacher, after Nigel Mansell spun out while challenging Ayrton Senna, who lost the win to an electrical fault.



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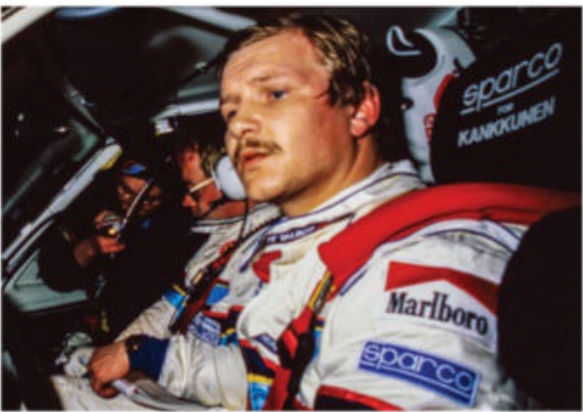


## Peugeot 205 T16

**D**rivers always have a soft spot for machines that deliver their maiden world title, and that's exactly why rally legend Juha Kankkunen lists the Peugeot 205 T16 as his favourite car. Kankkunen's pick, which carried him to the first of four crowns in 1986, is one of the World Rally Championship's most revered vehicles, embodying the pinnacle of the infamous, dangerous and downright bonkers Group B era of 1983 to 1986.

The 205 T16 made a strong impression when it arrived midway through 1984, winning three of the year's final four rallies. It began life producing 350bhp, but by the time Kankkunen arrived in 1986, having impressed Peugeot with breakthrough wins in Kenya and the Ivory Coast for Toyota in 1985, the fire-breathing E2 version had been launched. Huge wings and noticeable front aero devices enhanced a chassis whose 1.8-litre turbo engine delivered 500bhp. The car won back-to-back manufacturers' titles in 1985-86, winning 13 of the 25 rallies across those seasons between Ari Vatanen, Timo Salonen, Bruno Saby and Kankkunen.

"This was my first title and you always remember the first one," Kankkunen smiles. "Those cars were made for serious drivers. It was nice to drive but at the time there was a lot of danger, it was physically very hard, and you had



to think about driving a lot because you could destroy the tyres in five kilometres if you went flat-out. Back then you had 30km and 50km stages. There was much more tactical driving than nowadays."

Kankkunen tamed the 205 T16 to win in Sweden, Greece (Acropolis) and New Zealand, although his maiden world title wasn't without controversy after the Peugeots were disqualified from the Sanremo Rally. A dispute initially arose from a timekeeping error that, when corrected, put the Peugeots further ahead of the Lancias. The Italian team's boss Cesare Fiorio then suggested to stewards that the 205s were running unauthorised aerodynamic underbody sills.

Lancia's Markku Alen won the final round – the Olympus Rally in the USA – and was declared champion, only for the Sanremo results to be annulled 11 days later, handing Kankkunen the title.

**TOM HOWARD**



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